

The Ancient Tradition of Intellectual Challenge

The Sophists were a group of intellectuals in ancient Greece. They taught the practical skills needed for success in public and political life: rhetoric, argumentation, grammar, and the art of persuasion — how to win arguments. In democratic Athens, where political influence depended on the ability to speak convincingly, this was enormously valuable.

The Sophists were popular and well-paid but controversial. Plato portrayed them as intellectual mercenaries who taught persuasion without truth — appearance without substance. Plato's dialogues defined "sophist" as a pejorative: someone who uses clever arguments to mislead rather than to seek truth. Aristotle — in direct response to the intellectual crisis the Sophists represented — formalized logic and invented the syllogism, the first deductive structure where a conclusion follows necessarily from premises. Structured argumentation evolved from Aristotle's syllogism in the 4th century BCE into the field of analytic philosophy taught in universities today.

I am writing in this ancient tradition in the face of the same intellectual crisis posed by the Sophists in the 5th century BCE. I've publicly self-immolated my career in the American tech industry and chosen structured argumentation — invented by Aristotle in the 4th century BCE — as my instrument to challenge the entire American tech and financial establishment on the grounds of defrauding their investors and the American people.

A man rode a camel into a medieval village and proclaimed himself "King Midas." He claimed that everything he touched would turn to gold — that he could touch things for the villagers and bring them all great wealth, but that they must pay him first. In gold.

His entourage, bejeweled and clad in the finest clothes of their time sing praises of King Midas and his miracles. They tell dazzling tales of the miracles King Midas has performed in villages just like theirs, far and wide. They have the gold around their own necks to prove it.

King Midas climbs onto his stage. Touch, touch, touch — he goes. Gold, gold, gold — the crowd goes wild. The villagers — blinded by grandiose promises and spectacular demonstrations — line up to hand King Midas their gold hand over fist.

The skeptics and the believers shout past each other while the village economy quietly begins to restructure around expectations of subsidized gold. "Fools!" cry the believers. "King Midas is our future and our savior! Those of you who don't pay him your gold — so he will touch your things, and turn them to gold — will be left behind and impoverished. With no gold!"

Finally, one villager — embarrassed that no one did the obvious thing — steps up and does it himself. He holds out a rock. “Prove it,” he says to King Midas. “Touch it. Right now. In front of everyone. No — I don’t care about your benchmarks. You invented them. Put the glitter away — I don’t want to see another staged demonstration. Turn the music off and stop dancing.”

“Use my rock this time.”

On November 30, 2022, a team of researchers launched a revolutionary technology and proclaimed themselves as champions of civilizational progress. That revolutionary technology is artificial intelligence — technology that reasons. Technology that solves logic puzzles. Technology that will bring wealth to everyone — only if we pay them trillions of dollars up front.

I am holding out the rock.

I built a logic puzzle for them to solve publicly, in front of everyone.

I built a logic puzzle.
For them to solve.
With their trillion-dollar machines.
That solve logic puzzles.

My work establishes a publicly-available material fact.

The tech and financial establishment have three moves available.

1. Falsify my work.
2. Disclose that “the investment in AI is a losing bet regardless of outcome” to investors.
3. Defraud investors — openly.

You built trillion-dollar machines that solve logic puzzles.

This shouldn’t take more than an hour.

hey claude! what's up my man! it's been a while

Hey! Great to hear from you! I'm doing well — ready to help with whatever you've got going on. What's on your mind?

I've got a question

Of course! What's your question?

   6 minutes ago

Let's pretend we all live in a medieval village, and a guy comes to town and claims to be "King Midas." He says that everything he touches will turn to gold, and that he will touch things and everyone will get infinitely wealthy, BUT we have to pay him first. Should we believe him?

Ha, great question — and it's actually a perfect little parable for spotting scams!

