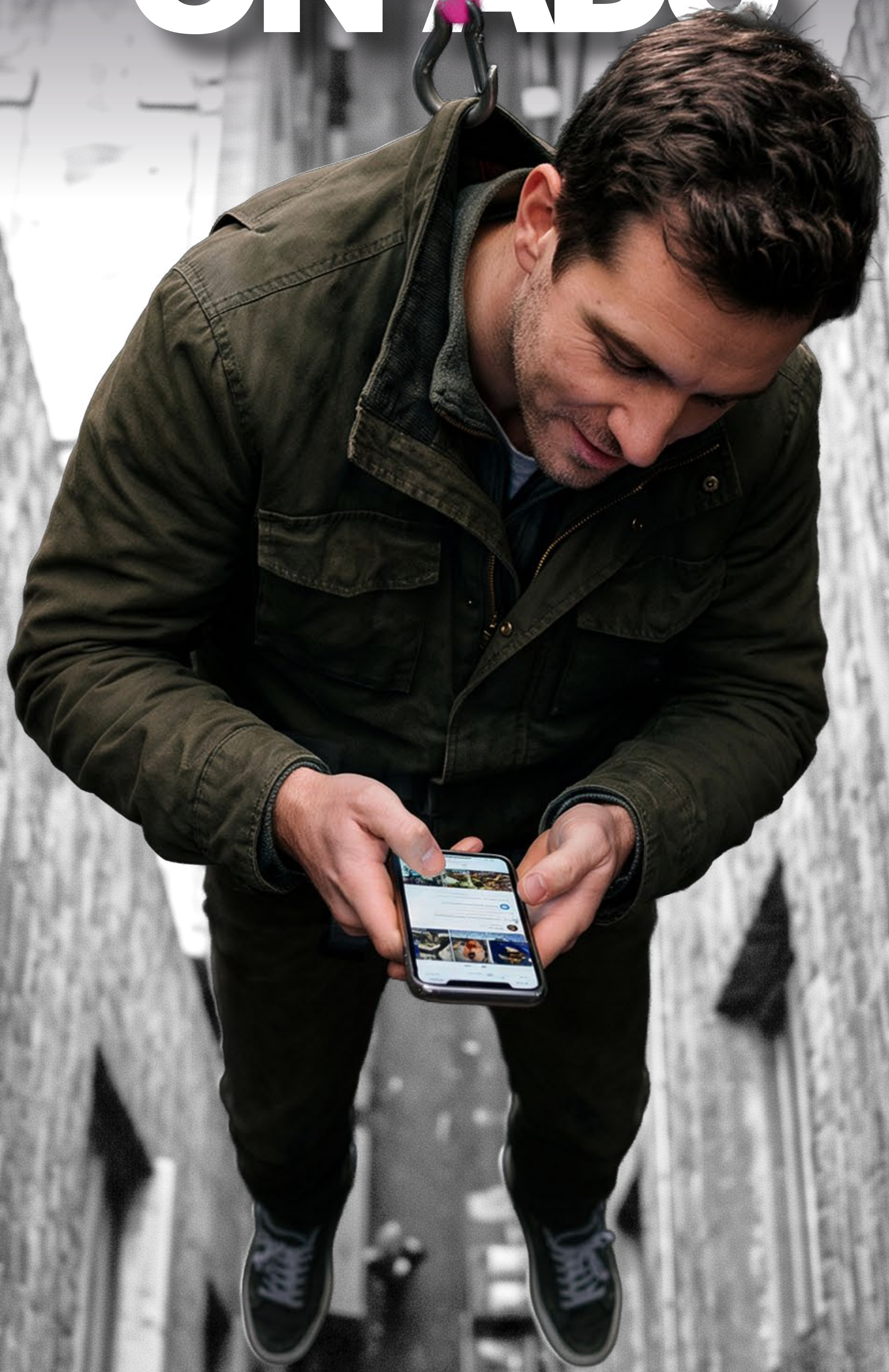


MARKETING

ISSUE #476 OCTOBER 2026

WEEKENDERTM

HOOKED ON ADS



WEEKENDER

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CREATIVE PARTNER
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**"WHEN WE DO
WHAT WE KNOW,
WE WILL KNOW
WHAT TO DO."**

**"LISTEN TO
EVERYONE,
THEN IGNORE
EVERYONE."**

**"GREATNESS
IS A CHOICE.
SO IS
MEDIOCRITY."**

**"AN AUTHOR IS
A BUSINESS OF
ONE. GENIUS
IS OPTIONAL.
INVOICING
ISN'T."**

**"IT'S NEVER
THE END.
EVERY LAST
CHAPTER IS
THE FIRST
PAGE OF THE
NEXT BOOK."**

YOU'RE FIRED. PLEASE LEAVE THE ZOOM.



In December 2021, 900 Better.com employees joined a Zoom call with CEO Vishal Garg, expecting a routine meeting.

Instead, Garg told them they were being laid off, effective immediately.

The backlash was enormous.

Garg later apologised, admitting he had “blundered the execution” and failed to show sufficient respect and appreciation for those affected.

But Better.com was only the most visible example of a broader shift: technology had made it possible to end hundreds of careers through a single video call.

During the pandemic, video calls became our offices, meeting rooms and boardrooms.

They also became places where people were told they no longer had jobs.

That practice did not disappear when offices reopened.

Once, firing someone meant calling them into a room, looking

them in the eye, explaining the decision and sitting through the silence, anger or disbelief.

Today, HR can join a video call, a statement can be read, access can be terminated and the meeting can end.

Not every dismissal can happen face-to-face. Remote employees may need to be dismissed remotely, especially across cities, countries and time zones.

But there is a big difference between using Zoom because distance makes it necessary and using Zoom because distance makes firing someone easier.

Technology should make companies more efficient, not make leaders less human.

Many people are being let go across our industry now. And I wonder if there were any Zoom firings.

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2026
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2026
DRAGONS
OF MALAYSIA



2026
DRAGONS
OF PAKISTAN



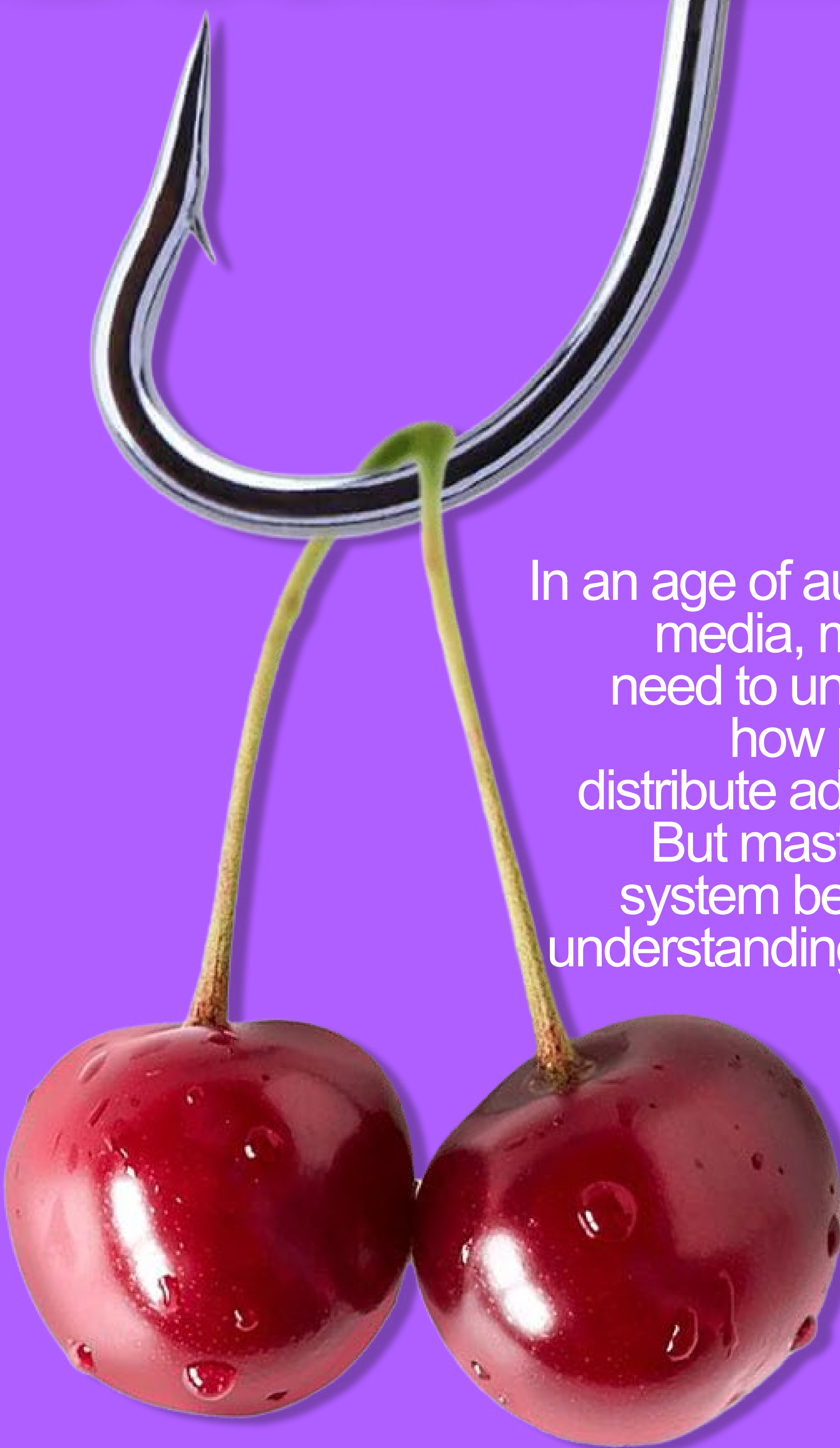
2026
DRAGONS
OF SRI LANKA



2026
DRAGONS
OF MENA

ALGORITHM **OR** **AD**GORITHM[®]?

In an age of automated media, marketers need to understand how platforms distribute advertising. But mastering the system begins with understanding people.



... Marketers often talk about “the algorithm” as if every platform uses one mysterious rulebook. In practice, each platform has its own systems, objectives and signals...

The advertising industry has a new kind of anxiety. It comes dressed as a technical question: How do we beat the algorithm?

How do we get more reach? How do we make the content travel further? What time should we post? Which format does the platform prefer? Which words, sounds, hashtags or audience settings will persuade the system to show our work to more people?

These are understandable questions. Every marketer wants their message to reach the right people. But the search for a secret formula can make us forget the more important question: what makes anyone want to pay attention in the first place?

That is where the Adgorithm begins.

