Before you read this

What follows describes a programme in development, built to address harm being done to everyone alive.

o cross a threshold;
ingly.

Threshold is a proposal in development. This document is part of its working canon.

Power is the problem

Plastic entered commercial use in the 1950s on a promise of necessity. The promise was delivered. Our lives are measurably better.

The question of what to do with the material when it was no longer in use was never asked, and was never resolved. It became rubbish, thrown away.

There is no such place as away. There is only everywhere. Two billion tonnes in seventy-five years, and everywhere now includes our blood.

This was known, measured, and written about as a threat to life on earth for over fifty years. The facts are done. The research is done. The understanding is done.

What has not been done is to stop it.

For half a century, every pathway has failed. Regulation has been outpaced. Voluntary pledges have been broken. Advocacy has been absorbed. Markets have not responded. Litigation has resolved single cases while the system continued.

The reason is not ignorance, and it is not lack of will. The reason is power. The wealth created by plastic does not want the wealth to stop, and has the resources to ensure it does not.

That is the problem this programme is designed to address.

The Threshold is what follows.

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d evidence base, built by the people who carry the harm in their bodies. Every observation scored for reliability. Chain of custody from phone to proceeding. A cross-stakeholder deliberation that produces ranked interventions on permanent record. An evidence infrastructure built upstream of the actors who will eventually use it, ready before they need it.

Not protest. Not policy. Not litigation. The architecture that makes all three forceful enough, sooner.

The Threshold st of accountability.

The Threshold is built to be ready. Whether the threshold is crossed depends on what is built, and who joins in building it.

THE THRESHOLD

Your complete guide to the app.

Plastic shouldn't be in our blood. But it is.

This threshold has been crossed.

The Threshold is the institution that makes that fact increasingly difficult to ignore: legally, medically, and politically.

THE FOUNDING TRUTH

The app that turns observations into verified evidence.

· Free to download. Free to share. Always free.
· No background required. No data sold. No advertising.
· The Spotter Network: submit what you see
· The Reliability Index: how trust is built
· Signal/Noise: read the news differently
· The Pulse: your weekly vote that counts
· Ledger Live: what inaction costs, every second
· The Poll: six ways to add institutional weight
· How mistakes are corrected: the correction protocol
· Frequently asked questions

A	B	C	D	E	F
Verified fact	Evidence-based	Consensus direction	Informed inference	Contested	Unsubstantiated

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A DOCUMENTED REALITY

A	**Plastic particles have been detected in human cord blood, placental tissue, and foetal brains in peer-reviewed studies. The children being born today are the most plastic-contaminated generation in human history.** Ragusa et al. (2021): placenta. Landrigan et al. (2023): foetal brain. Multiple independent replications. A-scored: explicitly supported by multiple independent peer-reviewed studies, uncontested to date.
B	**Male sperm counts in the developed world have fallen by approximately 50% over fifty years. Endocrine-disrupting chemicals in plastics are identified in current research as a significant contributing factor to the observed decline.** Levine et al. (2017). Human Reproduction Update; 2022 follow-up. B-scored: direction of decline established; precise magnitude subject to debate.

WHAT THE THRESHOLD IS: AN INSTITUTION, NOT JUST AN APP

The app that turns observations into verified evidence.

The Threshold is a free app. But it is more than an app. It is an institution with a published mission, an independent governance board, and legal protections for every contributor. It cannot be sold, discontinued, or pivoted without the board's approval.

Plastic particles are in human blood, breast milk, arterial tissue, and unborn children. A major 2024 medical study found people with plastic in their arterial walls have a 4.5 times higher risk of heart attack or stroke (Marfella et al., New England Journal of Medicine, 7 March 2024). Every year 22 million tonnes of plastic leak into the environment (OECD 2022). Petitions have been signed in the millions. Nothing structural has changed. The reason is not lack of awareness. It is the absence of a credible, trust-weighted, institutionally protected evidence base built by the people who witness the crisis.

This absence has a name. The pattern by which large-scale industrial harm is sustained, through suppression of accountability, in documented historical cases deliberately and systematically, and through the influence of regulatory systems, until the consequences become undeniable, is called the Threshold Effect (copyright Andrew Henderson, June 2026). The app you are reading about is the institution designed to interrupt that pattern before the threshold is crossed too far to matter.

