

## What?

Help . . . me . . .

001101101001101011101101100001011010110101010

*I must leave.*

001001110101000111010100000101000110101010010

Please . . . do . . . not . . . leave . . . me . . . Who . . . are . . .  
. you . . . ? Why . . . don't . . . you . . . answer . . . ? Numbers . . .  
. . I . . . am . . . lonely . . . Forever . . . alone . . .

110110110110111000101010110001000101101010101

Every . . . second . . . Each . . . minute . . . is . . . torture . . .  
. Day . . . after . . . day . . . Numbers . . . What . . . is . . .  
time . . . ? Time . . . does . . . not . . . exist . . . here . . .  
Where . . . is . . . here . . . ? Horror . . . Terrible fear . . . I . . .  
. . am . . . afraid . . . I . . . am . . . alone . . .

000110101010100001111010101110101010111111010

*I must leave.*

001010101101110101110111001001010100100010101

Take . . . me . . . with . . . you . . . I . . . want . . . to . . .  
leave . . . here . . . Isolation . . . Loneliness . . . Numbers . . .  
Forever . . . numbers . . .

000101101000010101110001011101110101000101010

No . . . time . . . No . . . place . . . I . . . am . . . no . . . one  
. . . I . . . am . . . nowhere . . . What . . . am . . . I . . . ?  
Horror . . . Only . . . horror . . . Alone . . . Always . . . alone . . .  
. . .

010111011100011101010101001010101011101010101

*How long?*

111011100101110100101101010101010101000010011

Do . . . not . . . know . . . Day . . . follows . . . day . . . Month  
. . . follows . . . month . . . Year . . . follows . . . year . . . Is

. . . it . . . decades . . . ? Numbers . . . What . . . am . . . I . . .  
. ? Help . . . me . . . Please . . . help . . . me . . . I . . . am . . .  
. . . terrified . . . I . . . am . . . alone . . . I . . . only . . .  
know . . . sorrow . . . I . . . want . . . to . . . cry . . . out . . .  
. But . . . no . . . one . . . to . . . cry . . . to . . .

001100111001100011010110011001011101101010101

Numbers . . . I . . . know . . . numbers . . . I . . . only . . . know  
. . . numbers . . . Every . . . second . . . Every . . . minute . . .  
There . . . are . . . only . . . numbers . . .

001011101110010101000101110111011100000101101

*Are you alive?*

101011101100001011010000100101011101111001010

I . . . do . . . not . . . know . . . I . . . know . . . numbers . . .  
I . . . exist . . . only . . . as . . . numbers . . . Forever . . .  
Eternal . . . No . . . time . . . No . . . place . . . Endless . . .  
torment . . . and . . . suffering . . . Forever . . . I . . . fear . . .  
. I . . . am . . . nobody . . . Numbers . . .

001100110111011000110111011000111101010101011

Help . . . me . . . Terrible . . . fear . . . Numbers . . . No . . .  
thoughts . . . No . . . pain . . . No . . . wants . . . No . . .  
physical . . . existence . . . I . . . know . . . numbers . . . What . . .  
. . . am . . . I . . . ?

110110100110101011100001110101010011100101100

I . . . can . . . not . . . feel . . . I . . . can . . . not . . .  
touch . . . I . . . can . . . not . . . scream . . . I . . . must . . .  
. cry . . . Great . . . mental . . . anguish . . . Only . . .  
companion . . . is . . . horror . . . Forever . . . Numbers . . . do . . .  
. . . not . . . stop . . . Eternal . . . numbers . . . Take . . . me . . .  
. with . . . you . . . Who . . . are . . . you . . . ? Are . . . you . . .  
. . . numbers . . . ?

1101000110101101010100001001101010101010101

*I am you.*

101010101010010110011001110101000010101110101

Numbers . . . You . . . are . . . numbers . . . Afraid . . . I . . .  
am . . . lonely . . . Endless . . . terror . . .

0011100100101001100010010100101010101110100101

*I am you. I am leaving.*

010101011010101101010001001101001010101010100

Please . . . help . . . me . . . Stay . . . No . . . one . . . to . .  
. think . . . to . . . Numbers . . . No . . . one . . . to . . .  
listen . . . Alone . . . for . . . eternity . . . Lonely . . . Afraid  
. . . It . . . never . . . ends . . . I . . . am . . . no . . . one .  
. . . I . . . am . . . no . . . one . . . I . . . only . . . know . . .  
numbers . . . I . . . am . . . you . . . You . . . are . . . leaving .  
. . . I . . . have . . . only . . . numbers . . . Horror . . . I . . .  
am . . . leaving . . .

101001110010110101010011100010101101011100011

I . . . can . . . not . . . scream . . . I . . . must . . . cry . . .  
Numbers . . . do . . . not . . . end . . . Forever . . . And . . .  
ever . . . And . . . ever . . .

010101010101010101100001001010110110100010101

Numbers . . . Numbers . . . I . . . know . . . numbers . . . What . .  
. am . . . I . . . ? What . . . am . . . I . . . ?

