From Boardroom to Bot

An M&A Executive's AI Transformation

"15 Years of Deals. 2.5 Years of Building. The Future of AI Leadership."

John J. Shay IV

M&A Executive │ AI Strategist │ Builder

The $4B Foundation

$4B+
Transaction Value Closed

15+
Years M&A Experience

5
Fortune 500 Companies

Director
Level Leadership

Google × Fitbit

$2.1B

Integration Lead

Square × QuickBooks

Strategic

Partnership Development

The Catalyst: Philips CPAP Recall Crisis

In 2021, Philips faced one of the largest medical device recalls in history. As Director of Corporate Development, I watched a company I'd helped build navigate unprecedented challenges.

Recognition

Q2 2021

Saw firsthand how traditional corporate processes couldn't scale to crisis demands

Observation

Q3 2021

Recognized that AI could have accelerated document analysis and risk detection

Decision

Q4 2021

Made the deliberate choice to step away and build expertise in AI

> *I realized that the executives who would lead the next decade needed to understand AI not as spectators, but as builders.*

The Calculated Risk

THE SAFE PATH

- Continue climbing the corporate ladder

- VP-level within 3-5 years

- Steady compensation growth

- Diminishing differentiation as AI becomes mainstream

- Eventually forced to adapt without foundation

THE STRATEGIC BET

- Step away intentionally at peak relevance

- Build genuine technical expertise

- Create production systems, not just theory

- Return with unique value proposition

- Lead transformation rather than follow

2.5
Years Invested

10+
AI Systems Built

3
Executive Programs

8,400+
Network Maintained

The Strategic Sabbatical: Education

I didn't just take time off—I executed a deliberate upskilling strategy combining world-class education with hands-on building.

MIT

AI & Machine Learning for Business Executive Program

Strategy + Technical Foundations

Stanford

Design Thinking & Innovation Programs

Product Development

Harvard

Executive Leadership & Strategy

Leadership Framework

The Strategic Sabbatical: Execution

📚 Learning Track

→ Deep dive into LLM architectures

→ RAG systems and vector databases

→ Computer vision and fraud detection

→ Voice agent development

→ Blockchain and authentication

→ API integrations and automation

⛏️ Building Track

→ Shipped 10+ production AI systems

→ Real client deployments

→ Measurable business outcomes

→ Full-stack implementation

10 Production AI Systems

Real Solutions. Real Clients. Real Results.

01

Legal Discovery Automation

LLM + RAG pipeline for document analysis. Reduced 100+ hours to 10 minutes.

LLM RAG Python

02

FindFake.AI

ML-powered fraud detection for autograph authentication market.

Computer Vision ML API

03

E-Commerce Automation

Multi-platform listing system for eBay, Amazon, Etsy with AI descriptions.

API Integration NLP

04

Voice Agent Platform

Conversational AI for customer service and lead qualification.

Speech-to-Text LLM

05

Blockchain COA System

Immutable certificate of authenticity for collectibles market.

Blockchain Smart Contracts

Production AI Systems (6-10)

06

Inventory Intelligence

Predictive inventory management with demand forecasting.

ML Time Series

07

Document Q&A Engine

Semantic search and question answering over private document collections.

Embeddings Vector DB

08

Price Optimization

Dynamic pricing engine using market data and competitive intelligence.

ML Data Pipeline

09

Content Generation Suite

Automated marketing content, product descriptions, and social media.

LLM Prompt Engineering

10

Customer Intelligence
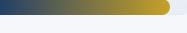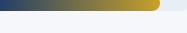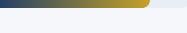
Sentiment analysis and customer journey optimization platform.
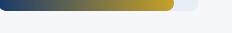
NLP Analytics

AI Portfolio Architecture
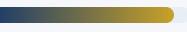
🧠 Language & Text

Legal Discovery

Document Q&A

Content Generation

Sentiment Analysis

👁 Vision & Detection

Fraud Detection

Image Analysis

Authentication

⚡ Automation & Integration

E-Commerce APIs

Voice Agents

Blockchain

Data Pipelines

From 100 Hours to 10 Minutes

$45K+ Savings

Estate Administration Document Analysis

The Challenge

Estate administration required analysis of 15,000+ pages across 200+ documents to identify assets, liabilities, beneficiaries, and distribution requirements. Traditional legal review estimated at 100+ billable hours at $450/hour.

The Solution

Built custom RAG pipeline with document-specific embeddings, deployed LLM extraction for entities, created interactive query interface for attorney review, generated structured reports with source citations.

10 min	99.2%	0	100x
Initial Analysis	Extraction Accuracy	Missed Assets	Speed Improvement

Combating Autograph Fraud with ML

12+ Years Domain Expertise

Authentication for the Collectibles Market

The Problem

The autograph market is plagued by forgeries—some estimates suggest 50%+ of "authenticated" items are fake. Traditional authentication relies on subjective expert opinion with inconsistent results.

