THE RISE OF THE PRACQUISITION: WHY BIG TECH IS AVOIDING M&A

Annabelle Diana Hutchinson

In a pracquisition, an acquiror hires a target's key talent and licenses its intellectual property, effectively gaining the target's core value without formally acquiring it. Since it is "practically an acquisition," a pracquisition serves as a structural alternative to traditional M&A structures and promotes deal efficiency while also providing a workaround to antitrust scrutiny. Companies engaging in the practice achieve similar goals as traditional M&A without the regulatory roadblocks and costs typically associated with a normal acquisition, representing a shift in dealmaking strategy with market-wide ramifications for companies, investors, and regulators.

Table of Contents

I. "Practically an Acquisition"

In the past two years, a dealmaking trend has emerged among the world's biggest and most sophisticated technology firms vying for control of the artificial intelligence market. Instead of merging with or acquiring target companies, they are hiring the target's top talent and then obtaining licensing agreements for the target's technology in deals worth hundreds of millions or billions of dollars. Typically, no shares are transferred or some minority of the shares are purchased by the acquiror and the corporate structures of both enterprises remain independent.[1] In form, these are not acquisitions. In substance, however, this sort of deal is "practically an acquisition" – a *pracquisition*.[2] A company is a function of its assets, its people, and its legal structure. The question asks itself: if Big Tech companies want access to the assets and the people, why not bring the legal structure along for the ride? The answer includes antitrust concerns and AI market incentives which prioritize speed over almost anything else.[3]

A. But First, Acquihires

Pracquisitions are not the first dealmaking innovation in recent years. The pracquisition was preceded by its better-known cousin, the *acquihire*.[4] Indeed, it is common to see pracquisitions confused with acquihires, despite the fact that they are radically different in terms of deal mechanics.[5] In an

---

[1] Meta's pracquisition of Scale AI is an example of a transaction that involved a significant but minority transfer of equity, with Meta acquiring a 49% stake in the startup. Janakiram MSV, *Meta Invests $14 Billion In Scale AI To Strengthen Model Training*, Forbes (Jun. 23, 2025), https://www.forbes.com/sites/janakirammsv/2025/06/23/meta-invests-14-billion-in-scale-ai-to-strengthen-model-training/. For reasons that will be discussed, this is a "friendlier" version of the pracquisition from the perspective of Scale's investors since it better aligns incentives between Meta and existing investors.

[2] Other names given to these deals include HALOs ("Hire and License Out"), reverse acquihires, and pseudo-acquisitions. *See* Kevin Kwok, *The Halo Effect*, KwokChain (Jul. 15, 2025), https://kwokchain.com/2025/07/15/the-halo-effect/; Anshika Mathews, *Old Employeees, New Dollars – Google's $2.7 Billion Investment in Character.AI's Reverse Acquihire for AI Innovation!*, AIM Media House (Oct. 4, 2024), https://aimmediahouse.com/market-industry/old-employees-new-dollars-googles-2-7-billion-investment-in-character-ais-reverse-acquihire-for-ai-innovation; Sean Ji, *Big Tech's Pseudo-Acquisitions: Using Licensing and Hiring Agreements Instead of Outright M&As*, Colum. Sci. & Tech. L. Rev. (Mar. 24, 2025), https://journals.library.columbia.edu/index.php/stlr/blog/view/671.

[3] It is taking longer and longer to close a large M&A deal after signing, as delays become increasingly common amid regulatory scrutiny. Jens Kengelbach et al., *2024 M&A Report*, Bos. Consulting Grp. (Oct. 2024), https://www.bcg.com/publications/2024/deals-are-taking-longer-to-close.

[4] *See* John F. Coyle & Gregg D. Polsky, *Acqui-hiring*, 63 Duke L. J. 281 (2013).

