


# The Intelligence Curse: A 2026 Scorecard

One year later, auditing the economic reality of AI.

# THE 2024 HYPOTHESIS

## DRAGO: THE RESOURCE CURSE

Intelligence becomes purchasable. Incentives to invest in human capital disappear.

## LAINE: PERMANENT LOCK-IN

Whatever wealth distribution exists at the moment of AGI gets permanently locked in.

## THE CONSENSUS PREDICTION

Superhuman capability is bought directly. The ladder pulls up. Outlier success dies. Humans become economically irrelevant.

# THE DEFINING METRIC: THEORETICAL VS. ACTUAL

MARCH 5, 2026

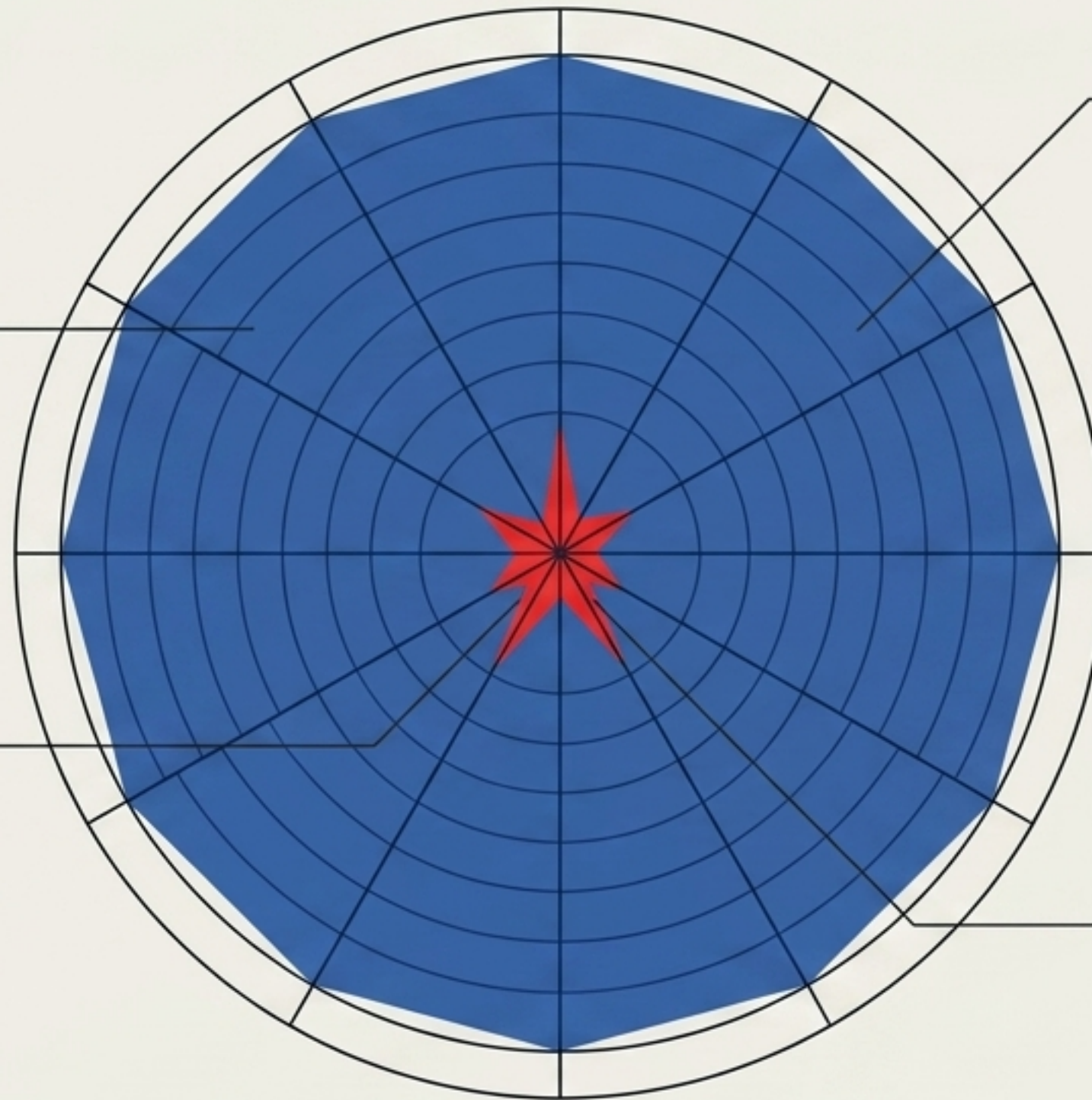
ANTHROPIC'S LABOR MARKET  
IMPACT ANALYSIS PUBLISHED.