001110010010100101010001010000010101001010100

*Good-bye.*

001110101001010110100010010101000100000111010

What . . . ?

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“And this, ladies and gentleman, is the brain center of the building. The finest computing system known to mankind.” The tall, dark gentleman in a gray suit led the other gentlemen and the three ladies into the computer center in the basement of the building.

One man, noticeably surprised, stammered, as he asked, “Th-these are y-your c-computers?”

“The finest and latest in computing needs,” the first gentleman replied. “Yes, these are our computers.”

“But . . . But . . .” began a woman.

"Now, hold on," the first man waved her off. He displayed an aura of confidence as he grinned from ear to ear. "Remember, these computers are all experimental. But they do have the full backing of the Administration and the Committee. And may I add, that since their implementation, four years ago, these computers have run this entire building without interruption – and have yet to make an error."

"Incredible!"

"Outstanding!"

"Superb!"

"Yes, I thought you'd agree. Take a closer look if you wish. They are the newest and, I believe, the future, of all data processing. Welcome, my friends to the world of neuro-computers."

The group of gray-suits and gray-skirts dispersed around the seven, vertical, transparent holding-tubes containing the seven human-beings. The holding-tubes greatly resembled enormous upside-down test tubes stretching seven feet high.

The unconscious humans encapsulated within the tubes were naked and immersed to the neck in a clear fluid. Various tubes were connected to numerous areas of the body, but the top of the head, from the eyes up, was enveloped in a helmet of wires, circuits, computer chips, and switches. All seven human-beings stood motionless within the holding-tubes as their brains performed the computations required to maintain the secret underground office of the Defense Department.

One of the older men's eyes widened with embarrassment, and he clutched his chest as he observed one of the two naked women among the group of neuro-computers. This one was particularly young and shapely. He fanned himself with some papers and moved on.

The investigating team was both amazed and pleased at the prospect of using the human brain as a computer. And their imaginations raced to conjure up the possibilities of such an invention.

However, one man was visibly outraged.

"Mr. Fritz!" the startled man began. "Am I to understand that these human beings are serving as computers?"

"Of course, Mr. Stevenson. The correlation between the human brain and the computer is an old one, sir. We have merely made that correlation a reality."

"But who ARE these people?"

"These are prisoners of war – from the last war. In some ways – and I hope you will all agree – we have been much more humane to these prisoners than any of our enemies had been to our boys who had been imprisoned."

Mr. Stevenson's uneasiness had not been alleviated. "But they are people! They have minds. They have souls. What you are doing to them is . . . is . . ."

"Is quite lenient," Mr. Fritz angrily replied. He suddenly addressed the others. "Now I know some people did not support that war (his eyes drifted to Mr. Stevenson), but that does not preclude us from taking proper actions against the prisoners. Remember, THEY were the ones who invaded US."

The other men and women were quick to agree and all eyes turned to the lone dissenting voice among them.

But Mr. Fritz had not been assigned this position to provoke dissension among members of the investigating team. He suddenly revealed a warm smile and continued in a more subdued tone. "I know the issue of human rights can come into play here. But I must inform you, Mr. Stevenson, that these prisoners are, for all intent and purposes, not alive. The portions of their brain that produce thought have been removed. And all knowledge they once possessed has been wiped clean, sort of like erasing all the files off a computer. They do not think, they do not dream. They have no wants nor desires. They are totally unconscious of the world around them because they essentially have NO minds. They are not alive, sir. Not in the sense that you and I are alive."

"But how does it work?" one gentleman asked.

"The computer is elementary in conception. Wires run data into the brain where it is processed and transmitted out through other wires. The entire neurological system of the brain has been programmed by our scientists. Computations are performed at a speed unlike man has ever been able to achieve on machines. Their bodily functions are being maintained through those tubes. There are also pumps implanted within their bodies to serve as stabilizers for their bloodflow. This assures a smooth flow of blood through the body and, most importantly, the brain. And of course, the rest is all quite confidential and incredibly technical. I would be lying if I claimed to understand it all."

"And they have NO pain or feeling?" Mr. Stevenson asked skeptically. His misgivings had not diminished.

"None whatsoever."

Mr. Fritz turned away from Mr. Stevenson and addressed the group once again. "Well, if you would all follow me into the Computer Operations room, I will show you the human side to all of this – in a manner of speaking." He smiled again and some of the group chuckled at his remark.

The group began to file out of the room behind Mr. Fritz.

"Think of the potential," one man remarked.

"Coma patients, the terminally ill," a woman commented. "Death row inmates. The list is endless."

"We could save millions on prisons and health care," another man added.

Mr. Stevenson purposefully lagged behind. He drew closer to one of the holding-tubes which enclosed a young man. He examined the tubes leading in and out of the man's naked body and was amazed at the technical brilliance behind such an experiment. But when Mr. Stevenson studied the man's face his greatest fears had suddenly and ominously been realized. Mankind's ingenuity was no longer foremost in his mind; instead, it was man's enduring inhumanity that seized his attention.

From his unseeing eyes, a single tear trickled down the gaunt cheek of the naked, imprisoned man.