[5] *See, e.g.*, Foo Yun Chee, *Big Tech's acquihire deals face regulatory scrutiny, outgoing EU antitrust official says*, Reuters (Aug. 1, 2025), https://www.reuters.com/sustainability/boards-policy-regulation/big-techs-acquihire-deals-face-regulatory-scrutiny-outgoing-eu-antitrust-2025-08-01/; *The AI Acquihire Phenomenon: Navigating the New Landscape of Tech Talent Acquisition*, Growth Shuttle, https://growthshuttle.com/

acquihire, a company acquires a target with the primary goal of hiring the target's top engineering talent. That is, even though the acquiror principally cares about gaining the target's talent, it also gains the target's assets and legal structure. John F. Coyle and Gregg D. Polsky explain this phenomenon in terms of social norms and the threat of informal sanctions: acquihires in the 2010s were "preferred because entrepreneurs derive[d] significantly more prestige in Silicon Valley by 'selling' their startup to a leading technology than by quitting the startup to join that same community…[and entrepreneurs wanted to ensure that the venture capital firms which had invested in their startups] received a payout from the buyer large enough for it to feel as though it had been treated fairly."[6] As a result, Silicon Valley evolved "transaction structures that promote[d] cooperation between investors and entrepreneurs… as a means of discouraging 'an antagonistic style where you fight for every nickel on the table.'"[7] Coyle and Polsky also suggest that tax considerations played a role in the rise of acquihires, since "the portion of the deal consideration that ultimately flows to the engineer (that is, as payment for her stock in the startup) is characterized as capital gains" versus compensation income.[8]

In short, the culture of Silicon Valley encouraged a collegial atmosphere where investors, entrepreneurs, engineers, and Big Tech management teams operated with a positive-sum mindset toward economic distributions, along with pragmatic tax considerations. A key feature of this dynamic was a "leave no man behind" mentality. If a top startup engineer defected from her startup to take an offer at a bigger firm, she would leave the startup without its most valuable resource: herself. Moreover, she would leave the startup's investors in the lurch because the growth trajectory of the startup without the key engineer would be vastly inferior to the growth trajectory with the engineer. But if the bigger company "acquihired" the engineer, instead of just hiring her, then the employees and the investors left behind would still receive consideration from the acquisition. Even if the startup was absorbed by the bigger firm, all the relevant stakeholders would be rewarded by the absorption.

B. The Mechanics and Theory of Pracquisitions

Although a pracquisition's deal mechanics are similarly straightforward, all stakeholders are not equally rewarded in a pracquisition unlike in an acquihire. In a pracquisition, the pracquiror (hirer-licensee), usually a large

---

the-ai-acquihire-phenomenon-navigating-the-new-landscape-of-tech-talent-acquisition/; Bill Clark*, The AI Talent War: AI Acquisitions*, MicroVentures (Oct. 7, 2025), https://microventures.com/the-ai-talent-war-ai-acquisitions.

[6] John F. Coyle & Gregg D. Polsky, *Acqui-hiring*, 63 Duke L. J. 281, 311–17 (2013).

[7] *Id*. at 324–25 (quoting Mark C. Suchman & Mia L. Cahill, *The Hired Gun as Facilitator: Lawyers and the Suppression of Business Disputes in Silicon Valley*, 21 Law & Soc. Inquiry 679, 700 (1996) (quoting a Silicon Valley lawyer)).

[8] *Id*. at 329.

technology company, approaches the target-licensor, which is generally set apart by its impressive, best-in-class technical talent. The pracquiror hires this top technical talent, leaving the target without its most valuable players. Concurrently, the pracquiror licenses the target's intellectual property (IP).[9] The pracquiror trades a sum of money (often an astronomical sum) in exchange for its new hires and the target's IP. Nonetheless, the corporate forms of both parties remain essentially unchanged, and the control of the target's equity is not exchanged in such a transaction, unlike in a true acquisition where control is transferred to the acquiror. Operationally, the pracquiror has everything of substantive importance that it would have obtained in a traditional acquisition. More importantly, this whole process avoids Hart-Scott-Rodino (HSR) antitrust review and mandatory waiting periods. So, it's fast. There is no merger agreement to negotiate, no regulatory paperwork to file, no waiting between signing and closing. Speed is no trivial advantage in the tremendously fast-paced and rapidly innovating AI sector where attracting the best talent is absolutely fundamental. For Big Tech companies seeking to dominate the market, falling behind in the arms race for talent is not an option.[10]

Traditional M&A and acquihires consolidate legal control of a target, which reliably triggers the machinery of merger control provisions and antitrust review. An acquisition which crosses the HSR thresholds requires regulatory notification and delays the overall deal process, even if the ultimate scrutiny is only mild, and can generate huge transaction costs associated with a regulatory antitrust merger investigation.[11] Of course, in many cases, the scrutiny exposes the deal to a degree of genuine uncertainty around consummation.[12] M&A lawyers and management teams working on deals subject to antitrust review spend countless hours arguing over and negotiating terms that relate to this uncertainty: efforts covenants (e.g., "hell or high water" provisions), termination fees, drop-dead dates, ticking fees, and the like.

