



Season 1 Episode 8: Executive Decision

What if the climate catastrophe could be averted, and all that's needed is some sand from the moon? After all governments fail to agree on mining on the moon, a trillionaire entrepreneur makes his move and talks directly to the people of Earth from his lunar location

Episode link: <https://lab.sapienship.co/executive-decision/>

Transcript

Hi Everyone! How's the weather down there? A little warm for this time of year, I guess. No change there, then. Anyhow, I thought it was time to explain to you all what I'm doing up here. I've been reading online, and there seems to be a lot of rumor and confusion and fake news. So it's time to set the record straight.

Yes, I really am on the moon. Really. Look behind me, that's not a green screen. That's not a deep fake. I'm speaking to you live from the lunar surface. Specifically, we're a little north of the Mare Humboldtianum, in case you were wondering. This is where we'd planned to build our first Helium-3 facility. Over there you can see our residential pod, and over here is where our bots are beginning to harvest lunar dust for building construction.

This big guy you see behind me is our 3-d printer. A little bigger than the one in your shed at home, amirite? What it does is mix in binding agents with that lunar dust and then, bit by bit, it prints off our mine so we can get tons more dust. Then the idea is to print some labs and a bigger residential facility. We're also testing the dust for silica content. If it's high enough, we wanted to start running off some solar panels too. After about a year, you'd be able to see us from Earth. The moon would look a little like a diamond ring, and the sparkle on top would be our solar farm.

Now, I know there's been some concerns raised. He's jumped the gun. He's trying to steal the moon. He's a trillionaire getting off the planet before it overheats for good and we get a runaway global warming. All of that kind of stuff. And I understand that, truly I do. Like you, I've been waiting patiently for our governments to take action on the climate crisis. Like you, I've been getting more and more concerned as time went by and nothing seemed to get done. But, trust me, I didn't come up here for the cool climate or the scenery. I'm not running away. I came here to fetch the solution to our problems.

That solution is right here in my hands. See this stuff? Might look like dust. Well, it is dust I suppose, but it's not any ordinary dust. This lunar dust is worth over \$3 billion dollars a tonne to you guys. In fact, its true value is priceless if you think about it. Because this is what will save our planet, and as Ms. Thunberg's been saying for – what? – more than twenty years now? there really is no planet B.

And what have our governments done about it? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. We're up to COP-what is it now? 45? 47? And they're still talking. Talking about mitigation. Talking about disaster relief. Talking about climate migrants. Talking about reversing the great die-off. Meanwhile up and up goes the temperature every year. It's just blah blah blah.

Meanwhile, we're dying. I mean that literally, folks. Tens if not hundreds of millions of deaths every year, and rising, along with the temperature. All these little token gestures aren't working, people. It's no good Europe banning combustion engines while Asia and America are still using coal-powered generators! We all share the same atmosphere. Well, okay, let me clarify. You all share the same atmosphere. Right now, there's not much of an atmosphere here at all.

Let me tell you about Tuvalu. You ever hear of Tuvalu? It's not an alien planet. It used to be a beautiful chain of little islands in the Pacific Ocean. But now Tuvalu is three metres under water. That nation is gone, wiped from the map. That's why you haven't heard of Tuvalu. The Tuvalans made some money from the early internet, selling domains. You know where they are now? In apartment blocks in Auckland, New Zealand.

But we're all Tuvalu now. Just ask the people of Jakarta, or Dhaka, or Alexandria. And you're gonna be next, New York, Amsterdam, Mumbai and Bangkok. Climate change is coming for us all. Doesn't matter where you live or how rich you are. Money won't save you.

Anyhow. Where was I? Oh yeah. Blah blah blah. Lots of hot air, literally and figuratively. So in the end I kind of got fed up about it. Fed up with turning up at meetings where nothing got done. I'm a can-do type of guy, as you know. People said fully immersive haptic VR couldn't be done, but I did it. Now millions of you work and live in the metaverses that I helped to create. Governments didn't do that. The UN didn't do that. Me and my people did that.

