CHAPTER 02 OF 50 • FREE DAILY MASTERBOOK DROP

Map Any Unfamiliar Enterprise Codebase in 5 Mins & Execute Safe Diffs.

How senior architects onboard onto 500K-line repositories and review multi-file diffs with zero regression risk.

Core Principle: Never let an agent edit a repository it hasn't mapped first. Read-only architectural reconnaissance cuts bad diffs by 80%.

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4-Question Recon Pattern →

1. The 4-Question Recon Pattern (Read-Only)

Drop into any legacy Python, Java, TypeScript, or SAP CAP/RAP project and run four safe prompts:

1. Architecture Map: "Summarize top-level entrypoints, service boundaries & external DB/API dependencies."

2. Call-Chain Trace: "Trace exact file:line execution from HTTP/OData ingress to database commit for order creation."

3. Blast-Radius Audit: "If I modify tax validation in `pricing.py`, list every downstream caller and test that breaks."

4. Hidden Conventions: "Identify error-handling, logging, and auth patterns enforced across this repo."

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Anatomy of Safe Diffs →

2. Diff Discipline: Inspect, Slice & Reject Early

Treat Claude Code like a staff engineer submitting surgical pull requests—not an unreviewed macro.

```
# Bad Prompt (Giant Unreviewable Blast Radius)
> Refactor the entire billing module and fix all edge cases.

# Architect Prompt (Bounded, Test-Backed Diff)
> Trace where currency rounding fails on 3-decimal SAR/KWD invoices.
> Show the 1-file diff ONLY, do not touch unrelated imports, then run
pytest tests/test_billing.py.
```

Golden Diff Rule: If a proposed diff touches lines you didn't ask to change (formatting churn, silent config edits), hit **Reject + Refine** immediately.

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Accept vs. Reject Workflow →

3. The 3-Gate Review Protocol Before Accepting

Gate 1 — Minimal Scope: Did the agent modify only the target function, preserving public signatures and backwards compatibility?

Gate 2 — Secret & Config Hygiene: Zero hardcoded keys, modified `.env` defaults, or weakened auth checks.

Gate 3 — Deterministic Proof: Require a failing test reproduced *before* the fix and passing *after* the diff.

4. Real Enterprise Impact: Legacy ERP, SAP & Microservices

SAP & Integration Teams: Trace custom BAPI wrappers, CDS annotations, IDoc mappings & BTP Node/Python sidecars in minutes instead of days.

M&A / Vendor Handover Audits: Generate dependency maps and dead-code inventories across undocumented inherited repos on Day 1.

Incident War Rooms: Pinpoint exact regression commits + blast radius while production P1 bridges are live.

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Git Safety Net →

5. Always Pair Agent Edits With Git Checkpoints

```
# Before starting any multi-file agent session:
git status                    # Ensure working tree is clean
git switch -c feat/fix-tax # Isolate on a dedicated branch

# After each verified micro-step:
git diff                      # Audit exact line delta
git commit -m "fix(billing): handle 3-decimal currency rounding"
```

Why Micro-Commits Matter: If Step 4 of a complex refactor drifts, `git checkout .` rolls back strictly to Step 3 in 1 second without losing 30 minutes of verified work.

6. Today's 15-Minute Hands-On Lab

Step 1: Clone any open-source FastAPI or MCP repo into a clean folder and run the **4-Question Recon Pattern** without editing a single file.

Step 2: Ask Claude Code to add input validation to one endpoint—intentionally **Reject** its first diff with a stricter constraint (*"also return RFC 7807 Problem Details JSON"*)—then verify with `pytest`.

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Next Drop: Chapter 03 →

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Up Next — Chapter 03: CLAUDE.md Mastery: Permanent Project Memory.

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