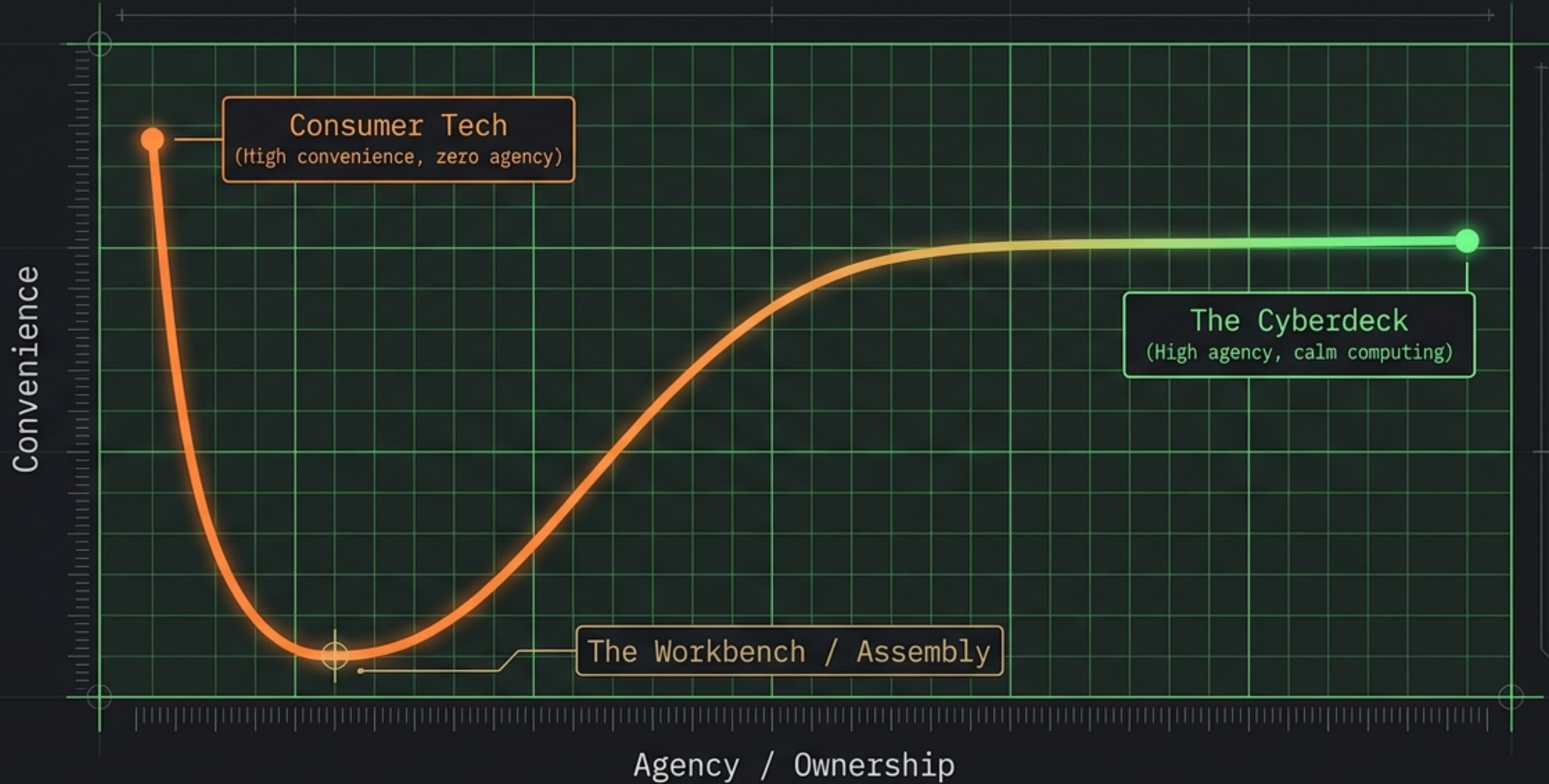




Build a Cyberdeck. Own Your Computer.

