

"The AI did it"
is the sentence
that hides the
architecture.



Dr Peter McCann Strain

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Swipe >>

— THE INCIDENT PATTERN

When a stack of distinct roles collapses into one fluent surface, a team mistakes a pleasant interface for an accountable system.

— THE REFRAME

Stack, not single actor.

THE OLD QUESTION

Is the AI good enough to trust?



THE QUESTION THAT HOLDS UP

Which roles are present, independent, authorised and owned?

— WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

CAD 650.88

Air Canada's website chatbot told a grieving customer he could claim a bereavement fare retroactively. The airline argued the chatbot was "a separate legal entity responsible for its own actions". The tribunal rejected that outright: there is no separate someone, and Air Canada was liable for negligent misrepresentation.

SOURCE

British Columbia Civil Resolution Tribunal, *Moffatt v. Air Canada*, 2024 BCCRT 149, 14 February 2024.

— FAILURE CHAIN

The word "it" breaks procurement, governance and blame.

- 01 Break the **competence** illusion: one capable answer does not prove a capable system.
- 02 Test for **judgement**; fluent context language is not situational grip.
- 03 Distribute **accountability**; blame splits across vendors, deployers, integrators, operators.

— THE ARTIFACT

Run the It Test.

Composition

What is inside the surface?

Verification

Who checks the answer?

Authority

What can it touch?

Containment

Where does it stop?

Ownership

Who answers?

Five questions to run before you sign (composition, verification, authority, containment, ownership) and what does not count as an answer.

— DO THIS AFTER THE NEXT INCIDENT

Run the It Test on one workflow this week. Name composition, verifier-versus-generator, untouchable scope, point-of-no-return behaviour, named owner. Any blank answer is the next thing to design before the next launch.

— FAILURE MODE TO AVOID

Buying the demo and discovering you bought an operations discipline. Procurement chose the front-office surface; verification, containment, evidence and ownership were never specified. Specify the back office in the contract.

— USE THE FULL POSTMORTEM

The Coworker Illusion

Read the full essay – the argument, the sources, the figures and a reader-ready working artifact.

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Next: [E03 – Demo Is Not Deployment](#)

— THE STACK SO FAR

E02 · Essay 2 of 22 complete · Arc I: See the object

YOU JUST ADDED

The It Test

STACK LAYER LIT UP

Checks / Permissions / Named owner

YOU CAN NOW ASK

break the coworker illusion before approving a pilot.

NEXT

E03 asks how a demo differs from a deployment.



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I build production AI systems and write about making agentic AI useful, inspectable, governable and safe enough for real work.

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