THE THRESHOLD EFFECT: WHY THIS MATTERS

The Threshold Effect describes the pattern by which industrial harm is sustained deliberately until consequences become too large to suppress. It is not the boiled frog; the frog does not know. In documented historical cases, risks were identified and not fully disclosed. It is sustained by choices.

The Threshold is built to reverse the calculation that makes suppression cheaper than accountability.

Threshold Effect concept copyright Andrew Henderson, Marans, France, July 2026.

WHAT MAKES THIS AN INSTITUTION, NOT A PLATFORM

· The Threshold has a published mission that binds future operators.
· An independent governance board must approve any fundamental change.
· A formal correction protocol: all errors corrected publicly within 72 hours.
· Legal protections for every contributor whose evidence may enter proceedings.
· Financial transparency: all funder relationships published. No funder influences findings.
· Succession protocol: if the Lead Architect leaves, the programme continues.
· You are contributing to something designed to outlast any individual.

The programme's founding argument is moral: plastic in the blood of unborn children is wrong, and the pattern that produced it was deliberate. The programme's method is institutional: every observation verified, every claim scored, every error corrected publicly. Both are necessary. The moral argument is why the programme exists. The institutional method is why its evidence can be taken seriously.

HOW THE SPOTTER NETWORK WORKS

Spotters are amateur reporters. Your submissions are taken seriously from day one.

Evidence in The Threshold is observation that has been independently verified, contextualised against other submissions, and corroborated through the pipeline. An unverified observation is the beginning of evidence, not evidence itself. There is no submission too small if it is honest and relevant. A photograph of plastic waste. A personal experience of contamination. A news event, a corporate announcement, a legal filing. Your experience as a parent, farmer, fisherman, or patient. All of it can contribute to the evidence record, once it has been verified, contextualised, and corroborated through the pipeline.

What you submit

Photographs or short videos of plastic waste issues. First-hand personal stories. News events, corporate announcements, legal filings. Your experience as a parent, farmer, fisherman, or patient. The system is designed so that a first-hand observation from a farmer whose crops are contaminated carries genuine evidential weight, not as much as a cluster of five independent Spotters reporting the same event, but real weight that grows with your track record.

Three stages from submission to evidence

Stage	What happens	What you receive
Stage 1 Observation	Your submission enters the system. An AI system classifies it and assigns an initial confidence score using the A to F evidence scale. AI assists in classification and pattern detection. It does not make final determinations. That is a human job: every submission that reaches the validation stage receives human review.	Immediate acknowledgement. Base Threshold Points. Your Reliability Index starts building.
Stage 2 Validation	Other Spotters can corroborate your submission independently. A human moderator reviews it within 24 hours. Similar observations from the same location and time are clustered, raising confidence.	"Three other Spotters reported the same event." Bonus points. Your Reliability Index rises.
Stage 3 Integration	If your submission passes full review by a Senior Validator and meets Knowledge Base quality standards, it is formally integrated into the evidence record used by researchers, journalists, policymakers, and courts. Integration at this level means the evidence has met the chain-of-custody, corroboration, and human-validation standards designed to withstand challenge in legal and regulatory proceedings.	"Your observation is now part of the evidence." Significant bonus points. Cash usage rights fee: 5 to 25 euros, funded from the programme operating budget and commercial licensing fees. Secondary payment if used in a publication or court case.

THE EVIDENCE CONFIDENCE SCALE: WHAT A TO F MEANS

Every claim in this programme is scored. Including the programme's own.

The Threshold does not claim to determine absolute truth. It claims something more modest and more durable: that every piece of evidence it holds can be examined, challenged, and corrected, and that the patterns which survive that process are increasingly difficult to dismiss. The A to F scale makes the current evidential status of every claim visible before you read it.

This same A to F scale is applied to every claim made by The Threshold itself, including in this document.