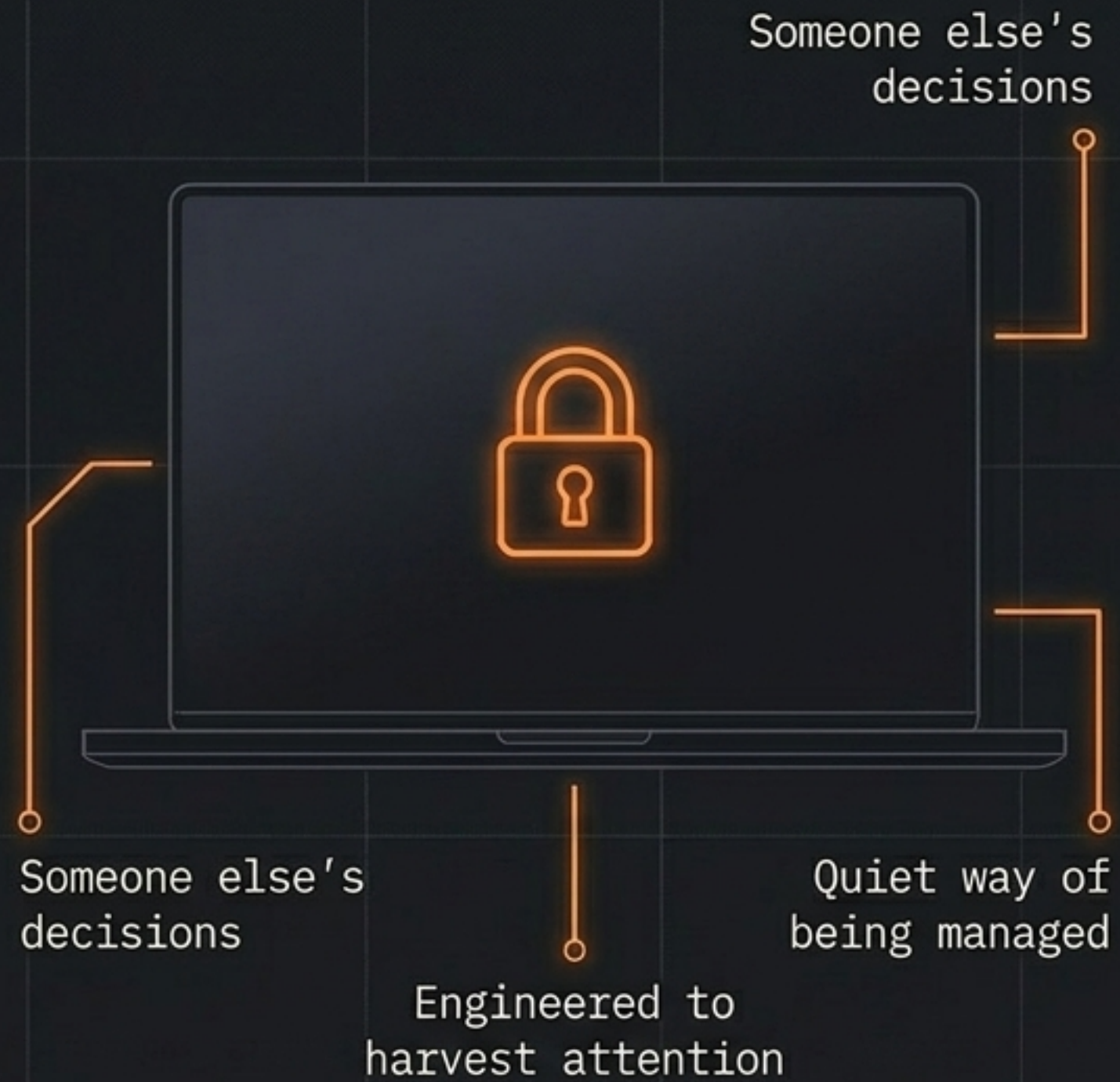
A field guide to building a portable, hand-made machine —
a self-driven device for the age of intelligence.

Build time: A weekend | Skill floor: Curious + patient | Ballpark: \$250-450 | Soldering: Optional

