NARRATIVE DEFENSE AUDIT

A record of a language change — with a date on it.

FOUR MOVES · ABOUT AN AFTERNOON · NO NAMES, NO ASK, NO RECOMMENDATION

Organization	**Prepared by**
Date	**Shared with**

1 NAME THE CHANGE

Their words and yours, copied exactly — not summarized. Images and omissions count: a photograph you stopped using, a program that left the annual report, a page you quietly took down. Three to five changes where the **meaning** moved. Skip copy edits. Sources: the Wayback Machine, your last two annual reports, old press-release boilerplate.

WHAT WE SAID OR SHOWED	WHAT WE SAY OR SHOW NOW	WHEN

2 NAME THE CONDITIONS

What the decision was responding to — not who made it. A funder signal, a legal letter, a risk to staff, a news cycle, a change in federal guidance. One sentence, in the most neutral language you can manage. **“Appears to have” is deliberate** — you are not concluding, you are leaving room for someone to correct you.

This change appears to have followed —

BOOK A SESSION WITH SHANE LUKAS

Bring the document. You’ll leave knowing what changed and what to say next.
insomanywordspodcast.com/book

BOOK A SESSION

3 NAME THE COST

What the new language makes it harder to say, show, or ship:

Where the new language is **better** than what it replaced:

> **BE FAIR HERE, OR THE PAGE DOES NOT WORK.**
> An audit that only ever finds damage is an argument wearing an audit's clothes, and the first person to spot that will be the person you most needed to convince. **One honest concession buys you the entire rest of the page.**

4 NAME THE REVISIT

One line, two parts: a date and a condition. "March, or sooner if the funder guidance changes." "September, or sooner if the legal position shifts."

Suggested review

Earlier if this changes

Who puts it in the calendar and sends the four lines on the day

> **TWO DIFFERENT NAMES — KEEP THEM STRAIGHT.**
> **No name on the decision.** That turns an audit into an investigation. **One name on the follow-up.** A page nobody owns is the most common way this dies.

STUCK ON YOURS?

Bring the style guide, the appeal, or the page you took down.
insomanywordspodcast.com/book

BOOK A SESSION

HANDING IT OVER

Don’t email it. An audit that arrives as an attachment reads as a complaint with footnotes, and the recipient has to decide how to respond before they have decided how to feel. Bring it to a one-to-one, on paper, and open with one sentence:

> “I put this together so we have a record. There’s no ask in it. I just didn’t want this to be something we can only discuss from memory.”

Then hand it over and **stop talking.**

WHEN THE REVIEW DATE ARRIVES

Put the date in **your own** calendar as well as theirs — theirs will not fire. On the day, do not reopen the argument. Send these four lines.

We set this to review today.

The condition we wrote down was —

As far as I can tell, it has / has not changed.

Do we want to look at the language, or move the date?

New review date, if moved

THREE WAYS THIS DIES

Nobody owns it.	No name on the follow-up, no clear next step. It goes nowhere.
It grows to five pages.	Scope creep turns a review into a project, and projects never happen.
The date arrives, nobody acts.	What you do that day matters more than writing the page.

And if the answer is silence, you have still won something: a document, with a date, that you sent on the date. **The next conversation starts somewhere other than zero.**

BOOK A SESSION WITH SHANE LUKAS

You’ll leave knowing what changed, who should decide, and what to say next.
insomanywordspodcast.com/book

Free to use, copy and adapt. Attribution appreciated, not required.
More worksheets at **insomanywordspodcast.com/resources** · Produced by **A Great Idea**
Views are my own. No client of the studio appears in any episode.

BOOK A SESSION