A	B	C	D	E	F
Verified fact	Evidence-based	Consensus direction	Informed inference	Contested	Unsubstantiated

Score	Meaning	Example	
A	**Verified fact**	Directly supported by reviewed scientific or official data. No credible dispute.	Microplastics detected in human blood (Leslie et al. 2022)
B	**Evidence-based**	Supported by evidence with legitimate uncertainty about magnitude, not direction.	Male sperm counts down approx. 50% since 1973 (Levine et al. 2017)
C	**Consensus direction**	Established direction of evidence; causal attribution not yet fully confirmed.	Female reproductive disorders associated with plastic chemical exposure
D	**Informed inference**	Honest projection from established evidence. The "may" is essential.	Current generation may find it harder to have children
E	**Contested claim**	Significant disagreement exists in peer-reviewed literature.	Specific recycling rate projections under contested policy scenarios
F	**Unsubstantiated**	Presented as fact without supporting evidence in the Knowledge Base.	Voluntary industry commitments as adequate substitute for regulation

THE RELIABILITY INDEX: HOW TRUST IS BUILT

Your Reliability Index (RI) is a score from 0 to 100 that represents how much the system trusts your submissions.

It is not secret. You can see exactly how it is calculated. It is published because transparency is not a preference: it is a structural requirement of a system whose evidence may enter legal proceedings.

0 to 25 New Spotter	25 to 50 Basic Reporter	50 to 75 Trusted Spotter	75 to 100 Expert Contributor

THE FORMULA: PUBLISHED AND TRANSPARENT

RI change = (base adjustment) x (accuracy weight 40%) + (consistency weight 35%) + (corroboration weight 25%)

+1 to +3 per validated and corroborated submission.

-5 to -15 if a submission fails review. The appeal mechanism applies equally in both directions.

Example: a Spotter with RI 68 submits a location that three validators determine is incorrectly documented. RI drops by 8 points to 60. The Spotter is notified, shown the reason, and can file an appeal within 7 days.

This asymmetry is intentional. Trust is earned slowly and lost quickly; exactly as in professional journalism.

If you believe your RI score is wrong, you can appeal. A Senior Validator reviews it within 48 hours and provides a written response. The decision is explained in full.

Quality over volume. The Threshold is not designed to be used by everyone. It is designed to be used honestly by those who use it at all. One verified observation from a farmer whose soil is contaminated carries more evidential weight than a thousand unverified photographs. The programme's value is not in the volume of its submissions. It is in the quality of the record those submissions produce. If you contribute honestly and consistently, your contributions will matter, regardless of how many others contribute alongside you.

THE SUBMISSION COACH: YOU ARE NOT ALONE WHEN YOU SUBMIT

When you submit, the coach is with you.

Most contribution platforms leave you alone at the moment that matters most, the act of submitting. You take a photograph, fill in a form, and hope it was good enough. You find out later, if you find out at all. The Threshold is designed differently. The submission coach is an AI presence available at every submission, helping you produce the best possible evidence from what you are observing, before it enters the pipeline.

The coach does not tell you what to find. It helps you document what you have found as clearly and completely as possible. The difference is fundamental to the integrity of the evidence.

What you are doing	What the coach does
Photographing plastic waste	"That image is slightly out of focus. Can you take another from a steadier position? A clear image of the scale of the deposit will significantly strengthen this submission."
Submitting from a location	"Your GPS metadata places this photograph 2.4 kilometres from your current position. Were you travelling when you took it, or is there a discrepancy? Accurate location data is essential for cluster formation."
Providing context	"You have documented what appears to be a regular discharge point. Do you know roughly how long this has been occurring? Duration information significantly increases evidential weight."
First submission ever	"This is your first Spot. It looks strong. Before you submit, here is what makes this evidence useful: clear image, accurate location, honest context. You have all three. Let us go."
Returning to a previous location	"You submitted from near this location on 14 March. Your new submission may be building a temporal record of the same site. That is particularly valuable: consistent monitoring of one location over time produces some of the strongest evidence in the Knowledge Base."

How the coach works, and what it does not do

The coach is an AI system with defined boundaries. It responds to what you are submitting, not to what you should be looking for. It will help you photograph more clearly, verify your location, and prompt for relevant context.

The coach never suggests what to look for or leads users toward specific conclusions. It does not manufacture evidence that is not there. Every coaching interaction is logged in the submission metadata as part of the chain of custody.

Standard coaching is included with the app. Enhanced coaching, which cross-references your submission with the active Knowledge Base and shows you how your observation connects to existing clusters, is available as a premium feature, charged as a small deduction from your Spotter account or as a one-off payment. Not a revenue stream. A defrayment of costs.