THE BLUE ZONE:  
THEORETICAL EXPOSURE

Enormous across all knowledge  
work: computing, finance,  
management, legal.

THE RED ZONE:  
ACTUAL ADOPTION

Barely registers by comparison.



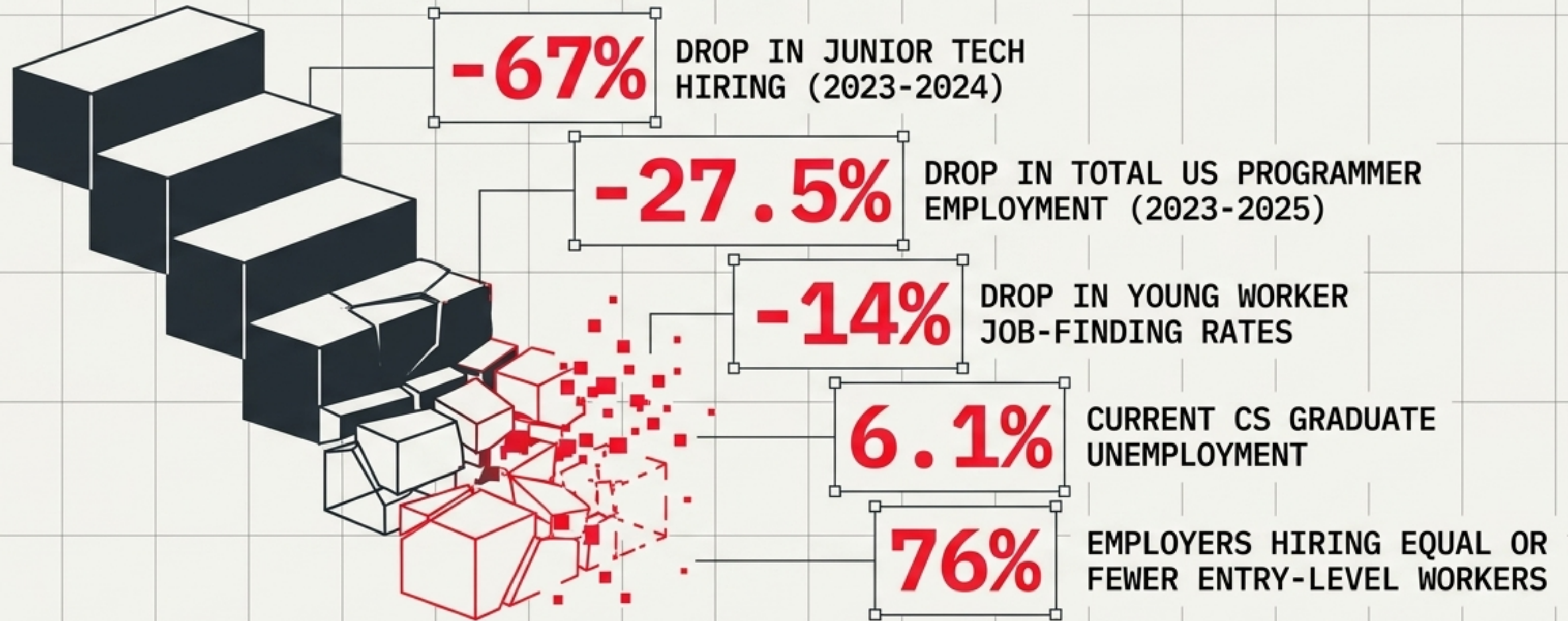
THEORETICAL EXPOSURE

ACTUAL ADOPTION

**CORE INSIGHT:** THIS GAP BETWEEN THE MASSIVE BLUE SHAPE AND THE TINY RED SLIVER IS THE ENTIRE STORY OF THE 2026 LABOR MARKET.