---

[9] Many of the licenses granted to the pracquirors in these deals are non-exclusive. Technically, the companies could license their IP out to other customers, as well. But while this is a helpful line to offer to regulators, the actual benefit of the license without the founding engineers is greatly diminished.

[10] Nate Rattner & Tom Dotan, *The AI Spending Spree, in Charts*, Wall St. J. (Sep. 11, 2024), https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai/artificial-intelligence-investing-charts-7b8e1a97?mod=article_inline.

[11] Fed. Trade Comm'n, *FTC Announces 2025 Update of Size of Transaction Thresholds for Premerger Notification Filings*, https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2025/01/ftc-announces-2025-update-size-transaction-thresholds-premerger-notification-filings (last visited Nov. 15, 2025).

[12] *See* Samuel N. Weinstein, *Anticompetitive Merger Review*, 56 Ga. L. Rev. 1057 (2022) (noting that significant merger investigations now average nearly a year and arguing that lengthy merger review itself can harm competition). For instance, in 2020, Penguin Random House agreed to buy Simon & Schuster from Paramount Global for $2.2 billion, but the deal triggered HSR review and ended in a permanent injunction blocking the deal nearly two years after its initial inking. As a result Penguin Random House had to pay a $200 million breakup fee to Paramount. *See* Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg & Jan Wolfe, *Penguin Random House Blocked from Acquiring Rival Publisher Simon & Schuster*, Wall St. J. (Nov. 1, 2022), https://www.wsj.com/articles/penguin-random-house-blocked-from-acquiring-rival-publisher-simon-schuster-11667257838.

Remove the antitrust risk, and you also remove countless (billable) hours of work and reduce the extended timelines which often mark modern M&A. But the current body of antitrust law focuses more on the legal transfer of control over a business entity and its assets, rather than the economic substance that the acquiror is actually obtaining. Historically, legal and business control were so tightly associated that former was, for all intents and purposes, equivalent to the latter. But the pracquisition was developed precisely to take advantage of that paradigm, even while the headline price rivals that of an acquisition. The pracquiror obtains what it needs from the target without acquiring the enterprise as such, therefore sidestepping the full risk and burden associated with reportable HSR acquisitions.

Pracquisitions also rearrange the distribution of economic benefit among stakeholders. In a traditional acquisition, the selling shareholders receive pro rata consideration for their shares. Whether the shareholder is a member of the management team, an employee, or an investor is irrelevant as long as the stakeholder is also shareholder. In an acquihire, stakeholder equality approach is maintained: while the primary goal of the acquihire is to obtain the target's talent, all the shareholders benefit equally as shareholders. In a pracquisition, shareholders are not treated necessarily treated alike. Instead, the economic upside is often concentrated in the hands of the founders and engineers who are hired into the pracquiror, with the investors and remaining employees left behind. Some economic value is transferred to the left behind stakeholders via the licensing agreement, but it is generally far less than what would be transferred to them in a full control acquisition.[13]

In many ways, pracquisitions are a more efficient scheme than acquihires, which provided economic value to stakeholders who were not core to the transaction. But if the target is the top talent, why not just pay for the top talent? Why include a licensing deal at all? In effect, it serves as a mechanism to buy off the legal claims that investors might bring against the boards and founders which would otherwise be exposed to accusations that they had not upheld their fiduciary duties. Routing a portion of the consideration through the licensing allows boards to justifiably characterize the transaction as a bona fide commercial deal for IP. The investors may not be made rich, but they are not excluded. Thus, pracquisitions are not a wholesale repudiation of the "no man left behind" mentality, although they are an injury to it. But when companies are locked in an aggressive battle to develop and obtain the best talent,

[13] *See* Kenn So, *Unpacking Big Tech's Quasi-Acquisitions of GenAI Companies,* Generational (Aug. 16, 2024), https://www.generational.pub/p/unpacking-big-techs-quasi-acquisitions ("For example, in the Microsoft-Inflection deal, Series A investors will get 1.5 times their $225M investment, and Series B investors will get 1.1 times their $1.3B investment. From the date of the funding announcement to the date of the acquisition announcement, Series A investors achieve a 25% IRR, and Series B investors, 14%. Google is more generous with a 2.5x return.").

the benefits of prioritizing talent acquisition outweigh the costs of harming other relationships in the ecosystem outweigh the costs. Given the rapid commercial and technological progress, the likes of which have never been seen, this is a natural development.