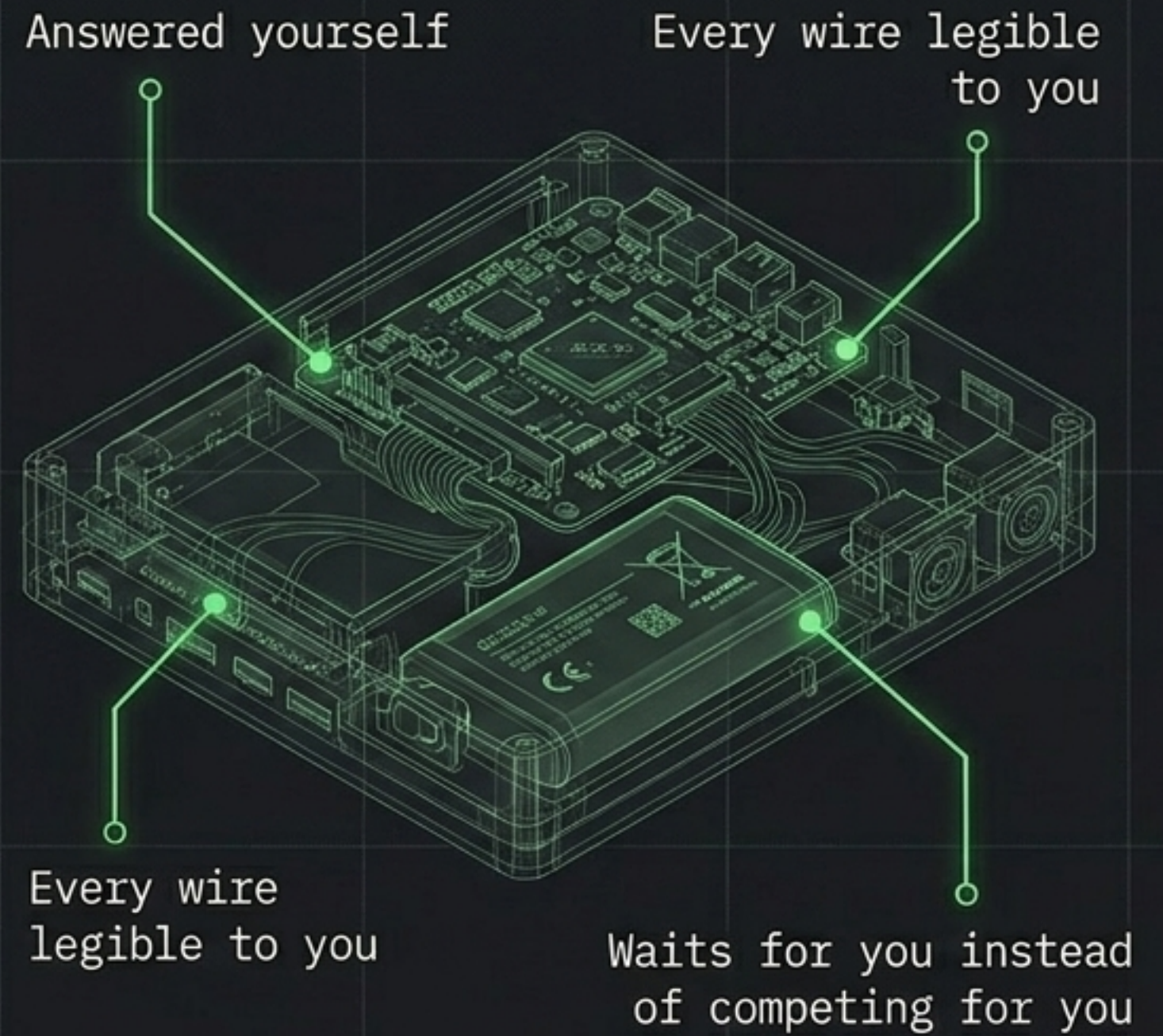


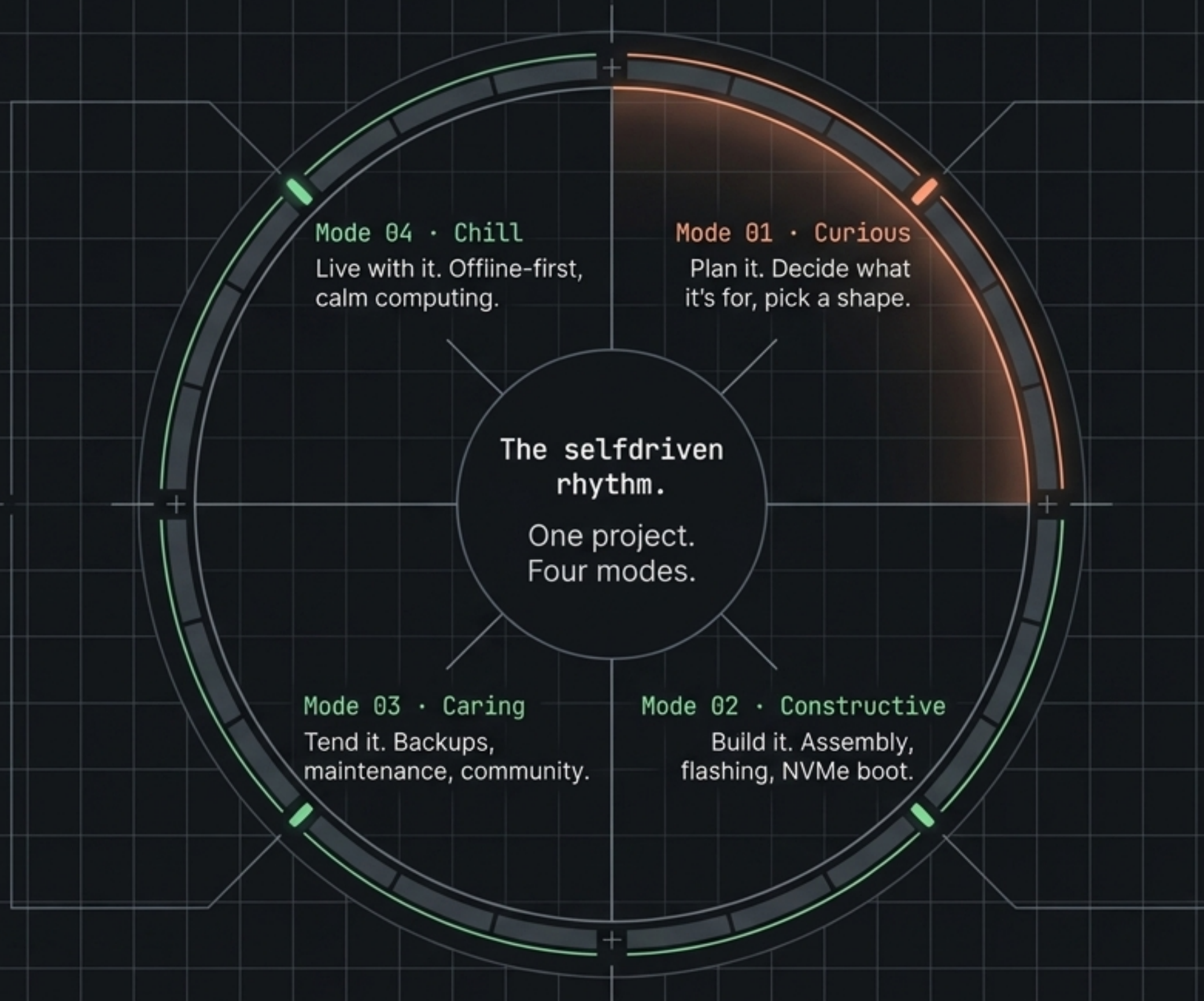
As intelligence gets cheaper and computing gets rented, a deck you built by hand is a small act of sovereignty. Not nostalgia – agency.

