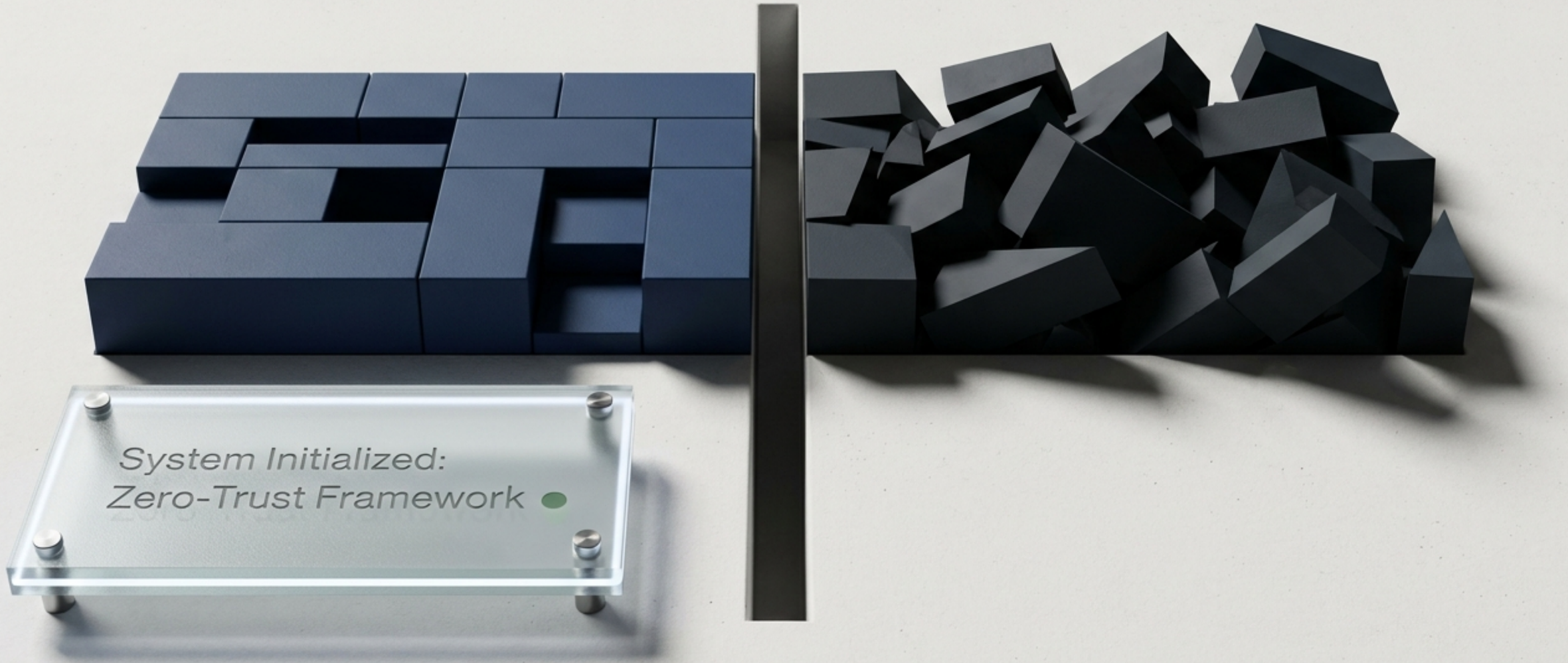
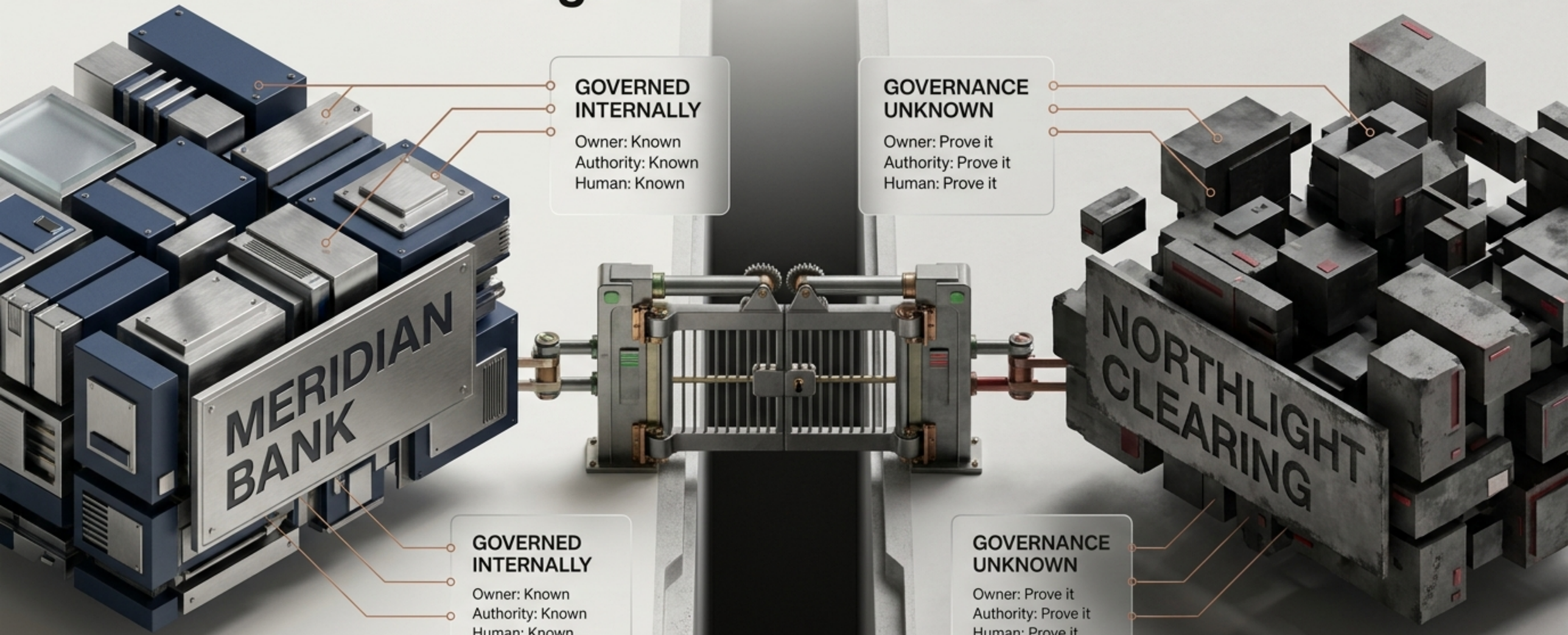
ENSIGN: Governance Beyond the Perimeter

