

# When It's Your Business

Recognising and responding to  
extraction in business partnerships

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**This is a financial emergency, not an emotional one. Treat it accordingly.**

Recognising the extraction pattern in a business partner, a co-founder, an employee or an investor requires a different response from recognising it in a personal relationship. The emotional damage is real – betrayal is betrayal. But the immediate priority is protecting the business, the finances and your legal position. Grieve later. Secure now.

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## 1. The Pattern in Business

Research shows that roughly 4% of management professionals score at the clinical threshold for psychopathic traits – four times the general population rate. The pattern is overrepresented in business because the traits that drive it – charm, confidence, risk tolerance, willingness to make decisions others flinch from – are what hiring processes select for.

The extraction toolkit works the same way in business as in personal relationships. Charm opens the door. The early phase delivers genuine results – the investment phase. Extraction follows: financial, reputational, structural. By the time you see it, the damage is significant. One study found a single toxic individual reduces team performance by 30–40%.

## 2. The Warning Signs

**Financial opacity.** You don't have a clear picture of the money. Accounts are complicated. Questions are deflected with charm or complexity. You feel stupid for asking.

**Credit claiming and blame shifting.** Successes are theirs. Failures are yours or the team's. This pattern is consistent and one-directional.

**Good people leave.** Talented employees resign. Clients drift. The common denominator is the person nobody examines because they are charming and confident.

**Your role shrinks.** You started as an equal partner. Gradually, decisions are made without you. Information reaches you late or not at all. You are being managed out of your own business.

**Complexity without clarity.** Structures multiply. SPVs, holding companies, cross-charges. Each has a reason. The accumulated effect is that you cannot see where the money goes.

## 3. What to Do Immediately

**Get independent legal advice.** Not your company solicitor – they may be compromised. A fresh solicitor who has never met your partner. Explain the situation. Understand your rights under the partnership agreement, articles of association or shareholders' agreement.

**Get independent financial advice.** A forensic accountant if the finances are opaque. Understand the true position before you act. The numbers will tell you what your feelings cannot.

**Secure your access.** If they control the bank accounts, the IT systems, the client relationships – that is the extraction architecture. Map it. Identify what you can secure independently. Do this before they know you are looking.

**Document everything.** Financial decisions, verbal agreements, email promises. The extraction-wired rewrite history. Your contemporaneous records are your protection.

## 4. The Options

**Buy them out.** Often the cleanest exit. Expensive now, cheaper than ongoing extraction. Get an independent valuation.

**Sell the business.** If the extraction has damaged the business to the point where your continued involvement is unsustainable, sell and split the proceeds. Better a clean loss than a slow bleed.

**Dissolve the partnership.** If buying out or selling is not possible, formal dissolution with legal support. Expect them to fight. Expect them to claim it was all theirs.

**Remove them.** If you have the governance structure to do it – board majority, shareholder agreement provisions, misconduct clauses – use them. Get legal advice on process. Follow it to the letter. They will exploit any procedural gap.

**Every month you delay while hoping they will change is a month of resources transferred. Treat it as a financial decision. The numbers will be clear even when the emotions are not.**

## Where to go next

**If you are in immediate danger:** call 999 or the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247 (24 hours, free).

**Free guides at [www.trueregard.com](http://www.trueregard.com):** The Good Faith Problem · Recognising Covert Narcissism · Waking Up · What Is Happening to You · Family Court Survival Guide · Personal Protection Toolkit · Professional Toolkits.

**The full framework:** *The Extraction Pattern* and *The Capture: How They Stole America* by Vaughan Smith. [www.trueregard.com/the-books](http://www.trueregard.com/the-books).

**Share this.** The pattern survives through isolation. Every copy shared rebuilds the grandmother.

## **THE EXTRACTION PATTERN**

Vaughan Smith

*The five per cent who design extraction. The ninety-five per cent who live inside it. The architecture that could contain it.*

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## **THE CAPTURE**

Vaughan Smith

*How They Stole America. The extraction pattern captured democracy, economy, healthcare, media and accountability – domain by domain.*

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