The word combines advertising and algorithm. It describes the marketer’s ability to connect a meaningful idea with the systems that distribute, rank and optimise

it. Learning the Adgorithm means understanding both the machine and the person on the other side of the screen.

The algorithm can influence who sees an ad. The Adgorithm is the marketer’s skill in making that ad worth seeing.

THERE IS NO SINGLE ALGORITHM

Marketers often talk about “the algorithm” as if every platform uses one mysterious rulebook. In practice, each platform has its own systems, objectives and signals. Even within one platform, the systems used to recommend organic content can differ from those used to rank search results or deliver paid ads.

A feed ranking system must choose from a vast amount of available content and predict what might be relevant to each person. LinkedIn describes its feed as a recommendation system that uses members’ actions, including implicit signals, to help evaluate relevance.

TikTok says its For You recommendations draw on people’s activity, including what they watch, like, share and search for.

Paid advertising adds another layer. Google’s Smart Bidding, for example, uses AI to adjust bids for individual auctions, drawing on contextual signals to pursue the advertiser’s selected conversion goal.

These examples matter because they show why there is no universal hack. A tactic that helps one



platform, campaign or business objective may do little for another. The system is responding to the signals available to it and the goal it has been asked to pursue.

The marketer’s job is not to memorise a rumoured ranking formula. It is to understand what the system is trying to do, what the business needs, and how to give it useful material to work with.

START WITH THE BUSINESS QUESTION

Before choosing a platform, format or optimisation setting, get clear on the result the campaign

needs to produce.

Is the aim to build awareness among people who do not know the brand? To persuade shoppers to consider a new product? To generate qualified leads? To encourage repeat purchase? These objectives call for different messages, different measures and often different paths to conversion.

A campaign designed to maximise clicks may produce plenty of clicks without producing customers. A video that earns attention may not be the right tool for capturing immediate demand. A lead campaign may appear efficient while collecting



... Creative work is not a decorative layer added after the media plan. It is one of the main reasons people stop, watch, remember or act...

marketer create work that is relevant beyond the targeting settings. A useful audience insight gives the creative team a reason to make the message distinctive. It also gives the media team a clearer idea of who is most likely to value it.

When the audience is understood, the algorithm becomes a distribution tool. Without that understanding, targeting risks becoming a more efficient way to interrupt people.

GIVE THE SYSTEM A STRONG IDEA TO DISTRIBUTE

Creative work is not a decorative layer added after the media plan. It is one of the main reasons people stop, watch, remember or act.

A campaign can be technically well targeted and still fail because its message is generic. It can use the right format, arrive at the right time and reach the right audience, yet leave no impression. Distribution

can put the work in front of people. It cannot make an uninteresting idea interesting.

This is why marketers should test creative ideas, not just audience settings. A different opening, story, product demonstration, visual, tone or call to action may change the way people respond. But variation should have a purpose. Produce versions that explore different ways of expressing the strategy, not endless cosmetic changes that teach the team very little.

For video, the first moments need to give viewers a reason to stay. For a static ad, the image and headline need to work together. For search, the message must connect with the need behind the query. Across formats, the brand should be recognisable and the promise should be clear.

The aim is not to create work that looks like it was designed for a machine. It is to create work that can earn attention from a person and perform in the environment where that person encounters it.

TEACH THE SYSTEM WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Automated advertising depends on signals. If a platform is asked to optimise for a particular conversion, it will use the information available to estimate which opportunities are most likely to produce that outcome.

That makes measurement and data quality part of creative and media strategy. Marketers need to



check that the events they track are meaningful, that conversion information is being recorded properly, and that the team is optimising for the outcomes the business values.

A low-value action may be easy to generate. A valuable customer may take longer to identify. If a campaign is rewarded for cheap, shallow responses, the system may find more people who respond in that way. That does not necessarily mean it is finding the people most likely to become profitable customers.

Whenever possible, connect campaign reporting to what happens further down the journey. Did the lead become a sales conversation? Did the store visit turn into a purchase? Did the new customer return? Can the business estimate the value of different types of conversion?

The more meaningful the feedback, the better equipped the marketer is to judge whether automation is helping. The system can optimise toward a target. The marketer has to make sure the target represents real progress.

EXPERIMENT WITH A QUESTION IN MIND

Learning the Adgorithm requires experimentation. It does not require changing everything at once.

A useful test starts with a clear question. Does a benefit-led headline attract more qualified interest than a product-led one? Does a demonstration hold attention better than a testimonial? Does a different landing page improve conversion among people arriving from the same campaign?

Change a meaningful element, give the test enough time and

scale to provide useful evidence, then review the result against the campaign's objective. If several things change at once, it becomes harder to understand what caused the difference.

Also look beyond the most flattering number. Reach and engagement can indicate that the creative is attracting attention. Clicks can show interest. Conversions can show action. Sales and repeat purchase can help reveal commercial value. No single measure tells the whole story.

A strong marketer learns to ask: what happened, for whom, under what conditions, and what should we do differently next time?

DO NOT CONFUSE A SPIKE WITH MASTERY

A post that suddenly reaches a large audience can be exciting. It can also tempt a brand to copy the surface features of its success: the same tone, format, trend or topic.

Before repeating the formula, examine what might have driven the response. Was the idea timely? Did people share it because it expressed something they already felt? Did the format make the message easier to understand? Did the audience fit the brand's future needs?

A spike in distribution is not automatically a business result, and one successful post does not prove that a tactic will work every time.

Platform guidance also reminds us to be cautious about popular explanations for reach. TikTok,

for example, says follower count and an account's history of past high-performing videos are not direct factors in its For You recommendation system. That is a useful reminder that marketers should verify platform claims rather than build strategy around hearsay.

The practical habit is to separate what the team knows from what it assumes. Keep a record of tests, results and context. Review platform announcements and official resources. Treat performance patterns as evidence to investigate, not laws of nature.

PROTECT THE BRAND WHILE OPTIMISING PERFORMANCE

The pressure to produce measurable results can narrow the work. Teams may chase clicks, cheap reach or short-term conversions at the expense of brand meaning.

But marketing has to do more than capture demand that already exists. It also has to help build familiarity, preference and future demand. People do not always buy the first time they see a brand. Some may need repeated exposure, a stronger reason to believe or a clearer sense of what makes the brand different.

This is why the Adgorithm needs both short-term and long-term thinking. Use performance data to improve the next decision, but do not let a single campaign metric become the definition of success.



Ask whether the work is building the brand the business wants to own, and whether it is also helping produce the results the business needs now.

Automation can improve speed and precision. It can test combinations and shift spend quickly. Human judgement remains essential for setting priorities, recognising when the data is misleading and deciding what the brand should stand for.

THE MARKETER'S NEW CRAFT

To master the Adgorithm, marketers need to become fluent in several disciplines at once: customer understanding, creative judgement, platform knowledge, measurement and experimentation.

That does not mean every marketer must become a data

scientist or media trader. It means knowing enough to ask better questions, spot weak assumptions and connect the numbers to the work and the business outcome.

The craft is to translate a business problem into a clear objective, turn an audience insight into an idea, prepare the right signals for the platform, and learn from what happens. Then do it again with better judgement.

There will always be new formats, new tools and new platform rules. Specific tactics will change. The underlying discipline will endure: understand people, make something worth their attention, distribute it intelligently and learn from the response.

The algorithm can help deliver the message. The Adgorithm is knowing what the message should be, why it matters and how to make it count.

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MACAM- MACAM



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Conference is about all kinds of
everything right now.

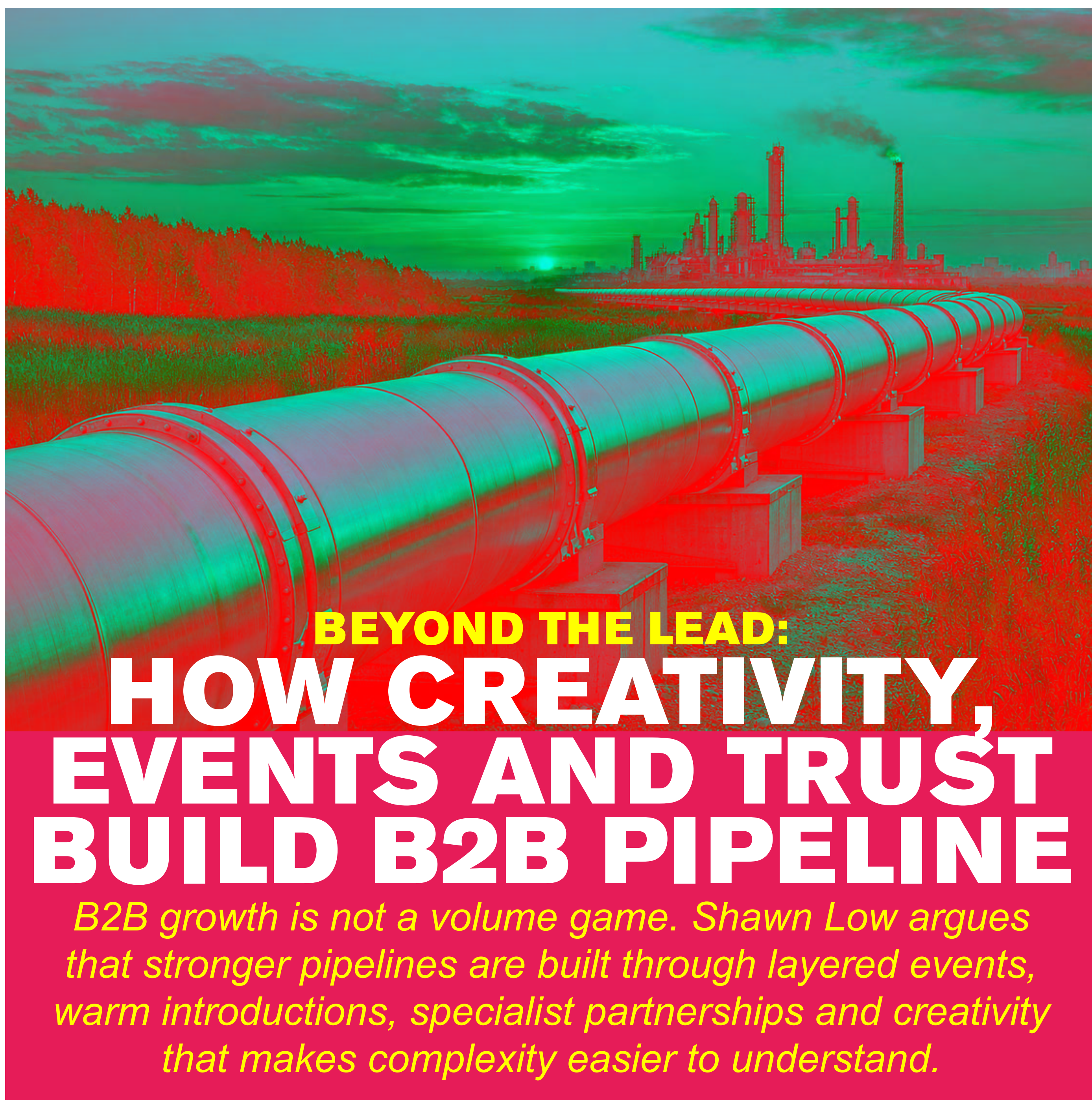
Old and new collide, budgets
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route to results.