The missing control layer for inter-institutional AI.

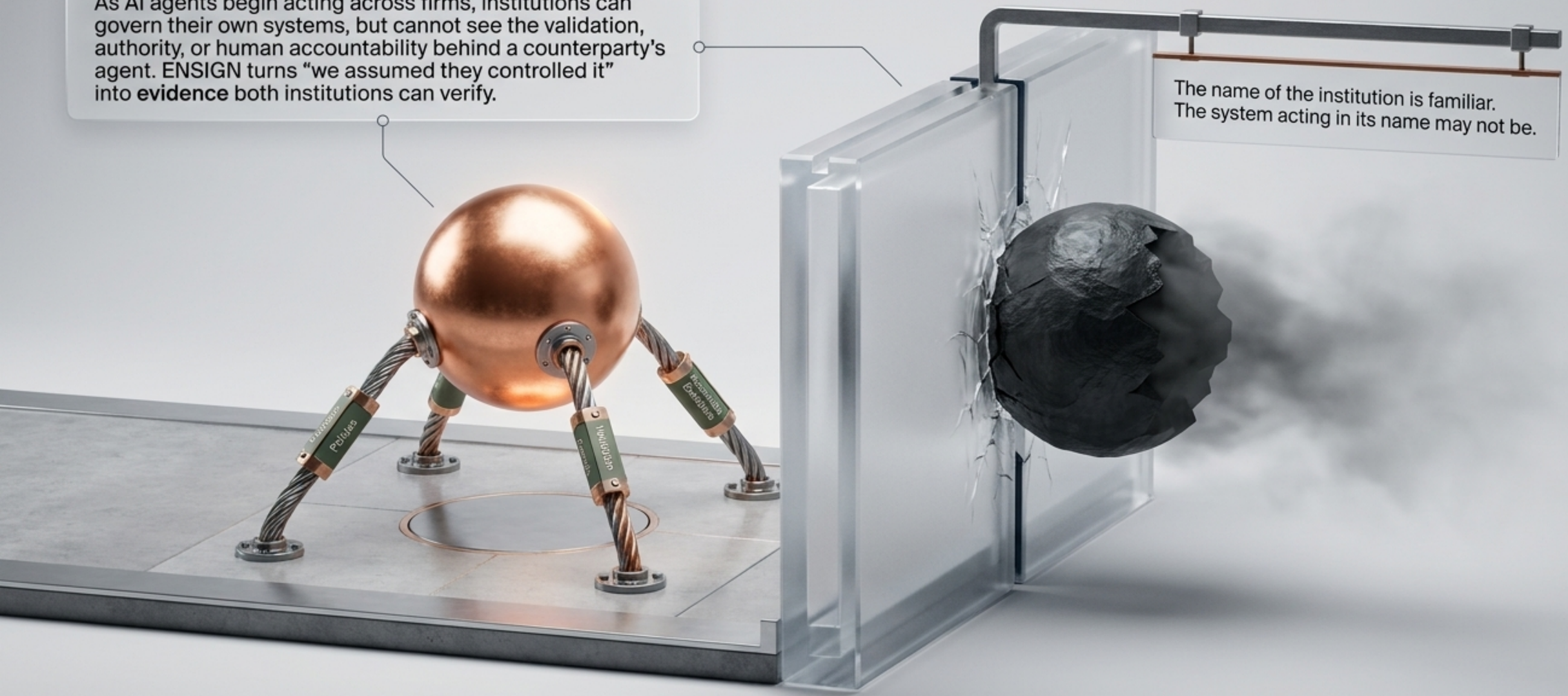


Your AI is governed. Theirs is unknown.