Later-stage investors feel these changes more acutely than early-stage investors. The later-stage venture or growth investors who participate in growth financing rounds typically hold their shares at or near the target's peak valuation and write larger checks on the assumption that the company will eventually clear that valuation in an IPO or sale. While the early-stage investors may still post attractive returns, even if those returns fall short of the true acquisition value of the company, the returns of later-stage investors will look far less attractive. The hope for a traditional venture-style liquidation event becomes much less likely since the impaired target is unlikely to support the valuation that the investors underwrote during the most recent round of fundraising, even if the business continues to operate.[14]

II. Select Pracquisitions in the Market

Artificial intelligence is a driving force in the American economy, and it is within this market that pracquisitions loom large. Recent pracquisitions have been executed by Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Meta, and Nvidia. Not coincidentally, they are five of the seven largest public companies on earth by market cap and are thus subject to a heightened degree of antitrust scrutiny.[15] I will review several of these deals in turn.

A. Inflection AI

In March 2024, Microsoft executed a landmark pracquisition of Inflection AI.[16] Almost all of the startup's employees were hired by Microsoft, including Inflection co-founder Mustafa Suleyman, and a licensing fee was negotiated with Inflection's existing investors to resell the startup's IP.[17] It was not, of

[14] That said, investors generally prioritize internal rates of return (IRRs) to multiples on invested capital (MOICs). If the pracquisition happens in quick succession after a round of fundraising, investors can still post attractive IRRs thanks to the short duration between entry and payment, which can either be in the form of dividends or share redemption. If the capital is returned within the recycling period of the fund (i.e., the period during which the investor is able to redeploy the capital toward another investment), then that investor may be less disappointed by the outcome. Moreover, investors are increasingly aware of the risks associated with AI investments and are able to account for such risks in their decision-making processes.

[15] *See* Lyle Daly, *The Largest Companies by Market Cap in November 2025*, The Motley Fool (Nov. 5, 2025), https://www.fool.com/research/largest-companies-by-market-cap/.

[16] Dave Michaels & Tom Dotan, *FTC Opens Antitrust Probe of Microsoft AI Deal*, Wall St. J. (Jun. 6, 2024), https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai/ftc-opens-antitrust-probe-of-microsoft-ai-deal-29b5169a.

[17] *See id.*

course, a formal acquisition. But the Federal Trade Commission nonetheless opened an investigation into the transaction to determine whether Microsoft and Inflection designed the transaction for the explicit purpose of avoiding antitrust review. Noting that Inflection was not acquired by Microsoft, Inflection's chief operating officer said, "We are a wholly independent company. Microsoft has no investment in our company."[18] The deal itself was inked for around $650 million, which was made up of a $620 million fee for the license and a $30 million fee in return for a waiver of legal rights related to the mass hiring.[19] The investors, including firms such as Greylock and Dragoneer, were bought off and disclaimed their right to sue going forward.[20] Prior to the pracquisition, these investors had lofty expectations for Inflection's future value, hoping that it "might top $1 trillion."[21] Under the terms of the pracquisition, however, these hopes were dashed.

B. Adept AI

In June 2024, Amazon effected a pracquisition with Adept AI.[22] The deal granted Amazon a license to its AI models as Amazon hired away its cofounders and much of its core engineering team.[23] Reconstituting under new management, Adept still operates independently. Its previous investors, such as Greylock and General Catalyst, invested $414 million into Adept, but only recouped their investment.[24] Breaking even is not the hoped-for outcome in a venture capital deal, although it is better than a strict loss of capital. Just as the FTC under Commissioner Lina Khan started to probe Microsoft's pracquisition of Inflection, the FTC also opened an inquiry into the pracquisition of Adept.[25] The status of both investigations appears to be stalled in the wake of the turnover in presidential administration.[26]

---

[18] *Id*.