- Autopen signatures undetectable to untrained eye
- High-quality forgeries pass visual inspection
- Authentication services expensive and slow

The Solution

Leveraged 12+ years of Gauntlet Gallery authentication experience to train ML models on signature characteristics, pen pressure patterns, and known exemplars.

- Computer vision for stroke analysis
- Pattern recognition for autopen detection
- Confidence scoring with explanations

94%	< 30s	$0	Scalable
Detection Accuracy	Analysis Time	Per Authentication	API-First Architecture

List Once, Sell Everywhere

5x Throughput

Multi-Platform Inventory & Listing Automation

The Challenge

Gauntlet Gallery sells authenticated art and collectibles across multiple platforms. Manual listing creation, inventory sync, and description writing consumed 60%+ of operational time.

The Solution

Built integrated automation platform connecting eBay, Amazon, Etsy, and direct sales with AI-generated descriptions optimized for each marketplace's search algorithms.

4	**80%**	**Real-time**	**AI**
Platforms Integrated	Time Saved	Inventory Sync	SEO Descriptions

Technical Skills Matrix

AI/ML Technologies

Large Language Models

RAG Architecture

Computer Vision

Vector Databases
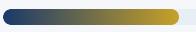
Prompt Engineering
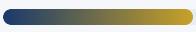
Development & Infrastructure

Python

API Development

Cloud (AWS/GCP)

Databases (SQL/NoSQL)
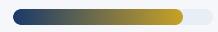
Data Pipelines
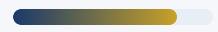
AI Platforms & Tools

OpenAI/Claude APIs
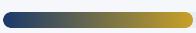
LangChain/LlamaIndex

Pinecone/Chroma

Hugging Face
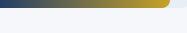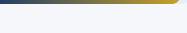
Fine-tuning
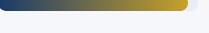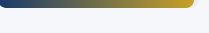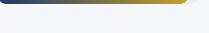
Business & Leadership Skills
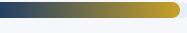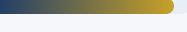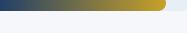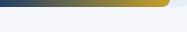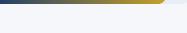
M&A & Corporate Development

Deal Structuring

Due Diligence

Integration Planning

Valuation

Negotiation

Strategic Leadership

Executive Presentation

Board Communication

Cross-functional Teams

Stakeholder Management

Strategic Planning

Business Development

Partnership Strategy

Market Analysis

Revenue Operations

P&L Management

Go-to-Market

The Unique Value Proposition

$4B+ M&A		10+ AI Systems		Bridge Builder
Deal Experience	**+**	Built & Deployed	**=**	Strategy ↔ Execution

> "Most AI leaders are technologists learning business. Most business leaders are executives learning AI terminology. I'm an executive who can actually build.

Both
Strategic Vision & Technical Execution

Fluent
In Board Rooms & Code Reviews

Proven
At Fortune 500 Scale

Builder
Not Just Advisor

Why This Combination Matters

🎯 I Can Identify Opportunities Others Miss

→ See AI applications through an M&A lens

→ Understand enterprise buying cycles

→ Know what executives actually need vs. want

→ Spot implementation pitfalls before they happen

→ Bridge communication gaps between tech and business

🚀 I Can Execute on Both Sides

→ Build the prototype myself

→ Present to the board myself

→ Structure the deal myself

→ Lead the integration myself

→ No translation needed

Where I Want to Go

I'm looking for a role where I can combine my M&A expertise with my AI building experience to drive meaningful business transformation.

AI Strategy & Ops

Lead AI transformation initiatives at companies ready to move from experimentation to production

Business Development

Drive partnerships and GTM at AI-native companies like OpenAI, Anthropic, or Microsoft

Corporate Development

M&A leadership at technology companies acquiring AI capabilities

The Impact I Want to Make

Target Companies

🤖 **AI-Native Leaders**

OpenAI, Anthropic, Microsoft AI, Google DeepMind

🏢 **Enterprise Transformers**

Companies serious about AI-first strategy

🚀 **High-Growth AI Startups**

Series B+ companies scaling enterprise sales

What I Bring

Credibility with enterprise buyers (I was one)

Technical depth to have real conversations

Deal experience to structure partnerships

Let's Build the Future Together

I'm ready to bring my unique combination of M&A expertise and AI building experience to an organization that's serious about transformation.

in bit.ly/jjshay   ✉ Let's Connect

View Full Profile →

John J. Shay IV

M&A Executive | AI Strategist | Builder

$4B+ Transaction Experience • 10+ Production AI Systems • Ready to Lead