FOR LEGAL PROFESSIONALS / CASE FRAMING

Frame the issues in a cryptocurrency matter

Separate the client's account, the payment evidence and the legal questions before commissioning a tracing exercise.

01 Begin with the event and the decision you need to make

Define the event and the decision needing evidence. Separate the client's observations from counterparty claims. Raise urgent concerns with the information available; refine a bounded investigative question alongside the initial response rather than waiting for a complete brief.

02 Identify the records that belong to different systems

Distinguish bank transfers, exchange ledger entries, public-chain records and platform displays. Preserve their identifiers, source systems and time zones. A public explorer does not necessarily reproduce internal exchange activity, and a displayed balance is not a verified holding.

03 Separate the address from the actor

Treat movement of funds, service attribution and control by a named individual as separate propositions. A service label does not automatically identify its customer or establish who controlled an account at the relevant time.

04 Turn the uncertainties into a working brief

Provide the transaction set, available records, intended use, known deadlines and sharing restrictions. Mark disputed facts and missing information. Assign ownership of the chronology and external communications, and revise the brief as evidence changes the initial account.

Example. In a fictional matter, an explorer shows a transfer to an address labelled as an exchange by one provider. "A transfer is recorded" and "the defendant received it in an exchange account" are separate propositions; the second requires further support.

Review checklist

- ☐ I have separated the client's observations from counterparty claims.
- ☐ I have identified which systems generated the records.
- ☐ I have specified the question and the intended use of the output.
- ☐ I have recorded material uncertainties and deadlines.

General educational framework; assess legal steps and expert requirements in the relevant jurisdiction. Example is fictional.

References: Ethereum: transactions / Ethereum: accounts