

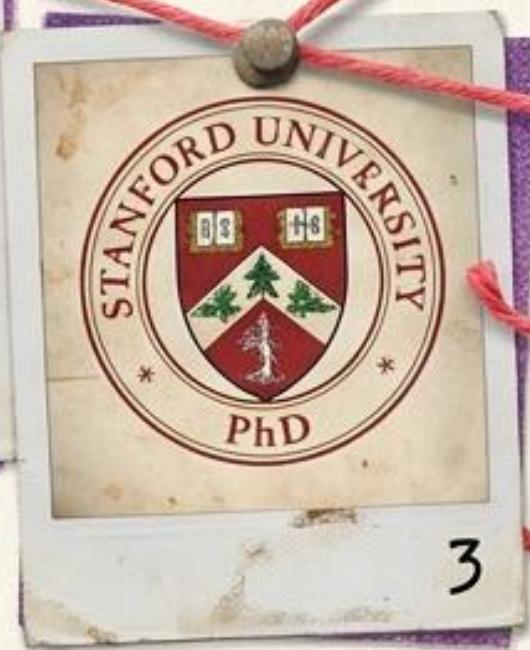


# The Book of Amol: Words of Wisdom & Other Disasters.

A Roast-Ready Dossier of the Most  
Over-Credentialed Troll in NYC Tech.

May 05, 2026

# The Anatomy of a Philosopher-King



The Mind: Queens-born, Stuyvesant debate team captain, Columbia Philosophy/Econ double-major under Sidney Morgenbesser, Stanford PhD in Cognitive Science.

The Hustle: McKinsey Engagement Manager, Virgin Mobile Employee #2, raised > \$500M to rent desks, testified before Ted Stevens on C-SPAN.

Most 22-year-olds wouldn't return a Lazard signing bonus to become a poor Ph.D. student. — Snigdha Sur, The Juggernaut

“Supermarket pain au chocolat. This philosopher is just a machine for turning pain au chocolat into theory.”

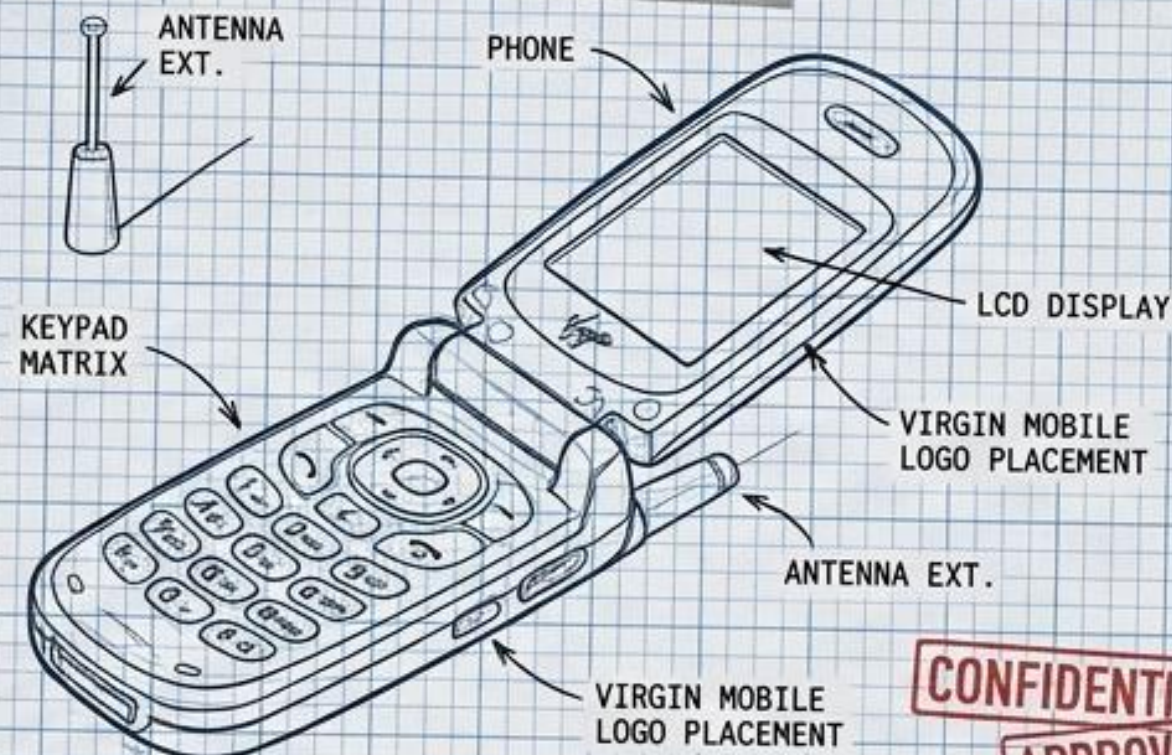
*Drwn France travelogue, Paris 2002-03*

PARIS 2002



OCT 2003

PARIS 2002  
OCT 2002  
PARIS 2002



**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**APPROVED**

While writing his cognitive science dissertation on “The Concept of Modularity” in Paris, Amol was secretly Employee #2 for Virgin Mobile USA.

**IMPACT STAT:**

Most people procrastinate on their thesis by watching TV. Amol procrastinated by helping Richard Branson invent the MVNO and raising \$550M from Sprint PCS.

**“What changes a cook into a chef is a growth mindset and the grit to push through to succeed.”**



**THE FIRST-MOVER FALLACY:**

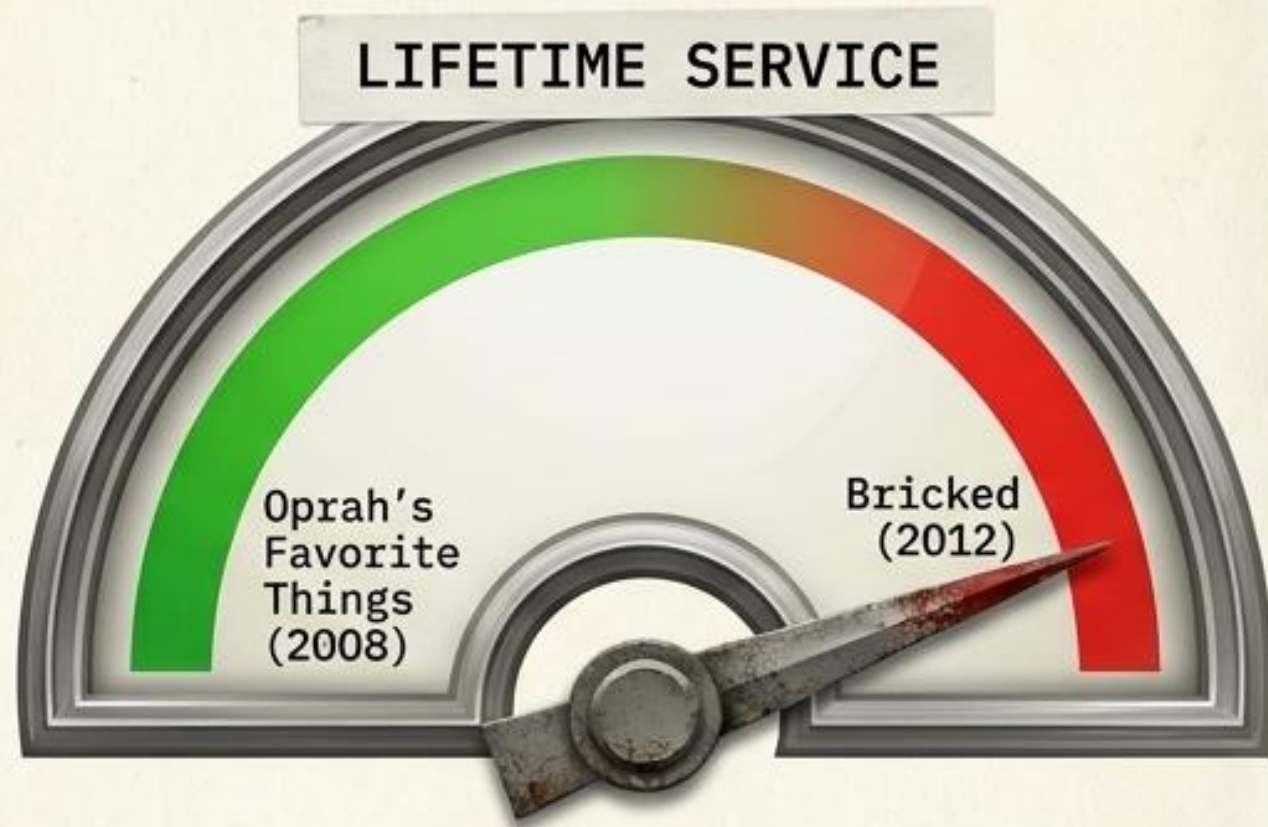
The first startup to the market seldom matters. It's the first startup to reach the right product-market fit that is the long-term winner.