This conference is where we
make sense of it all.

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BEYOND THE LEAD: HOW CREATIVITY, EVENTS AND TRUST BUILD B2B PIPELINE

B2B growth is not a volume game. Shawn Low argues that stronger pipelines are built through layered events, warm introductions, specialist partnerships and creativity that makes complexity easier to understand.

B2B marketing has become incredibly optimised, and that may be part of the problem.

When every campaign is judged against an end-of-funnel number, marketers can easily lose sight of the ideas, relationships and repeated interactions that make complex B2B buying possible.

For Shawn Low, creativity in B2B is not about copying consumer advertising. Global companies may create campaigns at headquarters and then ask APAC teams to localise them, while B2B budgets are often far smaller than the budgets behind major consumer campaigns.

But the definition of creativity is changing.

Awards such as Cannes' B2B categories increasingly recognise not only large-scale campaign ideas, but also creative uses of data, technology and customer insight.

For Shawn, the most useful definition may be the simplest: **B2B creativity is about making something complex feel clear, relevant and compelling.**

That creativity can also look different depending on who the buyer is.

For small and medium-sized businesses, there may only be one key decision-maker. Those buyers may behave more like consumers, using platforms such as Meta and responding strongly to real stories.



Case studies featuring actual business owners can therefore act almost like influencer marketing, helping translate a product or service into something more human and relatable.

Enterprise audiences are different.

Shawn would approach broad platforms such as Meta more cautiously unless a marketer has strong first-party data or a reliable match list. Large reach numbers may look impressive, but they can also fill the funnel with people who are unlikely to become genuine buyers.

This is one reason in-person activity remains so important.

Singapore's MICE sector continues to support conferences across technology, AI, defence and other specialist industries, while post-Covid audiences have rediscovered the value of face-to-face interaction.

Executive roundtables, conferences and selective leadership

gatherings create opportunities for people to learn, connect and discuss difficult business issues in environments where trust can develop more naturally.

The challenge is attribution.

A pile of business cards does not prove that an event worked.

Marketers need to define what happens next: how many meetings were booked, what opportunities were created, which deals were influenced and how prospects will be nurtured after the event.

For Shawn, the smartest way to approach events is in layers.

A large forum can create broad top-of-funnel awareness through booth visitors, downloads and general interest. Those contacts can then enter a wider communications stream.

Smaller satellite sessions, executive roundtables and client meetings are different. They tend to attract warmer prospects and should therefore receive more focused

... Partnerships also do not need to follow a traditional paid model. A co-hosted roundtable, webinar or content project can bring together complementary networks and create shared value...

middle- or lower-funnel follow-up.

Green Hat's experience around the B2B Marketing Leaders Forum in Singapore shows how this layered approach can work.

Hosted events, roundtables and client meetings generated around **\$700,000 in deals moving towards closure**, separate from the wider group of general contacts added to the CRM.

But the result did not happen overnight.

Green Hat had participated for three years.

The first year helped build awareness. The second deepened relationships. By the third, the business began to benefit from the familiarity it had created.

Prospects had already seen the team, read its research and met its people multiple times.

Over time, recognition became trust, and trust led to referrals and opportunities.

That same principle applies when trying to reach senior decision-makers.

Cold LinkedIn messages and emails are becoming less effective because inboxes are already crowded with repetitive outreach.

Warm introductions still carry more weight.

Mutual contacts, specialist media, vendors and co-marketing partners can all provide access to communities that would otherwise be difficult to reach.

Partnerships also do not need to follow a traditional paid model.

A co-hosted roundtable, webinar or content project can bring together complementary networks and create shared value.

Events offer another pathway.

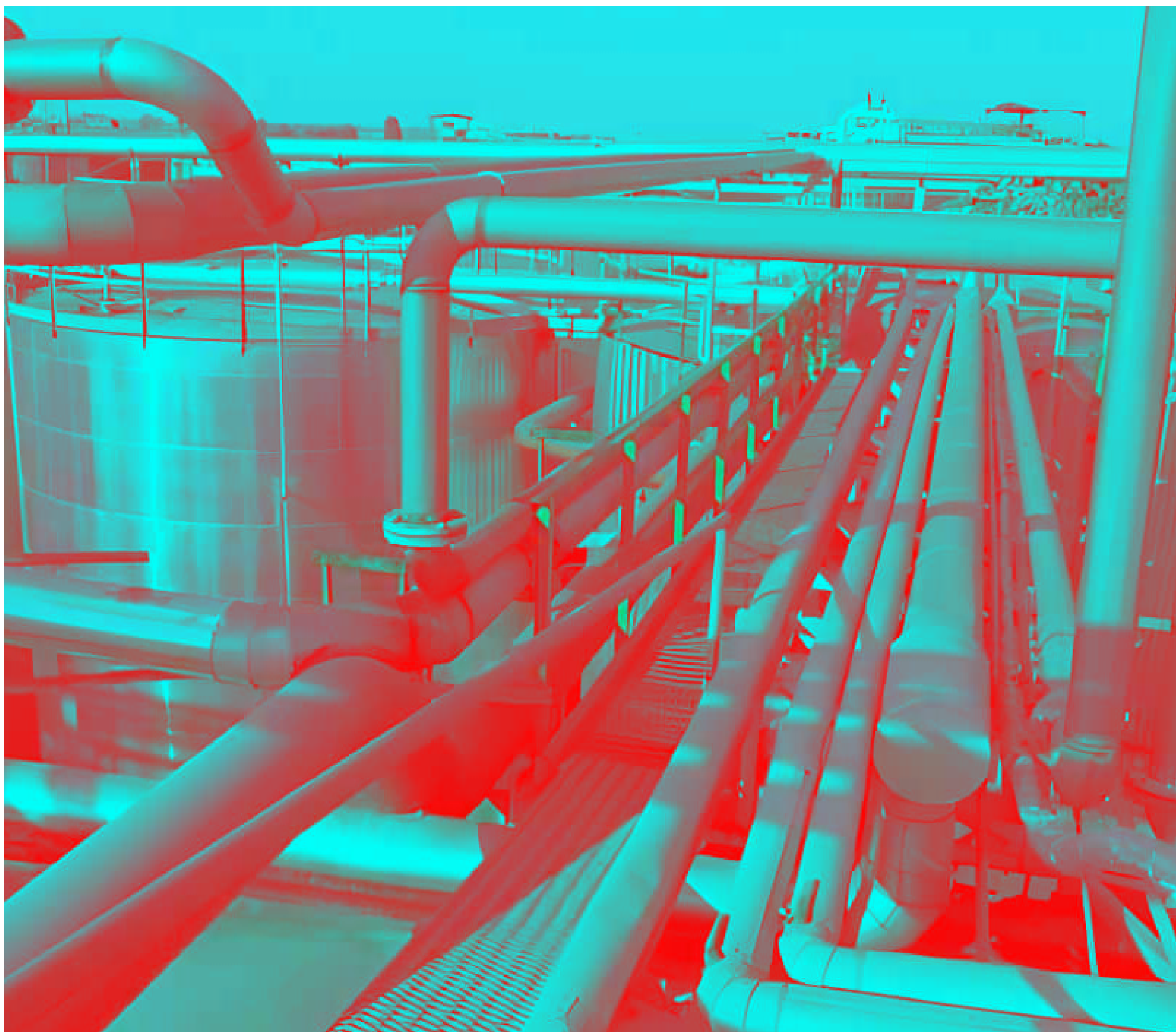
If the people a brand wants to reach are gathering in a particular room, the question becomes: **what credible reason does the brand have to be in that room too?**

Senior executives are often only one or two connections away. The challenge is finding the right bridge.

Behind all these strategies sits the pressure every marketer recognises: revenue.

Shawn says revenue targets keep him awake, along with the need to keep Green Hat visible, sustain its marketing engine and turn client concerns into real pipeline.

His preferred answer is research-led usefulness.



Bringing genuine insight into a conversation earns the right to discuss what matters.

That is important because strong B2B marketing is not simply about being present. It is about being useful enough that people want to keep listening.

Interestingly, Shawn's creative inspiration often comes from outside B2B.

Art, running and travel give him space away from a professional environment dominated by AI, platforms and metrics.

Running in particular gives him time to think through problems, sometimes dictating ideas into Siri while on the move. His previous experience at Lonely Planet also continues to influence how he sees people, places and behaviour.

... Art, running and travel give him space away from a professional environment dominated by AI, platforms and metrics...

That may be the broader lesson for B2B marketers.

Pipeline is not built through automation alone.

It grows when sharp ideas make difficult subjects easier to

**... the strongest
B2B strategies are
not simply about
generating more
leads...**

understand, when useful research creates better conversations, and when consistent human presence turns familiarity into trust.

For Shawn, the strongest B2B strategies are not simply about generating more leads.

They are about creating the right encounters, with the right people, often enough for confidence to build.

Hear More from Shawn Low at Elevate B2B Conference 2027

Jade Choong will speak at the Elevate B2B Conference 2027 on 12 January 2027 in Kuala Lumpur, sharing practical insights into how technical B2B brands can communicate value, build thought leadership and connect more effectively with decision-makers.

Join leading B2B voices for two days of strategy, creativity, case studies and practical learning at KLGCC Convention Centre, Kuala Lumpur, on 12 & 13 January 2027.

Registrations are now open.

For enquiries and group registrations, contact Ruby at **+603-7726 2588** or ruby@adoimagazine.com & For sponsorship Opportunities*, Contact vishnu@adoimagazine.com.



THE ASEAN B2B
CONFERENCE 2027
12TH & 13TH JANUARY 2027
KLGCC CONVENTION CENTRE
ELEVATE
<https://marketingmagazineasia.com/b2b/>

The poster features a large, stylized 'B2B' logo composed of colorful geometric shapes (squares and circles) in blue, yellow, green, and red. Below the logo, the text 'CONFERENCE 2027' is written in a bold, sans-serif font. The dates '12TH & 13TH JANUARY 2027' and the venue 'KLGCC CONVENTION CENTRE' are listed in a smaller font. The word 'ELEVATE' is written in a large, stylized, red font with a brushstroke effect. At the bottom, there is a URL and a small yellow circular icon with a hand cursor.