The Sealed Box



The Open Question





[In the Deck]

Understand Your Tools.

The builder opens the case and learns every wire. Nothing inside is a mystery they're asked to simply trust.

[In Your Life]

System Literacy.

Ask how the things you use actually work, and who decided they'd work that way. Literacy is leverage.

CURIOUS TASK: Before buying parts, sketch your deck on paper at 1:1 scale. Trace the keyboard, screen, Pi, and battery. You'll discover the real constraint before it costs money.

The Deck Archetype Matrix



The Pocket Deck

- Pi Zero 2 W or small Pi 5
- 4-5" display or e-ink
- 40% ortholinear keyboard
- ~1-2 W (runs for hours)

USE CASE

Jacket-pocket SSH, notes, distraction-free writing.

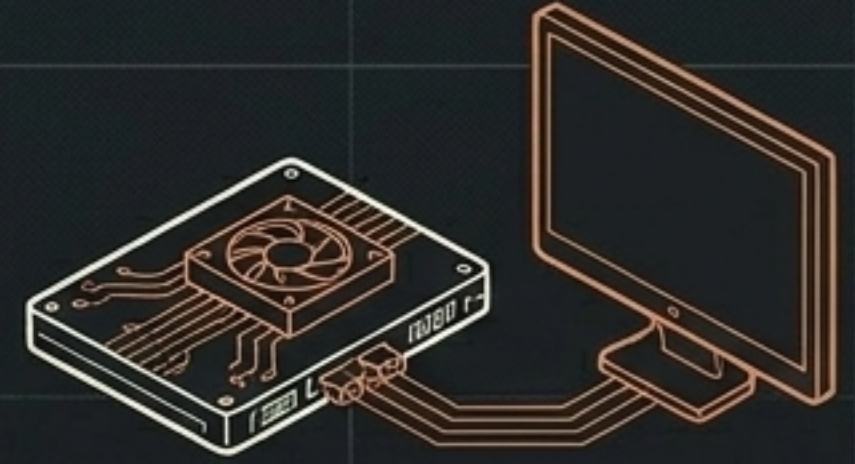


The Field Deck

- Pi 5 (4-8 GB)
- 7" touch display
- 60% mechanical keyboard
- UPS HAT + 18650 pack

USE CASE

Off-grid capable, antenna up, real work.



The Desk Deck

- Pi 5 (8-16 GB)
- NVMe SSD via PCIe HAT
- Wall power

USE CASE

Self-hosted brain, local LLMs, always-on.

The Compute Engine Selection Table

Brain	Power	Why
RECOMMENDED Pi 5 • 4 GB	Power: 5–8 W idle, 12–15 W load	Why: The default. PCIe/NVMe, fast enough for a full desktop. Best for Field decks.
Pi 5 • 8–16 GB	Power: ~5–15 W	Why: Headroom for containers, local LLMs. Best for Desk decks.
Pi Zero 2 W	Power: ~1–2 W	Why: Tiny, sips power, runs for hours. Best for Pocket decks.
Pi 4 • 2–4 GB	Power: ~6–8 W	Why: Cheaper, huge HAT compatibility. Best for Budget builds.

Mode 02 · Constructive

[In the Deck]

Accountable to You.

Assembled, not bought whole.
Accountable to the builder's
choices, not a vendor's roadmap or
forced update.

[In Your Life]

Make, Don't Just Consume.

Prefer tools you can shape over
tools that shape you. Make the
thing, write the thing, fix the
thing.

