Supremely Unemployable

How to Plan for the Inevitable Before It Plans for You

Everyone gets "invited to pursue other opportunities" eventually. This is how you make sure that day is a promotion.

Clients > Boss

Jonathan Pritchard

A field guide for the reliably fired

START HERE

The email you'll get someday

It won't say "you're fired." Nobody says that anymore. It'll say something warmer:

> **"As part of a broader effort to realign our resources with strategic priorities, your role has been impacted."**

Translated: the reorg happened, and you were a line item in it. Maybe it's AI. Maybe it's a new VP that brought their own people. Maybe the quarter was soft and you were expensive. The reason changes. The email doesn't.

Here's the part they don't print at the bottom: whether that email is a catastrophe or a Tuesday depends entirely on something that you either built or didn't build, years before it arrived.

For what?

Think about what the job actually asks of you. You toe the company line. You play the power games. You keep your head down and you don't rock the boat. The message lands at 5 o'clock, "Hey, I need this by tomorrow," right as your kid tugs your sleeve and asks you to come play, and you hear yourself say "in a minute, buddy." The minute becomes the whole evening. First one in the office, last one to leave. All of it to climb a ladder that someone else owns.

> **For what? Two weeks' notice and a severance check, if you're lucky?**

You're trading the years that you don't get back, the bedtimes and the ball games, to a company that would fire you this instant, today, without blinking, the second the numbers told it to. Kind about it or not, that's the arrangement, and somewhere in you already know it.

You know how the last day goes, too. Sally from HR, the one that you always figured was smarmy and fake, walks in with a folder and a countdown. She slides a non-compete across the table and leans on the clock, because a rushed signature is easier to get than a considered one. Sign here. Hurry. And that page exists for one reason: so they can sue you for calling your own former accounts to tell them that you're out on your own.

Read that twice. They will pay a lawyer to stop you from talking to the people that already trust you. That's the thing that you've been calling job security. A hostage situation with a dental plan.

The one idea

The people that land soft aren't lucky. They're **supremely unemployable**, and they got that way on purpose.

Supremely unemployable doesn't mean nobody wants you. It means the opposite. It means so many people want to be your *client* that being your *boss* stopped making financial sense. You didn't drop out of the workforce. You got promoted past the part where one company rents all your hours at a discount.

> **Clients > Boss. A boss can impact your role in a Tuesday email. A client base can't be reorganized out from under you.**

The goal isn't to quit. The goal is to become the person that *could* leave tomorrow. That person is calmer in every meeting, negotiates from a different chair, and (funny how this works) is usually the last one anybody wants to lose.

What a J.O.B. actually promises

You took the job for good reasons. Security. Steady money. Benefits, a title, a shot at a future. Those are real things to want, and nobody should apologize for wanting them.

Just One Boss

Every good thing that you signed up for, hanging on a single string that one person or one company controls. Security that a reorg can cut. Money that a salary caps. A future that a manager owns.

A job feels safe because it's one thick rope. It's still one rope. A client base is a dozen thin strings braided together: when one frays, the rest still carry you. That's the only real security there is, and every benefit that you wanted from the job shows up stronger on the braided side:

Security: lose one client out of twelve and you keep eating. Lose one job out of one and you file for unemployment.

Money: a salary has a ceiling somebody else sets. Your rates and your client count don't.

Freedom: a job rents all your hours. Clients buy outcomes, and the calendar stays yours.

Control: one boss can end you on a Tuesday. Twelve clients can't agree on lunch, let alone on firing you the same week.

A future: the ladder belongs to the company. The client base belongs to you, and it compounds.

I'd know. I've been fired from every real job I ever had. Every single one. Getting let go that reliably was the market telling me to stop applying and start invoicing, and the paycheck that nobody would keep signing became a client list that keeps choosing to.

THE FAST VERSION

The quickstart: four moves, start the first one today

You don't build this the week you get the email. You build it now, while you're still employed and nobody's watching.

1. **Name the skill that someone would write a check for by Friday.**

   Not your job title. Titles don't pay; outcomes do. "Senior Manager, Operations" is a title. "I cut a warehouse's shipping errors in half in 90 days" is a check-writing skill. If you can't name it in one sentence, that's the actual emergency, not the layoff.

2. **Let one person outside your company know you do it.**

   Right now, exactly one human that isn't on your org chart should know your check-writing skill exists. Post it once. Tell a former colleague over coffee. Send the DM that you've been drafting in your head. Being good in private is a hobby. Being known for it is the beginning of a client base.

3. **Get one dollar from one client before you need to.**

   One small paid engagement, on the side, done well, changes everything. The first invoice that you send that doesn't come from payroll is the most important document in your career, because it's evidence: someone chose you, directly, and paid.

4 **Start the list.**

The day you get impacted, your ability to eat equals the number of people that you can email who already trust you. So start collecting them today. Ten names is a start. That list is my hatch, built in public, and you're welcome to copy the move.

BONUS

Read the room before HR reads you the statement

You do this for a living whether you know it or not. The signs come early, dressed in language designed to keep you calm. Decode them:

"We're flattening the org." A layer is being removed. Check whether you're standing on it.

"We'll revisit headcount next quarter." The headcount conversation already happened. You weren't in it.

"We're so excited about the new direction." Direction changed. Ask whose seat the new direction needs.

"Your role is evolving." Roles that evolve sometimes evolve you right out. Find out into what.

A meeting appears on your calendar with HR and no agenda. You already know.

None of this is paranoia. It's the same skill that makes someone great at sales, negotiation, and leadership: watching what people do underneath what they say. Get good at it, and you're never the last to know.

The move

Pick move one. Do it before you close this. Name the skill that a stranger would pay you for, in a single sentence, today.

The email is coming for all of us someday. The only question is whether it finds you employable, or supremely so.

That was the fast version.

Center Stage is the community where we build your version:
get recognized, get chosen, and never need a boss again.
Come find me there when you're ready to make it real.

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Jonathan Pritchard got paid $200 at 13 to do a company's summer picnic, and that was the day he escaped the Matrix. He's been supremely unemployable ever since. He teaches experts, founders, and recovering employees how to get recognized, get chosen, and never need a boss again.