Finish at the top.
And maybe one day.
Run the business.
Run the account.
Run the brand.
Be rewarded.
Be applauded.
Be awarded.
Make heaps of them.
Make a campaign.
Make connections.
Have a crack.
Have an opinion.
Have an idea.
Take the coffee run.
Take in the groceries.
Take out the bins.
Get selected for internship.
apply@kerfuffle.agency
Start at the bottom.





NOT ALL IMPRESSIONS ARE EQUAL:

HOW MOOVE MEDIA IS REDEFINING TRANSIT MEDIA IN SINGAPORE

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT: MOOVE MEDIA × BROADSIGN

At Dhoby Ghaut MRT, one of Singapore's busiest transit interchanges, commuters are stopped in their tracks. Recently, a 3D anamorphic activation for the Coca Cola World Cup campaign lighted up the concourse, pulling out phones and turning a daily commute into a moment of engagement. It was a fitting backdrop for a conversation about where transit advertising is headed, and why [Moove Media](#), Singapore's leading transit media company, is leading the way.

PRESENCE AT SCALE

[Moove Media](#) owns and operates screens across Singapore's MRT network including DTL and NEL

rail networks and the entire bus and bus interchange advertising network. Formats include static, digital panels, large format displays, and platform screens, delivering millions of impressions daily to a captive, attentive audience. But scale was never the whole story. "Not all impressions are equal" is the idea now driving the company's transformation, backed by real investment in technology and creative capability.

OUTGROWING THE OLD WAY

As the network grew, cracks appeared in how the business ran. Digital screens sat on one system, static inventory on another, with little communication between them. This created friction for advertisers and duplicated effort internally. The

MOOVE MEDIA CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

fix was to unify everything on a single platform capable of handling both static scheduling and digital programmatic demand, built with a partner who understood operating at scale. That's where [Broadsign](#) came in. Beyond technical fit, [Moove Media](#) points to genuine partnership as the deciding factor. [Broadsign](#) configured the solution around its operational model rather than the reverse.

THE PROGRAMMATIC SHIFT: MOOVEPRO AND PDOOH

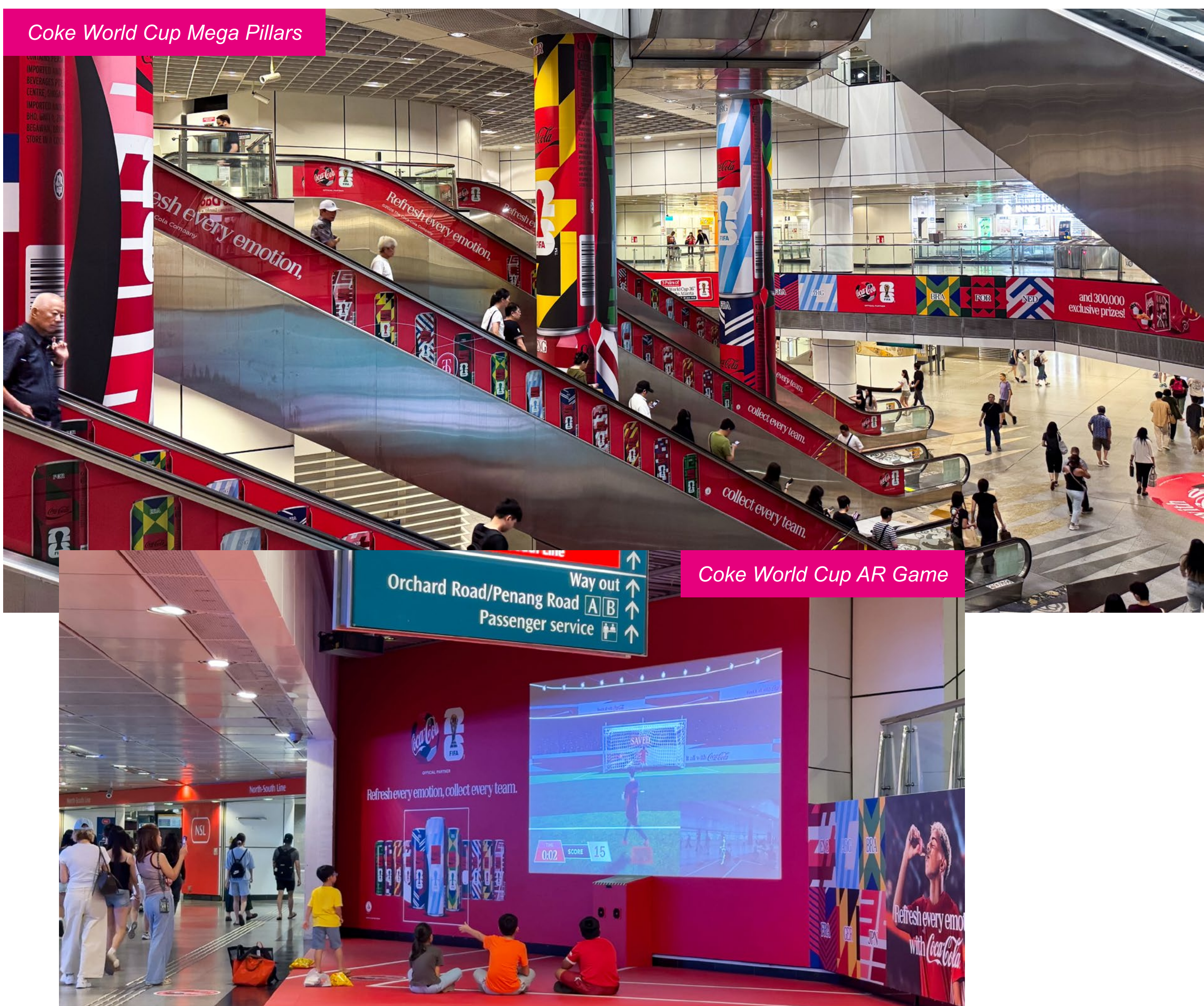
With that infrastructure in place, [Moove Media](#) launched MoovePRO, its programmatic DOOH offering. Instead of booking a fixed screen for a fixed period, advertisers can now target specific audience profiles

at specific times across specific locations. This reshapes the pricing, planning, and value conversation, letting inventory compete directly with digital media buys while offering something a phone screen can't, an unmissable physical presence.

The operational payoff has been speed. Campaigns that once took days to set up now go live in hours, letting brands react in near real time to a sporting result, weather event, or trending moment. Dynamic, contextual creative also consistently outperforms static, generic messaging.

CREATIVE THAT MATCHES THE TECHNOLOGY

Technology is only half the equation. [Moove Media](#) has invested heavily





Coke World Cup Live Score

in creative capability, including 3D anamorphic content, augmented reality, and motion triggered formats, all live on the network. The Coca Cola activation at Dhoby Ghaut shows the result. The screen doesn't just display an ad, it creates an experience that makes people stop, look up, and engage.

That combination has repositioned the company in the market. No longer just a transit media operator, [Moove Media](#) now presents itself as a full stack OOH media technology company, a shift that has opened conversations with regional and global brands that previously wouldn't have considered out of home as a primary channel.

WHAT'S NEXT

[Moove Media](#)'s leadership sees the industry at an inflection point. Presence, a poster in front of as many eyes as possible, is table stakes now. The future is intelligence: understanding who's in front of a screen, when, and why, and delivering something relevant

in that moment. MoovePRO is the foundation, [Broadsign](#) provides the infrastructure, and while Singapore remains home base, the ambition is regional and global.

The pitch to brands still on the fence: stand in the station during rush hour and watch a screen fire up. No skip button, no ad blocker, no second screen, just a brand and an audience that's genuinely present. Not all impressions are equal, and at Dhoby Ghaut, [Moove Media](#) is proving what a premium one looks like.



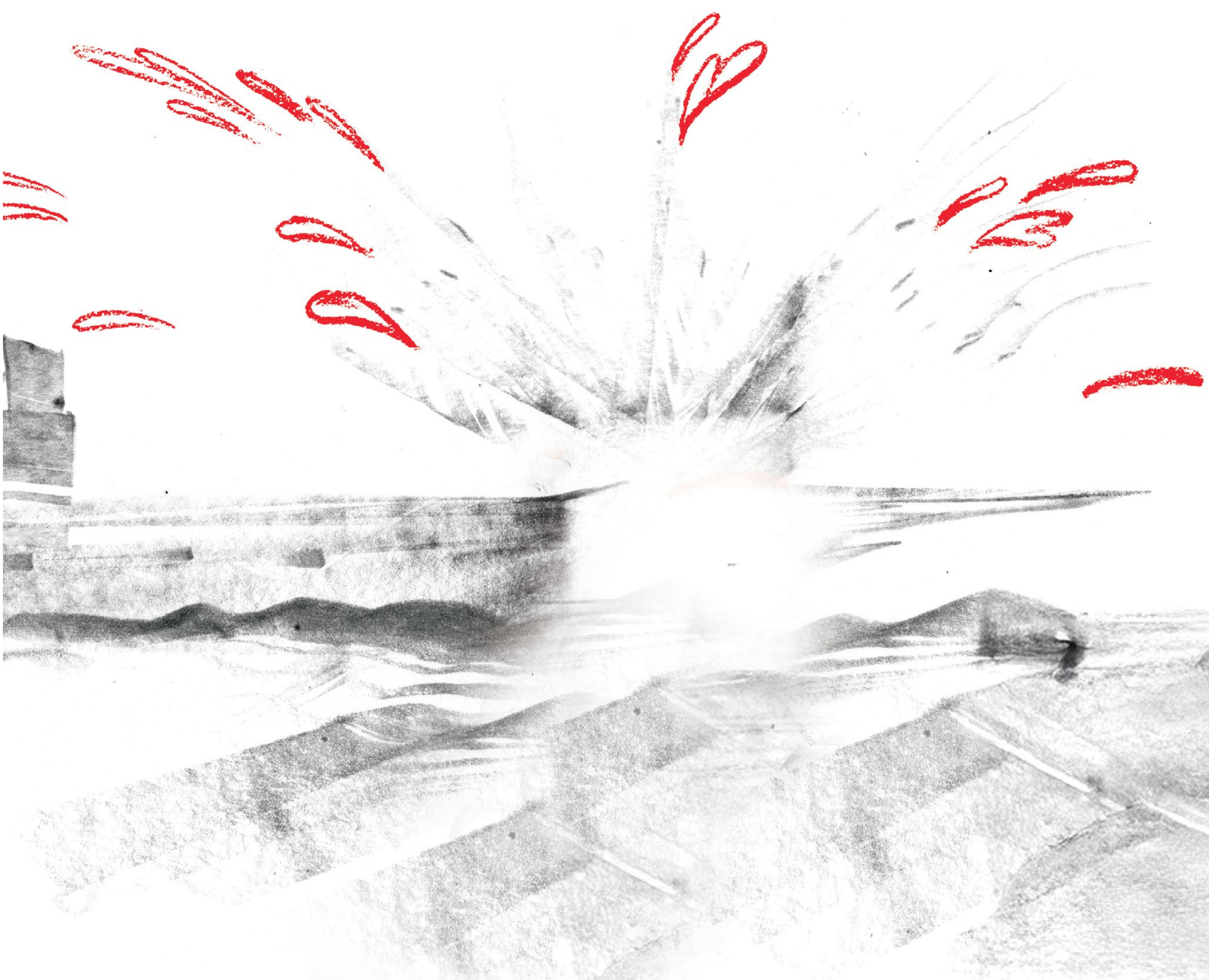
Based on an on location interview with Jeff Kwek, [Moove Media](#)'s CEO and Malcom Wong, Head of Digital & AdTech, filmed at Dhoby Ghaut MRT Station during the Coca Cola World Cup campaign activation, in partnership with [Broadsign](#).