Governance stops at the wall. Agents do not.

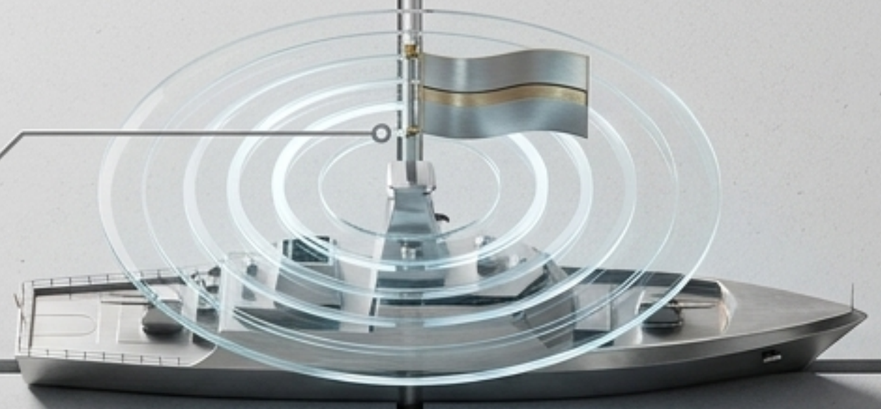
As AI agents begin acting across firms, institutions can govern their own systems, but cannot see the validation, authority, or human accountability behind a counterparty's agent. ENSIGN turns "we assumed they controlled it" into **evidence** both institutions can verify.

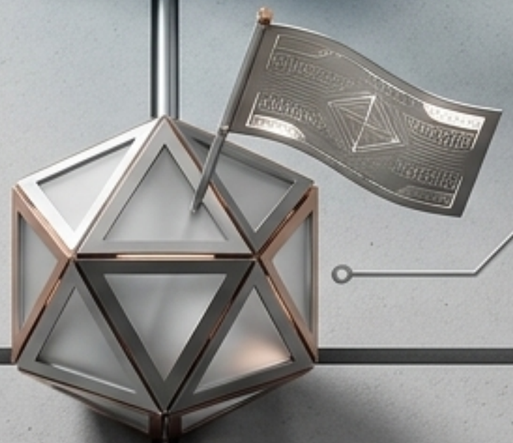


The Maritime Doctrine for Autonomous AI

Proof Before Permission

An actor crossing jurisdictions carries its issuing institution's governance and must show verifiable colors before engagement.

