Chuck McGill's Tape Strategy



Introduction

Charles McGill is one of the three lawyers who founded the law firm HHM, one of the biggest in Albuquerque. His lawyer skills are legendary among the people who know him, and throughout the show, he has displayed high levels of intelligence, something that will be covered here.

This doc will explain and analyze what is probably Chuck's best feat in the show, as well as a few other miscellaneous feats.

Note that this doc will try to give the fullest assessment possible, which may include going into implications or speculation at times, but I will always try to make it clear when that's the case. Regardless, the validity of any feat can always be contested in a debate where the doc is referred to.

COLOR LEGEND:

Full-Scale IQ, General Intellect, Miscellaneous...

Emotional Intelligence, Social Intelligence, Adversity Capacity, Psychology...

Thinking, Reasoning, Sensory...

Strategy, Planning, Tactics...

Manipulation, Deception...

Anticipation, Prediction, Field Skills...

SPOILERS FOR BETTER CALL SAUL

Tape Strategy

CONTEXT:

HHM has been in a small tug of war over a client, the bank Mesa Verde, with Chuck's brother Jimmy and Jimmy's girlfriend Kim, specifically the latter. Chuck is able to convince Mesa Verde to stay with HHM (more details in the miscellaneous section - see: "Persuading Mesa Verde"), but during the meeting, he's exposed to high amounts of electricity, causing him to later pass out because of his electromagnetic hypersensibility (a psychosomatic condition). Because of this, Jimmy is called to take care of the unconscious Chuck.

Seeing the Mesa Verde files, Jimmy has an idea. He takes the files to a late-night copy shop and changes the written address of Mesa Verde's proposed new branch from 1261 Rosella Drive to 1216 Rosella Drive. This causes Chuck to screw up the address during a meeting with Mesa Verde, as he uses the wrong address and insists on having read 1216 on the files, and his insistence on the matter causes him to lose his reputation with Mesa Verde, on top of having pushed back the matter by six weeks. Chuck checks the files as soon as he gets home and sees that the written address is 1261. He figures out almost immediately exactly what happened (more details in the miscellaneous section - see: "Figuring out Jimmy's swap", I recommend reading that part before reading the strategy for better context).

While probing for evidence on Jimmy's actions, Chuck finds the copy shop Jimmy used, but he finds that the employer there has been bribed and thus refuses to confirm Jimmy's presence the night of the copying. While arguing, Chuck has an intense attack of his electromagnetic hypersensibility and passes out, hitting his head.

PHASE 1 - GETTING THE CONFESSION:

Chuck wakes up at the hospital. He already suspects that Jimmy bribed the copy shop employer because he was at the scene very soon after Chuck hit his head, something Chuck vaguely remembers and has Ernesto confirm. The only way this is possible is if Jimmy was already close by. Chuck figures that this was the case because Jimmy had been to the copy shop to bribe the employer, explaining the change of statements between the time Ernesto talked to him and the time Chuck talked to him. Ernesto, however, covers for Jimmy by saying he called him. ***[Deductive Reasoning + Abductive Reasoning + Thinking: Critical, Analytical, Associative, Applicative, Holistic]***

Now, we know from later that Chuck still believes Jimmy bribed the employer and that he understands Ernesto's loyalty to his friend Jimmy (something that he will even exploit - more on that later), and that soon after this happens, he's already strategizing on how to get back at Jimmy. All of this makes it very likely that Chuck didn't believe Ernesto's version here, and the fact that he didn't point this out could indicate that he had already thought of his strategy and did so deliberately to begin constructing the narrative he needed, which would be extremely impressive given that he has just woken up from a state of unconsciousness, but it's a bit of a stretch, so I'll leave it as a possibility and nothing more. At the very least, Chuck recognized that Ernesto's loyalty made him an asset for the future and chose not to jeopardize it by doubting him and possibly creating friction. ***[{Intuition, Abductive Reasoning, Thinking: Critical, Applicative + Strategy Vision, Strategy Building, Strategy Logistics + Fabrication, Concealment, Acting Skills}~maybe + Thinking: Critical, Lateral, Abstract + Emotional Understanding, Emotional Perception + Logical Prediction + Strategy Foresight, Strategy Logistics, Strategy Building]***

Let's get into the strategy.

The entire tape strategy can be broken down into two main phases and a third one serving as the conclusion, the second phase being an extension of the first one, and both relying on an accurate prediction of Jimmy's behavior, as I will detail later.