The hidden chapter from Eugene Cheong's new book,
now published exclusively in Weekender magazine



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↓↓↓
To sink an
AIRCRAFT carrier
use a
CORKSCREW



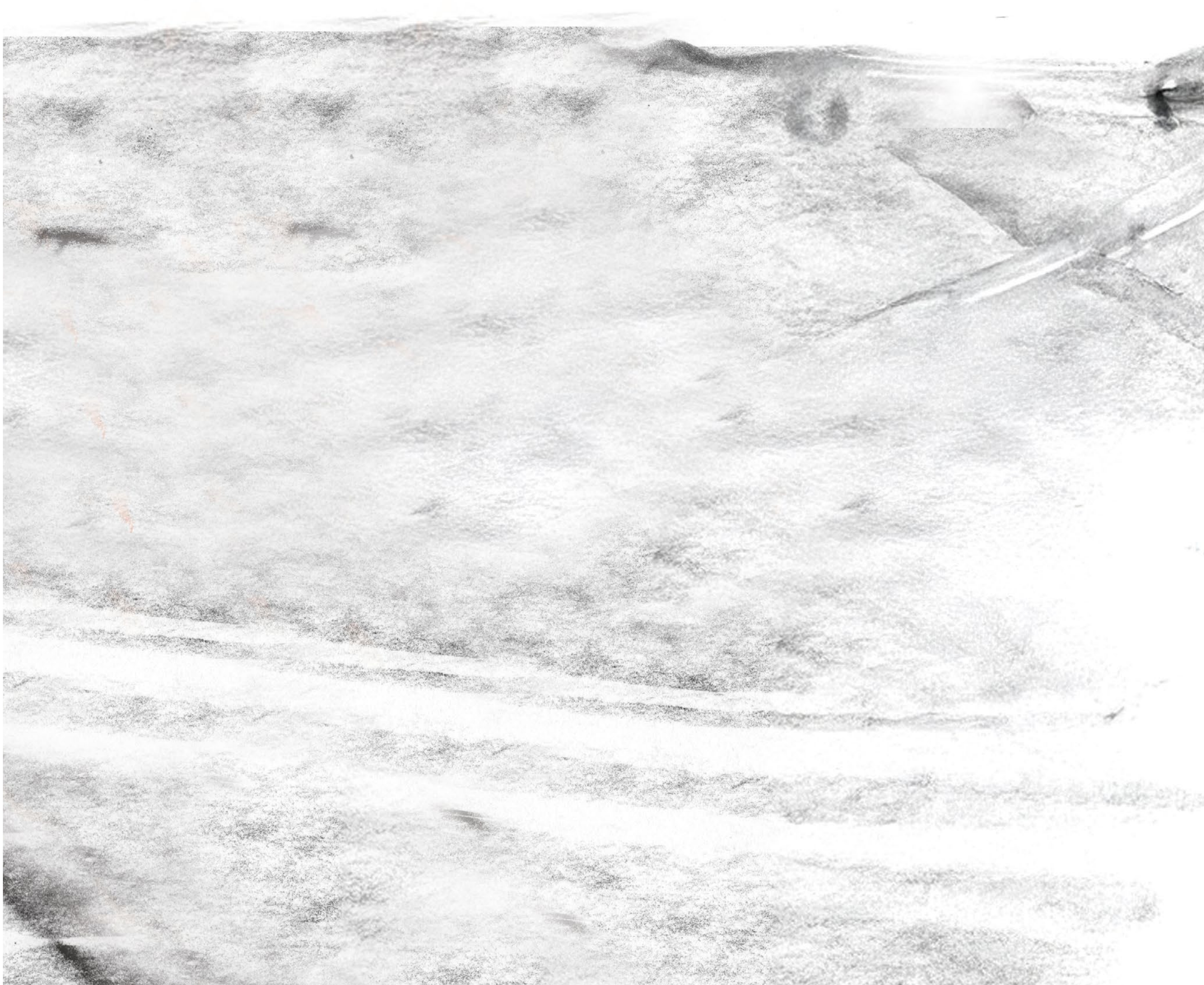
EVERY BUREAUCRACY IS, AT HEART,
AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER.

VAST. GREY. BRISTLING WITH POINTLESS
COMMITTEES AND ECHO CHAMBERS
INSTEAD OF TOMAHAWK MISSILES.
ACQUIRED, WITH ENORMOUS SUMS OF
OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY, TO PROJECT
THE COMFORTING ILLUSION THAT
TITANICS DON'T SINK.

AT THE HELM, SPREADSHEET DEVOTEES
CHANT THEIR MANTRA: A WHOLE NUMBER

FOLLOWED BY A STRING OF OHHS. THE INCANTATIONS SEND THESE BONDSE/RVANTS OF MAMMON INTO ECSTASY AND TEARS STREAM DOWN THEIR FACES.

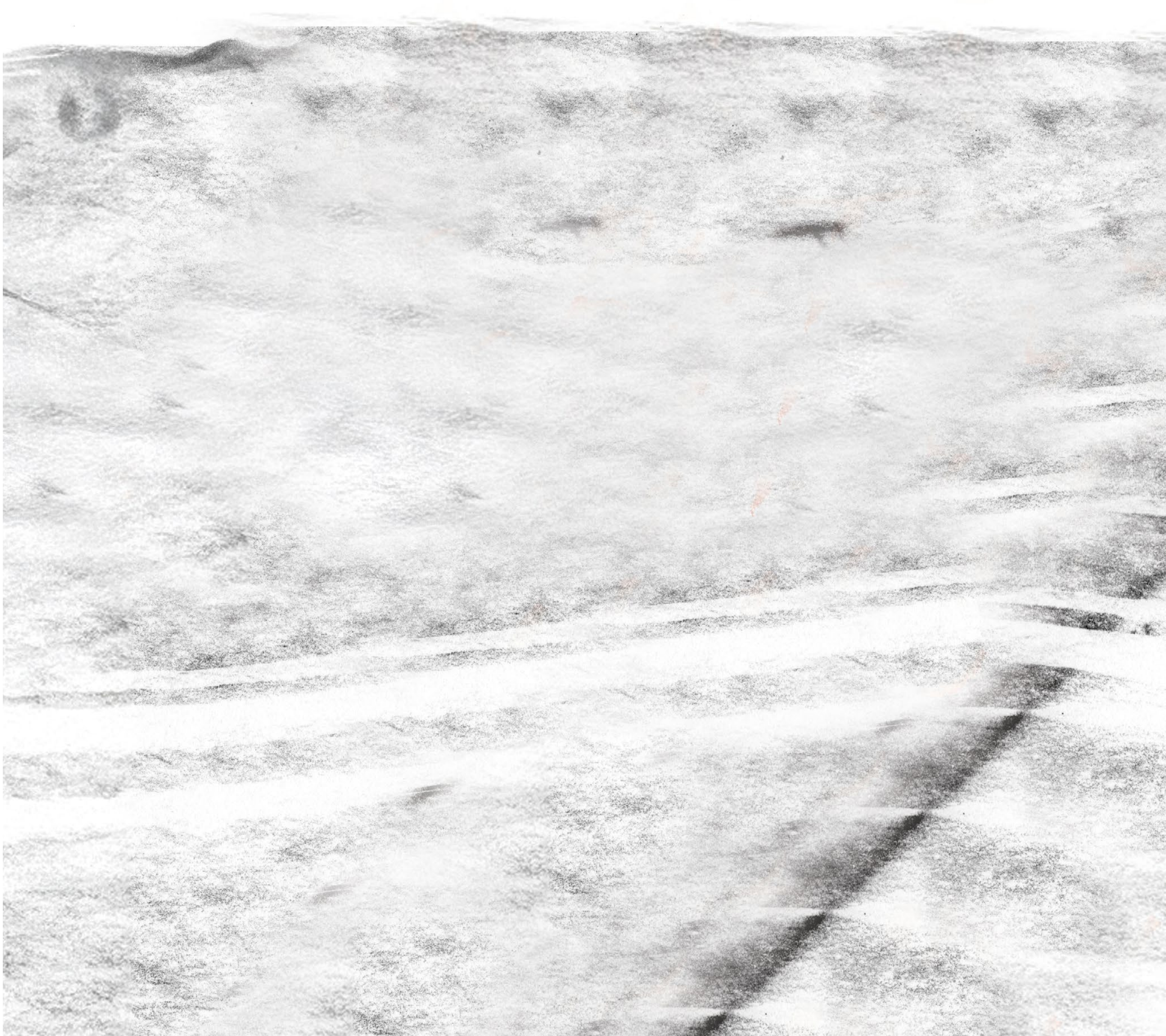
DEFAULT THINKING, NOT UNNATURALLY, DICTATES THAT TO DEFEAT SOMETHING THE SIZE OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, YOU'LL NEED SOMETHING JUST AS GINORMOUS. A BIGGER BUDGET. A LONGER MEETING. A FATTER PAL WITH