# VALIDATED: THE ENTRY-LEVEL COLLAPSE

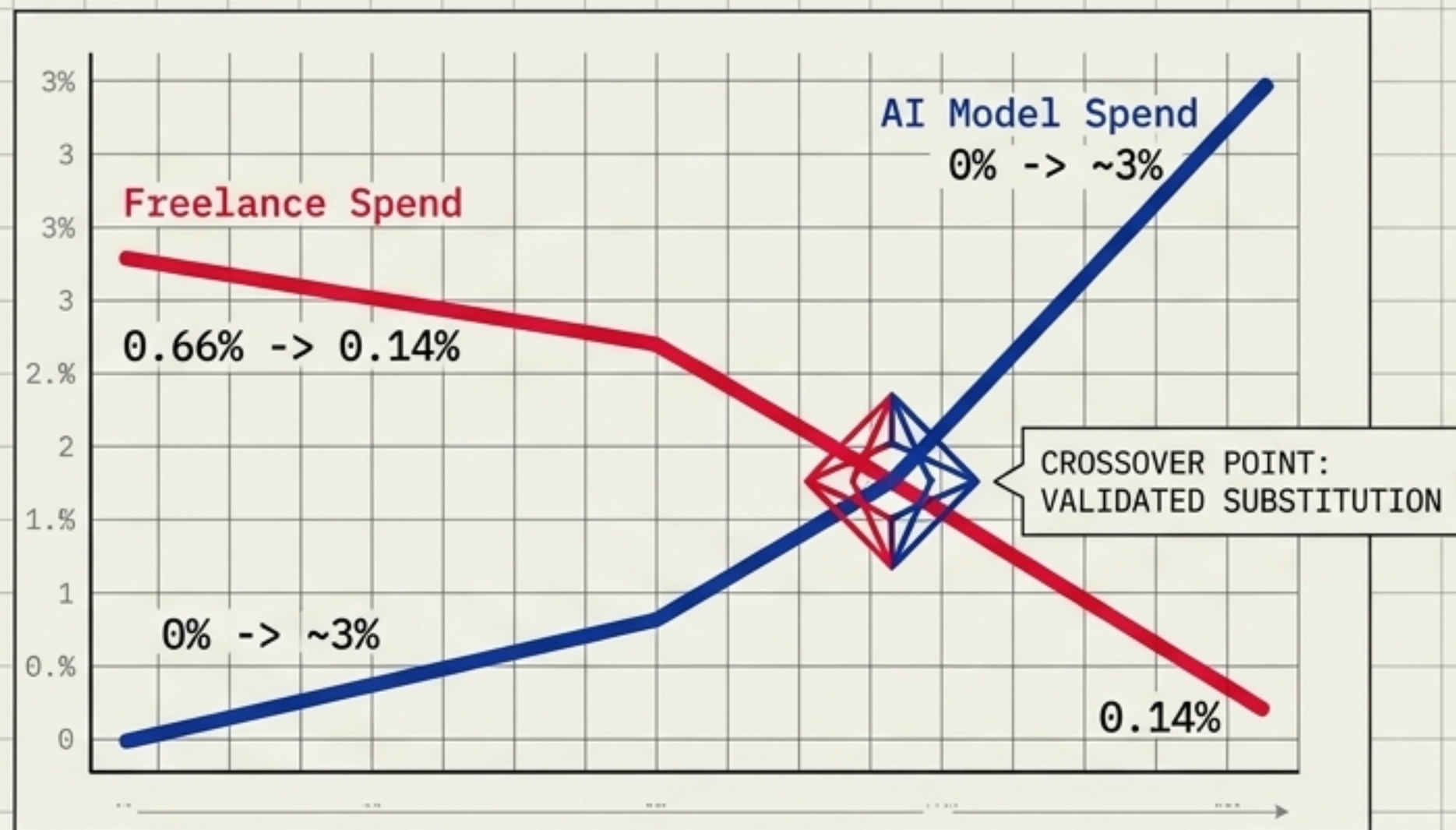
MARCH 5, 2026 | ANTHROPIC'S LABOR MARKET IMPACT ANALYSIS PUBLISHED.