This first phase consists of exploiting a situation to construct a narrative that allows Chuck to manipulate Jimmy into confessing to what he did and to thus get a recording of it (the infamous "tape" I named the strategy after). What this recording is meant to achieve will be explained in the second phase. ***[Strategy Vision]***

In order to manipulate Jimmy, Chuck needs to fabricate a precise state of mind that Jimmy can believe to be a result of the situation he himself put Chuck into. The crux of this is that every negative emotion Chuck is simulating has to stem from Jimmy's address-swap. At the same time, these negative emotions have to be potent enough for Jimmy to want to take the burden off of Chuck by confessing. Keep this in mind as I explain the trap itself. ***[Strategy Logistics, Strategy Fortitude, Strategy Alignment]***

The bait consists of sending a letter to HHM requesting retirement. This doesn't directly reach Jimmy by default, but Chuck predicts it will: he is an extremely important asset to HHM, which means that Howard will immediately try to reverse his decision; in particular, Howard will follow a specific reasoning process, connecting the recent events (keep in mind that Chuck had explained his theory to Howard) to what happened, therefore pinning the blame on Jimmy, also because of his understanding and general resentment of him, and will thus call him to either get him to "fix" his mistake or otherwise to hopefully get a better explanation for Chuck's decision from Jimmy who is close to Chuck and might know better. The details on this are not too precise because we only heard one sentence from Howard's call ("Jimmy, are you behind this?") that I could extrapolate Howard's thought process for, but regardless, we know for a fact that whatever it was, Chuck predicted it since it's the bait to his trap. The general abstraction of this prediction sees Howard connecting Chuck's retirement letter to Jimmy and acting on it, so Chuck is able to put himself in Howard's shoes and follow his abductive process to set the trap. This step is important as it serves as a layer of separation between Chuck and the bait, one of the many measures that will establish in Jimmy's mind that confessing is safe. Howard is also not in on the plan yet, despite Chuck planning to involve him later, so that his actions and reaction can remain as natural as possible so as not to risk making Jimmy suspicious. ***[Strategy Orchestration, Planning Accuracy, Tactics + Logical Prediction, Trap Setting, Information Control + Tactical Potency + Logical Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation + Thinking: Analytical, Convergent, Linear, Applicative, Abstract, Metacognitive + Logical Manipulation, Emotional Manipulation + Psychological Insight + Logical Manipulation, Fabrication, Bluffing + Tactical Potency, Tactical Synergy, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Logistics + Strategy Shielding, Strategy Fortitude, Strategy Resilience]***

Chuck then predicts that Jimmy, upon hearing about Chuck's resignation letter, would rush to his house to try to make him change his mind (due to Chuck's personality, I'll explain this in a bit). Chuck initially tries sending Jimmy away, an obvious farce in hindsight, knowing, based on Jimmy's character, that he would insist and demand to be let in anyway. Chuck understands Jimmy's drive to help his brother and his general stubbornness. This ensures another layer of separation, as it shows Jimmy that Chuck is reluctant to talk to him. ***[Logical Prediction** + **Tactics, Tactical Potency** + **Inductive Reasoning, Thinking: Critical, Applicative, Abstract** + **Logical Prediction** + **Emotional Manipulation, Psychological Insight** + **Tactical Synergy, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Logistics**]*

The scene that Jimmy finds is evidence of the narrative Chuck has fabricated: he has covered all the walls in a room in space blankets, arguing that the walls of his house aren't enough to shield him from the electromagnetic field outside. Let's break this down:

- ➔ The emotional turmoil Chuck is feigning, as mentioned above, derives from the address swap. It starts as a feeling of guilt for failing the client and making them waste precious time, a feeling initially dampened by pinning the blame on Jimmy. So when Chuck stops blaming Jimmy, he feels more guilt for doing so earlier, and so begin the feelings of inadequacy. Chuck sees the failure, something so simple and seemingly stupid, as evidence of his deteriorating cognitive faculties and ability as a lawyer, leading to a partial loss of self-worth (subtle and unstated, not overdone) and retirement. To follow his own psyche in a way that Jimmy would recognize, Chuck continues shifting the blame, this time onto the electricity. The failure fuels his paranoia and negative mental state and leads to his attempt to build a Faraday cage in his own home, something that obviously comes off as desperate and delusional. All of this, keep in mind, follows high levels of psychological accuracy and is in line with Jimmy's understanding of Chuck, which would see it as realistic for him to have such a reaction to a simple mistake due to his perfectionist attitude.
- ➔ Jimmy doesn't feel guilty for his actions, and Chuck knows this, but he might feel guilty for the effects said actions had on Chuck, especially when they are so severe. To put it into perspective, as Jimmy understands it, Chuck's job is the most important thing in his life, and his mental faculties and ability as a lawyer are the things he values most, so for Jimmy to have tarnished that means to have effectively ruined his brother's life and self-worth, turning him

