

The budget mismatch and the phone that took a year

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“The overrun isn't a budget failure. It's a planning model that priced inputs the year before they got five times cheaper to convert into output.”

— Seln Oriax, today's narration

Three senior engineers and ChatGPT couldn't reverse-engineer a Viking VOIP phone protocol in a year. Boris Starkov at Eleven Labs used Claude Code to do it in two days — brute-forcing command codes, setting up a TCP proxy, and cracking a checksum algorithm for roughly \$100 in tokens.

The Uber AI budget overruns are being headline-d as a failure story, but they're really a planning mismatch: budgets set in 2025 priced inputs before they got five times cheaper to convert.

Vicki Boykis argues we should be “more tired than the model” — adding deliberate friction to preserve skill retention in an era of agentic code generation.

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