**"The bottom rungs of the career ladder aren't creaking—they're missing."**

# VALIDATED: FREELANCERS AS THE CANARY

Ramp Corporate Card Data



## TASK SUBSTITUTION

Writing: Volume **down 30%**

Development: Volume **down 21%**

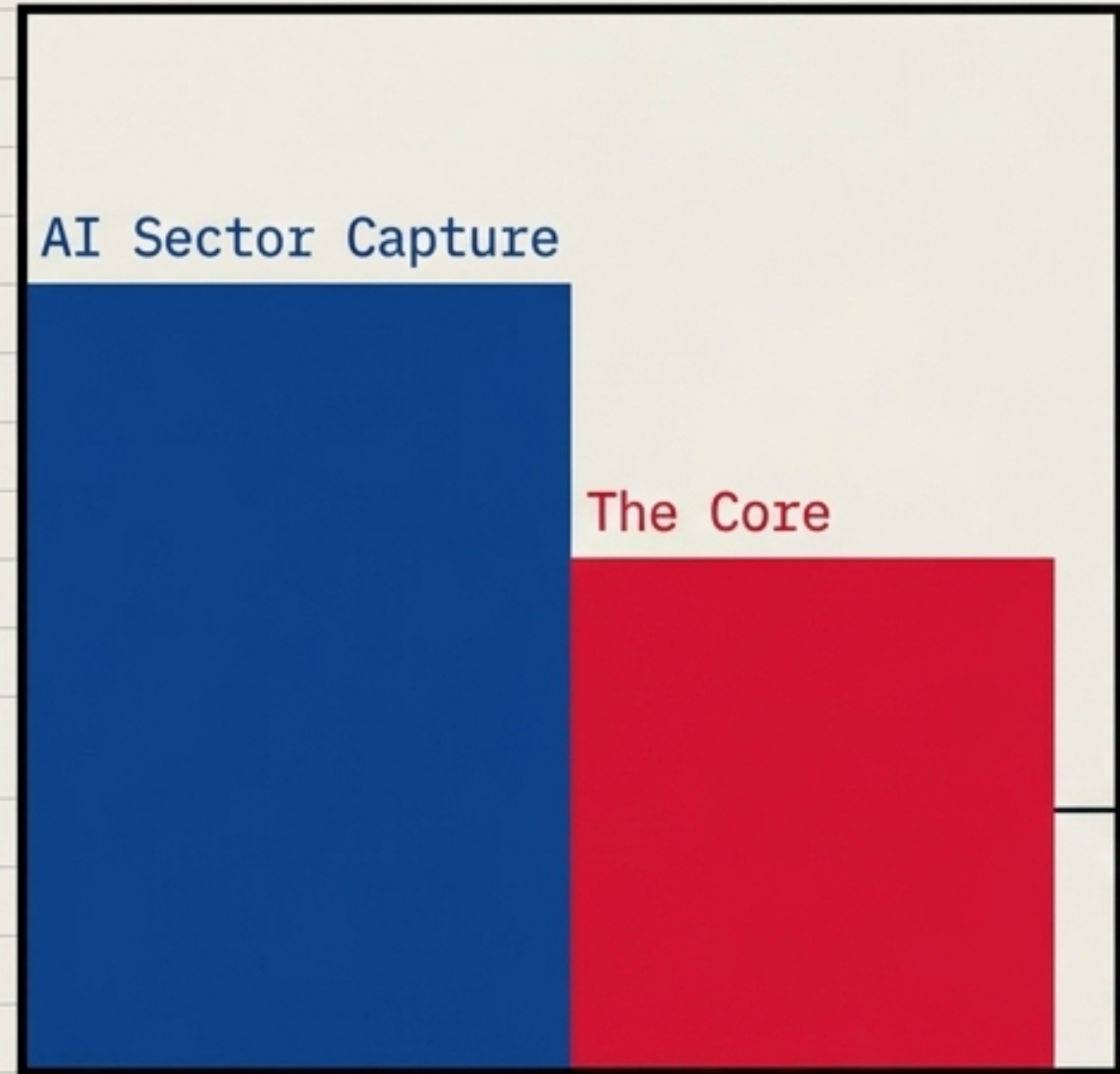
## GROUND ZERO (TRANSLATION):

Post-editing pays **25%** of traditional rates; **60-hour weeks** reduced to **zero**.

This isn't theoretical displacement; it is **direct, quantified substitution** visible in enterprise credit card receipts.

# VALIDATED: HYPER-CONCENTRATION OF CAPITAL

Total Global Venture Capital Deployments (2025)



**14%**

OpenAI (\$840B val) + Anthropic (\$380B val) captured 14% of all global VC deployed in 2025 across all sectors.