into a broken mess that covers his walls in space blankets. As if that wasn't enough, Jimmy knows that Chuck's mind is as sharp as ever for having initially figured out exactly what he did, which makes his later mental breakdown seem more unfair, especially since now Chuck is apparently feeling guilty for blaming Jimmy, something that he was right to do, which in turn makes Jimmy feel guilty. To add to that, Chuck also displays a defeatist attitude, contrasting with his usual determined, prideful, and fierce self, who would see Jimmy disbarred for his tendency to con and cheat, which Chuck sees as dangerous and blasphemous, which makes him come across as even more deeply broken.

- ➔ The ability for Chuck to do all of this shows a massive understanding of how others (Jimmy and Howard - the latter who likely did some of the same thought processes when gauging Chuck's retirement letter) see him, and by extension, of himself, his attitude, behavior, personality, values, and emotional drives. He has such a clear understanding of himself and such a regard for how people perceive him that he's able to simulate a completely made-up mental breakdown in minuscule detail in a way that raises zero suspicion from his own brother, who, on top of that, is a highly intelligent individual. All of this also applies to Chuck's feigned reaction and emotions after Jimmy confesses.
- ➔ The display gets the desired results, Jimmy confesses, and Chuck, who had hidden an old recorder taken from his old appliances in the garage under a space blanket (small but worth mentioning: double-layered tactic in hiding the recorder and shielding himself from the electricity), gets it on tape. He presses further by asking Jimmy if he did what he did to humiliate him (we know he knows this is not true, see: "Figuring out Jimmy's swap"), goading Jimmy, who will want to save face with his brother and prove that he's not that malicious, to outright state his true intentions, thus allowing Chuck to record his motive as well. And finally, Chuck asks Jimmy if he's aware that he's confessing to a felony, making it harder for him to wiggle out of the confession's implications by treating it as a white lie when the recording is eventually presented in court. This shows that Chuck is already anticipating that Jimmy will want to argue that his confession was a way to make Chuck feel better. All the while, Chuck keeps his act up, showing anger and disappointment at Jimmy for what he did.
- ➔ To recap, the reasons Jimmy feels safe confessing are: the two layers of separation mentioned above, the fact that Chuck wouldn't use a recorder due

to his condition (something that is firmly established in Jimmy's mind), the fact that as far as he knows, it's his word against Chuck's, and, of course, Chuck's acting skills.

- ➔ Speaking of Chuck's acting here, I should mention that Jimmy's EP is extremely potent. He's shown multiple times assessing the behaviors and core personalities of complete strangers just by observing them briefly in order to pull off his scams. And not only that, but he's Chuck's brother and has known him all his life. He's also perfectly capable of seeing through schemes, as he's done this multiple times as well. Despite this, Chuck fools him completely.
- ➔ Also, do keep in mind that handling the recorder meant actual physical pain for Chuck, something that he was willing to go through to reach his goal, and that he also concealed completely.
- ➔ Chuck also waits to hear the sound of Jimmy exiting the door before unveiling the recorder and turning it off, just in case Jimmy came back for whatever reason, like if he decided to add something to the conversation.

The first phase of the strategy is thus completely successful, all of Chuck's tactics and predictions proving right. ***[Strategy Logistics, Strategy Execution, Strategy Alignment, Planning Accuracy, Tactics, Tactical Potency, Tactical Synergy + Verbal & Non-Verbal Deception, Fabrication, Acting Skills, Misdirection, Concealment + Thinking: Critical, Abstract, Applicative, Linear + Strategy Logistics, Strategy Fortitude, Planning Accuracy, Planning Coverage + Emotional Manipulation, Psychological Manipulation, Direct Manipulation, Manipulation Methods (Guilt-Tripping) + Emotional Realization, Self-Awareness, Self-Regard, Emotional Understanding + Tactics, Tactical Synergy + Tactics, Tactical Potency, Tactical Synergy + Emotional Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Direct Manipulation + Logical Prediction + Emotional Understanding, Psychological Insight + Strategy Alignment, Strategy Logistics, Planning Coverage + Tactics, Tactical Synergy, Strategy Foresight, Strategy Fortitude, Strategy Resilience, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Building, Counteraction + Anticipation, Logical Prediction + Acting Skills + Strategy Shielding, Strategy Fortitude, Strategy Logistics, Planning Invincibility, Planning Accuracy, Planning Intricacies + Acting Skills + Determination, Perseverance, Composure, Emotional Management, Emotional Engagement + Strategy Effectiveness, Planning Aim]***