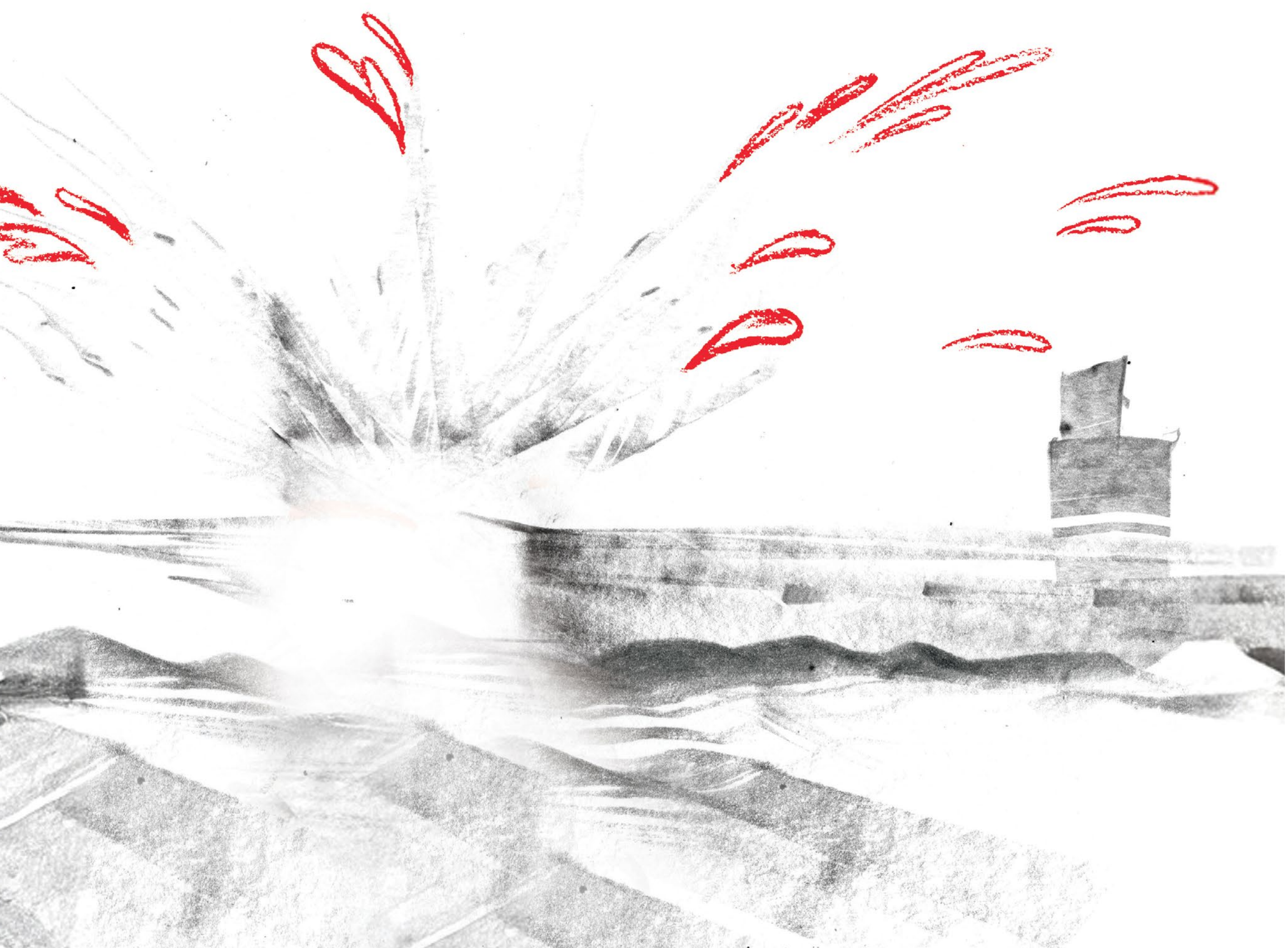


DEEPER POCKETS. FAILING WHICH,
GODBLOODYZILLA.

SAFETY IN LARGE NUMBERS IS, OF
COURSE, NONSENSE. THOSE WHO ARE
TOO BIG TO FAIL INEVITABLY FAIL.

MARGARET MEAD DIDN'T SAY "NEVER
DOUBT THAT A BLOATED, OVERLEVERAGED
HOLDING COMPANY WITH A FULLY-ALIGNED
C-SUITE, 17 ACQUIRED AGENCIES THAT ALL
HATE EACH OTHER, AND A QUARTERLY
EARNINGS CALL, CAN CHANGE THE WORLD."

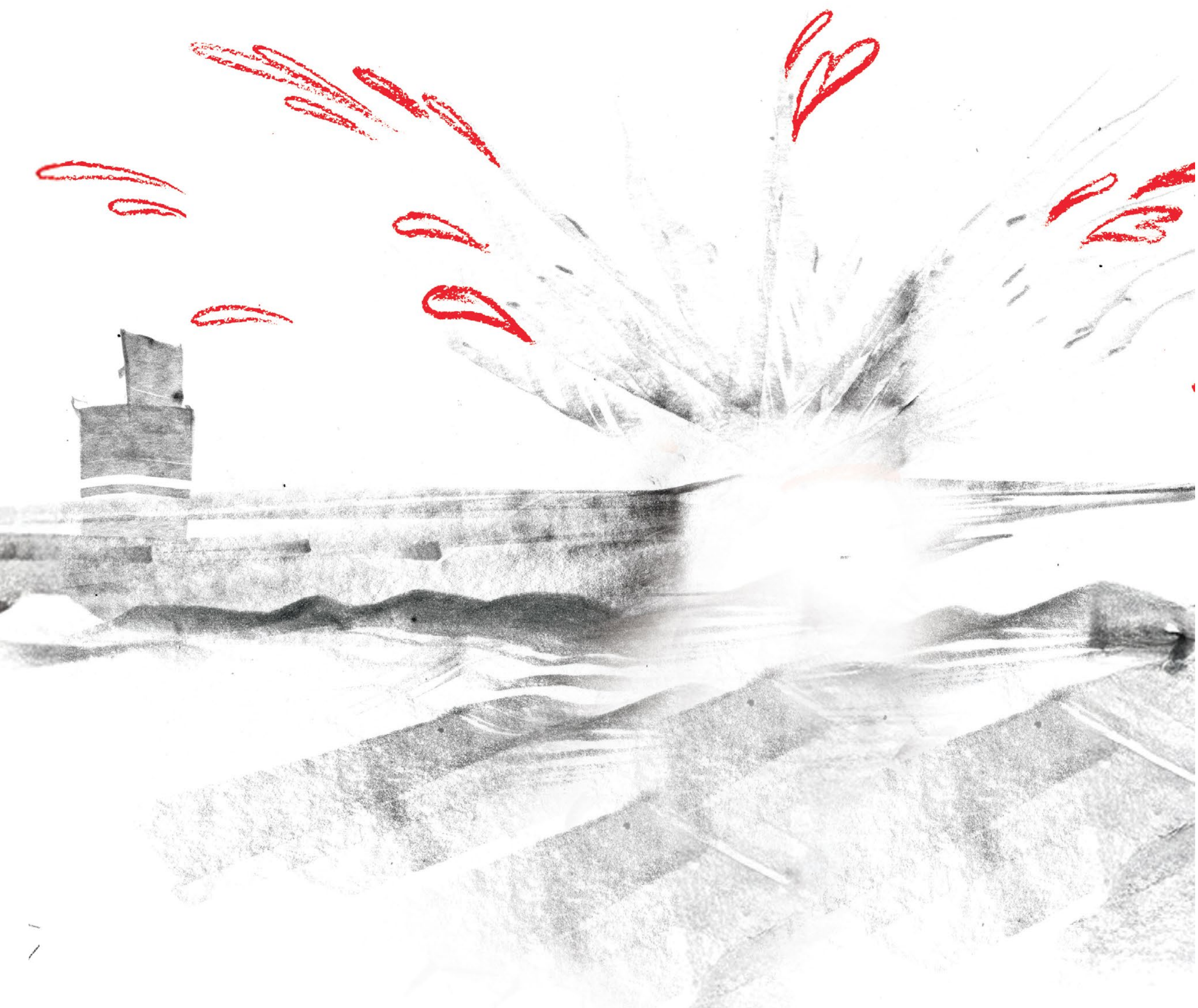




NO, SHE SAID, IT TAKES A SMALL GROUP OF THOUGHTFUL, COMMITTED CITIZENS TO CHANGE THE WORLD. NOW, THAT'S COMMANDO AT ITS MOST EXQUISITE.

THE FREE-SPIRITED UNDERSTAND A SMALL, MORTIFYING TRUTH THAT THE BEAN COUNTERS CAN NEVER QUITE GRASP: AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER DOESN'T NEED TO BE DEALT WITH BY A 20 MILLION DOLLAR, MACH 5 HYPERSONIC MISSILE. IT NEEDS ONE SMALL HOLE, IN ITS SOFT UNDERBELLY, THAT NOBODY





THOUGHT TO GUARD, BECAUSE WHO ON EARTH GUARDS A BELLY BUTTON, ANYWAY?

A CORKSCREW WILL DO NICELY.

