The counter card

From Nobody's Fool by Hazel Crowe, Appendix B

One action per technique. Sized for a phone screen. Read it in the 10 minutes before an interview, a negotiation or a call, and send it to anybody about to take a job offer or buy a car.

Before you go in

Write on one piece of paper, and keep it in front of you:

1. What you want, in one line.
2. The number, the date, and the walk-away you will accept.
3. The three things that would make this a bad decision.
4. Down the margin: anchor, frame, concession, clock, reopen.

In the room

What is happening	What to do
One big number is taking all the airtime	At the two-thirds mark, say which of your three items has not been covered
You are reading while somebody is talking	"Give me two minutes to read this." Then read in silence
You lost your thread	"I have lost my thread, give me a second." Go back to the exact point
A 300-page document with a short deadline	Say, in writing, how many working days you need with it
A number arrives before the information	"I am not going to work from that figure. Here is mine, and how I built it"
Three tiers and one is odd	Ask out loud who buys the top one
Two options offered	Name the third: do nothing, do it later, or do something smaller
A statement about you that feels uncannily accurate	Ask what a person or company it was false about would look like
Your objection keeps getting agreed with and not answered	"That may be true. My question was X." Same words
The meeting feels warmer than the disagreement warrants	Decide nothing in the room. Judge it on paper the next day
"Everyone is comfortable with this"	"Who disagreed with this, and what did they say?"
"We have already invested"	"If we were deciding today, with nothing spent and nothing built, would we choose this?"
Something was given to you for free	"Send us an invoice"
A recap that does not match what you remember	Correct it in writing the same day
You are asked to explain a hesitation you cannot justify	"I am not sure yet, and I would rather not manufacture a reason"
A deadline	"If it is not available tomorrow, then my answer today is no"
It is past seven and things are moving fast	Nothing gets agreed after the finish time you stated at the start
An item reopened as people stand up	"We will pick that up next week." Every time
You are on an interview panel	Write your score and evidence before anybody speaks
You are the candidate and asked your current salary	"I would rather talk about the range for this role"

The sentence that covers most of it

"I would like to take this away and come back to you."

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It defeats the anchor, the clock, the reopen, the mirroring, the manufactured consensus and the tiredness in one move, and it requires no confrontation and no certainty about anybody's intent.

Afterwards

Write the five margin words down with what actually happened, the same day, before you talk to anybody about it. Your memory of the meeting will be rewritten by the next three conversations you have about it.

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