

OPAUDIT 005 — Incoming fediverse activity arrived, passed checks, then vanished

Audit ID	2026-09-07-005
Report date	2026-09-07 (compiled from the incident record)
First observed	Fixed at 0.7.611D “SIGNED RECEIPT” (September 2026).
Theme	You cannot fix what you cannot see.
Surfaces	Inbound fediverse posts, likes, replies and follows arriving from other servers.
State	FIXED — CONFIRMING Every inbound item now leaves a receipt; the fix needs live watching before it goes green.
Watched live?	Not yet named; the instrumentation is in and already surfaced other bugs (see Related).
Reporter	Sean + Claude (Codex second-pass review on the follow-handshake hardening).
Related	OPAUDIT 007, 008, 009 — several of those were only findable after this receipt log existed.
Publication	Public. No content is logged; only dispositions.

1. SUMMARY

The worst bugs on this whole page share one property: they were invisible. Something would arrive from another server, pass its signature check, and then quietly disappear — which reads to a human exactly like “it never arrived.” This incident is the one where we stopped chasing ghosts and made the system tell us what it did with every item.

2. WHAT A HUMAN SAW

A post, like, or reply from a followed account would seem never to arrive — no error, no trace, nothing to distinguish “dropped on our side” from “never sent.” People chased lost posts with no way to tell where they went.

3. ROOT CAUSE

Several separate paths all ended in silence. An item from an account we were not following was silently ignored. A duplicate was silently acknowledged. A reader-insert that failed had its error swallowed. Each of those is a reasonable thing to do — but doing it *silently* meant every one looked identical to a delivery that never happened.

4. EVIDENCE AT DIAGNOSIS

The evidence was the absence itself: verified items acknowledged with a success code, yet no corresponding record and no log line. The only way to prove where they went was to make each path record its own outcome.

5. WHAT WE DID

Every inbound item now leaves a receipt in the interactions log describing exactly what happened to it: “ingested to reader,” “not ingested” with the reason, “ignored: not in accepted following,” “reply routed to ...,” “private message captured” (no content logged), or “replay — already received once, suppressed.” Reader-insert failures now report their cause instead of being discarded. Follow handshakes were also hardened so a stale acknowledgement can no longer flip a newer follow to accepted.

6. VERIFIED LIVE — AND WHAT REMAINS

The receipt log is in and has already earned its keep by making other drops findable. A named live observation of a formerly-silent drop now showing correctly in the log is the step that turns this green.

7. EYEBALL NEXT

Watch a real inbound item that would previously have vanished and confirm its receipt reads correctly — then apply the same “never fail silently” rule to any other path that can still swallow an outcome.

8. THE DOCTRINE THIS INCIDENT CREATED

Instrument before you hunt. A step that drops something silently is indistinguishable from a step that never ran — so make every path say what it did. You cannot fix what you cannot see, and most of the fixes on this page were only possible once the system started talking.