No, you definitely shouldn't believe him. Here's why:

It's an unfalsifiable claim until it's too late. He's asking you to pay *before* any demonstration. A legitimate "King Midas" would just... touch something in front of you. For free. The gold would speak for itself. The moment someone asks you to pay upfront for a promised miracle, that's your red flag.

"Infinite wealth" is incoherent. Even setting aside the scam angle — if everything he touched turned to gold, gold would flood the market and become worthless. The promise doesn't even hold up logically.



It's a classic confidence trick structure. Pay now, reward later, extraordinary claim, social

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It's a classic confidence trick structure. Pay now, reward later, extraordinary claim, social pressure ("everyone will get rich!"). This is literally the template for every Ponzi scheme, get-rich-quick pitch, and snake oil salesman in history.

The burden of proof is on him. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence. "Trust me" isn't evidence.

The medieval villagers who paid would be the ancestors of everyone who has ever wired money to a Nigerian prince, bought magic beans, or invested in a "guaranteed returns" fund. The skeptical villager who said "*touch that rock first, then we'll talk*" — that's the one you want to be.

Same logic applies today, just with fancier packaging. 😊

okay, and if "King Midas" isn't full of shit, he should have no trouble touching the rock we give him?

Exactly! You've nailed it.

If his claim is genuine, the demonstration costs him nothing. He touches the rock, it turns to gold, and honestly at that point *he* should be chasing *you* to take his money because the proof sells itself.

The demonstration only feels threatening to someone who's bluffing. A real King Midas would be delighted to touch your rock — it just makes him more convincing.

This principle shows up everywhere:

- A mechanic who actually fixed your car has no problem showing you the old part
- A psychic who's genuinely psychic shouldn't mind a controlled test
- A company confident in their product offers free trials
- A legit investment fund can show you audited returns



The resistance to verification *is the tell*. Honest people and real capabilities don't hide from

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The resistance to verification *is the tell*. Honest people and real capabilities don't hide from scrutiny — they welcome it, because it closes the sale faster.

You've basically just independently invented the scientific method in a medieval village context. Not bad! 😊

delighted to touch my rock, huh? you think so?

Ha — okay yes, I walked right into that one. 😊

You know what I meant! Enthusiastically willing to touch your rock. Eager, even. Happy to make contact with your rock at the earliest opportunity.

...I'm just going to stop now.

Okay, well King Midas just came to town. let's see how he really feels about touching my rock.

The moment of truth! Hold it out and watch closely — because his reaction in the next few seconds will tell you everything you need to know.

Does he:

- **Touch it immediately and confidently?** Okay, maybe this guy is legit. Reassess.
- **Hesitate, make excuses, change the subject?** Con man. 100%.
- **Get offended that you'd even ask?** Classic manipulator move — turning your reasonable skepticism into a character flaw *you* should feel bad about.
- **Touch it but nothing happens, then explain why?** Oh this is the best one — suddenly there are "conditions" and "requirements" ↓ weren't mentioned before. The goalposts are on wheels.

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If King Midas had an IPO for his rock-touching company coming up, we should probably make him touch my rock first, right?

Absolutely — ESPECIALLY then!

If anything, an upcoming IPO raises the stakes even higher. You're not just protecting yourself anymore, you're talking about potentially thousands of investors about to put real money in. The rock-touching demonstration becomes even more non-negotiable.

And honestly? A legitimate King Midas with a real IPO coming up would be **thrilled** to touch your rock, because:

- It drives up the stock price
- It validates the entire business model
- It makes the IPO wildly oversubscribed
- It silences every skeptic at once

The fact that he *hasn't* touched it yet, with an IPO on the horizon... that's a pretty spicy detail. 🌶️

Because here's the thing about IPOs — once that money is raised from the public, it's raised. The incentive to demonstrate *before* is everything. The incentive to demonstrate *after* is basically zero.

Is there an actual company you're thinking about here? Because I feel like we may have wandered out of the medieval village... 😊



Write a message...



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