It seems to me that there are a lot of really smart people around, and when we put our heads together, we can find solutions to any of our problems. But those people don't usually end up in governments. And, you know, I feel we really owe a lot to all those smart people working in Georgia, and California, and Munich and Moscow and Shenzhen. They've thrown us a lifeline with this nuclear fusion thing, they really have. We have an opportunity to provide all the energy that the planet needs without adding a single carbon molecule to the atmosphere, and we can do it right now. We've had this opportunity for a few years now, actually. All we had to do was come here and get what we needed, which is this dust, right here. Helium-3.

Here's what we need to do. We build our mine, and mine this dust right here. Then we heat it up to 600 degrees to extract the He-3. Then we can use that He-3 to power nuclear fusion plants.

Just a couple of hundred tonnes of dust is enough to provide all of the energy we need. And best of all, it's super clean. No nuclear waste, except for some protons. Now, they're not so easy to store or dispose of. But guess what? We could do that up here! No additional carbon or pollution of any kind for Earth at all. Instead, just good clean energy coming your way via microwave or laser transmission.

I remember watching that video of the first moon landing in 1969. You would think we'd have a moon settlement by now. Well, no. For decades we went backwards, technologically. We were going in reverse.

But we're smart people. We're a smart species. Why have we been stuck in reverse? Governments, that's why. Every time I spoke to governments about building Helium mines on the moon, I got shrugs of the shoulders. I got sighs and shakes of the head. And trust me, I spoke to everyone. I spoke to the Americans, the Chinese, the Russians, the Europeans. I spoke to the UN.

This nation says, oh, we need to have a lunar lottery. We need to allocate lunar resources fairly. Then this other nation says, oh, but what's fair? Should we hand out sections of the moon based on nation size or on population? Should we allocate it to nations or directly to private enterprise? The UN says we all need to agree. But we're never going to all agree.

So I made what you might call an executive decision. It's time to mine the moon now. Yeah, the governments got all

butthurt about that. But they should have gotten on board. They could have, but they didn't. See that little blue marble way over there? That's you guys! And y'all look beautiful from here, believe me. Now, can you see those little fireworks? Kinda difficult, I know. Can we enhance? Thanks, guys. See them now? Those are inter-planetary nuclear missiles heading for the moon.

I wanted to provide us all with clean energy. I wanted to stop the pollution of our atmosphere. Stop the seas rising and the ice caps melting. Stop all the animals dying. Stop the people from dying. But someone didn't want that. One of your governments, I don't know which one. There's what? Nineteen nuclear powers now? Could be any of them. Might be all of them. And in less than 12 hours, we're going to get nuked, basically.

We've uploaded all our plans, all our patents to the internet. We've open-sourced everything. So here's what I want you to do. You need to rise up. Overthrow your leaders. Remove your executives and take back control of the planet. We're dead already, but you – I'm sorry. You still have a chance to live. Take it.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. The protagonist in the story is a tech trillionaire who decided to go to the moon and mine it for Helium-3, against all international agreements. Do you support his decision?
2. Do you think climate action should come from governments or from private organizations? Is there a difference?
3. Some astronomical objects, such as the moon and asteroids, might have economic value. What do you think is the best way to deal with and manage such objects? Should governments make these decisions, or should private companies be allowed to take the initiative?
4. What might happen if we use the moon and other objects in the solar system as resources? Could there be a downside?
5. Some entrepreneurs and government agencies plan on sending people to colonize other planets and solar objects in response to the overpopulation of Earth and climate change. What is your opinion about this? If it were possible, would you ever consider living on another planet?
6. The protagonist in the story blames governments for not acting on climate change. However, research shows that the carbon footprint of the world's richest 1% significantly affects the world's climate. Where do you stand on this? How should we handle this issue?
7. The protagonist is saying that it "doesn't matter where you live or how rich you are. Money won't save you". Do you agree with this statement?
8. Do you think people should be allowed to say things such as: "Rise up and overthrow your leaders", as the protagonist does?
9. What do you think of the ending of the story? Do you think it was just that governments on Earth sent nuclear missiles to the moon? How do you think they should have reacted?