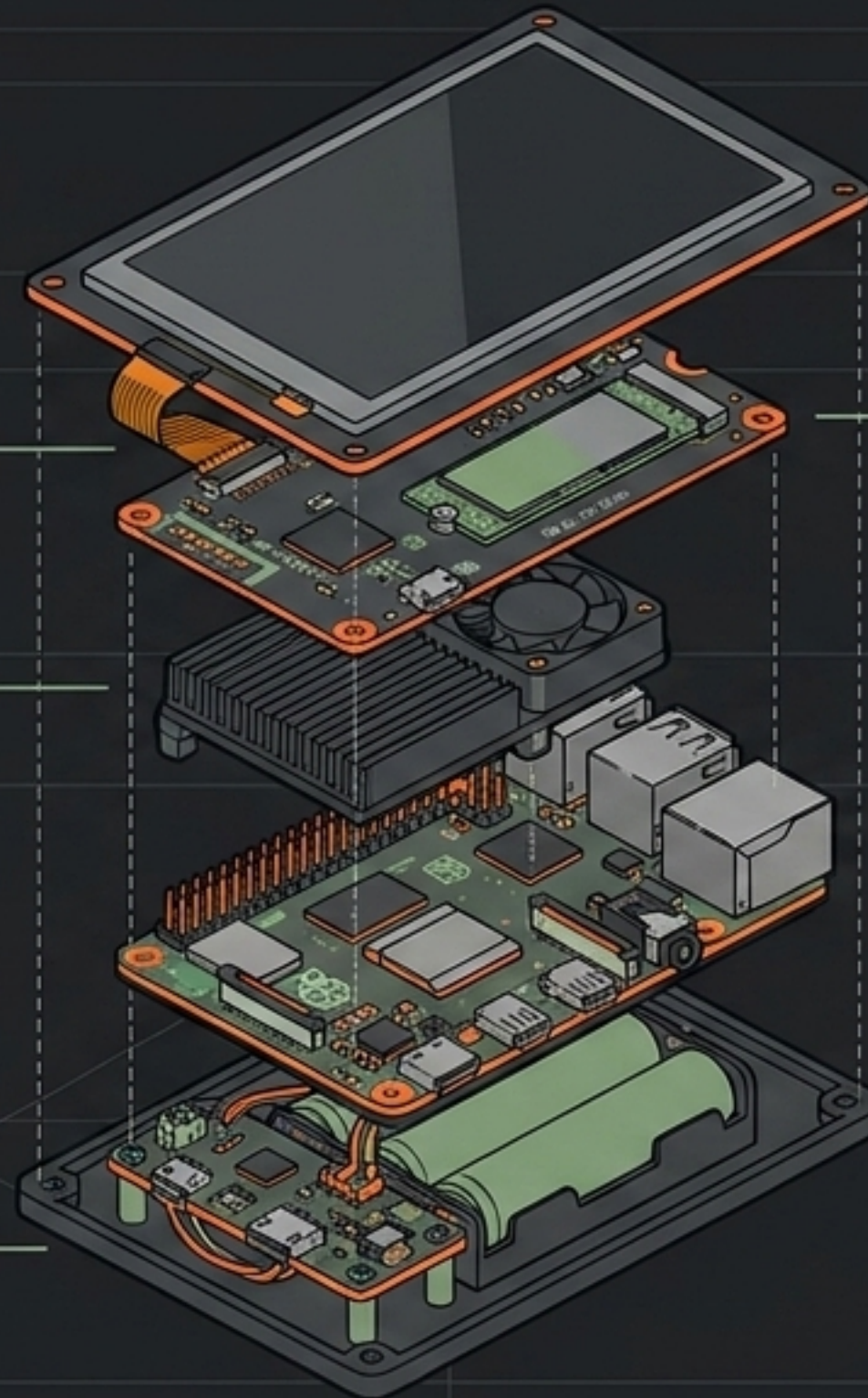
CONSTRUCTIVE TASK: Ship the rough version. Get it booting on the bench before the enclosure is perfect. Momentum beats perfection.

Field Deck Internals

7" Touchscreen (\$45-70)
- DSI ribbon leaves a USB port free.

Official Active Cooler (\$5)
- *Not optional* on Pi 5.

UPS HAT + 2× 18650 cells (\$30-50)
- Protected cells, clean shutdown.



NVMe SSD 256 GB + M.2 HAT+ (\$40-55)
- Boots faster, lasts longer than SD.

