FIELD NOTES — BEFORE THE CALL

The Quiet Window

What to do before the layoff — while you still can.

PinkSlipped

Before you start: this is about preparing yourself — your own records, your own network, your own runway. Never company files, proprietary data, or a list you're not entitled to. Taking those can cost you the severance and references you're trying to protect. Prepare quietly. Stay clean.

PART ONE

Do these now. Any worker. Any time.

Not panic moves — the things you'll wish you'd done no matter how the job ends. Do them this month and forget about them.

- ☐ **Save personal copies of your own records.** Offer letter, recent pay stubs, last two reviews, vesting schedule, benefits summary. They set your severance floor — and access gets cut fast.
- ☐ **Get your personal life off the work laptop.** Tax docs, photos, anything personal in a company device or inbox. The day you lose the laptop, you lose everything on it.
- ☐ **Know your runway.** Monthly burn vs. accessible savings. That number — three months, eight, eighteen — is the difference between negotiating and taking the first offer.
- ☐ **Read what you already signed.** Offer letter, severance policy, any non-compete or non-solicit, equity docs. Learn the rules before the game starts.
- ☐ **Map the timing of your money.** Vesting cliffs, bonus payout dates, unpaid commission. Leaving two weeks before a date can be worth real money.
- ☐ **Warm your network now.** The first call shouldn't be to LinkedIn. Reconnect with no agenda — the relationship built under no pressure is the one that holds.
- ☐ **Line up references.** Three people who'd vouch for you without hesitating. Get their personal contact info — not just a company email. Managers leave too.
- ☐ **Refresh your résumé in private.** The document, not the public profile. Current and ready while you still remember what you did this year. You don't have to send it anywhere.

PART TWO

Read the proximity. Then move.

Not every "something's off" is a layoff, and not every layoff gives warning. But signals cluster — and the closer you are, the sharper the move.

The rumors. Months out.

SIGNAL: DISTANT

What it looks like — reorg talk, a hiring freeze, budget cuts heard secondhand, a leadership change, an acquisition or "strategic review," numbers that keep missing. Nothing points at you yet.

- ☐ **Do every Part One move now** — while there's zero urgency and zero suspicion.
- ☐ **Build runway** — trim what you can, bank what you can.
- ☐ **Keep skills current and your work visible.**
- ☐ **Reconnect with two or three people a month** — no agenda.

It's real. Weeks out.

SIGNAL: CLOSING IN

What it looks like — projects deprioritized or handed off, you're left out of planning, 1:1s go vague, consultants running an "org review," peers leaving — some you didn't expect.

- ☐ **Get your records today** — not this weekend.
- ☐ **Finalize the résumé;** tailor a version for the one or two roles you'd actually want.
- ☐ **Make network conversations specific** — "I'm starting to look. Who should I talk to?"
- ☐ **Confirm references** and tell them it may be soon.
- ☐ **Use the healthcare you have** — appointments, prescriptions, anything you'd rather do while covered.

Imminent. Days out.

SIGNAL: AT THE DOOR

What it looks like — an unexpected meeting with HR on it, a vague "quick sync," a system that quietly stops working, an all-hands suddenly on the calendar. You know.

- ☐ **Download all personal records today.**
- ☐ **Know your severance ask before you walk in.** Most severance is negotiable — almost always.
- ☐ **Don't sign in the room.** "I need time to review this." You're allowed to say it.
- ☐ **Write down what's said** — who, when, the reason given, the numbers. Keep it factual.

You're not starting over. You're starting from experience.

You can't control whether it happens — only whether it finds you ready. When the call comes, **The First 72 Hours Kit** picks up exactly where this one ends.