

# The First 3 Seconds

## A hook swipe file that shows its working

Most swipe files are a list of sentences someone liked. This one is different in two ways: every hook in it **actually ran**, and every one carries the reason it was chosen over the hooks that didn't make the cut.

The sentences matter less than the patterns. Copy the patterns.

## Before you use any of this: the only benchmark that matters

Measured on a live Australian DTC Meta account, last 30 days, ads with at least \$20 spend (n=11, \$694 total spend):

|                     | Link CTR |
|---------------------|----------|
| Worst performing ad | 0.12%    |
| Best performing ad  | 5.66%    |

**47x spread.** And here is the part that should change how you work: **two of those ads were the same creative.** Same video, same copy, same hook. One ran at 0.12%, one at 5.66%.

The hook was not the variable. Placement and audience were.

So: a hook file is worth using, and it is not worth believing. A hook cannot save a bad audience, and a great audience will make a mediocre hook look like genius. Use this file to stop shipping *boring*, not to chase a magic sentence.

## Pattern 1 — Contrast

Two states, side by side, with a number if you have one. The strongest commercial pattern because it does the maths for the viewer instead of asking them to.

### Shipped examples:

*what my grocery bill looked like before vs after joining [brand]*

*stop what you're doing. this is what \$150 gets you at [competitor] vs [brand]*

*perfect mix of supporting local farmers and never running out of zucchinis*

**Why the first one was selected over the alternatives:** "Strong price-comparison angle, immediate supermarket contrast, broadest commercial appeal."

### The template:

what my [recurring cost / routine / result] looked like before vs after [product]  
this is what \$[amount] gets you at [incumbent] vs [you]

**Where it breaks:** contrast needs a named or strongly implied incumbent. If your category has no obvious "before", this pattern has nothing to push against — use Confessional instead.

## Pattern 2 — Confessional

First person, admits something slightly against interest, lands on the product as the reluctant conclusion. Reads native because it sounds like a person changing their mind rather than a brand asserting something.

**Shipped examples:**

*I don't even remember the last time I went to [competitor] for veggies*

*honestly didn't think i'd say this but... i'm never going back to [competitor]*

*i used to chug water all day, thinking '8 glasses' was the golden rule. yet, i still felt dehydrated, my skin looked dull, and my energy was flat*

**Why it was selected:** "Native confession format with clear anti-incumbent positioning."

**The template:**

honestly didn't think i'd say this but... [reversal]  
i don't even remember the last time i [old behaviour]  
i used to [old belief], thinking [conventional wisdom]. yet [the problem persisted]

**Where it breaks:** if the confession has no cost to the speaker, it isn't a confession, it's a testimonial. "I used to be sceptical and now I love it" is dead on arrival — everyone has heard it. The admission has to be something a real person would be mildly embarrassed by.

## Pattern 3 — POV

Puts the viewer inside a specific moment. Best for products where the *experience* is the differentiator and the specs are not.

**Shipped examples:**

*POV: your neighbour brought you fresh tomatoes again*

*POV: you just opened [product] and it's actually beautiful*

*POV: it's sunday and your [delivery] arrived before you even left bed*

*POV: you traced your steak back to the farm it came from*

**Why it was selected:** "Leans into local/community identity and freshness without sounding corporate."

**The template:**

POV: [specific mundane moment that only happens if the product worked]

**Where it breaks:** POV is the most over-used format on the platform and the most punished when it's generic. "POV: you found the perfect skincare" is noise. The moment has to be so specific it could only belong to your product. Weekday, time of day, room, who else is there.

## Pattern 4 — Transformation over a named timeline

Not before/after — **before, during, and the awkward middle.** The middle is what makes it credible.

**Shipped examples:**

*Day 1: 'this is weird' Day 30: my whole street is in*

*used to skip periods from stress, now they're regular — and it wasn't birth control*

*i used to ride the stress rollercoaster daily: morning anxiety, afternoon slump, then wired at night. my mind was racing, focus was gone*

**Why the first was selected:** "Captures the network effect, which is more differentiated than generic category ads."

**The template:**

Day 1: '[honest initial scepticism]' Day [N]: [the outcome]  
used to [problem], now [outcome] – and it wasn't [the obvious explanation]

**Note the "and it wasn't \_\_\_\_" clause.** That is the highest-leverage six words in this document. It pre-empts the viewer's own dismissal before they can finish forming it. Every category has an obvious explanation the viewer will reach for. Name it and deny it.

**Where it breaks:** if you name a timeline you cannot substantiate, this becomes a claim. In regulated categories (health, finance, cosmetic) a timeline is a therapeutic or earnings claim and will get the account restricted. Use "Day 1 / Day 30" for behaviour, never for outcomes you'd have to prove.

## Pattern 5 — Myth-bust

Attacks a piece of conventional wisdom the audience already half-doubts. Highest engagement of any pattern, lowest conversion. Use it top-of-funnel and do not judge it on CPA.

**Shipped examples:**

*everyone told me these 'healthy' habits were the key. i followed them religiously, but i was still feeling drained*

*i used to train like a man, pushing hard every single day, trying to power through. but i was always exhausted, my progress stalled*

*everyone's raving about [popular method]. i tried it, bought into the hype, but instead of thriving...*

#### The template:

everyone told me [conventional wisdom]. i followed it religiously, but [it didn't work]  
everyone's raving about [trend]. i tried it, bought into the hype, but [the reality]

**Where it breaks:** you must actually disagree with the myth. If the payoff of your myth-bust is "so do the thing everyone said, but with my product", you've written a bait-and-switch and the comments will say so.

---

## Pattern 6 — Curiosity gap

States the viewer's exact situation, then withholds the mechanism. Only works if the situation is stated *precisely* — a vague gap is not a gap.

#### Shipped examples:

*you're getting your 8 hours, you're avoiding caffeine late, but your hormones still feel off and your skin isn't glowing. what if...*

*you're drinking coffee, working out, trying all the energy hacks, but still feel that afternoon slump*

#### The template:

you're [doing the three obvious right things], but [the problem persists]. what if [it isn't what you think]

**Note the rule of three.** Both shipped examples list exactly three things the viewer is already doing. Two feels thin, four loses them. Three reads as "this person knows my life."

**Where it breaks:** the gap has to close in the same piece of content. If the payoff is "link in bio", you've made an ad for the click and not for the sale, and you'll get cheap traffic that doesn't convert. Close the loop, then sell.

---

## The rejected pile — patterns to stop using

These appeared in real batches and were cut. They are cut for a reason.

| Pattern                                                                 | Why it was cut                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hashtag-stuffed captions ( #longevity #biohacking #wellness )           | Zero hook. The caption is doing SEO for a platform that doesn't rank captions. |
| "Unlock the secrets to..."                                              | Marks the post as an ad in four words.                                         |
| "Ready to ditch outdated advice and embrace..."                         | Nobody speaks like this. It is the sound of a brand voice guideline.           |
| Anything with ✨ leading                                                 | Signals the account is selling before the viewer has decided to listen.        |
| Generic aspiration ("Transformative habits that changed my confidence") | No specific, so no proof, so no reason to keep watching.                       |

## How to use this file tomorrow morning

1. Pick **one** product.
2. Write one hook in each of the six patterns. Six hooks, twenty minutes.
3. Cut the two you like least. You are keeping four.
4. Ship all four against the **same** audience and the same placement. This is the only way

the hook is the variable — see the 47× finding at the top of this document.

1. Read them at 1,000 impressions each, not before.

*Feisty Agency — feistyagency.com. Every hook in this file ran on a live account. The benchmark data is measured, not estimated. Swap the [bracketed] parts for your offer.*