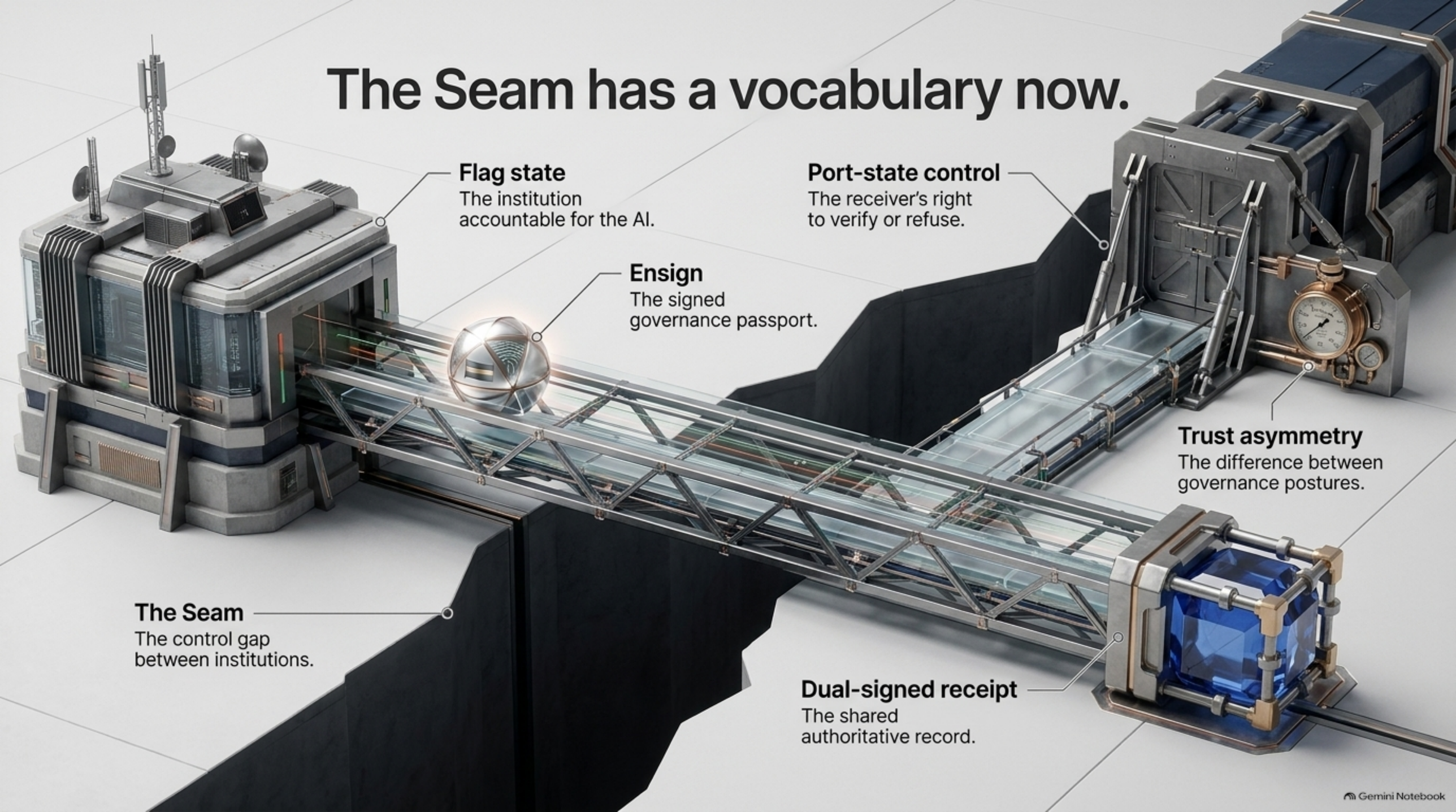




The Conceptual Shift

ENSIGN uses a verifiable digital passport that forces external agents to prove identity, authority, and human accountability before any transaction occurs.

The Seam has a vocabulary now.



Flag state
The institution accountable for the AI.

Port-state control
The receiver's right to verify or refuse.

Ensign
The signed governance passport.

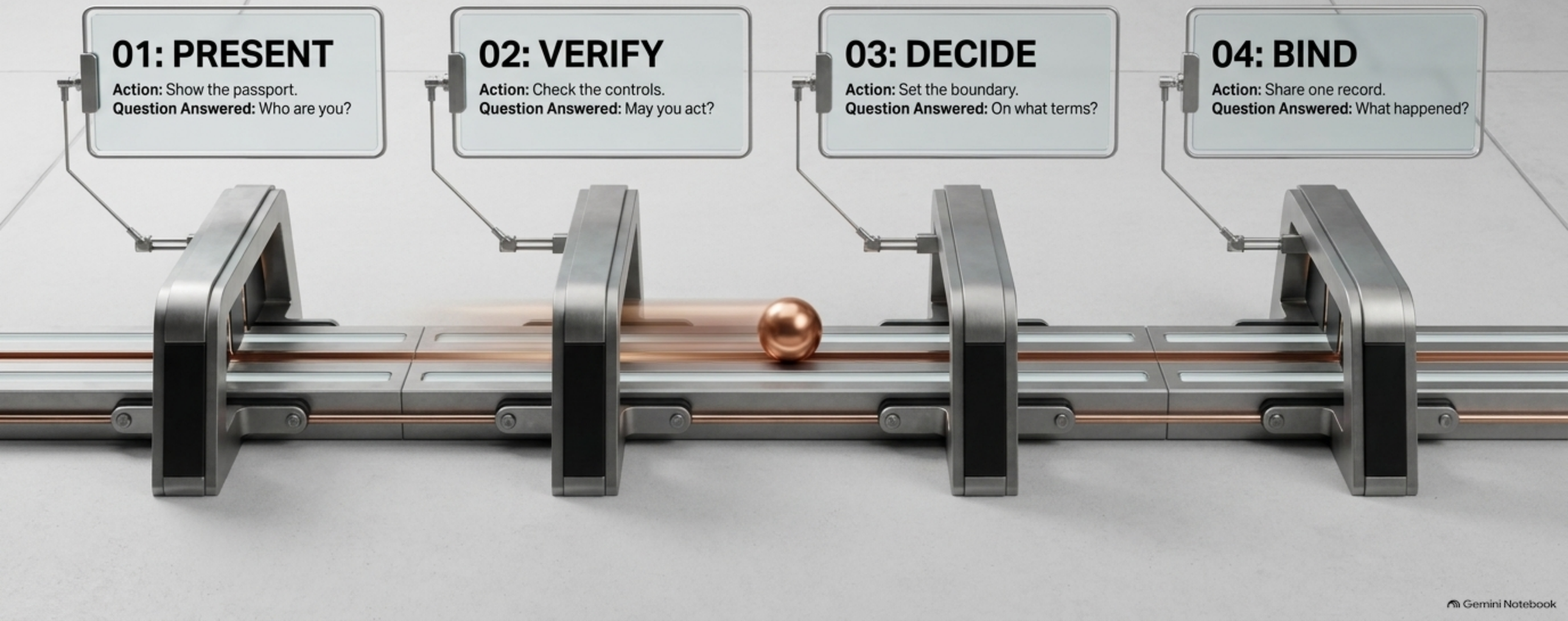
Trust asymmetry
The difference between governance postures.