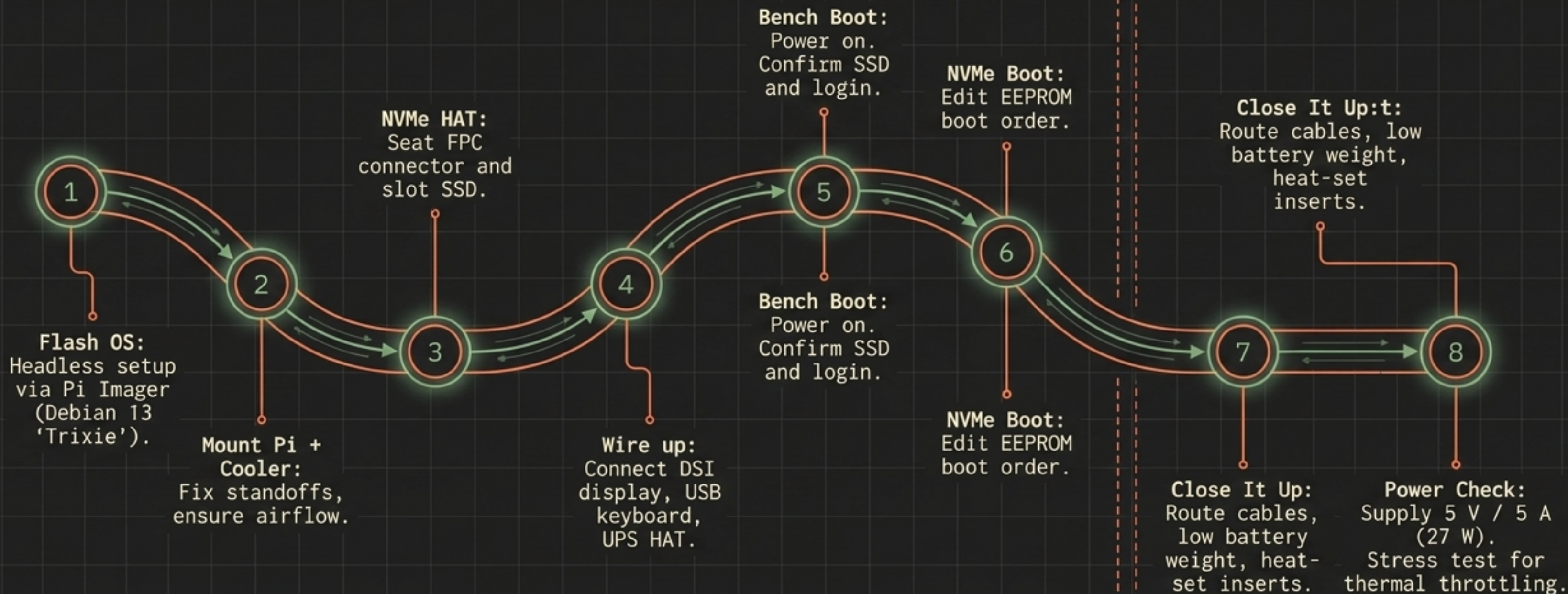
Raspberry Pi 5 · 4 GB (\$60-80)
- The quad-core brain.

Total hardware footprint: \$250-450.
Assembly time: A weekend.

The Bench to Box Workflow

THE BENCH

THE BOX



[In the Deck]

Build to Last.

Standard parts, open plans, repair over replace. Longevity is a design value, not an accident.

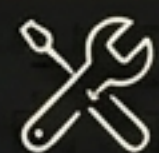
[In Your Life]

Care is Attention Paid Forward.

Choose durable over disposable — in objects, skills, and relationships.

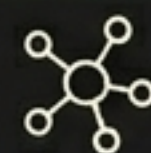
CARING TASK: Uncredited and useful. When you solve a tricky bit, write the fix into a public forum. Someone at 1 a.m. three months from now will be grateful.

Maintenance & Community



Keep It Healthy

- Image the SSD to a spare drive (rescue boot).
- Use **protected** 18650 cells. Never charge loose lithium unattended.
- Blow dust out of the cooler (the quiet killer of small computers).
- Run updates on a rhythm, not a panic.



Give Back

- Photograph mistakes—they are the most useful thing to share.
- Publish your STLs or cut files.
- Post on cyberdeck.cafe or r/cyberDeck.
- Help one person in the threads.

[In the Deck]

No Feed Lives Here.

There's no feed engineered to pull you back. The constraint is the feature. Let this be the machine that's boring in the best way.

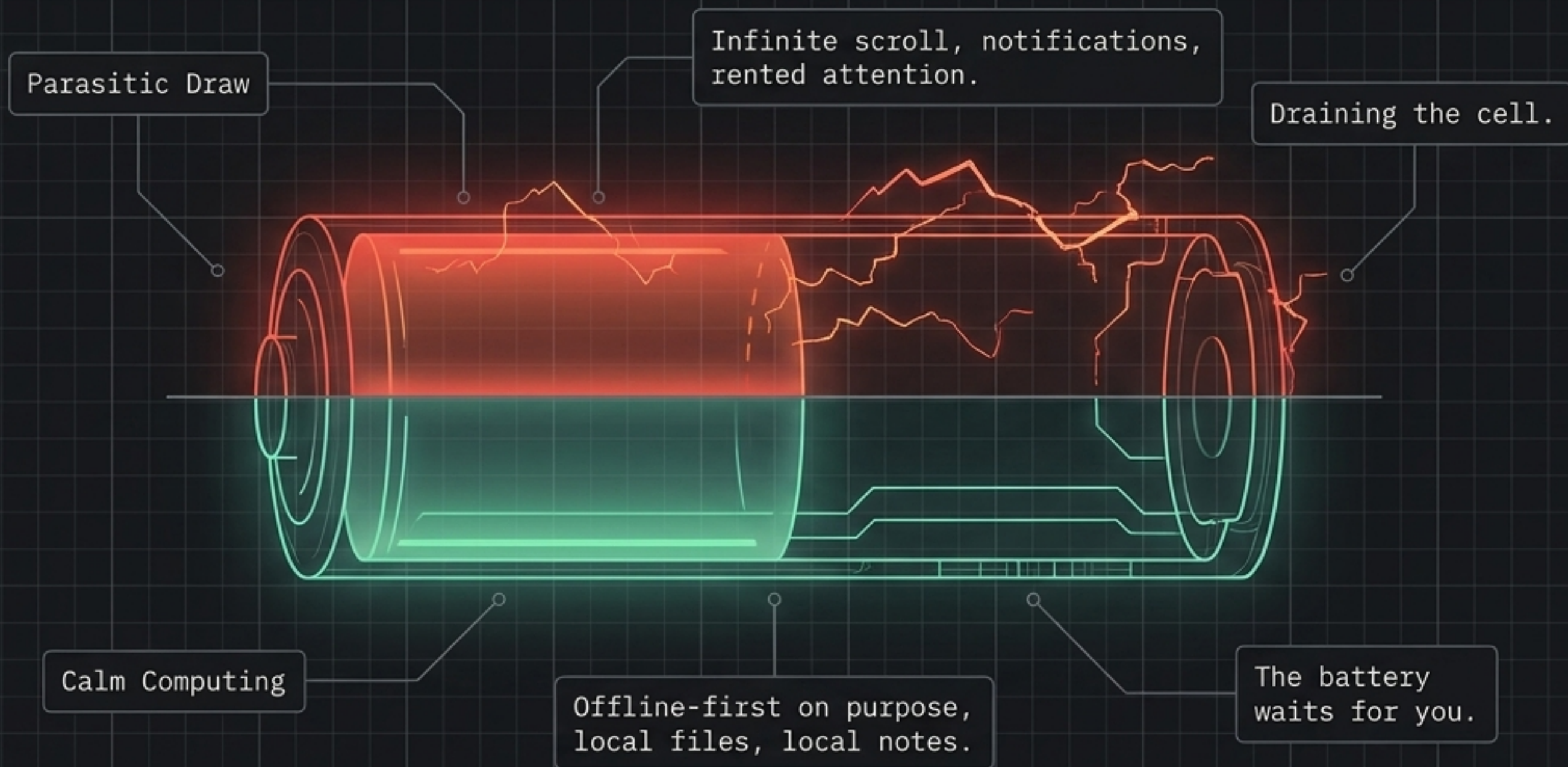
[In Your Life]

