The AI dominoes

The selloff has reached CoreWeave’s lenders. What would it take to reach the life insurers that own private credit?



01 Chips | 02 Former SPACs | 03 Neoclouds | 04 Nasdaq-100 | 05 Asset managers | 06 Life insurers

THE SIX-STAGE BEAR CASE

Equity returns from October 6 to November 24, 2026

01 / SEMICONDUCTORS — OBSERVED

−35.1%

Nvidia’s decline from the October 6 close.

AMD also fell 36.4% and Broadcom lost 19.9%. We expect another leg down if a major cloud customer cuts its chip orders.

Nvidia (NVDA) · AMD · Broadcom (AVGO)

02 / SPAC 2.0 — OBSERVED

−49.5%

Loss on three former SPACs, equally weighted.

Quantum stocks IonQ and Rigetti and nuclear developer Oklo each lost over 48%. A discounted share sale to fund operations would put fresh pressure on the issuer.

IonQ (IONQ) · Rigetti (RGTI) · Oklo (OKLO)

03 / COREWEAVE & NEOCLOUDS — OBSERVED

74.9¢

Intraday price per $1 of CoreWeave’s 2032 debt.

CoreWeave stock fell 53.5% and Nebius lost 65.1%. If CoreWeave’s roughly $9B of expected customer payments slip past February 10, watch for costlier borrowing.

CoreWeave (CRWV) · Nebius (NBIS) · IREN

04 / BROAD TECH / QQQ — NEXT TEST

$532

Zeffer’s June 2027 bear case for QQQ.

QQQ is already down 16.0%. Our target requires a weekly close below $608.45 with more than half the Nasdaq-100 stocks below their 200-day averages.

$532 is 30% below QQQ’s October 6 close.

05 / ALTERNATIVE ASSET MANAGERS — CONDITIONAL

Two managers

Watch for AI losses to cut performance fees.

If two managers disclose AI investment write-downs that cut fees, we expect the four-stock basket to trail the S&P 500 over the following six months.

KKR · Blackstone (BX) · Apollo (APO) · Ares (ARES)

06 / LIFE INSURERS — CONDITIONAL

Less cash to parents

Watch the assets behind the annuities.

Athene holds 19% in private credit. Global Atlantic holds 18% in privately originated debt. If losses erode statutory capital, we expect a dividend cut to a parent within two quarters.

Athene / Apollo (APO) · Global Atlantic / KKR (KKR)

What could stop the chain?

A $44B SpaceX GPU financing drew excess demand on November 20. New lending can keep projects funded.

Sources include S&P Global via Stock Analysis, TRACE trade reporting and company disclosures.

The evidence behind the sequence

The declines in chips, former SPACs and neoclouds overlap in time. Zeffer's sequence traces how an equity selloff could reach lenders and insurers. Stages four through six are conditional forecasts.

01—04 / PUBLIC MARKETS

One selloff, different depths

Closing prices in U.S. dollars. Click a ticker for daily prices.

SECURITY	TICKER	OCT 6 CLOSE	NOV 24 CLOSE	CHANGE
Nvidia	NVDA	239.24	155.38	−35.1%
AMD	AMD	649.42	413.27	−36.4%
Broadcom	AVGO	375.81	301.08	−19.9%
IonQ	IONQ	43.29	22.40	−48.3%
Rigetti	RGTI	15.17	7.59	−50.0%
Oklo	OKLO	38.55	19.20	−50.2%
CoreWeave	CRWV	91.72	42.61	−53.5%
Nebius	NBIS	249.87	87.31	−65.1%
Invesco QQQ	QQQ	759.66	638.10	−16.0%

The SPAC and asset-manager baskets use equal starting weights and no rebalancing. Returns exclude dividends. The $532 target is 30% below QQQ's October 6 close of $759.66. The $608.45 trigger is its November 20 close.

03 / THE CREDIT TEST

Can customer cash keep pace with debt?

CoreWeave's 9.625% note due in 2032 traded as low as 74.9¢ per $1 of principal on November 24. CoreWeave owes $11.0B in scheduled principal payments across its debt in 2027. On November 10 management said it expected roughly $9B in deposits and prepayments within three months. A disclosed delay would put more pressure on other funding sources.

Bond trades / TRACE reporting CoreWeave earnings release SEC filing / debt maturities

05 / THE FUND MANAGERS

Who financed the buildout?

These deals sit in managed funds or affiliated accounts. Losses can reach a listed manager through lower performance fees, investment losses on its own holdings, or weaker fundraising.

KKR / ST Telemedia Global Data Centres

Apollo / xAI GPU lease financing

Blackstone / Aligned Data Centers

Ares / Vantage Data Centers

06 / THE INSURANCE BALANCE SHEETS

Which assets could transmit losses?

On September 30, Athene held $81B in private credit, or 19% of gross invested assets under the industry definition. Athene's broader measure reached 61% by including non-agency mortgages and Rule 144A securities, among other holdings. Global Atlantic held 18% of adjusted invested assets in privately originated fixed income.

Athene's digital infrastructure holdings were about 3% of gross invested assets. Global Atlantic's expanded AI exposure was 3.7% of adjusted invested assets. A cut to dividends from an insurer would leave its listed parent with less cash for buybacks, debt service or shareholder dividends.

Athene / Q3 deck, pp. 16–17 Global Atlantic / pp. 26–27 Apollo / $44B SpaceX financing