**\$650B**

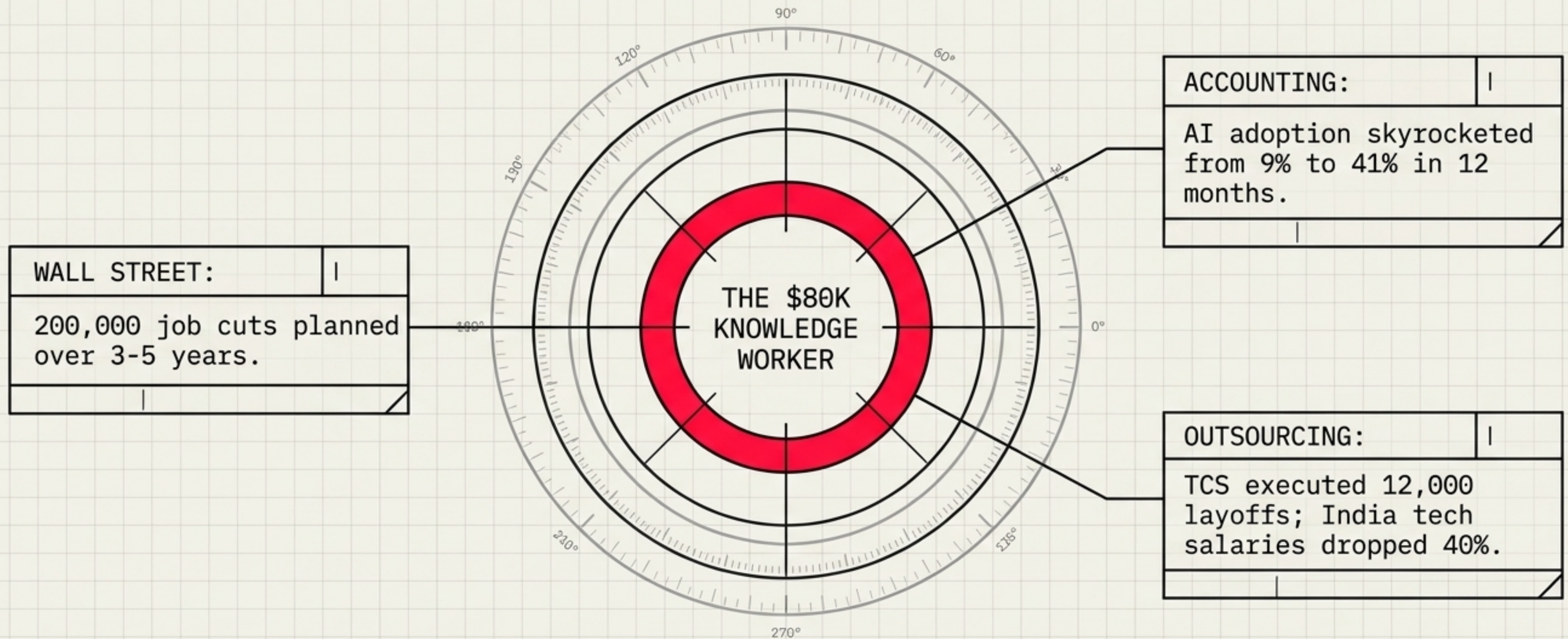
Big Tech collective AI capex committed for 2026.

**\$4.4T**

Nvidia market capitalization.

Drago's "few actors controlling intelligence" framingd hyperbolic in 2024. Today, it is merely descriptive.

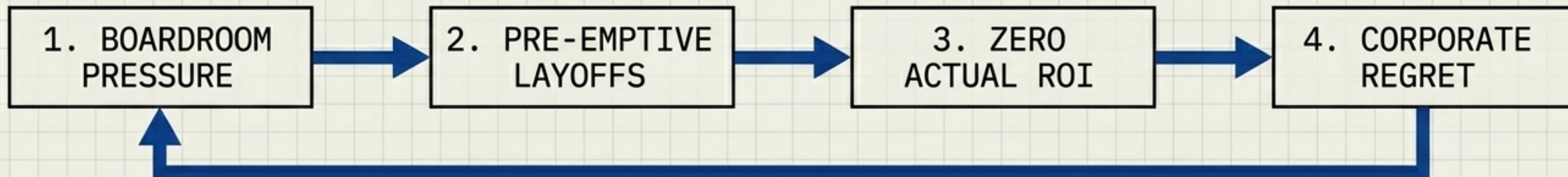
# VALIDATED: THE HOLLOWING OF THE MIDDLE



The worker who believed they were safe because their role 'required judgment' is mathematically the most exposed category.

# THE MISS: 'AI-WASHING' VS. REALITY

## THE NARRATIVE LAYOFF CYCLE



### SCALE:

**4.5%**

ONLY 4.5% (RISING TO 8%) OF LAYOFFS ARE DIRECTLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO AI (55K-76K JOBS). NO JOBS-POCALYPSE CLIFF.

### PERFORMANCE:

**95%**

95% OF ENTERPRISE AI INVESTMENTS SHOW ZERO ROI.

### REGRET:

**55%**

55% OF EMPLOYERS WHO MADE AI-DRIVEN LAYOFFS REGRET THE DECISION.

