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Getting SIGNAL to Portfolio Stage

Speculative Design Response - how the project gets completed in the time available.

WEEKS 1-2

Define the core flow. Upload a photo → AI drafts a transcription → human reviews and corrects it → entry drops into a timeline. Sketch this as lowfidelity wireframes before touching code, using the friction points I already hit transcribing Norman's diary as the test cases.

WEEKS 3-4

Build a working prototype. Generalise the code already written for Norman's site: the timeline layout, the photo-and-transcript pairing, the phase structure. Add the missing piece, an editable review step, so a transcription becomes a draft, not a final answer.

WEEKS 5-6

Test it on someone else's material. Hand it to a friend or family member with their own old letters or photos and watch where it breaks. Their handwriting won't be Norman's; their dates won't be as clean. That's exactly the point.

PORTFOLIO STAGE

Package it as a case study. Document the decisions, not just the output: why self-hosted, why AI drafts instead of AI answers, why Cowbird's closure mattered to the brief. Show the shift from "a project about my family" to "a tool any family could use."

WHAT COULD GO WRONG

- **Handwriting varies too much** to generalise the AI transcription step cleanly - mitigate by keeping the human-correction step central, not an afterthought.
- **Self-hosting is a real barrier** for non-technical users - mitigate by scoping the prototype to "runs on one laptop," not a full server setup, for this trimester.
- **Time.** Six weeks plus mid-tri break is tight for a working prototype - if it slips, the fallback is a well-documented working flow for one additional family's material, rather than a fully generalised tool.

> **"Every project is an opportunity to tell someone's story more Clearly."**

FROM MY PERSONAL DESIGN MANIFESTO