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Course: SEAS 8414 — Security Analytics

Goal of this notebook

Train and audit detectors on NF-ToN-IoT-v2, using that same standard NetFlow schema.

What you will learn

1. Read a majority-class baseline before trusting any accuracy figure.
2. Find the strongest single feature, then test it by dropping it and refitting.
3. Tell duplicate inflation apart from genuine signal.
4. Report per-group recall, because the rare classes carry the risk.

Where this connects to the course text

The text builds a defence pipeline; this notebook trains a classifier and audits it. The links below are to specific chapter objectives that share an *analytic move*, not to matching subject matter.

- **Chapter 3: Vulnerability Assessment** — Learning objective 1 (section 3.1) frames assessment as **evidence grading**, not output collection. The A-F data-trust grade in section 10 is exactly that move, applied to a model score.
 - **Chapter 8: Federated Threat Intelligence** — Learning objective 2 (section 8.1) derives why **non-IID** site distributions produce *client drift*. A model fit on one site does not carry to another. This notebook does **not** run that test: every score here is in-distribution on one corpus. The shared move is scoping a claim to its evidence. Notebook 36 runs the cross-corpus transfer matrix.
 - **Chapter 11: Formal Protocol Verification** — Section **11.1.2**, titled *Proved, tested, and hoped*, asks you to separate exactly those three. (Chapter 11 lists its objectives in §11.0, not §11.1 as the other chapters do.) The ablation does that job here: it tests whether the headline survives.
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NetFlow-Standardized Intrusion Detection: NF-ToN-IoT-V2

Model comparison + validity audit on NF-ToN-IoT-V2 (≥1M records, via Kaggle)

Abstract: NF-ToN-IoT-V2 (Sarhan et al., 2022) re-features the ToN-IoT corpus (Moustafa, 2021) into the standard 43-field NetFlow v2 schema. We compare four learners on its $\geq 1\text{M}$ flows and audit the scores.

1. Research problem

Task: Classify standardized NetFlow v2 records (ToN-IoT) as benign or attack. The standard feature set was proposed to enable *cross-dataset* comparison. It is therefore the right lens for asking whether high scores are feature shortcuts or transferable signal.

2. Literature review

- **Moustafa (2021)** — *A new distributed architecture for evaluating AI-based security systems at the edge: Network TON_IoT datasets* (Sustainable Cities and Society): the **ToN-IoT origin**. The ToN-IoT network pcaps it describes are the raw material for the corpus used here.
- **Sarhan, Layeghy & Portmann (2022)** — *Towards a Standard Feature Set for Network Intrusion Detection System Datasets* (Mobile Networks & Applications; arXiv:2101.11315): the **NetFlow conversion**. It defines the **43-field NetFlow v2 schema and the NF-*-v2 datasets used here** (NF-UNSW-NB15-v2 / NF-BoT-IoT-v2 / NF-ToN-IoT-v2 / NF-CSE-CIC-IDS2018-v2), enabling cross-dataset comparison.
- **Sarhan, Layeghy, Moustafa & Portmann (2021)** — *NetFlow Datasets for ML-Based NIDS* (BDTA 2020, Springer): the earlier 8-field NetFlow v1 datasets this v2 set extends.
- **Koroniotis, Moustafa, Sitnikova & Turnbull (2019)** — Bot-IoT origin, behind the sibling NF-BoT-IoT-v2 set.
- **Moustafa & Slay (2015)** — UNSW-NB15 origin, behind the sibling NF-UNSW-NB15-v2 set.
- **Layeghy & Portmann (2023)** — cross-domain evaluation over four NetFlow-standardized NIDS datasets. No model they tested generalised across all four.
- **Sommer & Paxson (2010)** — the closed-world critique.

Related approaches and their known caveats — drawn from the wider literature; these are **not** measurements reproduced on this exact corpus:

Reported approach	Known caveat
Standard NetFlow feature set (Sarhan et al., 2022)	in-distribution; NetFlow fields can leak
Cross-domain NetFlow evaluation (Layeghy & Portmann, 2023)	standardized features expose a generalization gap

3. Dataset provenance & honesty caveats

Property	Value
Source	Kaggle <code>dhoogla/nftoniotv2</code> (NetFlow v2)
Origin	ToN-IoT (Moustafa, 2021), re-featured to NetFlow v2 by Sarhan et al. (2022)
Label	<code>Label</code> 0/1; family <code>Attack</code>
Access	Kaggle API token required

Honestly: `Attack` (family) is dropped from features; NetFlow header fields (ports/protocol) can act as shortcuts, which the audit probes.

Before you run this: getting the data

This notebook downloads its own data on the first run, then caches it. You do not fetch anything by hand.

Dataset: Kaggle `dhoogla/nftoniotv2` -> `/tmp/kg_nftoniotv2`. It is about **199 MB** on disk.