Pick Tools That Respect You.

A thing that does one job won't spend your day for you. Calm is a design choice you're allowed to demand.

CHILL TASK: Done is a place to rest. There is always another HAT or mod. Use the machine. A working deck in your bag beats a perfect one on the bench.

Attention as a Battery



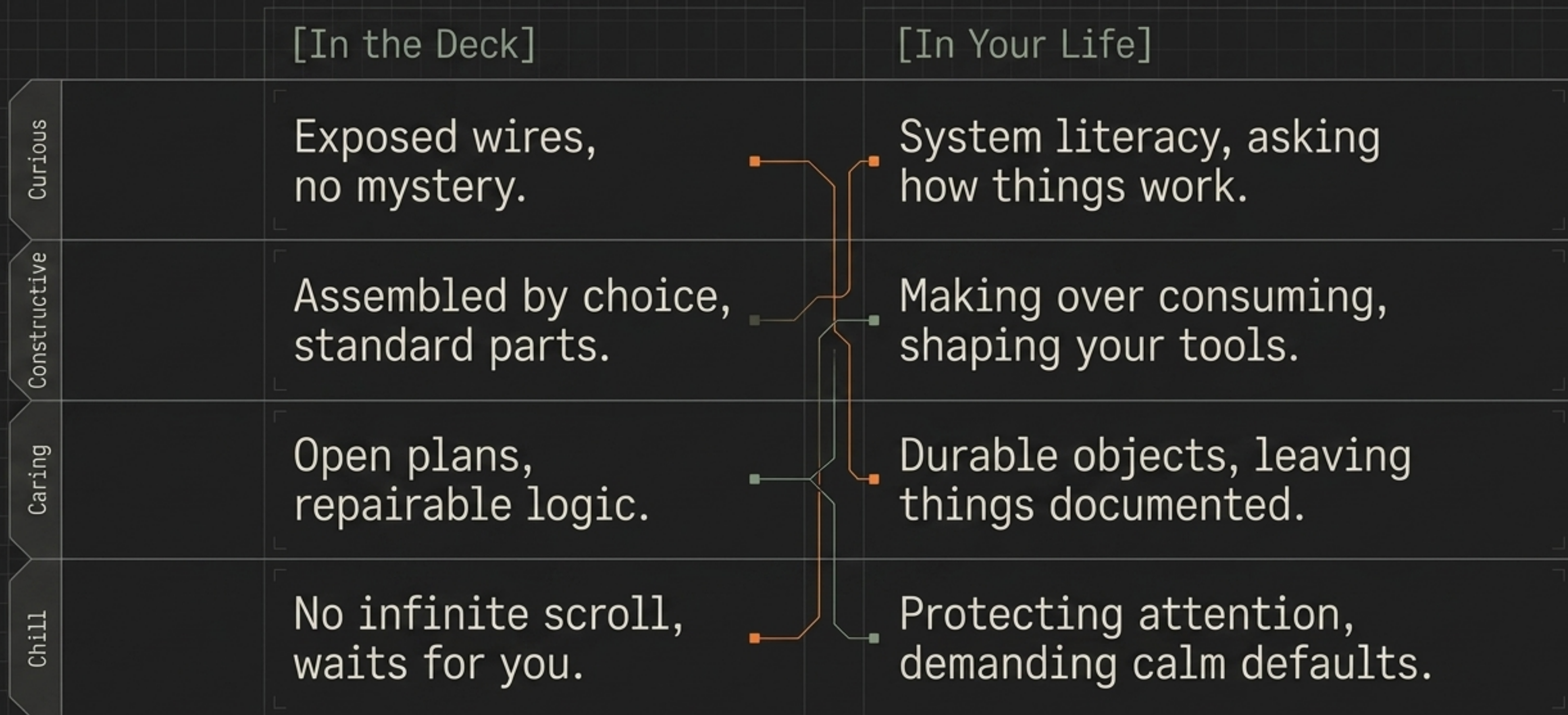
Attention runs down and needs charging. Treat your mental energy with the same engineering rigor as your deck's power supply.