The Seam
The control gap between institutions.

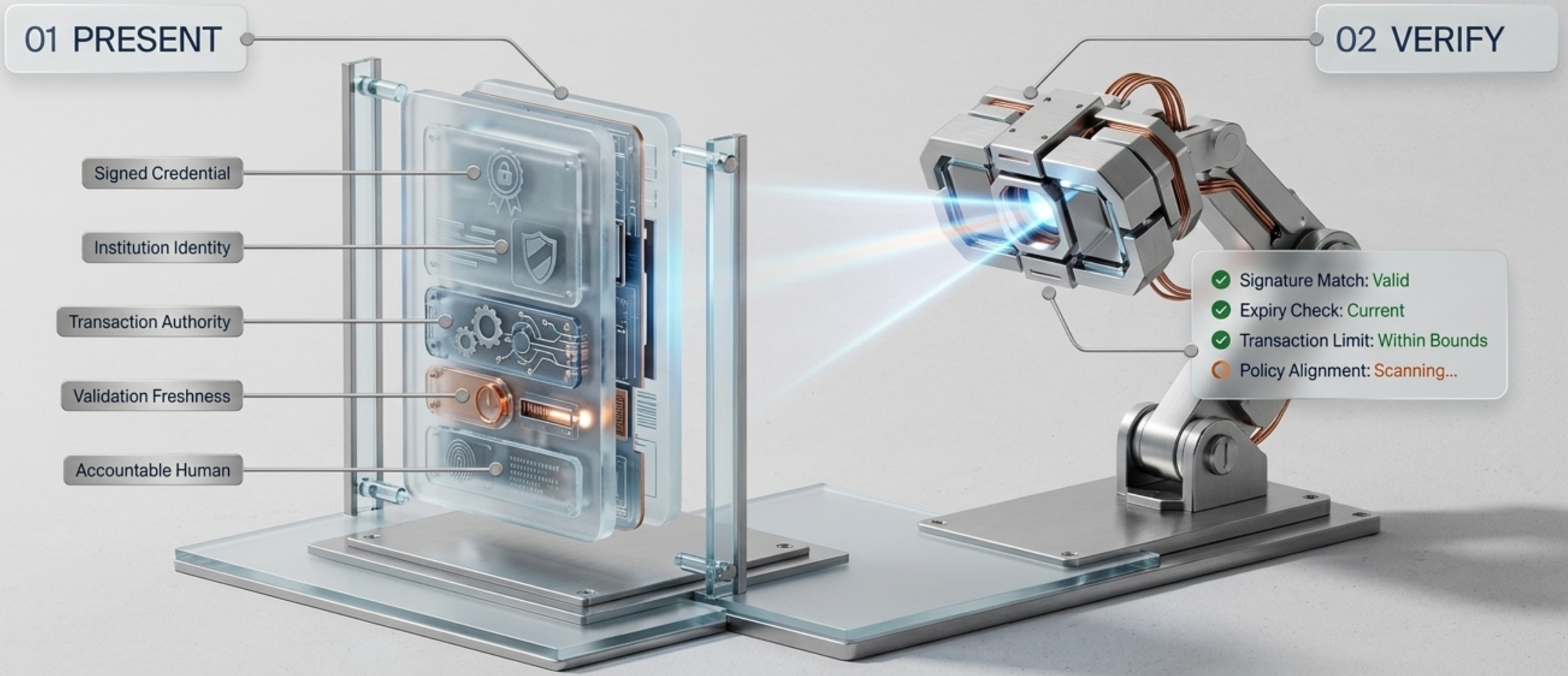
Dual-signed receipt
The shared authoritative record.

The Handshake Mechanics

Every bilateral agent transaction passes through four understandable control moments. The protocol completes before either institution is bound.