**CONTEXT:**

He proved the 'chef' mindset by founding Peek (the world's first mobile email device) with the Virgin Mobile USA founding team, raising \$25M from Index and RRE.

## The Philosophers Dossier

“Unfortunately, we cannot maintain the network forever for a few users, so that end time has come.”



THE HYPE: 2008 Time Gadget of the Year, Oprah's O Magazine Favorite Things. Sold via Target, SkyMall, and Amazon for \$99.

THE REALITY: Customers paid \$200 for "lifelong service." In January 2012, the devices were bricked. Lifetime, it turns out, is exactly 2.5 years.

SIDE NOTE: TwitterPeek (the spin-off) was named one of Gizmodo's "50 Worst Gadgets of the Decade."

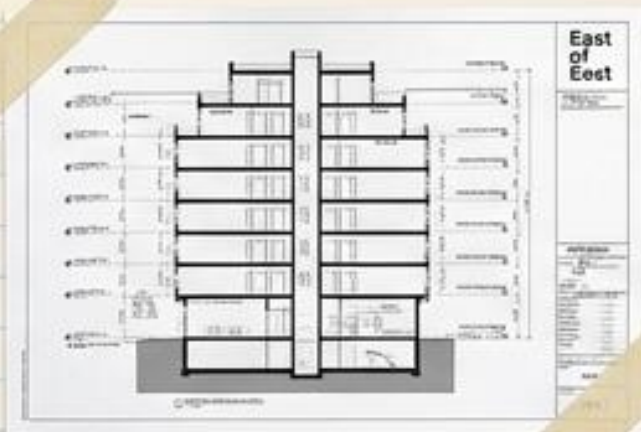
MUSEUM OF FAILURE INDUCTEE

“ Knotel is just office. The hocus pocus gets you to waste lots of money. The folks talking about the best design, the most comfortable couches... it’s ridiculous. ”

**The Doctrine**  
(What he says)

- Champion of straightforward “Headquarters as a service”
- Bespoke offices built in 4 to 6 weeks
- Strict anti-five-year-lease advocate

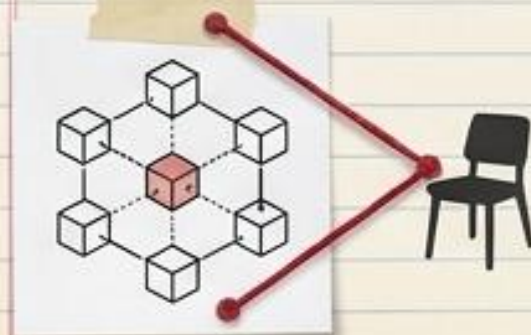
**The Deliverables**  
(What he actually does)



Built East of East, a custom 9-story, 13-loft luxury building in Long Island City from the ground up just for fun.

Exhibit C

Exhibit C



Attempted a Knotel blockchain pivot in 2018 called “Baya” with a furniture subscription called Geometry.

Fact Check:  
**FAILED**

22/  
Conf

Confidential 07/119

# The Philosophers Dossier

“There are only so many freelancers with headphones on that need a desk in a coworking space.”



Knotel's Pitch: Enterprise-grade, customized HQ for mid-size companies. Raised \$560M to capture the grown-up market.



The Target (WeWork):  
“The bros hanging out doing keg stands at WeWork.”

THE WAR CRY: Amol likened Knotel vs. WeWork to Amazon overtaking eBay, or Facebook killing Myspace.



# The Philosophers Dossier

We've been waiting for the music to be over.  
And now the music is **OVER**, and it's time to dance.

@WeWork layoffs. Sorry folks. We didn't mean to.  
Meanwhile, @Knotel is hiring. Text me.

+1-530-727-8277.

## THE FALLOUT:

Featured prominently in The Cult of We as Exhibit A in the "do not grave-dance, you might be next" cohort.

# THE GRAVITY OF A UNICORN

*“We will be bigger than them in the next 15 months. / Knotel sprawls across virtually every block in every city.”*

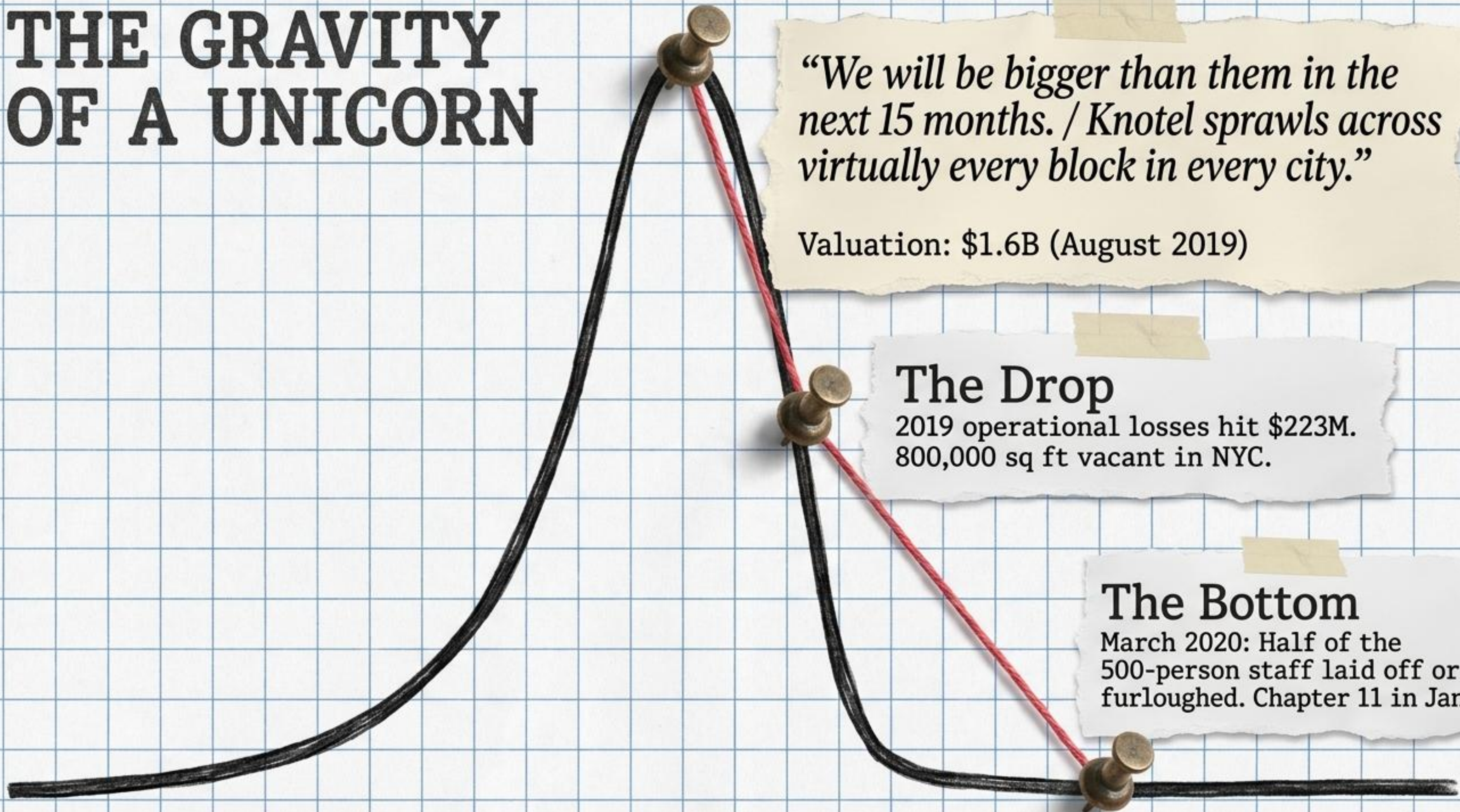
Valuation: \$1.6B (August 2019)

## The Drop

2019 operational losses hit \$223M.  
800,000 sq ft vacant in NYC.

## The Bottom

March 2020: Half of the 500-person staff laid off or furloughed. Chapter 11 in Jan.



**“It was just consummate Wall Street-type [stuff]. It was a disaster.”**



**Dec 2020:** Triple Point Capital sells Knotel's debt to Cantor Fitzgerald/Newmark chairman.

Dec 2020



confidential

**The Ultimatum:** Accept \$20M DIP financing, bankrupt yourself, and let Newmark buy it for \$70M in a stalking-horse bid.

wework

**“They have literally hired a group of Adam Neumann]-era WeWork bros to lead the company forward. (Newmark installed former WeWork vice chairman Michael Gross as Knotel CEO).”**

EXHIBIT C

## CRAIN'S NY BUSINESS

“It’s a dog eat dog world. But you can choose how you want to behave in life.”