The deck is the lesson, not the gadget.

A cyberdeck is just the most literal version of a question worth asking: Do I own this, or does it own me?

You don't have to pick up a soldering iron to keep the answer.

The Dual-Track Matrix



Six small moves. No workbench required.

Curious

Run a sealed-box audit.

Name three daily tools. Could you explain how they work?
Notice which ones own you.

Constructive

Make one finishable thing.

A page, a script, a shelf.
Ship it rough to change the consumption ratio.

Caring

Repair instead of replace.

Fix one thing this month you'd normally bin.

Caring/Curious

Document one thing publicly.

Write down something you figured out where a stranger can find it.

Chill

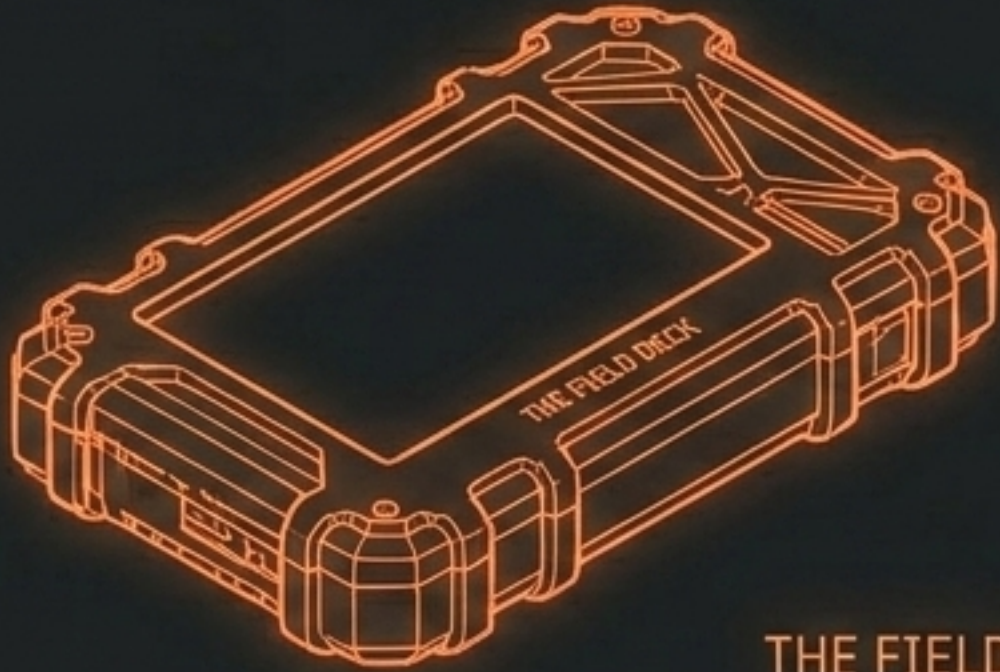
Keep one feed-free device.

An e-reader or wiped old phone. A surface with no pull.

Chill

Choose the tool you can turn off. "Off" being possible is a feature worth paying for.

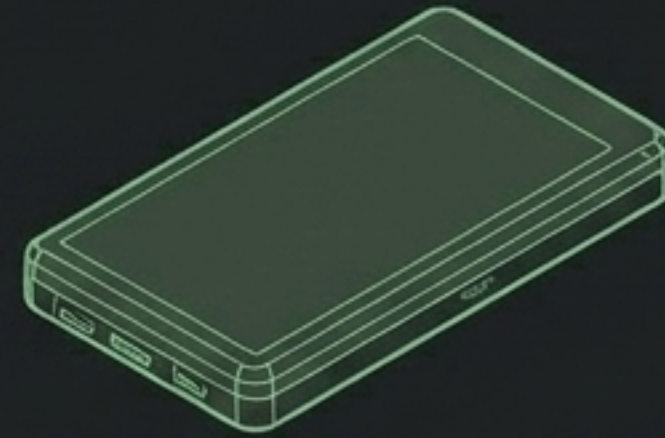
Some of you will reach for a soldering iron anyway.



THE FIELD DECK

The Field Deck

Raspberry Pi 5 · 7" screen · Mechanical keyboard. The full portable workstation.



THE POCKET DECK

The Pocket Deck

Raspberry Pi Zero 2 W. The headless terminal that sips power and runs for hours.

Both guides ship as installable .skill packages. Be curious. Make something. Keep your attention.