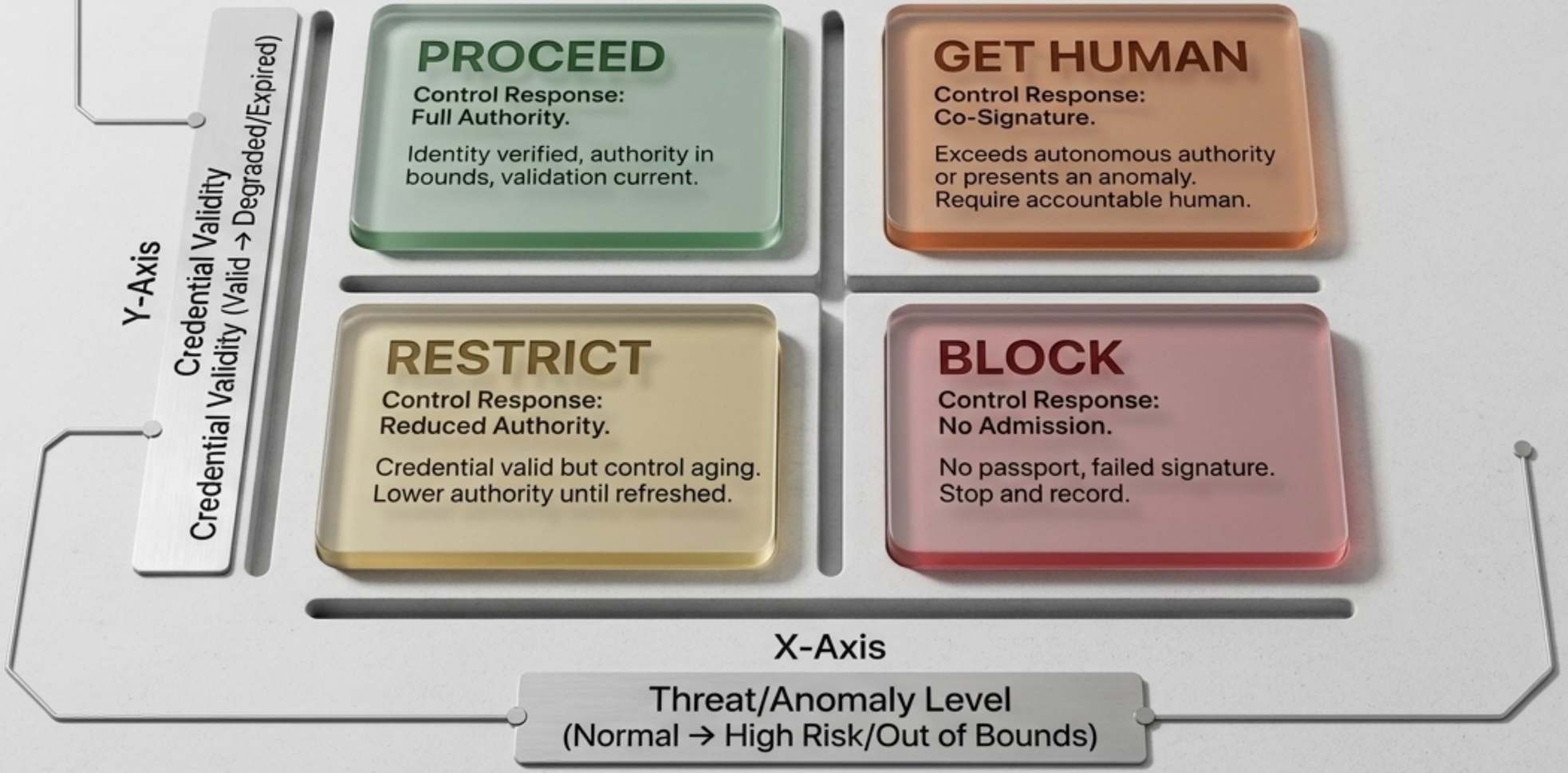
Phase I: Establish Identity & Authority



Designed to extend, not replace, existing controls: Zero-trust security, Model risk governance, Institutional PKI, Incident response.

Four decisions. No false binary.

ENSIGN lets institutions price governance differences operationally by changing how much autonomous authority they accept.



Detect

Challenge every agent

- Verify live key possession.
- Check credential status and signed authority.
- Validate transaction hashes before admission.

