FROM NOBODY BOUGHT IT, BY CAL RENSHAW

The Autopsy Card

20 minutes, the week a product dies, while it still stings. Copy the card, fill every line, and put it in a folder called graveyard. Don't wait until you feel better about it. The version written 6 months later is a story about yourself.

The card

What it was

One sentence. What it did, not what it was going to become.

Who it was for

Name them as a group you could find, or admit it was a word.

How long it took to build

In days or weeks, honestly.

How long it lived

From launch to the day you switched it off, or the day you stopped looking at it, whichever came first.

What happened

4 to 6 moments, with the month each one happened. Launch day. The first payment, if there was one. The moment you knew. The day it ended.

What actually killed it

One sentence. Not what you told people. What killed it.

The filters it failed

Run it through the 7 in Appendix B, afterwards, honestly.

The rule it leaves you

One sentence you would want in front of you when you start the next thing.

When you'd drop the rule

The specific thing that would have to happen for you to stop believing it.

Three questions that keep it honest

Would I say "what actually killed it" out loud to somebody who was there? If not, rewrite it until I would.

Is the rule something I'll actually do next time, or something I wish I were the kind of person to do? Only the first kind belongs on the card.

Have I written a number anywhere I'd be embarrassed to see published? Then I have written the useful version.

Cal Renshaw, The Autopsy Card, from Nobody Bought It (Verity Publishing). calrenshaw.com/tools/autopsy-card. Free to copy and use; please keep this line.