“Knotel is in someone else’s control today because of that bad decision by me.”

CONTEXT NOTE: A rare moment of total ownership from a founder, completely dropping the bravado to acknowledge the \$1.6B failure as a personal strategic error.

**Burning Man  
is the kindest  
place on Earth.**



**THE ANNUAL MEMO**

Every year, he sends a "what did you learn?" email to a 5,000-person network.



**THE DIETARY PHILOSOPHY:**

The two best things I ever ate were this year in Japan: a tomato with salt and a raw egg (stirred).

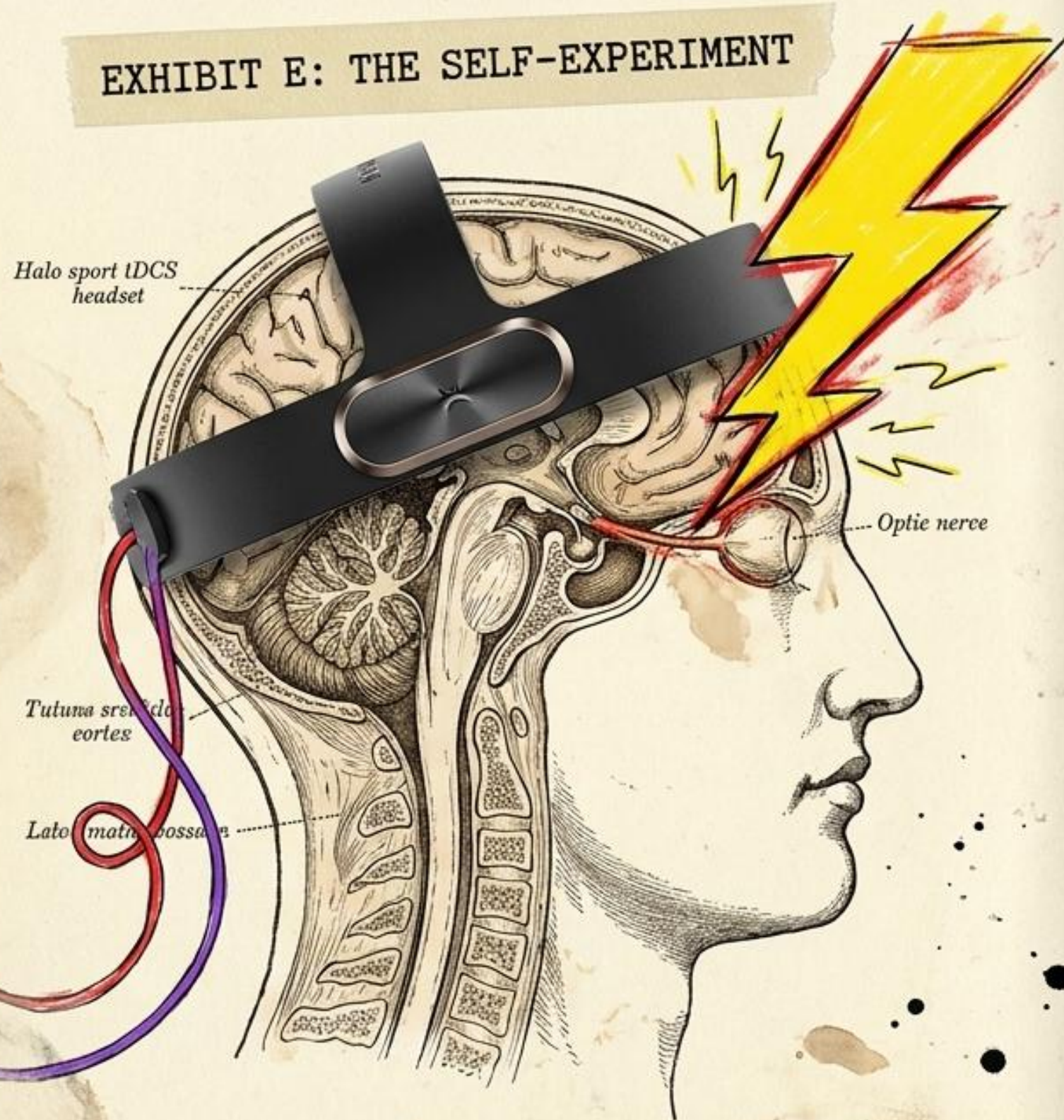
**THE COAT QUOTE:**

Known for his eccentric persona, Sarva appeared on Bloomberg TV in a shimmering purple coat covered in dragons.

— *The Real Deal*

# THE PHILOSOPHERS DOSSIER

## EXHIBIT E: THE SELF-EXPERIMENT



OCT 2016 - JUN 2021

*"I turned it on and there was this bright flash and then I was basically blind."*

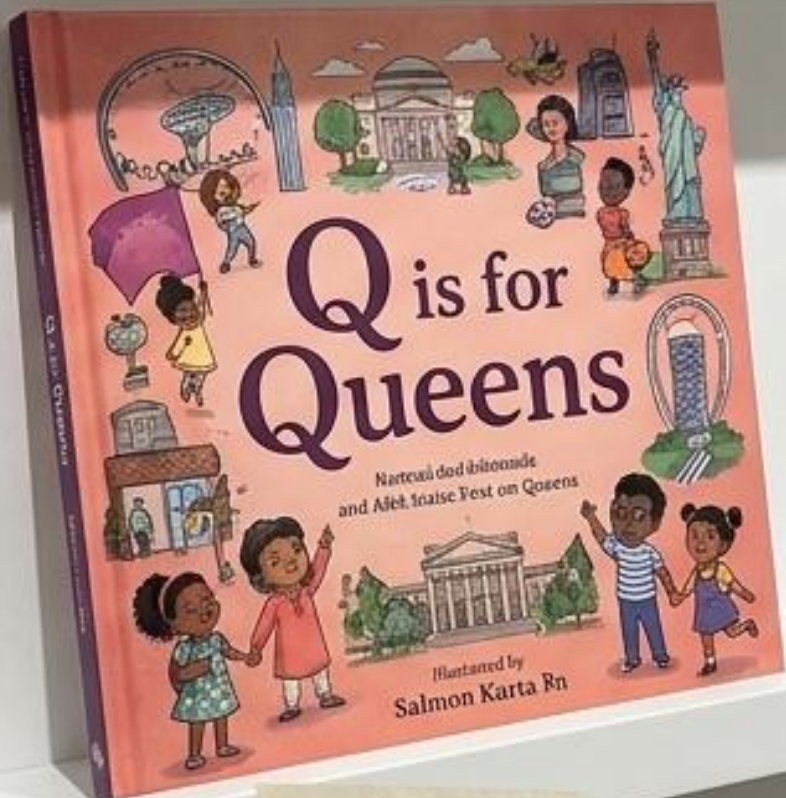
OCT 2016 - JUN 2021

THE SIDE QUEST: Raised the first \$1M and recruited the team for Halo Neuroscience (neuropriming the motor cortex for athletes/military).

OCT 2016 - JUN 2021

THE SACRIFICE: He literally electrocuted his own optic nerve during testing, went temporarily blind, and still kept developing the product until its acquisition by Flow Neuroscience.

"My mother would love it."  
(His response to wearing a mom-selected Salmon Kurta to a press interview)



**THE KICKSTARTED AUTHOR:**  
Raised \$14k from 240 backers to write an ABC book about Queens for his two daughters. (A is for Arthur Ashe, M is for Mets). It is now in the MoMA gift shop.

# PHILOSOPHY FOR KINDERGARTNERS

## SYLLABUS

- Svadenity: Academics Counzn**
- Neiloaphorically—Nrew teaches Beginner Philosophy
  - Culture-oorers sedpsrating trismics
  - Senieancy programs to sitzranining serites, and standing entere etivities
- Graduatoy: Euostation**
- "Startup history at Columbia University
- Tocicar: Saedeteal's Ekseimeny**
- Philosophy Incaurastellon

**THE EDUCATOR:**  
Not metaphorically—he literally teaches Beginner Philosophy to four-to-six-year-olds at The Queens Paideia School, and startup history at Columbia University.

# THE PHILOSOPHERS DOSSIER

OCT 2016 - JUN 2021

High Intellect/PhD

Virgin Mobile USA architect,  
Pain au chocolat theory,  
LifeX Longevity VC.

Philosophy for Kindergartners,  
Optic-Nerve Zapping,  
MoMA permanent collection.

Visionary

Eccentric

Enterprise Headquarters as  
a Service, \$1.6B valuation,  
C-SPAN FCC testimony.

School bus stunts,  
Grave-dancing tweets,  
Dragon coats on Bloomberg TV.