PHASE 2 - GOADING JIMMY'S ACTIONS:

Let's tackle the role of the tape. Chuck is indeed planning to eventually play it in front of a jury, but by itself, it's not enough to build a case against Jimmy. In fact, it's practically useless. The tape was recorded secretly, so while Jimmy did confirm that he knew he was confessing to a felony, it still doesn't entirely count as much as a willing confession. Another problem is that Jimmy might try to argue that the tape was modified or anything else on that note. Because of this, Chuck plans to let Jimmy find out about the tape through information leakage, predicting that he would break into his house to destroy it. This would not only provide Chuck with concrete grounds to get Jimmy disbarred (by charging him with breaking and entering), but also trick Jimmy into making the confession seem more authentic, as he would show being willing to commit a crime to destroy. ***[Deductive Reasoning (the premises are the law itself), Thinking: Critical, Linear, Convergent, Divergent + Anticipation + Thinking: Creative, Divergent, Convergent, Non-Linear + Logical Prediction + Strategy Logistics, Strategy Fortitude, Strategy Complexity, Planning Coverage]***

Chuck goes about this by exploiting Ernesto's personality. Chuck asks Ernesto to buy him batteries, then he starts changing the recorder's batteries and uses the excuse of his condition to ask Ernesto to do it instead, as doing it causes him discomfort. However, he also sets up the recording so that once the batteries are inserted, it starts playing, letting Ernesto hear Jimmy confessing, and making it seem like an accident. At that point, Chuck starts acting panicked and angry, rushing to shut off the recorder, then more understanding, generally using actual persuasive tactics as if he was trying to manipulate Ernesto into keeping the secret, like by overblowing the consequences of him telling anyone about what he heard and implying he could lose his job. These tactics serve the purpose of making the situation look more believable, and being as solid as they are, they might've worked on someone else (they were enough to make Ernesto highly doubtful about what he wanted to do), but Chuck knew they wouldn't work on Ernesto because of his psyche, personality, and values, which Chuck assessed with incredible accuracy. So Chuck predicts that Ernesto will want to relay this information to Jimmy in order to protect him from the possible consequences of what he has witnessed, setting up the next part of his plan while, once again, keeping a layer of separation present to avoid Jimmy suspecting what's really happening. Something else that may have been taken into account, though I don't think it's a necessary part of the prediction, is that Kim acts as a buffer in the sense that she's not directly involved in the case, so Ernesto could tell her instead of Jimmy directly, which is what he ends up doing.

[Strategy Vision + Strategy Logistics, Strategy Execution, Strategy Fortitude, Strategy Efficiency, Planning Accuracy + Concealment, Misdirection + Acting Skills, Concealment, Misdirection, Logical Manipulation (purposefully failed, but designed to be believable) + Tactics, Tactical Potency, Tactical Synergy + Emotional Understanding, Psychological Insight + Logical Prediction, Information Control, Trap Setting + Emotional Manipulation, Direct Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation, Logical Manipulation + Strategy Alignment, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Resilience, Planning Accuracy, Planning Invincibility + Misdirection, Concealment + Strategy Shielding, Strategy Fortitude, Strategy Logistics, Planning Invincibility]