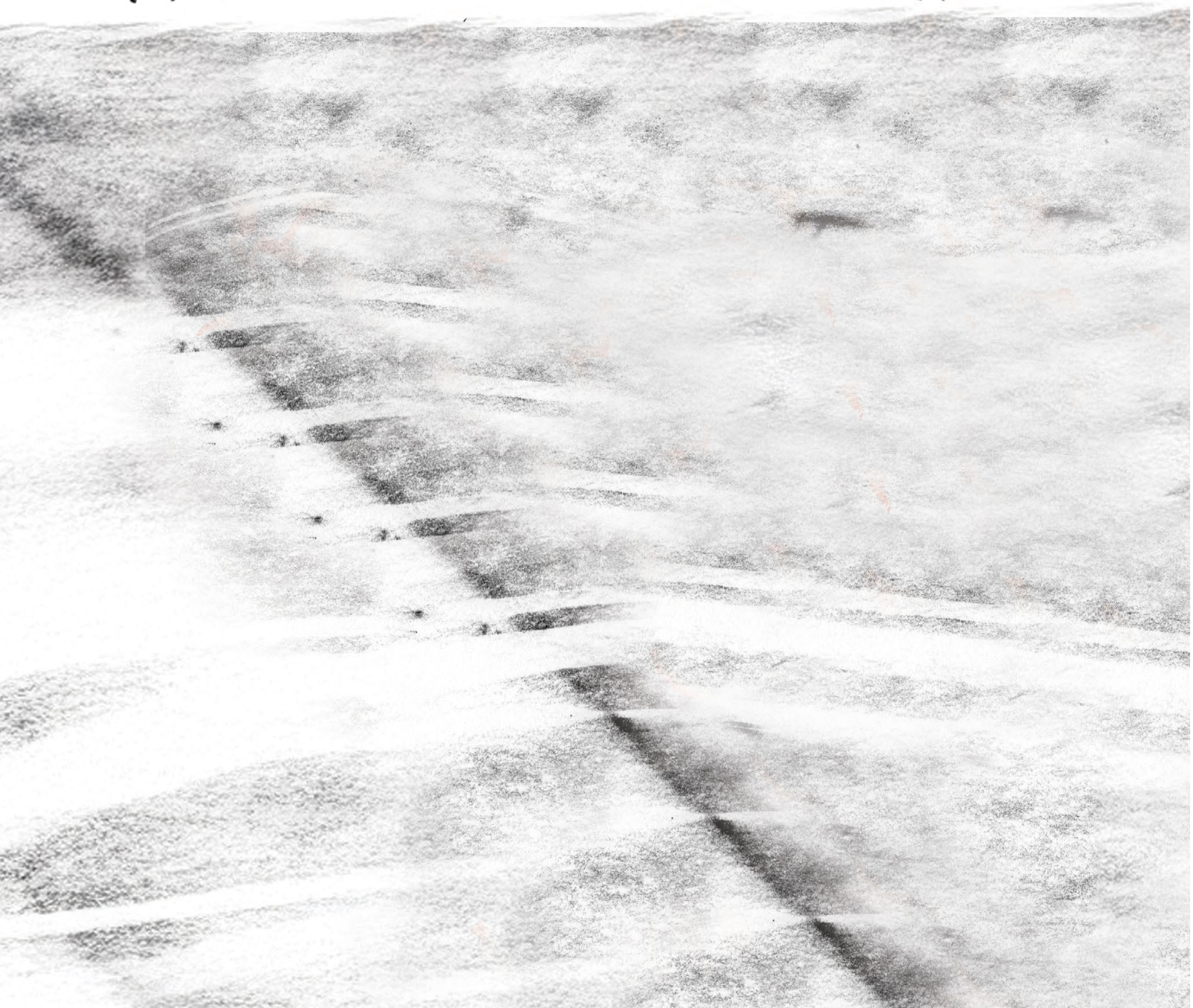
AND NEED WE REMIND YOU OF GOLIATH, FAMOUSLY UNDONE BY A SMALL SMOOTH STONE?

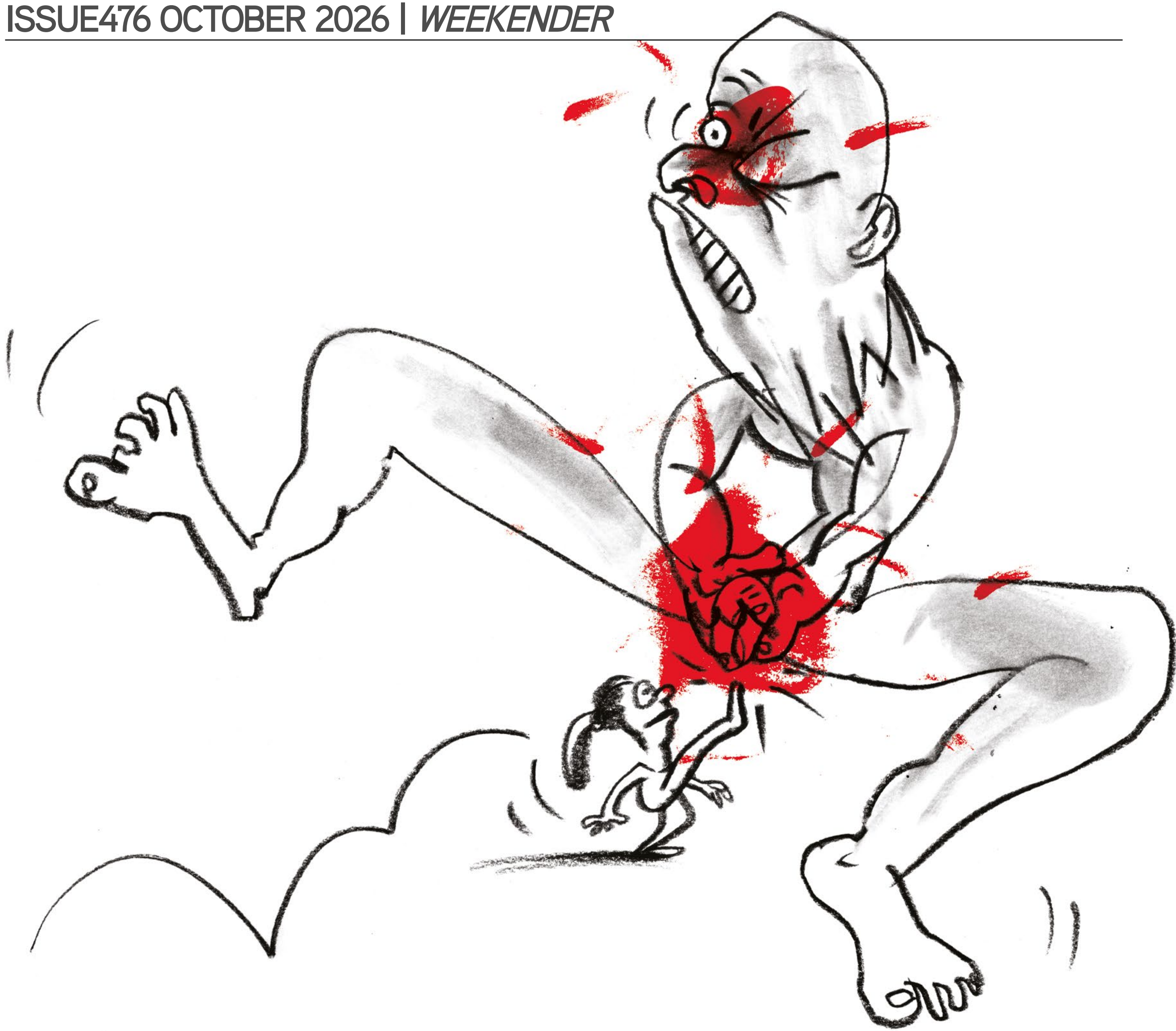
SOMEWHERE IN CAPE TOWN, SAN PAULO, MANILA, SOMEONE IS SOLVING A PROBLEM ON A BUDGET THAT WOULDN'T COVER PETTY CASH AT HEAD OFFICE IN NEW YORK.

NO LUXURY OF BRUTE FORCE, SO THEY IMPROVISE, SCAVENGE, AND ASK THE SAME QUESTION ON REPEAT: WHAT'S THE CHEAPEST, WEIRDEST WAY TO KICK THE SUCKER IN THE KAZOO?

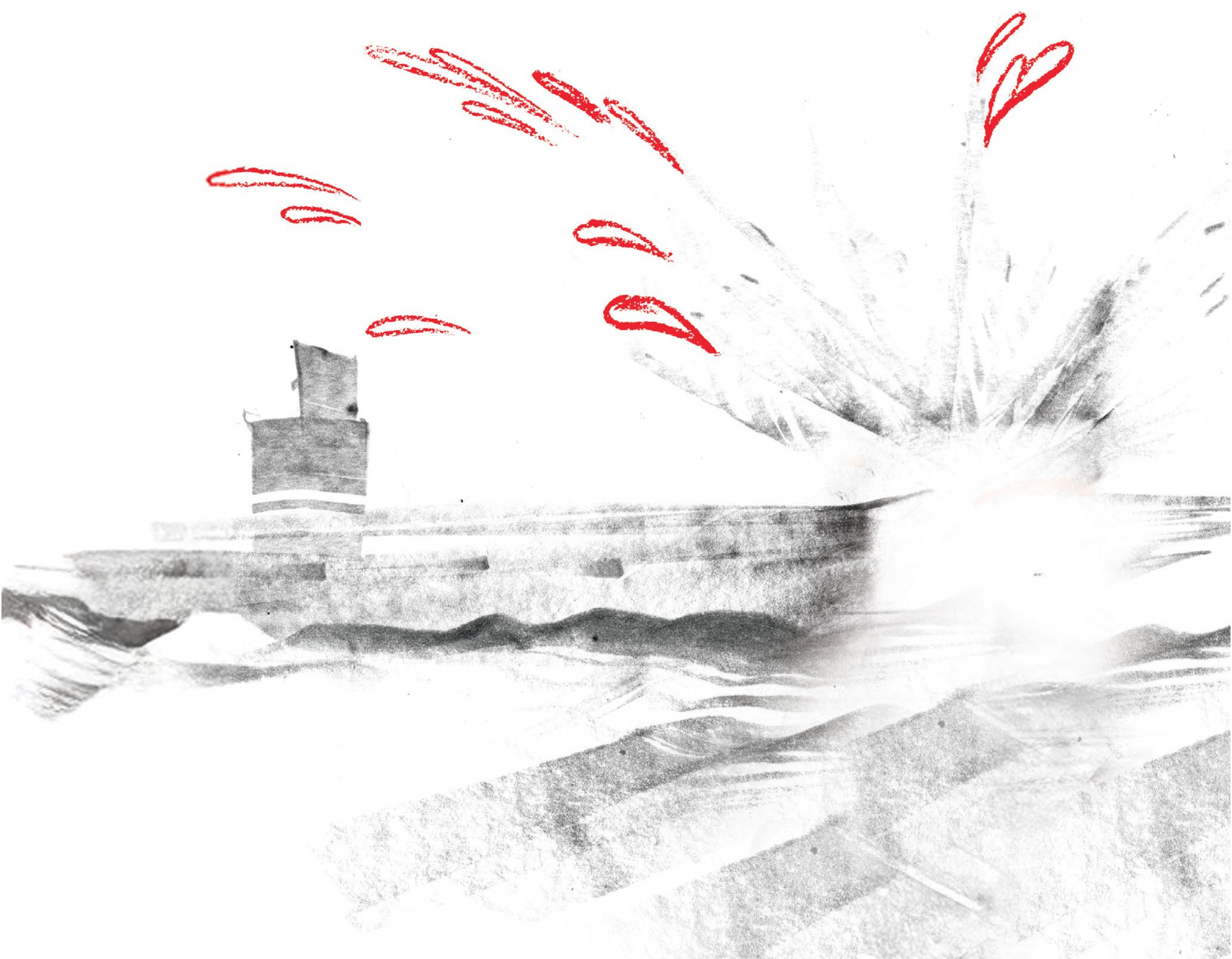
THE FUTURE, AS EVER THUS, BELONGS TO SMALL GROUPS WITH THERMONUCLEAR IDEAS AND OTHERWORLDLY CRAFTSMANSHIP.

IF YOU'RE STUCK IN AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER, DO NOT DESPAIR. YOU CAN STILL OPERATE LIKE DELTA FORCE FROM THE INSIDE. SMILE AT THE COMMITTEE. NOD IN MEETINGS.