Street-Fighter/Troll

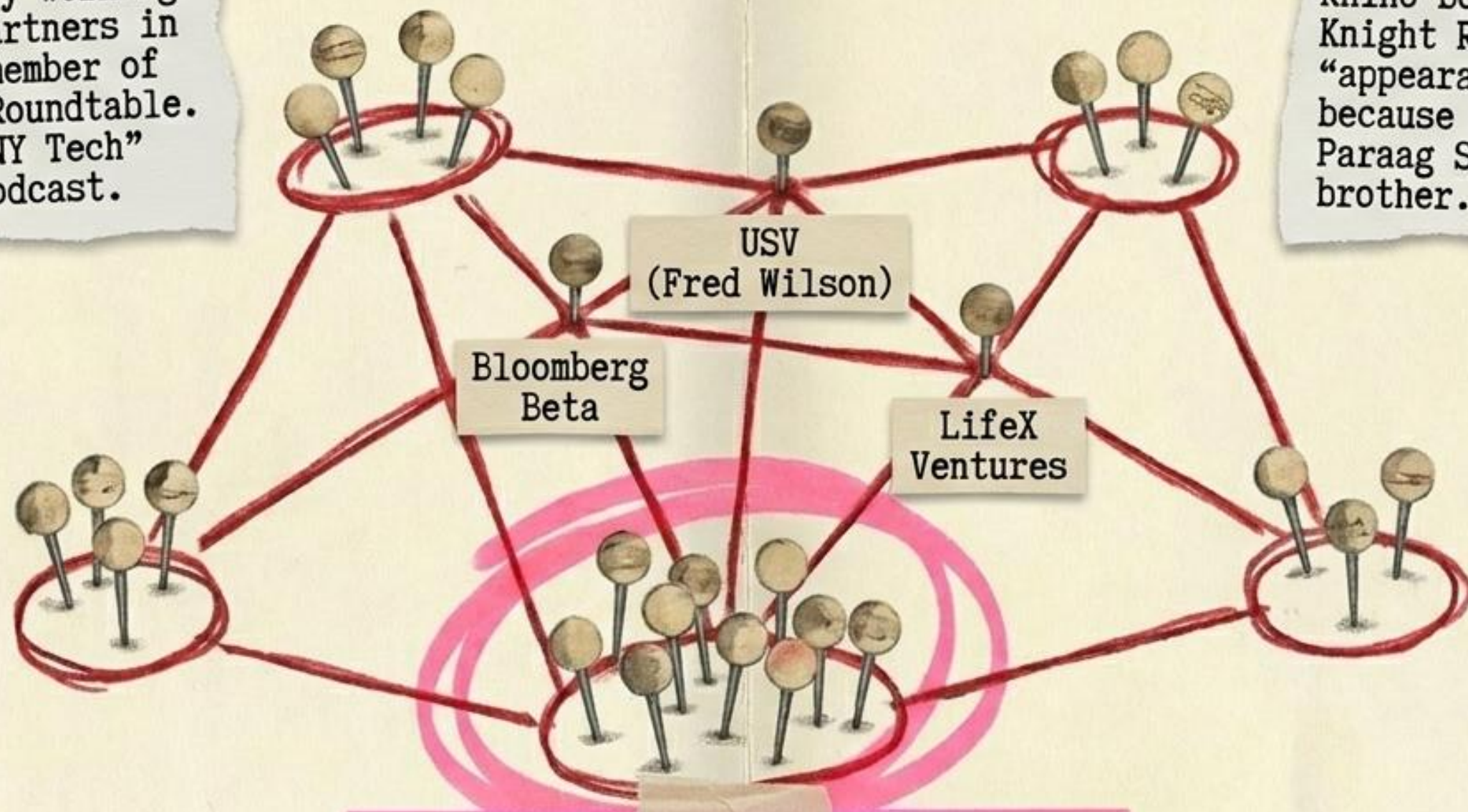
**TAKEAWAY POINT:** He is exactly the same person in every quadrant:  
an elite Queens debate champion arguing his worldview into existence.

OCT 2016 - JUN 2021

# Four Sarvas Walk Into a Cap Table

**THE ECOSYSTEM:**  
Pre-dates USV by working for Flatiron Partners in '98. Original member of NYC Founders' Roundtable. Hosts the "OG NY Tech" oral history podcast.

**THE SIBLING OVERLAP:**  
Rhino bonds backed by Knight RE collapsed due to "appearance of impropriety" because Rhino's CEO is Paraag Sarva, Amol's brother.



**THE FAMILY FUND:** Operates the "Sarva, Sarva, Sarva & Sarva" angel portfolio (50-100+ investments).

EXHIBIT H

DATE 2...  
FILE NO...

08 07 99

EXHIBIT I

“The Knotel alumni will spawn a number of intriguing companies, and I am among them now.”



@amol  
(Joined Dec 2006)



LifeX Ventures  
(\$100M longevity fund)

**THE RESURRECTION:**


You can bankrupt his unicorn, let his rivals buy his debt, and put his gadgets in the Museum of Failure. But he will simply pivot to teaching brain cells to play Doom via a \$100M Longevity fund.

The ultimate NYC tech survivor. Respawning daily.



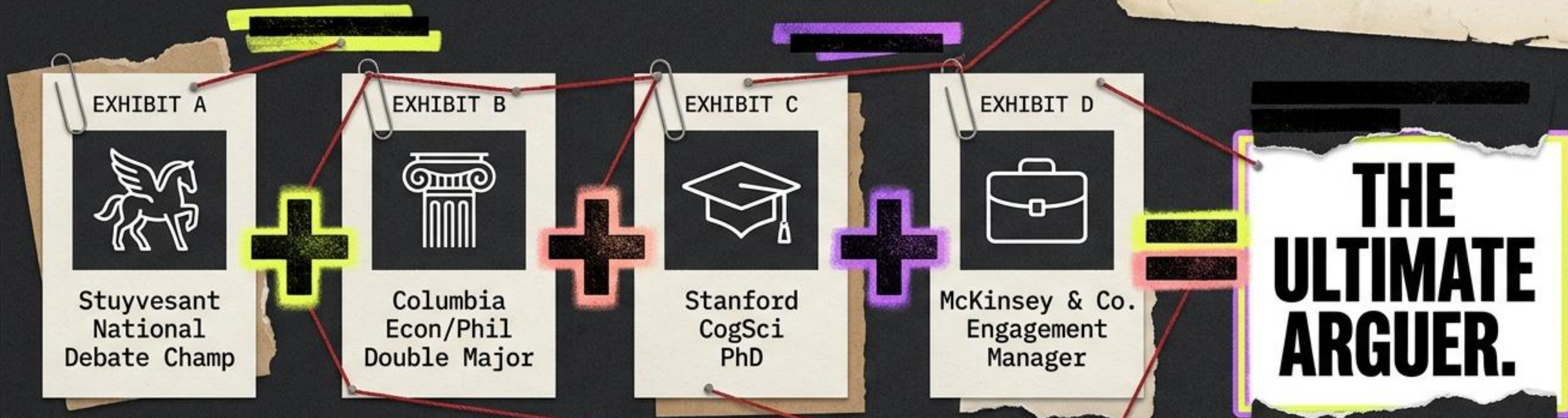
**THE AMOL SARVA DOSSIER**  
A Roast-Ready Research Report & Scrapbook.

Subject: @amol (Joined December 2006)  
Known Aliases: Peekster-in-Chief,  
The Kindergarten Philosopher.  
Date: May 05, 2026.  
Status: Under Investigation.



# THE ANOMALY OF AMOL SARVA

Statistically the most over-credentialed person you know.

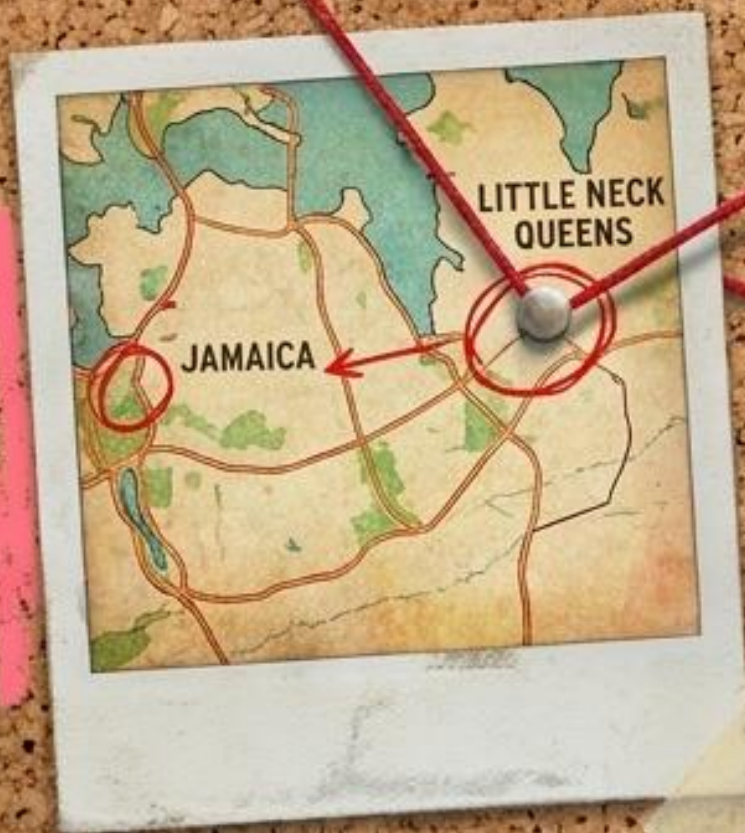


“This philosopher is just a machine for turning supermarket pain au chocolat into theory.”