[19] *See* Kenn So, *Unpacking Big Tech's Quasi-Acquisitions of GenAI Companies,* Generational (Aug. 16, 2024), https://www.generational.pub/p/unpacking-big-techs-quasi-acquisitions.

[20] *See id*.

[21] Gary Rivlin, *An AI Startup Couldn't Beat Microsoft. So It Joined Them*, Bloomberg (Mar. 20, 2025), https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-03-20/how-microsoft-lured-inflection-ai-s-staff-to-abandon-the-startup?embedded-checkout=true.

[22] Kyle Wiggers, *Amazon hires founders away from AI startup Adept*, Tech Crunch (Jun. 28, 2024), https://techcrunch.com/2024/06/28/amazon-hires-founders-away-from-ai-startup-adept/#:~:text=Adept%2C%20a%20startup%20developing%20AI,commerce%20giant.

[23] *See* Reed Albergotti, *Investors in Adept AI will be paid back after Amazon hires startup's top talent*, Semafor (Aug. 2, 2024), https://www.semafor.com/article/08/02/2024/investors-in-adept-ai-will-be-paid-back-after-amazon-hires-startups-top-talent.

[24] *See id*.

[25] *See id*.

[26] *See id*.

C. Character.AI

In August 2024, Google inked a $2.7 billion pracquisition with Character.AI, giving Google a license to its technology.[27] Naturally, Google also hired several key Character employees, including Noam Shazeer.[28] But the agreement was still primarily about the talent, not the IP. "People who work on AI at Google said they don't know what the company will do with the technology it licensed from Character," according to the Wall Street Journal.[29] The license was, as customary in a pracquisition, more of a pay-off than a standalone value-add. While it is unclear what the returns profile looks like for the original Character investors, but without Shazeer and the other key engineers, the independent Character is a much less valuable enterprise as a going concern. Unlike the other deals, Google also directly invested in Character.AI on top of its licensing deal, which may soften regulatory skepticism.[30]

D. Enfabrica

The most recent mega pracquisition came in September 2025 between Nvidia and Enfabrica, a microchip startup. Nvidia agreed to spend over $900 million in cash and stock to hire Enfabrica's CEO Rochan Sankar and other key employees and to license Enfabrica's chip networking technology.[31] Similar to the other pracquisitions, Enfabrica's investors and non-key employees received a portion of the licensing fee but were left with significantly less than they would have received had Nvidia bought the company outright. Sankar and the other newly-hired employees were paid in part by their handsome new compensation packages, but the exact split between new-hire compensation and licensing fee is unknown. Prior to the deal, Enfabrica had raised roughly $260 million in venture funding and already counted Nvidia as a strategic investor.[32] After the deal, Nvidia gained access all of Enfabrica's strategic IP and personnel without formally acquiring the company, such that

---

[27] *See* Miles Kruppa & Lauren Thomas, *Google Paid $2.7 Billion to Bring Back an AI Genius Who Quit in Frustration*, Wall St. J. (Sep. 25, 2024), https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai/noam-shazeer-google-ai-deal-d3605697?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=AWEtsqcus6y2i3JCt_1k_CrAMs3AAe2jof8KVkKRertTQA9qAuItRdxcajFMjw_3pi4%3D&gaa_ts=69195534&gaa_sig=cZRyNlKQykYKPQu-hD8dlTLccE4QEqIBpcQPpWd-XPr8fcLGQt1rUKtGcvJn6xjk001hXwU7QbIgWakimYhLCg%3D%3D.

[28] *See id.*

[29] *See id.*

[30] *See id.*

[31] *Nvidia spent over $900 million to hire Enfabrica CEO, license technology, CNBC reports*, Reuters (Sep. 18, 2025), https://www.reuters.com/technology/nvidia-spent-over-900-million-hire-enfabrica-ceo-license-technology-cnbc-reports-2025-09-18/.

[32] *See id.*; Stephen Nellis, *AI startup Enfabrica raises $115 million, plans to release chip next year*, Reuters (Nov. 19, 2024), https://www.reuters.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/ai-startup-enfabrica-raises-115-million-plans-release-chip-next-year-2024-11-19/.

neither regulatory review nor contractual merger provisions were triggered. Once again, this creates an uneven distribution among shareholders, with Enfabrica's key technical talent enjoying priority over investors as a result of rich go forward compensation.