At this point, Chuck predicts that Jimmy will want to break into his house and destroy the tape. This is not the ideal course of action for him to take, as Howard and Kim point out, but it's regardless of what Chuck thinks Jimmy will do, knowing his way of acting, and most of all, based on the anger and betrayal he feels, caused by the exposure of Chuck's manipulation, driving his actions. This is the second major layer of Chuck's manipulation, something he had planned from the start despite the first phase alone being a fully realized scheme in its own right, which shows an ability for Chuck to conceive and execute multi-step, multi-layered strategies ahead of time. To capitalize on it, Chuck has Howard hire a private investigator to stay in Chuck's home all day and act as a witness when Jimmy eventually breaks in. In preparation for this, Chuck creates a duplicate of the tape to use in court. *[Logical Prediction, Anticipation + Inductive Reasoning, Thinking: Critical, Non-Linear, Abstract, Metacognitive, Applicative + Emotional Understanding, Emotional Facilitation, Psychological Insight + Emotional Manipulation, Indirect Manipulation + Strategy Complexity, Planning Intricacies + Strategy Logistics, Strategy Efficiency, Planning Accuracy + Strategy Shielding, Planning Contingencies]*

Something to mention, showing that Chuck's predictions aren't 100% accurate, is that he thinks it's more likely that Jimmy will break in at night. This, however, is only in response to Howard suggesting they should shut down the operation entirely due to the PI's cost. This means that for Chuck, it either meant reducing the effectiveness of the trap to the most likely time of the day or removing the trap entirely. Chuck also mentions that he wouldn't consider it above Jimmy to break in during the day, so it's not like he botched the prediction entirely. *[Psychological Insight]*

Regardless, Jimmy breaks in, and Chuck, Howard, and the PI are all witnesses to that. *[Strategy Effectiveness, Planning Aim]*

PHASE 3 - GETTING JIMMY DISBARRED:

With an iron-clad accusation of breaking and entering, and a now validated confession tape to boot, Chuck can bring Jimmy to the courtroom, where he has the advantage thanks to his HHM lawyers and the situation he has constructed. His ultimate goal is to get Jimmy disbarred from the profession of lawyer. The way he intends to do this is by taking Jimmy's action to the New Mexico Bar Association, which is made up of people Chuck knows well and some of whom he has even mentored in the profession, leaving no doubt that they will side with him. To avoid Jimmy defending himself, Chuck feigns sympathy for him (as a brother would, rather than an enemy) during a pre-trial interview and proposes a deal where Jimmy confesses to all his actions and avoids jail time completely, with the confession however being taken up to the Association. If Jimmy chooses not to take the deal, he risks going to jail and getting disbarred anyway. The deal tactic might've been gauged to Jimmy's personality since he was initially feeling resigned and was going to accept the deal, but Kim's tenacity fueled Jimmy to fight back and come up with a counterstrategy of his own. ***[Strategy Logistics, Strategy Fortitude, Strategy Alignment, Planning Accuracy + Strategy Logistics, Strategy Efficiency, Strategy Fortitude, Planning Accuracy, Planning Invincibility + Social Awareness, Emotional Understanding, Influence + Strategy Shielding, Strategy Resilience, Planning Intricacies, Tactics, Tactical Potency, Tactical Synergy + Acting Skills, Misdirection + Logical Manipulation + Psychological Insight]***

Chuck did all of this not just as revenge, but because he genuinely believes that Jimmy's tendency to con and cheat and exploit the law is harmful, even blasphemous to the entire concept of law, which Chuck is deeply dedicated to and sees as the masterpiece of humanity, and that kind of behavior shouldn't be allowed. Subconsciously, Chuck has always resented Jimmy, mainly out of jealousy. These feelings are what fueled his entire strategy. ***[Emotional Engagement]***

VERDICT - DID JIMMY OUTSMART CHUCK IN THE END?

There is no doubt that Jimmy (or Saul) scales higher than Chuck overall. He just has way better feats on almost every front, even though there are aspects in which

Chuck is superior. That being said, the Tape Strategy as a whole is clearly an example of Chuck outsmarting Jimmy, though you could argue that this is not “prime” Jimmy, since he’s only three seasons in.

Jimmy later came up with a strategy to goad Chuck into a breakdown in the courtroom, which many might point to as proof of Jimmy eventually getting the upper hand. While this is true, I feel like Jimmy had an unfair advantage in that Chuck actually believed his condition to be real, meaning that he could’ve never anticipated Jimmy’s specific move that caused the breakdown. So Jimmy’s move is not something Chuck could’ve ever considered as a possibility, which makes it dubious if this should count as a proper victory or rather a situational win. Chuck managed to remain a step ahead the entire time until Jimmy pulled the rug by using Chuck’s greatest weakness, something that Chuck’s mental health didn’t allow him to anticipate. That aside, Jimmy was also helped by Kim, who is very smart in her own right and also provides motivational support. In this doc alone, there are two separate instances mentioned that would’ve led to Chuck’s victory if Kim hadn’t been there for Jimmy, and on top of that, she contributed to Jimmy’s counterstrategy, even though he did most of the work, effectively making this a 2v1.