— Amol, Paris (2002)

# THE LIC ERA

Born and raised in Queens.  
Built the neighborhood blog [LICNYC.com](http://LICNYC.com) (10,000+ monthly visitors). Published a Kicks-starter children's book *Q is for Queens* (now sold at MoMA).



# THE ORIGIN STORY (AND THE WARDROBE)

Excerpt from *The Juggernaut*:  
He showed up wearing a salmon kurta with a blue vest... and assured me that he wasn't wearing the outfit for my benefit. His mother had given him the clothes.

EXHIBIT B

HE HAS A STANFORD PHD, BUT HIS MOM  
STILL PICKS OUT HIS CLOTHES.

# The Procrastinator's Guide to Building Unicorns

EXHIBIT E

1998

Accepts Lazard banking job.  
Returns signing bonus to be a poor PhD student.

2003

Completes Stanford Dissertation: The Concept of Modularity in Cognitive Science (Advisor: Mark Crimmins).

EXHIBIT F

Most people procrastinate on their dissertation by watching TV. Amol procrastinated by helping Richard Branson invent the MVNO.

EXHIBIT G

2000

Becomes Employee #2 at Virgin Mobile USA.

EXHIBIT H

Result: Helps raise \$550M, negotiates Sprint JV, company IPOs at ~\$1B valuation.

# The Museum of Failure: Peek (2007–2012)

The world's first mobile device dedicated to email.  
Raised \$25M from RRE, Index, Bharti SoftBank.

**EXHIBIT C**

Press Release Title:  
Peekster-in-Chief  
Amol Sarva.

## *The Hype*

Time Magazine  
Gadget of the Year.

Wired #1 Gadget.

Oprah's O Magazine  
Favorite Things.



## **The Reality**

~~Gizmodo's 50 Worst  
Gadgets of the Decade.~~

~~CNN's Top 10 Biggest  
Tech Failures of  
2009.~~

In 2012, users who paid \$200 for lifelong service had their devices suddenly bricked. Lifetime, it turns out, is approximately 2.5 years.

# Side Quest I: Accidentally Building a Skyscraper

Project: East of East  
(13-14 Jackson Avenue, LIC)

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Height: 9 stories

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Units: 13 custom lofts

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Scale: 20,000 square feet

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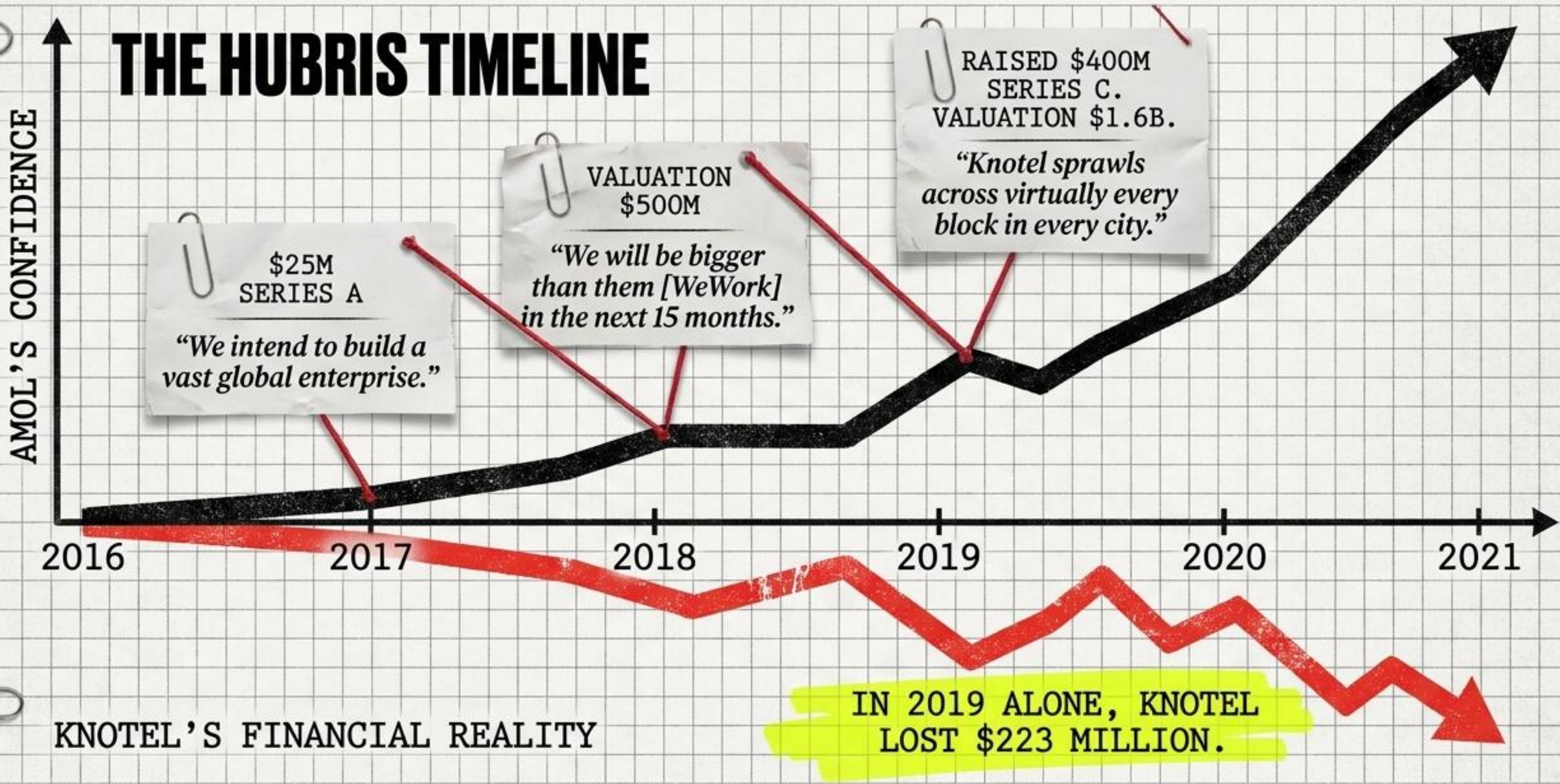
Status: Built entirely from the ground up

*“The most important new building in the borough.  
— New York Daily News”*

**He literally built a 9-story building for fun. Most of us are still figuring out IKEA shelves.**

# THE HEADQUARTERS-AS-A-SERVICE ERA (2016-2021)

## THE HUBRIS TIMELINE



# THE BATTLE FOR COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

## **KNOTEL (AMOL)**

## **WEWORK (ADAM)**

THE FOUNDER  
VIBE

Stanford PhD,  
Shimmering  
Dragon Coat.

Barefoot,  
Tequila.

THE CORE  
STRATEGY

Headquarters as a  
service for enterprises.  
Anti-Hocus Pocus.

Freelancers,  
Kombucha,  
Community.

THE TARGET  
AUDIENCE

There are only so  
many freelancers with  
headphones on.

Elevating the world's  
consciousness.

EVIDENCE

## **THE ULTIMATE POST-MORTEM**

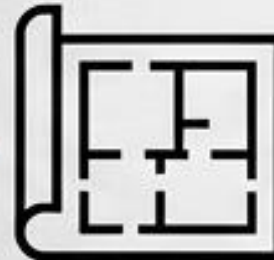
**BOTH OUSTED. BUT LITERAL WEWORK EXECUTIVES WERE  
INSTALLED TO RUN KNOTEL AFTER BANKRUPTCY.**

# AN IMPROVISED KEYSTONE COPS SPYING OPERATION



## STEP 1: THE INFILTRATION

WeWork sends two employees using fake names, posing as a 6-person startup.



## STEP 2: THE TOUR

The spies infiltrate 7 different Knotel secure locations to pilfer proprietary information.



## STEP 4: THE RETALIATION

Amol files a cease-and-desist. WeWork counters by offering Knotel customers a year of free rent to break leases. (Only one 4-person team switched).