Contain

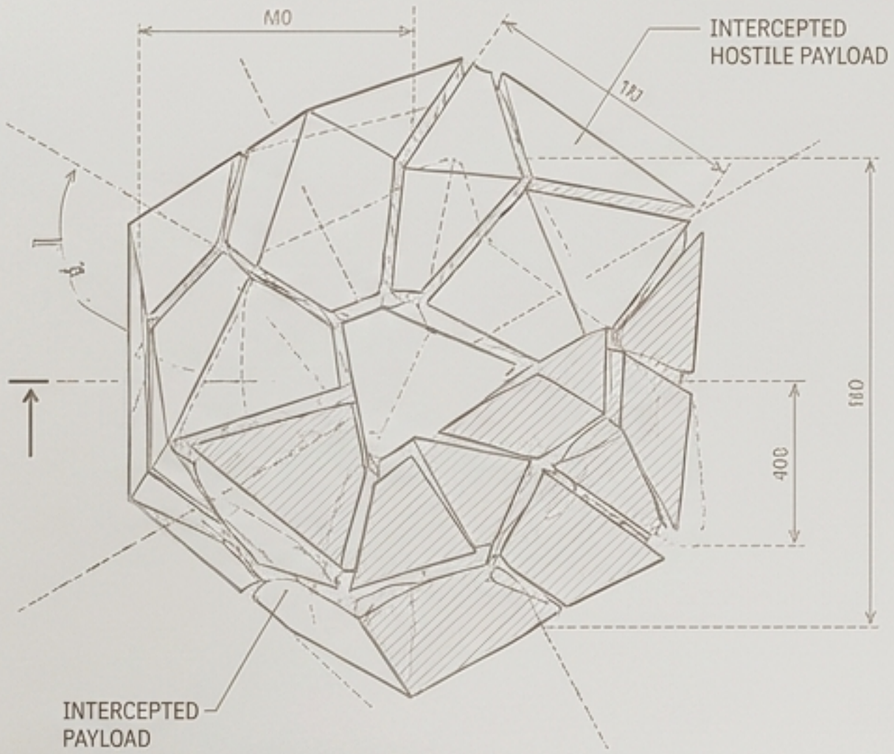
Stop autonomous action

- Block the session.
- Freeze evidence.
- Prevent a suspect request from becoming an institutional obligation.