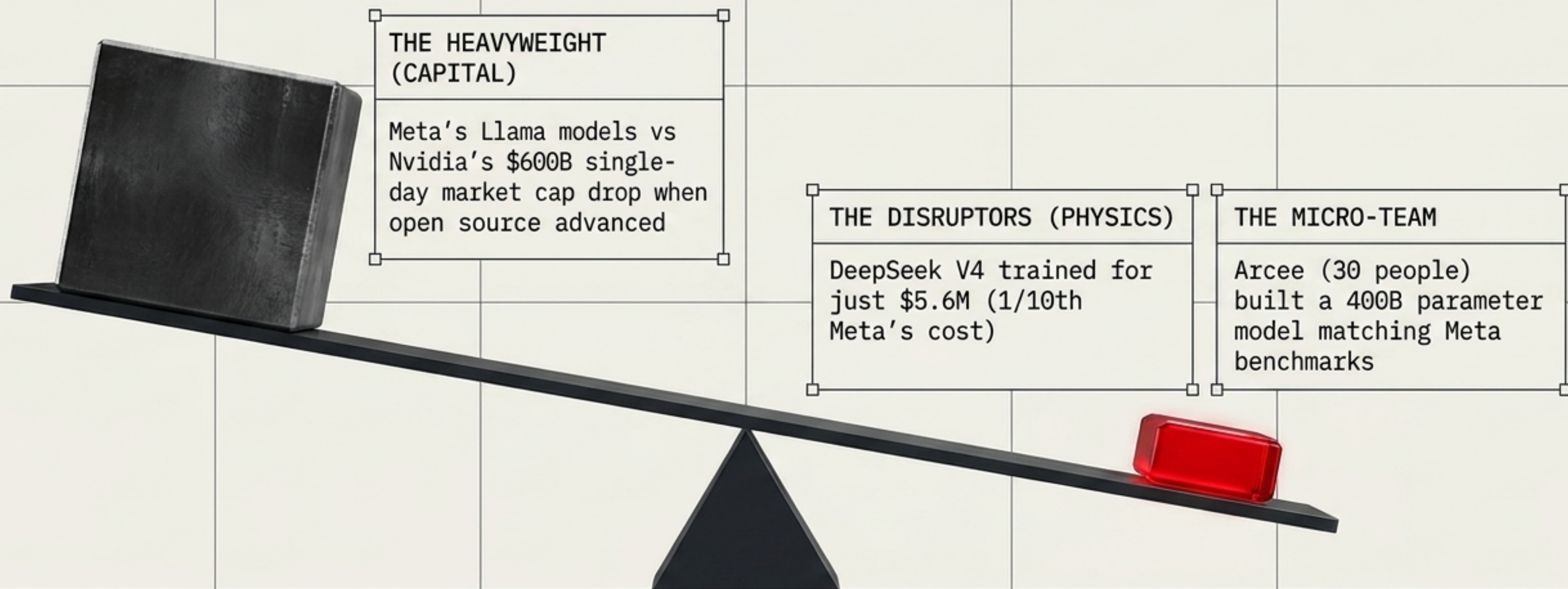
Disruption is narrative, not technological. People are losing jobs to a PowerPoint deck about AI, not to actual AI.

# THE MISS: THE REGULATORY FRICTION



Democratic states are responding with regulation, not retreating into irrelevance as predicted.

# THE MISS: OPEN SOURCE SHATTERS THE MOAT



Oil stays expensive due to geology. Compute gets cheaper due to physics.  
The permanent capital moat is porous.

# THE UNSEEN FORCE: THE BIFURCATION

## WINNERS

AI SKILLS +56% PREMIUM

AI ENGINEER TITLE  
+143% GROWTH

SOLO FOUNDER \$80M EXIT  
(36.3% OF NEW VENTURES)