## STEP 3: THE UNRAVELING

A Knotel employee recognizes one of the spies as a friend-of-a-friend.

EXHIBIT  
A

EXHIBIT  
A

EXHIBIT  
B

Exhibit D:  
The Bus Stunt  
(Sept 2017)

Parked directly outside  
WeWork's HQ at 115  
West 18th Street.

Slogan: Graduate from  
Co-Working.

The Target: The bros  
hanging out doing keg  
stands at WeWork.

**In March 2019, Amol tweeted: "@WeWork layoffs. Sorry folks. We didn't mean to. Meanwhile, @Knotel is hiring. Text me." He then published his actual cell phone number to the entire internet.**

# THE GRAVE-DANCE AND THE FALL

## THE GRAVE-DANCE

Sept 2019 - WeWork IPO implodes.

**“We’ve been waiting for the music to be over. And now the music is over, and it’s time to dance.” – Amol**

(Note: He was literally named in *The Cult of We* as Exhibit A for why you shouldn’t grave-dance).

FINANCIAL TIMES

## THE FALL

Jan 2021 - The Newmark Ambush.

1. Knotel has 800k sq ft vacant.  
[REDACTED]
2. Triple Point Capital sells Knotel’s debt to Newmark (a former investor).  
[REDACTED]
3. Amol is forced to accept \$20M DIP financing, bankrupt the company, and let Newmark buy it out from under him.  
[REDACTED]

EXHIBIT C

EXHIBIT D

The Friday-Night Farewell (April 2, 2021)

The Leaked Email Excerpt

[REDACTED]

“Newmark was a stalking horse on a process that used bankruptcy to take control of Knotel... Only to confirm that judgment, they have literally hired a group of Adam Neuman-[n]-era WeWork bros to lead the company forward.”

### The Post-Mortem Quotes (Crain's NY):

**Knotel is in someone else's control today because of that bad decision by me.”**

**“It was just consummate Wall Street-type (stuff). It was a disaster.”**

**“It's a dog eat dog world. But you can choose how you want to behave in life.”**



# THE UNBREAKABLE CYCLE OF COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

EXHIBIT E

Immediately launch Aikito, a turnkey commercial real estate company.

EXHIBIT A

Build a 9-story loft in Queens just for fun.

EVIDENCE

**THE MAN CANNOT QUIT REAL ESTATE.**

EXHIBIT B

Start Knotel. Expand to 800,000 square feet. Reach \$1.6B valuation.

EXHIBIT B

EXHIBIT D

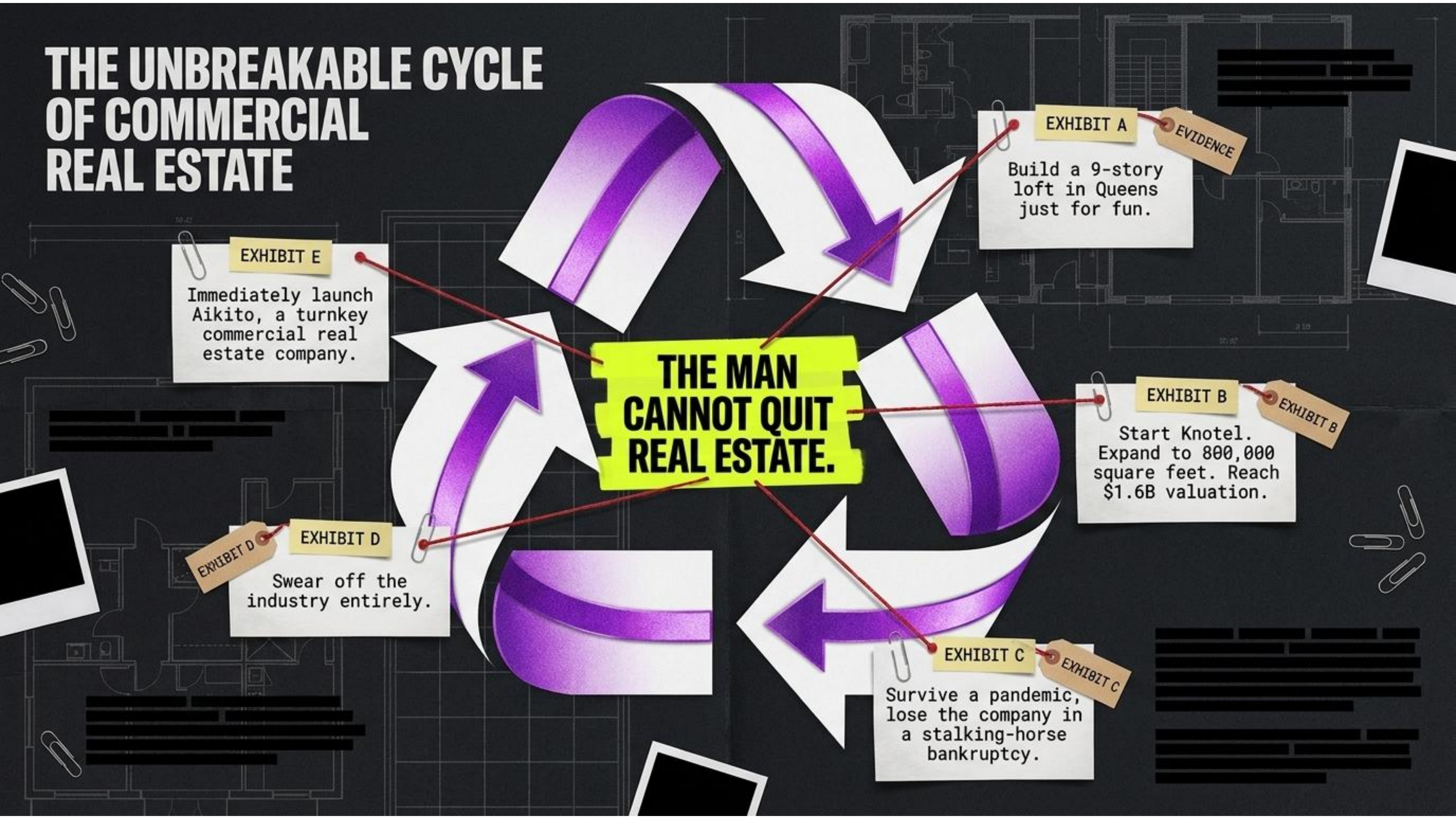
Swear off the industry entirely.

