

The Interview Protection Checklist

Defending Against Interview-as-Extraction — Chapter 3 / Script 11

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Multiple interview rounds can become organizational theft disguised as process. This checklist helps you recognize when an interview crosses from evaluation into free consulting, and provides protection protocols at each stage.

PRE-INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT

- Research the organization's AI maturity and current capabilities
- Determine if the role is genuinely funded (ask directly)
- Set a personal limit on rounds/hours of free demonstration

ROUND 1-2: STANDARD EVALUATION

- Present your background and approach (general, not proprietary)
- Show results and outcomes, not full methodology
- Share dashboards or outputs, not architecture
- Answer technical questions at the conceptual level

ROUND 3+: PROTECTION PROTOCOLS

- Scope assessment: Is this still an interview or has it become consulting?
- If presenting to multiple teams, limit scope per session
- Present results without full methodology
- Use the script: "We're moving into territory closer to consulting. Let's align on next steps."

Document what you've shared (protect your IP after the fact)

RED FLAGS

"Can you build a quick prototype/demo for us?" (after round 2)

"We want you to present to the full engineering team" (extraction at scale)

Asking for specific technical solutions to their actual problems

No discussion of compensation, start date, or offer timeline by round 3

"We've decided to do it internally" (after extensive demonstrations)

REMEMBER

Your systems, your architecture, your solutions are proprietary intellectual property—whether or not you have formal IP protection. Protect them the way you'd protect any proprietary system, because that's what they are.