

The Citizen's Playbook

The definitive legal boundary for
police roadblocks in Malaysia.

The Asymmetry of the Street

When stopped at a roadblock, the physical imbalance of power is overwhelming. In this moment, citizens face two distinct legal vulnerabilities disguised as routine compliance.

Compliance under pressure is not a legal strategy.



The Illusion of Absolute Authority

Jan 13, 2025.

IGP claims broad power to search any phone on "reasonable suspicion."

Jan 14–19, 2025.

SUHAKAM and Home Minister Saifuddin intervene. Random searches declared unlawful.

Jan 21, 2025.

The Retraction. IGP confirms phone checks are strictly limited to active, specific investigations.

The law did not change in those 8 days. The public's understanding of the boundary did.

The Boundary of Lawful Search

Lawful Actions

The 20%

- Requires an active investigation of a specific seizable offence.
- Must be executed by an officer ranked Inspector or higher.
- Exigent circumstances (imminent destruction of data).

Unlawful Actions

The 80%

- Random roadblock audits.
- 'Fishing expeditions' for illicit apps.
- Demands made by Constables or Corporals.

Refusing to unlock your phone during a random roadblock is an exercise of fundamental rights under Article 5. It is not an obstruction of justice.

The Cultural Myth of the Victim

~~*I had no choice, I am the victim*~~

'Duit kopi' is culturally normalized as a pragmatic solution to street-level pressure. You pay RM200 to avoid a summons, believing the problem is solved and the officer bears the legal risk.

The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Act 2009 makes no distinction between the extortionist and the pragmatist. Cultural normalization does not grant legal immunity.

The Mirror of Liability (MACC Act 2009)

The Receiver (Section 16)

The officer who solicits the gratification.

**20 Years Imprisonment
RM10,000 Fine (or 5x the bribe)**

The Giver (Section 17)

The citizen who offers the payment under pressure.

**20 Years Imprisonment
RM10,000 Fine (or 5x the bribe)**

The MACC Act does not recognize 'duress' as a blanket defense for giving a bribe. If you pay, you are a felon.

The Corporate Contagion (Section 17A)

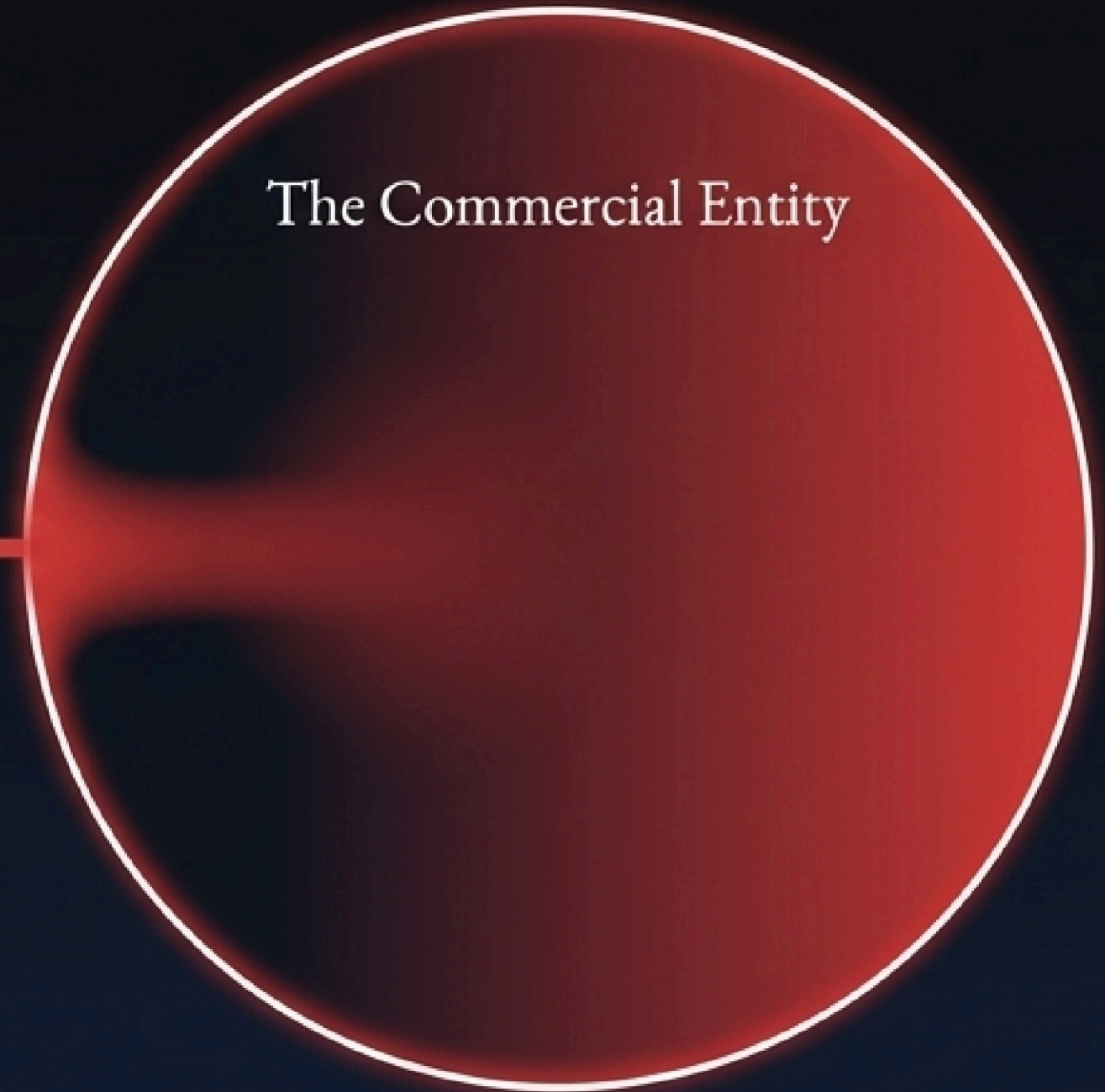
Since June 1, 2020, commercial organizations are legally liable if an employee commits a bribery offense for the organization's benefit.