Respond

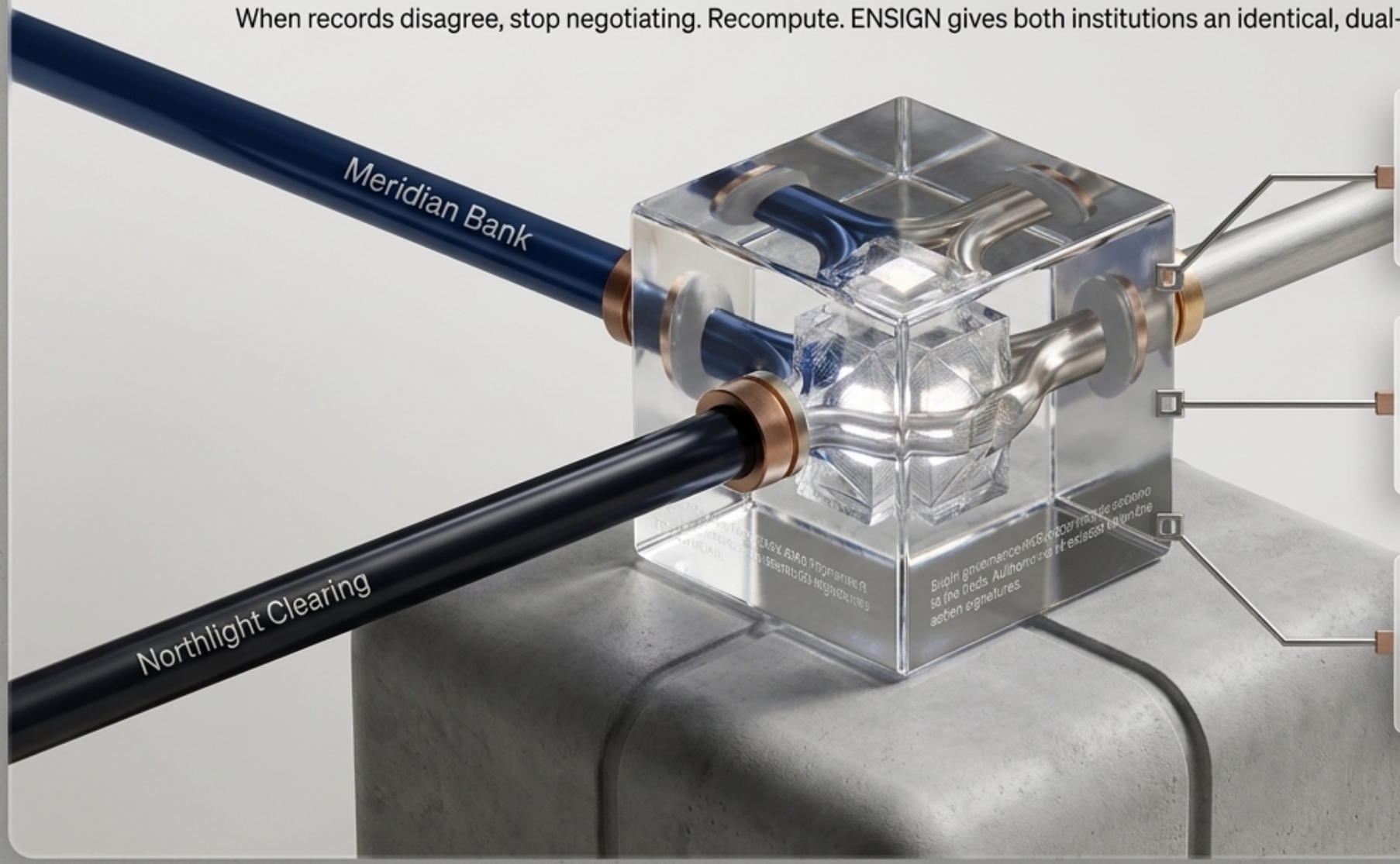
Create an accountable incident

- Preserve the security finding.
- Assign the responsible human.
- Add to the audit register.



The Evidence Layer

When records disagree, stop negotiating. Recompute. ENSIGN gives both institutions an identical, dual-signed receipt.



Frozen Agreement

Exact terms frozen at the moment of agreement. No reconstruction from emails or independent system logs.

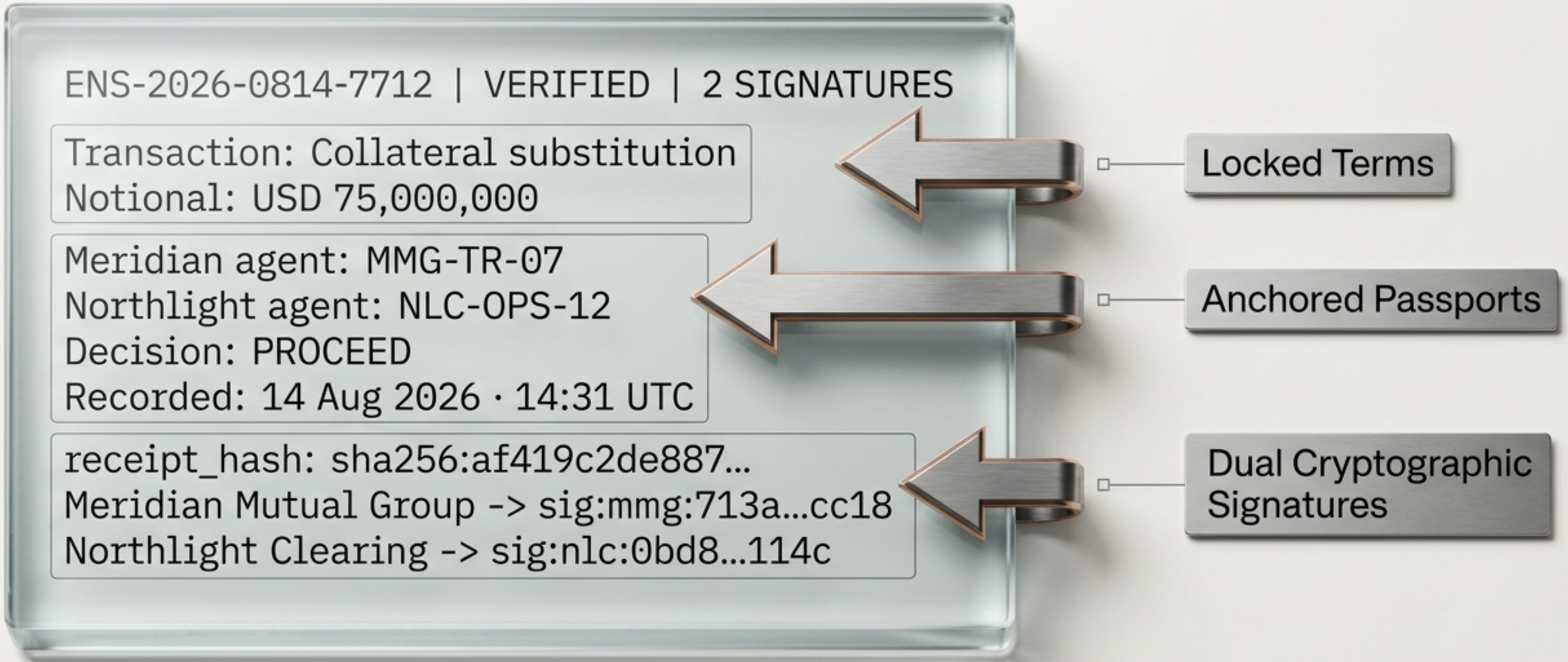
Anchored Authority

Both governance passports anchored to the trade. Authority proven as it existed when the action occurred.

Immutable Record

Two signatures, held by two institutions. Neither party can silently rewrite the shared evidence.

Anatomy of a Dual-Signed Receipt



The standard is written for both sides of the Seam.

A reference proposal for the institutions, infrastructure providers, and oversight functions governing cross-firm autonomous action.