PART ONE

The fear nobody puts on the diagram

What I was actually afraid of when I started advising on AI, and the test I run before a feeling drives a decision.

Three things

01 The fear in AI work is rarely about the technology failing.

02 Unnamed fear behaves exactly like an unlogged risk.

03 Three questions separate real signal from mood.

The fear was not the one I expected

I assumed I would worry about getting a recommendation wrong. Those problems are uncomfortable and familiar, and the method for handling them is well understood.

What actually arrived was quieter. Being the person who is supposed to know, advising on systems that move faster than any one person can honestly track.

Fear behaves like an unlogged risk

A logged risk has a description, an owner, a threshold and a review date. Fear in an AI programme has none of that machinery.

It still shapes decisions. It just does it where nobody is watching.

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recognisable shapes unnamed fear takes

Delay with a defensible reason attached. Over-scoping until a pilot can no longer finish. The sudden mandate after months of silence. Policy padding that describes controls nobody can operate.

Each one gets diagnosed as something else

01 Delay becomes **a resourcing issue**.

02 Over-scoping becomes **poor project discipline**.

03 The sudden mandate becomes **leadership commitment**.

04 Padding becomes **rigour**.

3

questions before a feeling drives a decision

The same questions you would already ask of any claim that arrived in a governance paper.

The three questions

01 **What is the claim?** A mood has no subject and object. A claim can be checked by lunchtime.

02 **What evidence would change it?** If nothing would, it should not be approving spending.

03 **Who else sees it?** Fear that survives a competent person disagreeing is usually signal.

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Accountability is outrunning comprehension. Decide in advance which parts of the work you still do the slow way.

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Write down the three fears moving your AI timeline

Not the risks on the register. The ones actually setting the pace. Run each through the three questions and see which survive.

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