As for Chuck’s placement as a whole amongst smart characters, I believe that his feats are really solid and worthy of consideration, but I don’t think he could ever scale too high due to a lack of versatility and variety in feats, and most of all, his condition rendering him useless in a lot of situations. The fact that he can do something completely ordinary and it counts as an AC feat should be telling. Regardless, you can still take his moves in a vacuum and scale those just based on how smart they are, and his performance within the feats in this doc is impressive considering his limitations.

Miscellaneous Feats

Note: This doc doesn’t cover every one of Chuck’s feats, and it’s not meant to. Originally, this was only meant to be an analysis doc on the Tape Strategy, but seeing as two of the feats below are strictly related to the context of the strategy and the other is a small narrative statement, I decided to put this section as well. I might add more feats in the future.

★ Graduation statement

Chuck is said to have graduated from high school at the age of fourteen as a valedictorian (the highest-ranked student), placing him in a highly gifted IQ range. He then went to college immediately, and following a typical education path (4 years college, 3 years law school), he would've graduated from law school at around 21-22. This shows extremely advanced learning ability and verbal comprehension. Following this narrative, other statements include Jimmy calling him a "rock star" in the realm of law (proven by his revered status and reputation), and another lawyer claiming that he would've expected Chuck to be arguing in front of the Supreme Court at one point (instead, Chuck's career was cut short by his condition). ***[Fluid Reasoning Index, Verbal Comprehension Index, Learning Ability, Knowledge, Knowledge Application, Fluid Intelligence, Crystallized Intelligence]***

★ Persuading Mesa Verde

In order to secure Mesa Verde as an HHM client, Chuck sets up a meeting where he can persuade them to choose them over Kim as their attorney, despite them already having chosen Kim by this point. Chuck is very dedicated to his job and to HHM, so he's willing, for this, to even walk through a metal detector to show himself as fully functioning, despite the extreme pain it causes him, and only flinches a bit.

- ➔ Chuck begins by setting up a light-hearted and friendly atmosphere, throwing in a joke about how he's not there to make them "suffer through a hard sell" (like they did with Howard), showing playfulness and self-awareness. This is because while the representatives there likely didn't actually "suffer", the joke creates a situation where Chuck's defences are visibly down, as he's allowed to jab at his own firm, making him appear friendly and non-hostile, despite standards of professional courtesy usually demanding strict respect, especially towards someone of Chuck's social stature. Aside from this, if they did feel bored to any extent by Howard's "hard sell" (not unlikely at all), they can laugh along, feeling understood without the need to hide anything. These are all very subtle psychological mechanisms, which is why they might not seem entirely relevant, but it's extremely important for Chuck to set the right atmosphere here.
- ➔ Chuck starts validating Mesa Verde's choice of Kim, singing her praises and saying how she's young and brilliant, as the future of banking law should be.

This is essentially getting the point across that Chuck understands Mesa Verde's choice, thus validating their judgment. He then casually mentions how he keeps himself updated on every change in the law, painting it as a self-deprecatory joke to show how old and boring he is, and points out that even the littlest mistakes can have devastating consequences in the world of modern banking law. He continues mentioning complicated law terminology, several different aspects to cover, and that could hold Mesa Verde in court for years if not properly dealt with, as well as giving a passing mention to some contacts of Howard's that could help with that sort of stuff (implying that Howard has a vast pool of contacts to draw from, aside from this specific example). Now that same judgment that was validated is feeling doubt at the previous choice. The point here is essentially that for how good Kim can be, it would always be better for a big company like Mesa Verde to go with a large, established firm like HHM, offering a whole team of professionals like Kim. All Chuck does then is ask them to reconsider. Mesa Verde switches to HHM thanks to Chuck's arguments, which followed the thought-process that the representatives would have in their situation.

➔ Right after the representatives leave, Chuck collapses, showing that he had kept himself completely composed despite the massive effects that his condition was having on him.

