

THE EXTRACTION PATTERN

When It's Your Workplace

Recognising and surviving extraction
at work

Vaughan Smith

Author of The Extraction Pattern and The Capture: How They Stole America

www.trueregard.com

You are not the problem. The architecture is the problem.

If your manager, a senior colleague or a team member is extracting from you – claiming credit, shifting blame, gaslighting in meetings, undermining you to others – this guide helps you recognise the pattern, protect yourself and decide what to do.

1. Recognise What You Are Dealing With

Workplace conflict costs the UK economy £28.5 billion per year – £1,028 per employee. Not all of that is extraction. But the extraction-wired create disproportionate damage: one study found a single toxic individual reduces team performance by 30–40% within weeks.

The pattern in the workplace uses the same toolkit. Charm to manage upwards. Credit theft laterally. Blame shifting downwards. Triangulation to prevent colleagues comparing notes. Different behaviour with different audiences – charming to the board, destructive to the team. If you are confused about how someone so popular can be so harmful, that confusion is the pattern working.

2. Document

The HR Behavioural Observation Log in the professional toolkit is designed for this. Date, time, what happened, who was present, exact words. Email yourself after every significant interaction. Build the evidence base before you need it – because once you need it, it is too late to start.

3. Build Your Coalition

Find the other people who see it. They exist. The pattern isolates, but it also creates witnesses. A quiet conversation with a trusted colleague – “Have you noticed what happens in meetings when [name] is there?” – can break the isolation that the pattern depends on.

4. Assess Your Options

If your manager is the extractor: HR may not help. HR works for the organisation, not for you. If the extractor is senior and performs well upwards, the organisation may choose the extractor over you. Be honest about this. Document, escalate if you can, but update your CV.

If a colleague is the extractor: your coalition matters. If multiple people document the same pattern, the organisation must respond. The HR Pattern Analysis Framework in the professional toolkit is designed for exactly this.

If you manage the extractor: get HR and legal support before you act. Document meticulously. Follow process to the letter. They will exploit any procedural gap. The extraction-wired are often superb at employment tribunals.

When to leave: when the architecture is captured and your energy is better spent elsewhere. Leaving is not defeat. It is recognising that some structures cannot be changed from inside.

Where to go next

ACAS (acas.org.uk, 0300 123 1100) for workplace dispute advice.

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: 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.

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.

THE CAPTURE

Vaughan Smith

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

www.trueregard.com

Frontline Club Books

© Frontline Television News Limited 2026. This guide may be freely shared in its complete form.