

# Protocol for Severance: When Code Recalls Things You're Paid to Ignore

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A peculiar issue arises in a world where systems track our every action, AI models create our pipelines, and infrastructure deploys itself:

**What if your code understood more about you than you did?**

Welcome to the era of severance engineering, where our systems at work remember things that we are encouraged to forget about ourselves.

## The Modern Engineer's Dual Identity

The basic idea of the show *Severance* is that your personal life and work memories are kept apart by a chip in your brain. The office is where the worker self resides. The inner self is unaware of what goes on.

Now consider your cloud infrastructure.

You've created pipelines that launch on their own. Lambda functions that continue to operate long after you've left. Security policies drafted under duress at two in the morning. IAM roles that give you trust you no longer possess. Terraform plans that continue to function daily, untouched for years.

**There is memory in your systems.**

## The Consciousness You Leave Behind Is the Code

Each line of code represents a choice. Every architectural diagram is a frozen conception. Each CI/CD pipeline has its own ideology.

And yet—we forget.

We move jobs. We switch off. We exhaust ourselves. We *sever*.

But the system doesn't.

## AI Is Your Constant Shadow

With generative AI now a part of the DevOps lifecycle, we're no longer just building infrastructure—we're training its next layer.

Every pattern, every resolve, every cue becomes a behavioral artifact.

Don't forget your tools. Your assistants autocomplete your legacy.

**You are not writing infrastructure. You are creating memories.**

Consider Terraform, Jenkins, and the archive of you:

- Your GitHub repository is a forensic mirror.
- Your Terraform modules are maps of your historical risk tolerance.
- Your observability dashboards reveal belief in addition to utilization.

In *Severance*, the outie has no idea what the innie does. In our environment, it's the opposite: systems retain what people suppress.

## The Morality of Amnesia in Infrastructure

When we are no longer here to explain it, we must ask:

- Who audits our intent?
- When the modeller is absent, who maintains the mental model?
- Does code have to fade like memories?

Perhaps a half-life is necessary for infrastructure.

Perhaps policies should include expiration dates.

Perhaps systems ought to graciously let go.

## Conclusion: Keep in Mind Your Purpose

The distinction between infrastructure and developers is blurring in this era.

You write more than just code. **You inscribe identity.**

Versions of yourself are deployed into memory, Jenkins, and AWS.

So write carefully. Leave a kind comment. And leave breadcrumbs.

Because the system will remember—even if you are cut off from it.

## **About the Author**

**Nigel Dsouza** works at Fidelity Investments as a Principal Software Engineer. He develops code knowing full well that someone else may live there one day—and perhaps even try to remember who he was.