YOUR SPOT'S JOURNEY: TRACKED FROM SUBMISSION TO CONSEQUENCE

Your Spot does not disappear when you submit it. It travels. And the coach travels with it.

The moment of submission is not the end of the relationship between you and your evidence. It is the beginning of a journey that the coach narrates as it happens, the way a courier service tracks a package, except that what is travelling is something you observed, and where it is going matters in ways that a delivered parcel does not.

You will know where your Spot is at every stage. You will know when it connects to other submissions. You will know when it reaches the people who use it. If nothing has happened for a while, the coach will tell you that too, and suggest what you could do to build on what you have already contributed.

Stage	What the coach tells you
Immediately after submission	"Your Spot is in. Initial confidence: B. A human moderator will review it within 24 hours. I will let you know when that happens."
After moderation	"Your Spot has been confirmed and is now live in the Knowledge Base. Your Reliability Index: 54 to 57. Three other Spotters have submitted from within 2km of your location this month. You may be building a cluster."
When a cluster forms	"A convergence cluster has formed around the discharge point near Saintes. Your submission is one of five independently corroborated observations. Cluster confidence: 81%. Flagged for expert review."
When experts engage	"The cluster you contributed to has been reviewed by the programme's expert panel. It is cited in the policy brief on riverine discharge submitted to the French Environment Agency this week."
If two weeks pass quietly	"Your Spot from the 14th is still in the Knowledge Base and has been accessed four times by researchers. No cluster yet, but submissions from your region are building. You might want to check the same location again."
When your evidence is cited	"Your observation from March 2026 has been cited in the programme's published white paper. Secondary payment: 8 euros. Your contribution is now part of the permanent record."

That last message, sent two weeks after a quiet period, is the most important retention mechanism in the programme. It is not a reward. It is an invitation. It says: the process is still alive, your contribution is still relevant, and there is something specific you could do right now that would build on what you have already started.

MEANING FEEDBACK: HOW YOU KNOW YOUR CONTRIBUTION MATTERS

Most apps show you likes. The Threshold shows you consequences.

At every stage of the submission journey, you receive a specific notification about what your evidence has done, not a number of people who tapped a button, but a result in the world.

What you did	What you receive
Submitted a Spot	"Your Spot has been received. You earned 45 Threshold Points. Your Reliability Index contribution: +2.1. Community review opens in 24 hours."
Your submission was corroborated by 4 other Spotters	"Your observation on the River Mersey discharge has been independently corroborated by 4 other Spotters. Cluster confidence: 81%. Bonus: 200 points."
Your submission entered the Knowledge Base	"Your evidence is now part of the official Knowledge Base. You have received 12 euros and 1,200 bonus points. This observation is now part of the evidence experts are using."
Your evidence informed a Pulse question	"Your submission contributed to the dataset behind this week's Pulse question, which 183,000 citizens have answered."
Your evidence appears in a published output	"Your observation from March 2026 has been cited in the programme's white paper. You have received a secondary payment of 8 euros. Your contribution is now part of the permanent record."

THE FEATURES: SIGNAL/NOISE, THE PULSE, LEDGER LIVE

Signal/Noise: read the news differently

Every weekday, three items appear. Each is one sentence, preceded by a letter from A to F telling you what kind of evidence you are about to read. A = verified fact with strong and consistent scientific consensus. F = claim made without evidence. The scale in between is the evidence confidence scale the programme applies to everything, including its own statements. This builds evidential literacy as a daily habit.

The Pulse: your weekly vote

Every Monday, one specific policy question appears. Not "are you worried?" but a real question from the live analytical debate, drawn from the Knowledge Base and the expert simulation that runs at the heart of the programme. You answer in one tap. Results are published Friday with a global map. Your vote is not a petition signature. It is structured public opinion data that informs the expert analysis and is published alongside it.

Ledger Live: what inaction costs, updated every second

Your home screen shows four counters that tick every second: plastic leaked to the environment since you installed the app; days without a binding international production control; new health studies published on microplastic exposure; and the estimated municipal clean-up cost accumulated since you joined. Modelled calculations drawn from the annual Inaction Ledger, updated continuously. The numbers reflect best available data on annual rates, not real-time measurement, but the closest available approximation of it. Each counter has a share button. This is not designed to make you feel hopeless. It is designed to make the cost of inaction personal and continuous, so that the actions the programme provides become the obvious response.