III. Contractual Innovations

As pracquisitions become more common in AI and related sectors, investors will need to develop new ways to protect their interests and ensure that they are adequately compensated for their productive risk-taking.[33] To address the legal innovations, several contractual provisions might be contemplated to balance the competing demands of technologists and investors, including greater than 1x preferred return/liquidation preferences, trigger-sale clauses, modified block-sale provisions, and income-share agreements.

First, investors could negotiate for the inclusion of higher preferred return rights or liquidation preferences. In the normal M&A context, shareholders are paid pro rata, but preferred shareholders may be given priority up to a certain return threshold. For example, it is standard that VC investors obtain a 1x liquidation preference, such that the VC breaks even before any other shareholders are paid out.[34] It is not unheard of for investors to negotiate for higher liquidation preferences, but it is unusual. Even if a 2x preference were negotiated, this would still be less than investors would normally underwrite in a venture-style deal.

Second, investors could demand the introduction of trigger-sale clauses requiring a secondary sale process or auction to determine if a higher price is achievable, upon the proposal of a pracquisition. This would enable investors to align all the shareholders toward the common goal of maximizing equity value. This is especially useful for growth investors, who are disproportionately harmed compared to early-stage investors, since their returns on invested capital look more unattractive due to their higher entry valuations. It may become increasingly standard to include pracquisitions in the definition of "Deemed Liquidation Event" for the purpose of these provisions, although it would require careful legal drafting. Practically, in a transaction which would result in less than a certain threshold return for the investors, the investors would retain the right to start a competitive process for a sale of the company.

Third, transaction approval or block-sale protective provisions might be included in financing agreements to guarantee an investor's right to veto

---

[33] *See generally* Jesse M. Fried & Mira Ganor, *Agency Costs of Venture Capitalist Control in Startups*, 81 N.Y.U. L. Rev. 967 ("VCs also typically receive extensive control rights in venturebacked startups. Like preferred shareholders in other companies, VCs obtain substantial protective rights in their preferred stock contracts, such as the right to veto").

[34] *See Liquidation Preference and Why it Matters*, WilmerHale Launch (Aug. 24, 2015), https://launch.wilmerhale.com/research/blog/liquidation-preference-matters.

proposed exits. Since a pracquisition is not formally an acquisition, it would not usually trigger the standard version of these provisions. Therefore, investors could ask for enhanced veto rights or supermajority vote requirements on any transaction that has the economic or operational effect of a sale. These are unusual to obtain in practice but are worth contemplating amid the rise of pracquisitions.

Fourth, investors could draw lessons from an industry where talent dynamics mirror those observed in the AI market today: entertainment. Just as a talent agent in Hollywood might source opportunities for stars in exchange for a share of their future earnings, AI investors could contemplate income-share agreements with founders as a part of major fundraising rounds. This would acknowledge the reality that the talent, not the business, is the true object of the investment in the first place.[35] In general, the landscape of investor protection in an era of pracquisitions remains nascent given the novelty of the trend, but careful contract drafting can mitigate some of these risks.

IV. Conclusion

As Big Tech races to develop AI capabilities, speed is of the essence. Pracquisitions allow large strategics to bypass HSR waiting periods and drive forward AI innovation. But for investors, pracquisitions are a mixed bag. Early backers might post strong gains, while later-stage investors see only modest or breakeven returns. Regulators are reasonably troubled by this contractual innovation, and the seeming gap between form and substance has raised serious questions related to antitrust policy. Pracquisitions will no doubt invite more scrutiny in the future, especially if pracquisition targets do not continue to operate in good faith post-transaction with a meaningful business strategy. Left unchecked, the workaround threatens to neuter traditional HSR review by allowing dominant companies to absorb the value of nascent rivals with no formal oversight. But policy changes must nonetheless balance the dual goals of robust competition and technological innovation, neither of which are lacking in the current AI market.

[35] Sam Lessin of Slow Ventures espoused this strategy during the boom of the "creator economy," when he started buying equity in influencers (i.e., buying a percentage of the influencer's future profits for a certain time period). *See* Margaux MacColl, *Forget startups. VC firms like Slow Ventures are now buying equity directly in influencers*, Business Insider (Nov. 18, 2025), https://www.businessinsider.com/slow-ventures-set-aside-20-million-invest-in-influencers-2021-5.