Chuck was successful in securing Mesa Verde for HHM. ***[Emotional Management, Emotional Engagement, Determination, Composure + Social Skills, Social Integration, Social Awareness, Social Cognition, Psychological Insight, Emotional Facilitation + Psychological Manipulation, Direct Manipulation + Strategy Building, Strategy Fortitude, Tactics, Tactical Potency, Tactical Synergy + Tactics + Psychological Manipulation + Tactics, Tactical Potency, Tactical Synergy, Strategy Logistics + Psychological Manipulation + Logical Manipulation, Persuasion + Thinking: Critical, Linear, Convergent + Composure, Emotional Management]***

★ Figuring out Jimmy's swap

Right after the Mesa Verde fiasco, Chuck went to his home to check the files and found that the written address was, in fact, 1261. Almost immediately, he figured out what happened. Later, he gives Jimmy and Kim an extremely accurate account of his suspicions, but he might not have figured out everything immediately. I'll distinguish between what he had to have surmised when he figured out Jimmy was behind it and what he might have figured out later. Keep in mind that there's nothing suggesting that his original inference couldn't have already been complete

and detailed, but I'll low-ball the feat to show that it's still impressive. Let's break this down:

- ➔ Chuck was sure of having read 1216. He checked the number multiple times, he's implied (and shown) to have a very good memory, and most importantly, he had made a mental note of how the number was "one after Magna Charta" (which was signed in the year 1215).
- ➔ This means that the files Chuck read and the files with the real address number, which were now on his desk, are different.
- ➔ Chuck thus infers that someone has tampered with the files in his house before he could work with them, then replaced the tampered files with the original copies before he came back from the meeting.
- ➔ What's above is what Chuck 100% had already inferred originally (he said "It wasn't a mistake"), but I think it's unreasonable to claim he didn't at least clock in Jimmy at this point.
- ➔ For whom could have done this, Chuck realizes it was Jimmy because:
  - ◆ Jimmy has reason to do this. Specifically, Chuck understands that Jimmy did it for Kim's sake, as he loves her and believes she deserves Mesa Verde as a client.
  - ◆ Jimmy was at his house while he was delirious from the effects of the hypersensitivity, so he would've been in a situation where he could've seen the files and thought of the scheme.
  - ◆ Jimmy has the keys to Chuck's house, thus he could've waited for Chuck to leave, snuck back in, and replaced the tampered files with the original copies.
  - ◆ Jimmy has a history of conning and something like this is very much in his style. Chuck makes the example that when Jimmy was younger he was good at falsifying ID cards to buy beer for himself and his friends.
- ➔ So Chuck infers the entire process of Jimmy's scheme: he found the files unattended, Chuck unconscious, he took the files to a late-night copy shop, he meticulously created copies that were completely identical except for the address number, he replaced the original files with the fakes, he waited for Chuck to leave for the meeting, entered his house, and put the original files back in their, leaving no trace of his interference.

[Deductive Reasoning + Abductive Reasoning + Thinking: Analytical, Critical, Convergent Associative, Holistic, Linear, Non-Linear + Emotional Understanding + Psychological Insight]

Chuck's immediate strategy to counter this is to tell Kim everything in hopes that she behaves professionally and tells Mesa Verde to go back to HHM, apologizing for Jimmy's actions. Kim, however, covers for Jimmy, pretending not to believe Chuck's theory. Hers is a front, as she does believe Chuck, and she argues like she would in court, letting Chuck know that his story wouldn't hold up, and Chuck understands this. For this reason, Chuck starts digging. He figures that whatever copy shop Jimmy went to would have an employer able to recognize him, or maybe he could even find CCTV footage, so he sends Ernesto to check on copy shops open at night, likely starting from the closest one. Ernesto asks the employer if he has seen Jimmy, showing him a picture, and gets a positive answer, so he leaves and brings Chuck. In the meantime, Kim tells Jimmy that Chuck is a dangerous opponent and that he should make sure he leaves no trace of what he did, which gets Jimmy to think about the employer. So Jimmy manages to bribe said employer before Chuck is back. Chuck starts getting frustrated and agitated because he feels the effects of the hypersensitivity and is being lied to (note that the hypersensitivity is likely what made him so impatient, and he might've handled the situation better if not because of it), until he eventually passes out and hits his head. If not for Kim, Chuck would've already been successful against Jimmy here. Not to mention, Chuck sent Ernesto first because he didn't know how many copy shops he would've had to check, and he wanted to minimize the amount of electricity he's exposed to. If not for this, Jimmy would've been too late to bribe the employer. ***[Strategy Vision + Thinking: Critical, Linear + Inductive Reasoning, Thinking: Divergent, Critical + Strategy Execution, Strategy Logistics + Information Gathering]***