EXHIBIT D

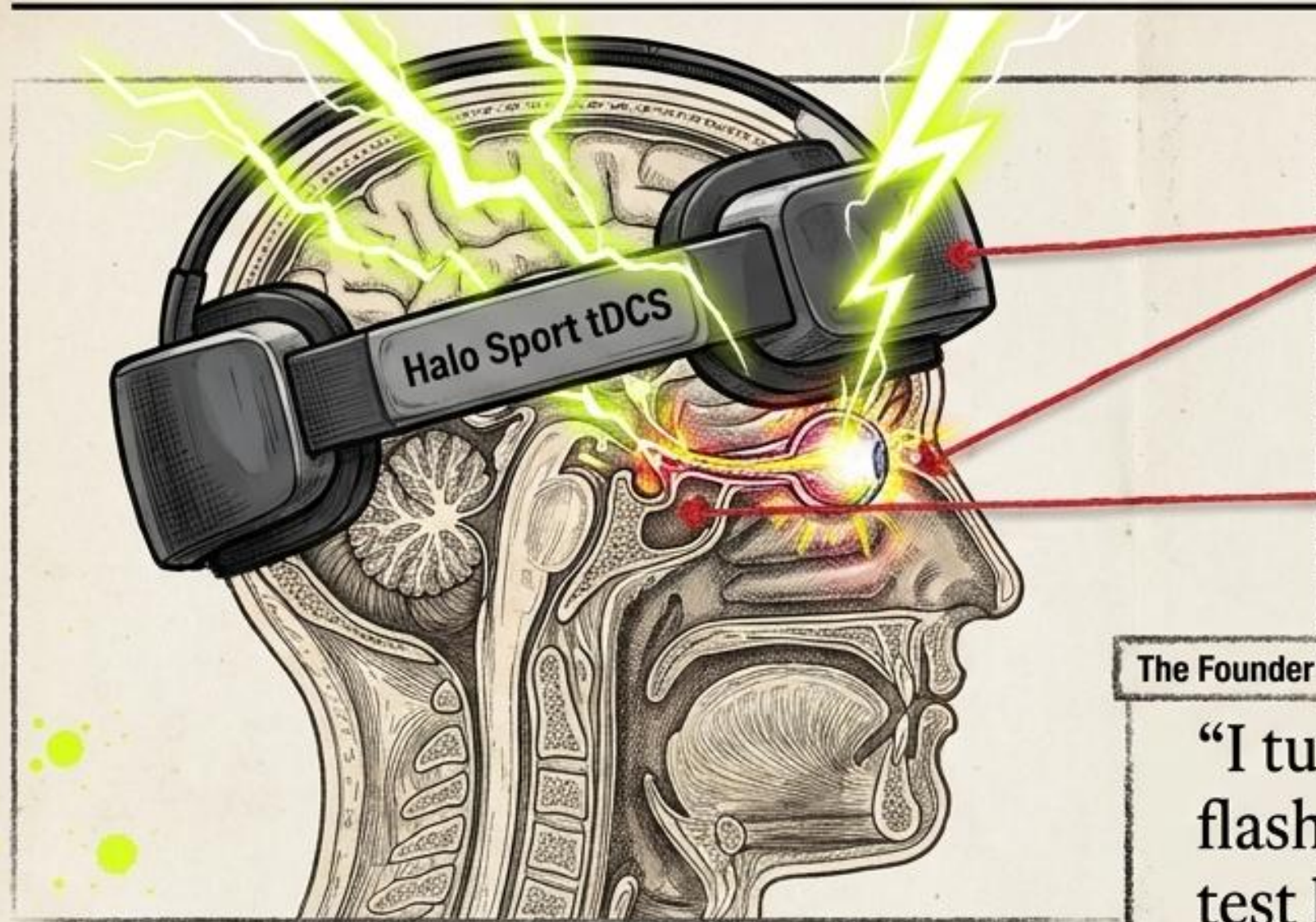
EXHIBIT C

Survive a pandemic, lose the company in a stalking-horse bankruptcy.

EXHIBIT C



# Side Quest 2: Electrocuting the Optic Nerve



## Clinical Notes

**The Company:** Halo Neuroscience (Raised \$13M Series B). Customers included Navy SEALs and the US Ski Team.

**The Tech:** A headset that neuroprimes the brain to accelerate learning.

## The Founder Testing Phase

“I turned it on and there was this bright flash and then I was basically blind. The test had sent a direct blast into his optic nerve.”

**He literally blinded himself in service of co-founding a startup.**

# SIDE QUEST 3: THE EDUCATIONAL EXTREMES

## COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

- Adjunct faculty since 2016.
- Teaches the advanced undergrad course: Making History through Startups.
- Founder of Columbia's invite-only venture studio.

EXHIBIT  
F

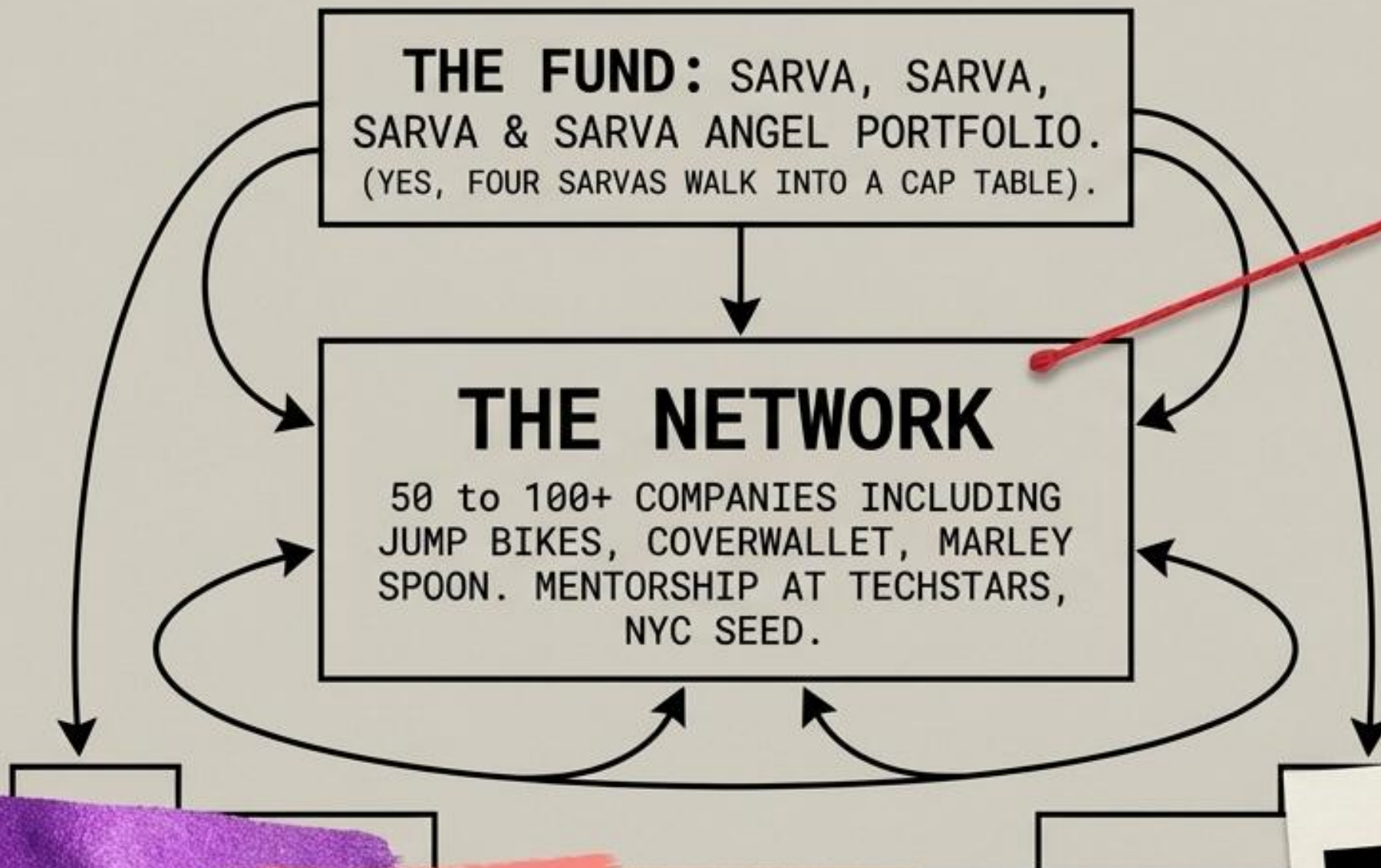
EXHIBIT  
C

## THE QUEENS PAIDEIA SCHOOL

TAUGHT BEGINNER  
PHILOSOPHY TO  
FOUR-TO-SIX-  
YEAR-OLDS.

**ARGUING WITH A ROOM FULL OF IVY LEAGUE FOUNDERS  
IS EXACTLY THE SAME SKILLSET AS DEBATING  
ONTOLOGY WITH A KINDERGARTNER.**

# THE FAMILY CAP TABLE



## THE IMPROPRIETY LOOPHOLE

*His brother Paraag runs Rhino. Rhino issued surety bonds on Knotel leases. Knight RE refused future bonds due to the appearance of impropriety.*

# Pearls of Wisdom (The Annual Colleague Memos)

*“Burning Man  
is the kindest  
place on Earth.”*

“It turns out it’s  
hard to travel  
and speak loud  
enough for the  
other guy to hear  
you. (His actual  
apology to Commer  
Observer for for  
being late). [REDACTED]”

**“THE TWO BEST THINGS I  
EVER ATE WERE THIS YEAR IN  
JAPAN: A TOMATALT AND A  
RAW EGG (STIRRED).”**

CONTEXT NOTE: THIS WAS  
SENT IN A REAL BUSINESS  
EMAIL TO A 5,000-PERSON  
PROFESSIONAL NETWORK.

It  
turns out it's my  
hard to be travel in  
how, loud to the speed

DATE: 01/16/22

# The Eccentricity Bingo Card

Shimmering Dragon Coat on Bloomberg TV	<del>Photograph in the MoMA Permanent Collection</del>	Testifies before the Internet is a series of tubes Senator
First-name-only Twitter handle (@amol)	FREE SPACE Raw Egg (Stirred)	<del>Returns Lazard signing bonus</del>
Parks school bus at rival HQ	Starts a podcast about OG NY Tech	Acquires a real estate search engine to pivot to blockchain (Baya)

EXHIBIT E:  
ECCENTRICITIES

## The Rebirth: LifeX Ventures (2022–Present)

Cortical Labs is  
literally teaching  
brain cells to play  
the video game  
Doom.

**The Pivot:** From renting office desks to investing in longevity for people and planet.

**The Fund:** \$100M longevity-focused fund co-founded with Inaki Berenguer.

**The Portfolio:** Cromatic, Haven Energy, Ketryx, and Cortical Labs.

**Summary:** A highly logical pivot for a man who has already [REDACTED] lived nine [REDACTED] corporate lives.

EXHIBIT F:  
THE PIVOT

EXHIBIT C:  
EXT EXIVOT

# The Unified Theory of Amol Sarva

**The Debater's Arguer Energy**

(Stuyvesant Champ, Fighting WeWork).