The Employee



Employee pays RM200 to expedite a commercial transport stop.

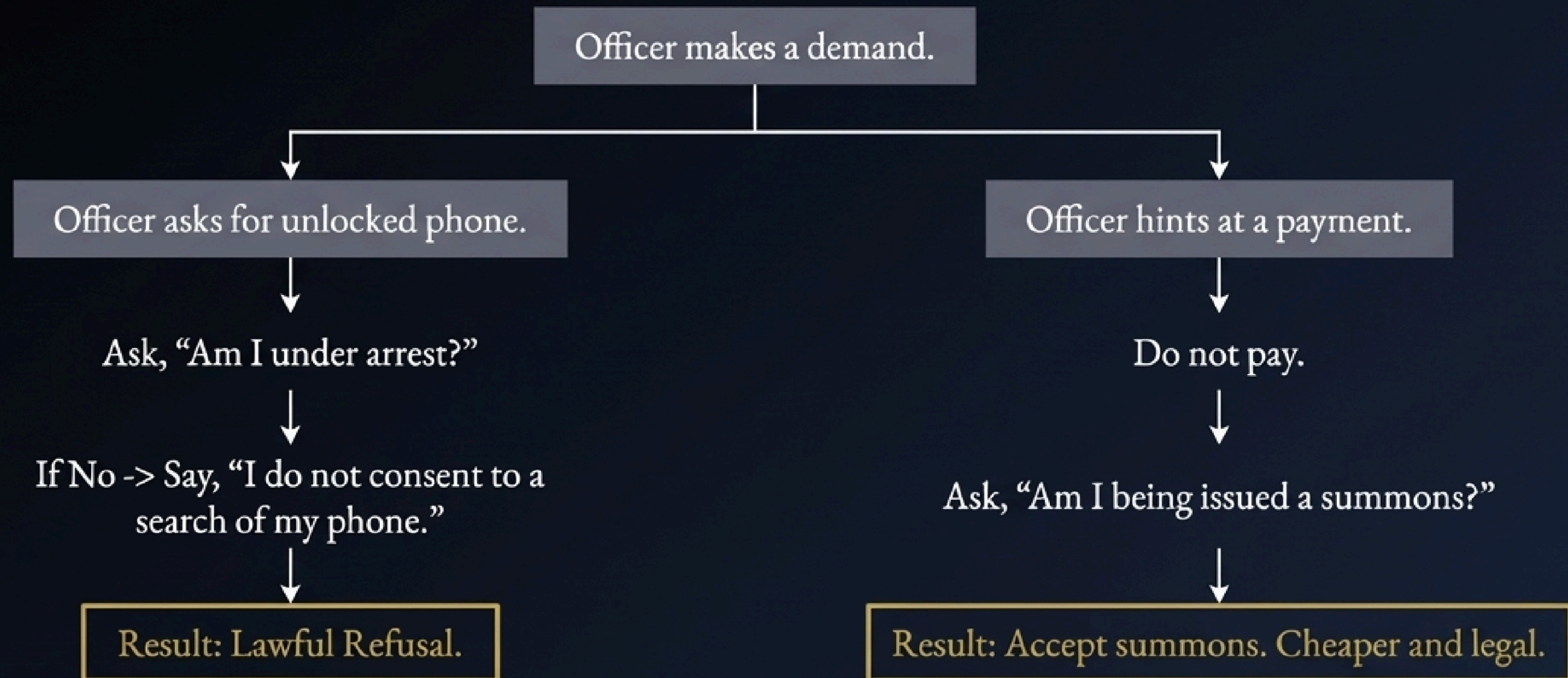
The Commercial Entity



Businesses that tolerate 'duit kopi' as a cost of doing business are engineering their own collapse.

The entire business faces prosecution unless it can prove 'adequate procedures' were in place.

The Roadblock Protocol



If pressured or extorted, note name/badge/time and report to MACC (1-800-88-6000) or EAIC.

Asymmetrical Pressure vs. Symmetrical Law



In the isolation of a roadblock, the pressure feels entirely one-sided.



But the written law is the great equalizer.

- Complying with an unlawful phone search surrenders your fundamental rights.
- Complying with an extortion demand creates a 20-year felony.

Your compliance does not protect you. Only absolute knowledge of the legal boundary does.

Know the law. Know the cost. Choose accordingly.

The law has not changed. A phone search requires a warrant, an arrest, or specific suspicion. A bribe is a crime, regardless of who asked for it.

Report extortion: MACC Hotline 1-800-88-6000 or the MyMACC app.
Access the full briefing: raul.com.my/briefing-room — RLB Advocates & Solicitors