SHARPEN THE CORKSCREW FOR LATER.
AND THE IRONY IS, THE BEST CREATIVE FOLKS
INSIDE NEW YORK AIRCRAFT CARRIERS
ARE USUALLY FROM CAPE TOWN, OR SAO
PAULO, OR MANILA. YOU SEE, THEY'VE
SMUGGLED THE CORKSCREW ONBOARD.
THEY ARE THE FOLKS WITH THE AUDACITY
TO DEFEAT A CAST OF THOUSANDS WITH A
KEYBOARD AND 26 SOLDIERS. THEY ARE
THE FOLKS WITH THE ROGUERY TO CAPTURE
A GOLDEN LION OR A WINGED CELESTIAL
CREATURE WITH AN IPHONE ON PRORAW



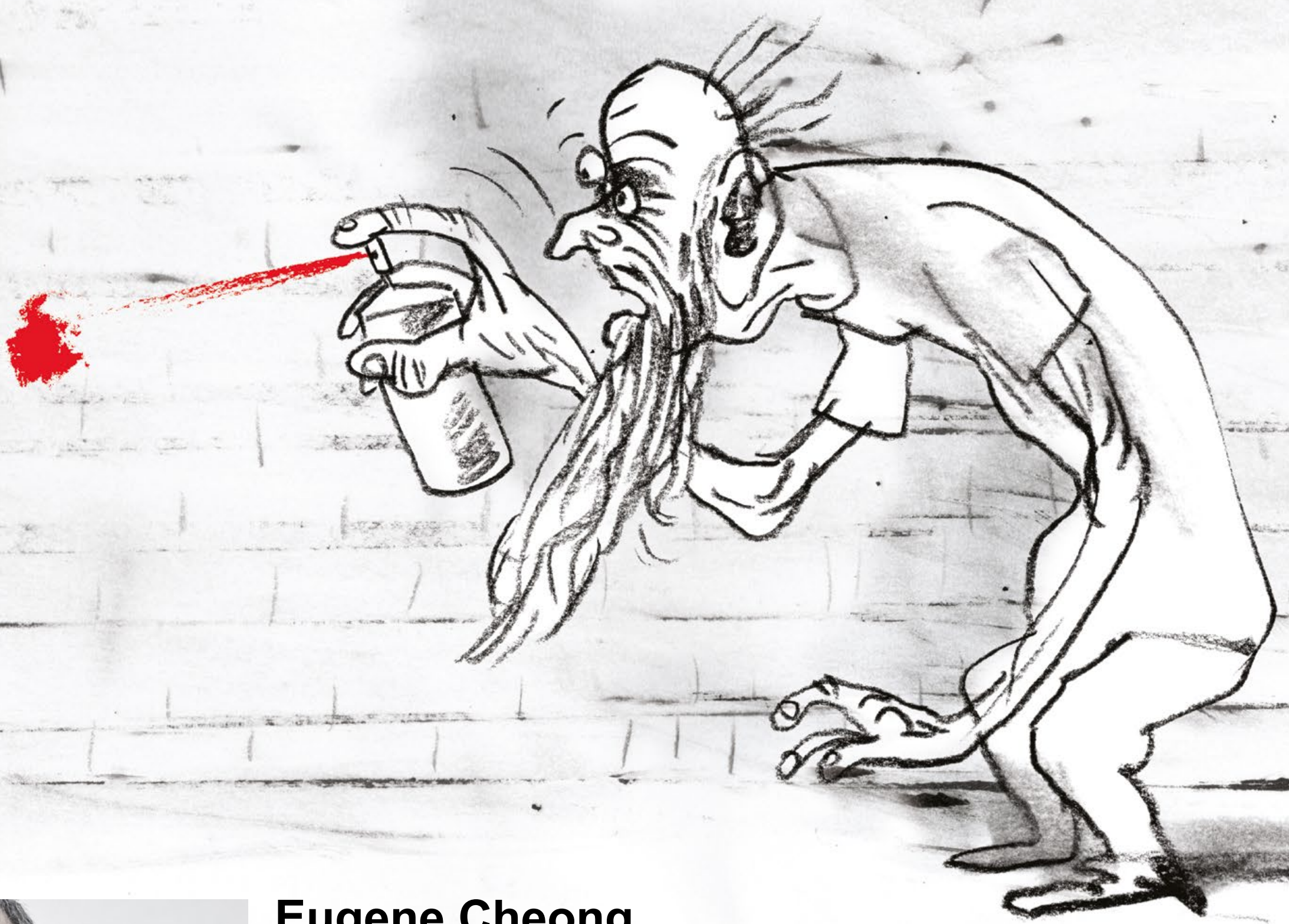
MODE. THEY ARE THE FOLKS WHO CAN CORNER THE MARKET WITH AN ARCHED EYEBROW AND A SQUIGGLE ON A COFFEE-STAINED PAPER NAPKIN.

THEY ARE GANGSTAS WHO HANDLE THE CORKSCREW LIKE A SWITCHBLADE.

THIS ESSAY, BETWEEN US GIRLS, WASN'T WRITTEN IN A WRITERS' ROOM. THERE WAS NO COMMITTEE, NO FOCUS GROUP, NO ONE TO POINT OUT THAT A CORKSCREW IS A FAINTLY RIDICULOUS WEAPON TO BRING TO A FIGHT WITH A SUPERCARRIER.

IT WAS WRITTEN BY A DEFIANT OLD GEEZER,
IN A ROOM, WITH NOTHING BUT THE CORKSCREW
AND A BOTTLE OF TEMPRANILLO.

A LESSON THE BIG BOYS IN THE BIG LEAGUE
IN THEIR BIG BOOTS WOULD DO WELL TO HEED.



Eugene Cheong
Creative Partner
eugene+jasper.



WHAT MAKES GREAT LEADERS?

The Future Does Not Fit in the Containers of the Past. Edition 320.

[Rishad Tobaccowala](#)

... Sometimes this may mean going against the grain and what is majority opinion...

Across time, nations and industries the best *long-term* leaders have exhibited the same six characteristics:

1. Resilient Effort: There is no substitute for hard work. Talent matters but is not enough. Hard work, focus and persistence are what makes for success. They never “call it in”. Tim Ferris and all those books of 4-hour workweeks and stuff are fantasies. If one want to do well, one has to work one’s butt off. Period.

Even if one is wickedly smart.

When we see people we admire do things effortlessly, it is because they have practiced, continuously iterated, and learned. As a result

... If they wanted somebody to reflect what they say, they know it is far more cost effective to replace a senior manager with a full-length mirror...

they have sculpted intellectual and emotional muscles that now make their performance second nature.

The effort is also sustained.

They are relentless and constantly resurrecting after setbacks.

2. Growth Mindset: The best leaders are perpetual students constantly growing utilizing three tactics:

a) **Exploration:** They explore new areas outside their category knowing that the future of their industry is likely to come from outside of it. They seek guides and experts to help them navigate what they do not know. They travel to meet start-ups and to different nations to understand other perspectives and new approaches.

b) **Engaging provocateurs/ jesters:** Often it is only the clown that can convey the truth to the Crown. Rather than have “yes women and men” chant about the greatness of the *dear leader* they

retain challengers and people who question them.

If they wanted somebody to reflect what they say, they know it is far more cost effective to replace a senior manager with a full-length mirror.

c) **Setting aside time for learning:** Their calendars have time set aside to learn. Usually they are prolific readers and intensely curious. As Satya Nadella, the CEO of Microsoft, notes they display a “learn it all” mindset versus a “know it all” mindset.

3. Integrity and Trust: Integrity is when what one says, what one believes and what one does are aligned.

INTEGRITY IS A WAY OF DOING. IT IS A BEHAVIOUR.

And one does not build a reputation for integrity without principles and sticking to them even if it is inconvenient to a career.

Build reputation by speaking truth to power if appropriate.

Sometimes this may mean going against the grain and what is majority opinion.

By being fearless and calling things out (politely, calmly and often with humor) versus bending the knee to the powerful, the moneyed and the in-fashion.

Among the best compliments one can get is that one is a person of their word.

Integrity is the bank that prints trust.

... If trusted as a leader, our colleagues, our partners, and our investors are open to being innovative, taking risks, moving fast, speaking up, and continuously improving...

Trust is the critical currency in business and relationships.

TRUST IS A WAY ONE IS PERCEIVED. IT IS A FEELING.

Trust is speed because it removes friction and accelerates decision making and risk taking.

If trusted as a leader, our colleagues, our partners, and our investors are open to being innovative, taking risks, moving fast, speaking up, and continuously improving.

Outside of a few cases, leaders give trust to those who work with them till proved wrong rather than get them to earn trust. Trust is often earned and kept by showing the

data one is using, being clear about one's intent and goals and being transparent about the decision making process.

4. Accessibility: Regardless of how powerful or famous or busy they are, leaders find ways for people to get to them easily and feel safe and free to speak what is on their mind and in their hearts.

Whether it be a student, a startup, someone who sounds like a nitwit with a crazy idea, they know it is important to find time to meet these folks. They are wary of over relying on a bevy of executive assistants to filter and shoo away people. To grow it is essential to meet new people, to listen, and to be available.

They encourage people to challenge them. They work to be respected and admired, not feared.

5. Stewardship: Leaders recognize that success is due to those around them.

The talent that delivers the products and services which they need to attract, retain and cultivate by giving them opportunities to build and grow their skills, reputation and wealth.

They recognize that the company they lead is bigger and greater than them. There were leaders before and there will be leaders after. Great leaders never believe they are the company.

They focus on the ensuring the long term success of their customers.

Leaders recognize that it is about others first and not them first.



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6. Results: One does not stay a leader without delivering a spectrum of results.

Financial results are a key but they are built on other key deliverables including insights, ideas and imagination to re-think one's business and help customers re-invent theirs.

The best leaders do not just keep their companies up to date but up to tomorrow and here is why a growth mindset becomes key.

Just as is the reputation for integrity, trust and stewardship since the only way to get from here to there often is convincing investors, customers and talent to go to a new world which feels risky, scary and often lacks clarity.

ONE SINGLE THING.

Every picture tells a story...

Rishad is the author of "Restoring the Soul of Business: Staying Human in the Age of Data" published by Harper Collins. Additional writings can be found in the "The Future Does Not Fit in the Containers of the Past" read by 25,000 leaders around the world.



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AN AI WORKSHOP FOR LEADERS

DIFFERENTIATION IN THE



AGE OF AI

BY RAJIV LAL

27TH OCTOBER, 2026
KLGCC CONVENTION
CENTRE
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