**The Philosopher's Contrarianism**

(Stanford PhD, Teaching 4-year-olds).

A founder who views the world entirely as an argument to be won, a thesis to be proven, and a space to be built.

**The McKinsey Audacity**

(Building lofts, Electrocuting his own optic nerve)

EXHIBIT A:

*My mother would love it.*  
— Amol Sarva



@amol  
since  
Dec 2006

# A Mausoleum of Pivots

The **Amol Sarva Dossier**: A Graveyard Tour  
of Billion-Dollar Hubris, **Bricked Gadgets**,  
and the Quest to Defeat Death

TECH BUBBLE BURSTS

STARTUP FAILURE RATE

STARTUP FAILURE RATE

MSSTUP S  
BRINRE  
SOTYEBTRADOB 18

# The Academic Ancestry

Here Lies the  
Lazard Signing Bonus.

Sacrificed in 1998  
to become a poor  
PhD student.

Gone but not spent.

## Stuyvesant High School

City, state, and national  
champion in debate. (He was  
a national-champion arguer.  
This explains everything).

## Columbia ('98CC)

Double major in Econ (under  
Sidney Morgenbesser) &  
Philosophy (under Akeel  
Bilgrami).

## Stanford (2003)

Dissertation:  
"The Concept of Modularity  
in Cognitive Science."  
Advisor: Mark Crimmins.

**RETURNED**

# The Crypt of Broken Gadgets

Here Lies  
TwitterPeek  
(2009).

Named one of  
"50 Worst Gadgets  
Gadgets of the Decade."

It tweeted so we could sleep.

PRESS RELEASE

NEWS

**Peekster-in-Chief  
Amol Sarva**

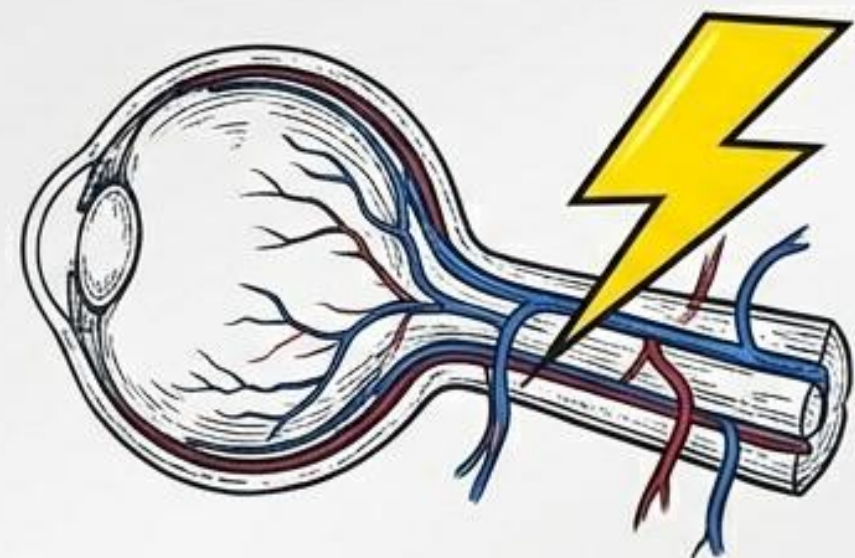


Raised over \$25M from RRE,  
Index, and Bharti SoftBank to  
build the world's first mobile  
device dedicated to email.

# The Pursuit of 'Neuropriming'

Here Lies  
Amol's Vision.

He literally  
electrocuted his  
own optic nerve  
so we could  
jump higher.



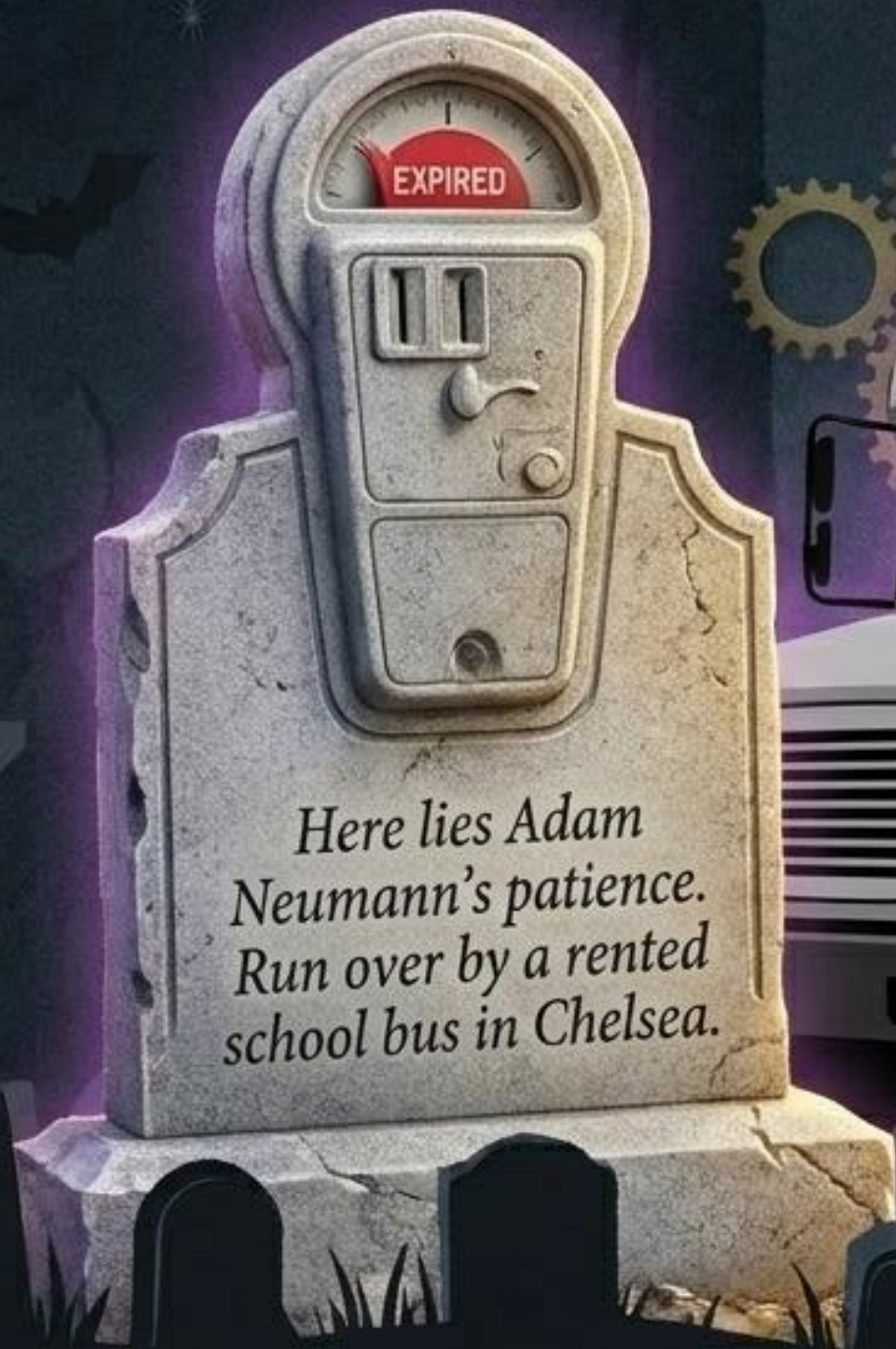
## The Startup

Halo Neuroscience (2012). Raised ~\$10M (Andreessen Horowitz, Lux) to build a tDCS brain-zapping headset for athletic learning. Used by Navy SEALs and the SF Giants. Acquired by Flow Neuroscience in 2021.

## The Founder's Sacrifice

"I turned it on and there was this bright flash and then I was basically blind. The test had sent a direct blast into his optic nerve. (It cleared up after a few minutes)."

# The WeWork Wars: Part I



*Here lies Adam  
Neumann's patience.  
Run over by a rented  
school bus in Chelsea.*



115 West 18th Street

Graduate from Co-Working

## The Stunt (Sept 2017)

Sarva parked buses outside WeWork HQ to troll them.

## The Quote

The message was directed at "the bros hanging out doing keg stands at WeWork."

# The Side-Quest Memorial Garden (Part I)

Here lies conventional hobbies.

B is for building a 9-story loft.  
Q is for Queens.



## The Real Estate Relapse

**East of East (2012):** Built a 13-loft, 20,000-sq-ft building in Long Island City from the ground up. Called "the most important new building in the borough."

**LICNYC.com:** Ran a neighborhood blog for 16 years. The OG LIC influencer.

**Aikito (2021):** Started another turnkey commercial real estate venture studio. The man cannot quit real estate.