The scenario projections underlying these counters represent the author's analysis, constructed from OECD baseline data and informed by direct experience in European plastics markets and recycling economics. They are possible scenarios with high probability, not forecasts in the strict sense.

THE POLL: SIX WAYS TO ADD INSTITUTIONAL WEIGHT

From a two-minute signature to institutional investor pressure: six levels, each targeting a different institution.

Level	For	What it does	Time required
A Sign	Everyone	Your name on the programme's public evidence record	2 minutes
B Write	Everyone	The app writes a personalised letter to your elected representative. You send it.	5 minutes
C Declare	Medical and health professionals	Named co-signatory on the Global Medical Declaration on Plastic and Human Health. Ten thousand named doctors across eighty countries saying the same thing carries weight that no petition can match.	10 minutes
D Audit	Mayors and council officials	Commit to commissioning a plastic cost audit for your city using the programme's published methodology. Municipal cost data from fifty cities creates a database of plastic externalities that is legally usable in producer liability contexts.	1 meeting
E Commit	Retail and procurement executives	Tiered public commitment to reduce single-use plastic with named accountability. Early adopters command premium positioning in a market where 71% prefer sustainable products.	1 meeting
F Disclose	Institutional investors and insurers	Formally request plastic producer liability disclosure from companies in your portfolio. A named pension fund formally requesting disclosure moves markets in ways that no petition has ever moved them.	1 letter

HOW MISTAKES ARE CORRECTED: THE CORRECTION PROTOCOL

The Threshold makes a specific promise about errors. When false data gets through, and at scale some will, it will not be quietly deleted. It will be publicly corrected.

This is not a fallback. It is a primary credibility mechanism. A programme that corrects its errors publicly and completely is fundamentally different from one that conceals them. Every correction strengthens the record rather than weakening it. The correction protocol is what allows The Threshold to apply its own evidence standards to itself, including the A to F scoring applied to its own communications.

Step	What happens	Who is responsible	Timeframe
Detection	A false cluster is identified, by the AI anomaly detection system, by a human moderator, or by an external report.	Intelligence Director notified immediately	Ongoing / automated
Assessment	Scope determined: which submissions are affected, which publications cite them.	Intelligence Director + Validator + Lead Architect	24 to 48 hours
Retraction	If any publication cited the false data: a public retraction statement is published. States what was wrong, what changed, what the corrected position is. Never quiet deletion.	Lead Architect signs off / Legal Counsel reviews	Within 72 hours
Notification	All affected Spotters notified individually. Founding Circle members and institutional partners notified.	Communications Director	Within 72 hours of retraction
Audit log	Complete record of the error, its source, the correction, and what system changes were made to prevent recurrence. Published permanently in the transparency archive.	Data Analyst	Within one week

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does "institution" actually mean for me?

It means your contributions are protected by governance, not just by terms of service. The Threshold has an independent board that must approve any fundamental change to the programme's mission or methodology. Your Reliability Index score cannot be reset arbitrarily. Your evidence cannot be sold or transferred. The correction protocol is published and binding. If the Lead Architect leaves, there is a published succession protocol. You are contributing to something designed to outlast any individual.

I'm not a scientist or expert. Does my submission matter?

Yes, and more than most platforms would admit. The system is designed so that a first-hand observation from a farmer whose crops are contaminated, or a parent who photographs their child's contaminated environment, is genuinely valuable evidence. Your Reliability Index starts at zero and builds through consistent honest contribution. The fiftieth submission, from an established Spotter with a strong track record, carries substantial evidential weight. Voice is universal. Impact is earned.

Can I see how my Reliability Index is calculated?

Yes. The formula is published in the app's How it works section and on the website. It is: RI change = base adjustment x (accuracy 40%) + (consistency 35%) + (corroboration 25%). If your RI changes in a way you do not understand, the app shows you why. If you believe the calculation is wrong, you can file a formal appeal.

What happens if two similar submissions are made and only one gets paid?

Payment is determined by the full validation process, not by the moment of submission. Two submissions of similar content can receive different payments if one was submitted by a higher-RI Spotter, one achieved better corroboration, or one provided clearer location and contextual data. If you believe a payment decision was wrong, the appeal mechanism applies. A Senior Validator responds within 48 hours in writing.

What happens if the app is shut down?