TOTAL AGENCY & LEVERAGE

SALARY

EMPLOYMENT

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

HEALTH

## LOSERS

INDIA TECH PAY -40%

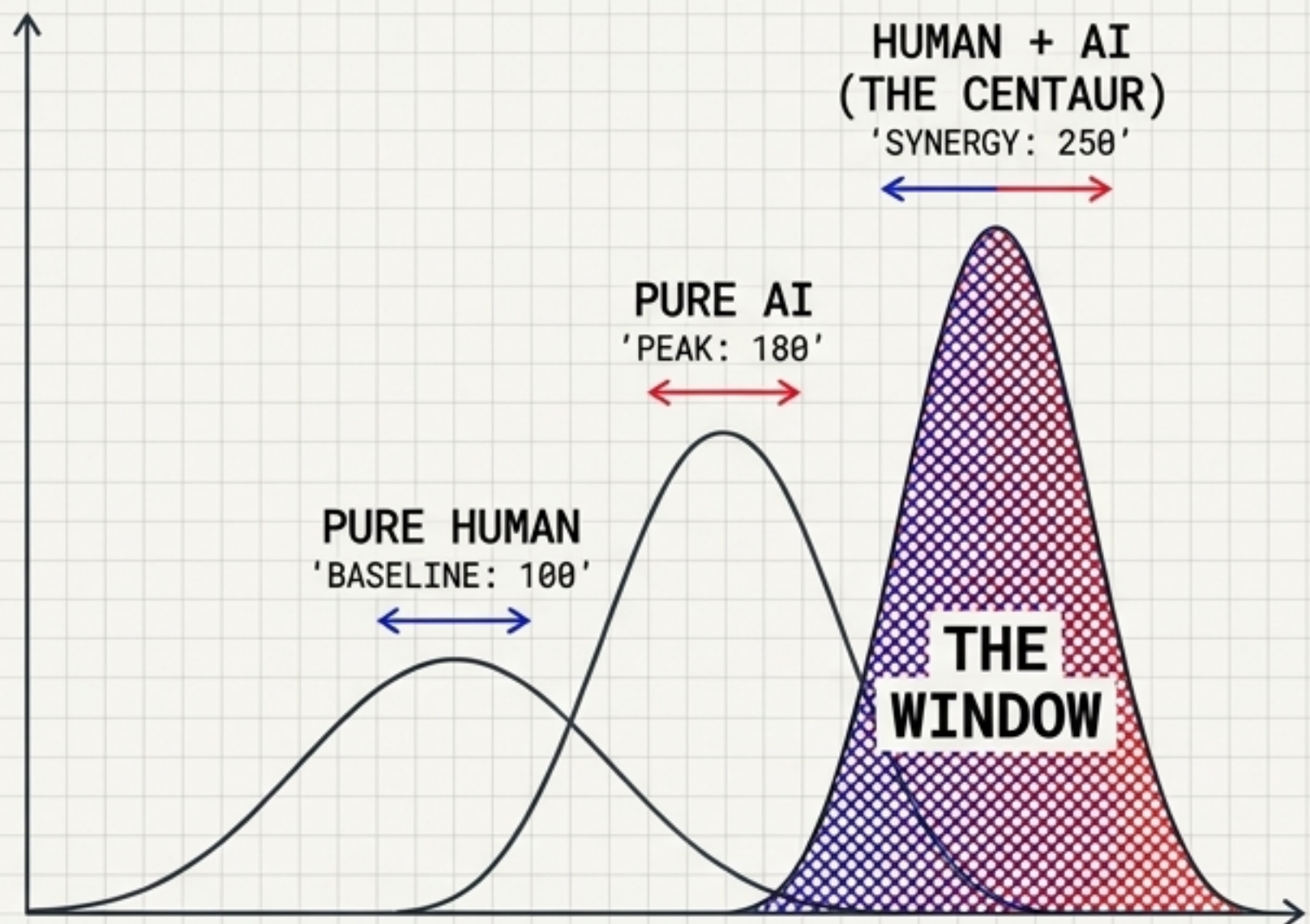
JUNIOR DEV  
HIRING -67%

FREELANCE WRITING  
-30%

AIRD CLINICAL CONDITION

Same technology. Same year. Completely opposite economic realities depending on your side of the ledger.

# THE CENTAUR WINDOW



## THE DATA:

Teams using AI tools meaningfully outperform pure-human and pure-AI approaches on complex tasks.

## THE CATCH:

Amodei warns the centaur phase may be "very brief—perhaps only a few years."

The on-ramp to the super-individual path exists, but it is narrowing in real time.

# SYNTHESIS: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CURSE

97%

Tasks theoretically  
AI-feasible.

AIRD  
(AI Replacement Dysfunction)

71%

Workers reporting  
fear of permanent  
displacement.

30%

Workers who have literally  
ZERO AI exposure.

The fear—"AI will take your job"—is driving career abandonment faster than the technology is driving actual displacement.