The Threshold cannot be shut down by a commercial decision. It requires governance board approval. Before any shutdown, all Spotters receive their complete personal archive as a downloadable record. The Knowledge Base is transferred to an academic institution under open access terms. The Inaction Ledger is published in perpetuity by the successor institution.

What if a company tries to have the app removed or my submission challenged?

Retaliation from commercial interests is a named and planned-for risk. The programme has a pre-funded legal defence arrangement. Your copyright always belongs to you: the programme holds a usage licence, not ownership. If your submission is challenged in a legal process, the programme's Legal Counsel provides guidance. The Reliability Index and convergence scoring create a public evidentiary record that is much harder to challenge than a single uncorroborated claim.

Can I be identified from my submissions?

No, and this is architectural, not a promise. The Threshold holds a cryptographic identifier generated on your device. It does not hold your name, address, or any information that would allow a third party to identify you. Your IP address is stripped from all server logs before storage. The programme cannot disclose what it does not hold, including in response to a court order. If you choose to identify yourself voluntarily, to give evidence, to claim credit publicly, that is entirely your decision. The programme facilitates it. It never initiates it.

What is the minimum age to participate fully?

The app is open to all ages with appropriate parental consent for under-13s. The Spotter Network is open to users 13 and above. The Poll levels are fully accessible to adults. The Youth Council requires a minimum age of 18 years for legal reasons: participant consent, contractual obligations, and the potential that programme outputs enter legal proceedings require legal adult standing. Young people under 18 are fully engaged through the Schools and Youth layer, supervised class submissions, and the Guided Knowledge Layer.

Does The Threshold have a position on plastic?

The Threshold operates across two distinct modes. The Knowledge Base and Spotter network are evidence-neutral: they collect, verify, score, and publish observations without advocacy or interpretation. What decision-makers conclude is their determination. The Althing Round operates differently: it takes the verified evidence base and applies expert analytical judgment to produce ranked policy recommendations. The Threshold Effect, the pattern by which industrial harm is sustained through suppression of accountability, in documented historical cases deliberately and systematically, is an analytical framework, not a political position. The programme applies it to plastic because the evidence fits the pattern. If the evidence changes, the analysis changes.

"You are not powerless. You are evidence. And your evidence is now protected."

Download and start contributing

Search The Threshold on the Apple App Store or Google Play, or visit thresholdsummit.org/app to use the browser version immediately. Free to download. Free to use. Your first Spot matters from day one.

The submission coach will be with you when you submit your first observation. It will stay with your Spot after you submit. You will not be submitting into a void.

THE FOUNDING TRUTH

Plastic shouldn't be in our blood. But it is. This threshold has been crossed. The Threshold is the institution that makes that fact increasingly difficult to ignore: legally, medically, and politically.

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What follows from reading this

You have now read the evidence. The medical evidence is in our blood and our children's. The economic case for recycling, as it has been sold, is dead. The policy interventions exist and have been costed. The architecture that would resolve a case of this shape has been mapped.

From this point you are an informed witness. That is the threshold.

The next question is not whether you care. The historical pattern is clear. Systemic harm has been resolved in every documented precedent (tobacco, asbestos, lead, opioids) not by enough people caring but by enough informed witnesses acting in ways small and large. The relevant distinction is not between those who care and those who do not. It is between those who act and those who do not. The difference is witnessed commitment, not feeling.

Three civic acts cross the threshold.

Vote. Vote for political representatives who will price the externality, build the levy, and pass the producer liability framework. Plastic is a political problem before it is a chemical one.

Vote in the Threshold poll. When the Knowledge Base presents the ranked interventions that emerge from the Althing Round, vote on them. The poll is the public record of which interventions citizens have endorsed.

Write your Pledge. If you care, show it. Write to your unborn grandchildren. Tell them what you knew. What you did. What you did not do. Tell them why they will live with the consequences. Seal it with your mark. Send it to the Threshold. We will hold it until the threshold is crossed, or until the year you have chosen, whichever comes first. This is the act that crosses your own. You will carry it forever.

The Threshold Effect is the pattern by which documented systemic harm crosses a threshold making it increasingly difficult to ignore, legally, medically, and politically, in documented historical cases, deliberately and systematically.

The case has crossed every threshold but yours.

Whether you cross it is now observed.