# THE FINAL SCORECARD

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## WHAT THEY GOT RIGHT:

- [✓] Entry-level collapse (-67% junior hiring)
- [✓] Capital hyper-concentration (50% global VC)
- [✓] Freelancer displacement as early indicator

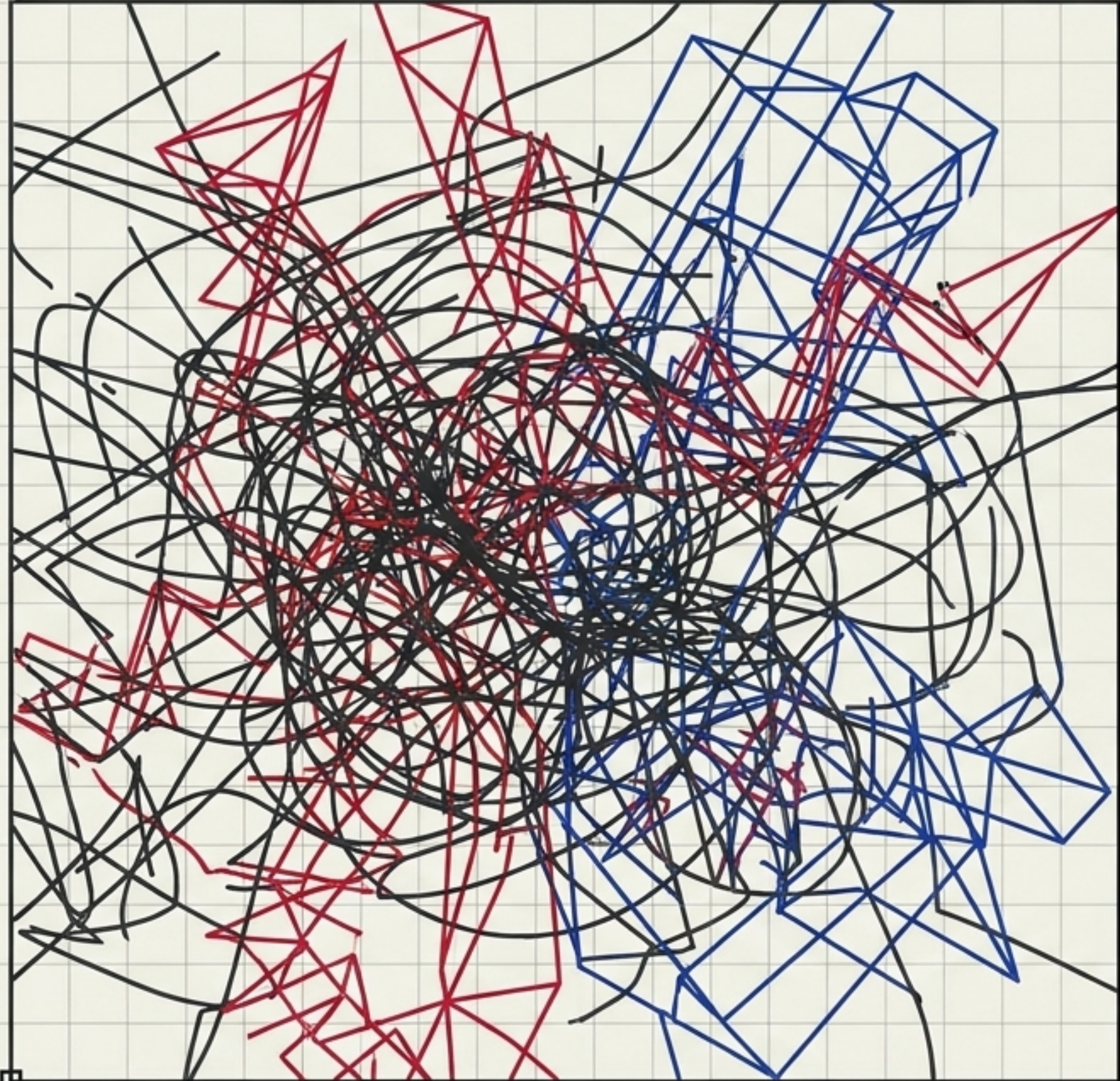
## WHAT THEY GOT WRONG:

- [✗] Immediate Jobs-pocalypse (Only 4.5% of layoffs)
- [✗] Total Government Capitulation (Regulation rising)
- [✗] Impregnable Capital Moats (Shattered by Open Source)

## THE OMISSION:

They modeled a single trajectory. The reality is a bifurcation.

# THE NARRATIVE RESHAPES THE ECONOMY



The original essays assumed the technology would be the destructive force. But in 2026, the narrative is running ahead of the code. Fear is driving fake corporate transformations and mass career abandonment. The curve is bending in multiple directions simultaneously. The only variable that matters is which side of the bifurcation you are standing on.