One-time setup. Sign in at kaggle.com, open **Settings**, and under **API** choose **Create New Token**. Kaggle hands you a `kaggle.json` file. This notebook does *not* read that file. It reads a plain key file, so convert it once:

```
mkdir -p ~/.kaggle
python3 -c "import json;print(json.load(open('kaggle.json'))
['key'],end='')" > ~/.kaggle/access_token
chmod 600 ~/.kaggle/access_token
```

Never paste the token into a cell, a commit, or a screenshot. If it leaks, revoke it from the same Settings page.

If the loader fails:

- `FileNotFoundError: ~/.kaggle/access_token` - you created `kaggle.json` but not the key file. Run the command above.
- `401 Unauthorized` - the key is wrong, or a trailing newline crept in.
- `403 Forbidden` - open the dataset page on Kaggle while signed in, accept its terms, then re-run the cell.

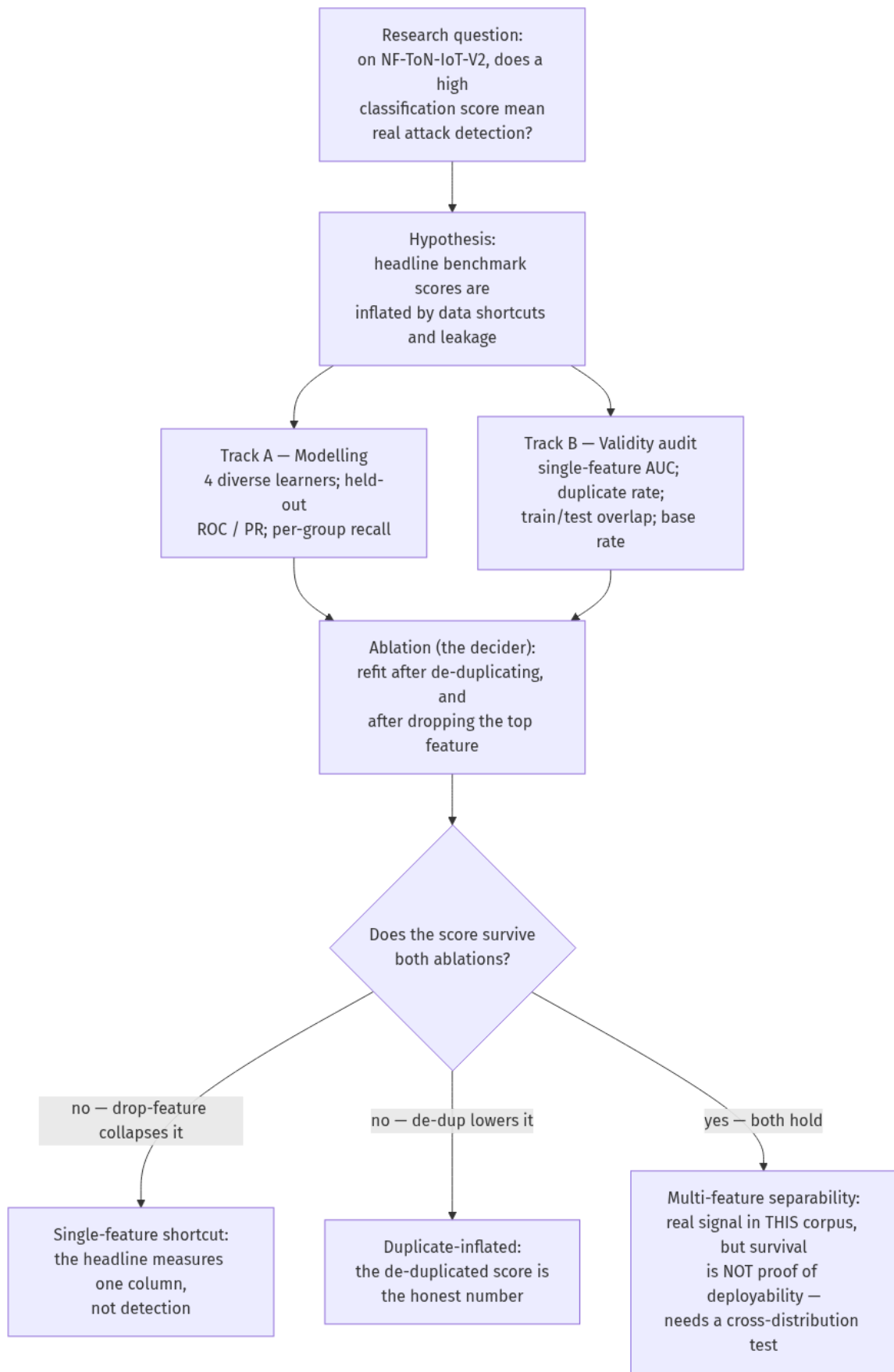
The cache sits under `/tmp`, which macOS clears on reboot. To keep it, move the folder somewhere durable and symlink it back. Do **not** edit the path in the code cell below: that changes a code cell and invalidates the stored outputs you are reviewing.

4. Solution design

The methodology is deliberately two-track. We *earn* a headline score with standard modelling, then *interrogate* it with a validity audit. Only a verdict that survives both is

reported. The diagram below is the shape of every notebook in this series.

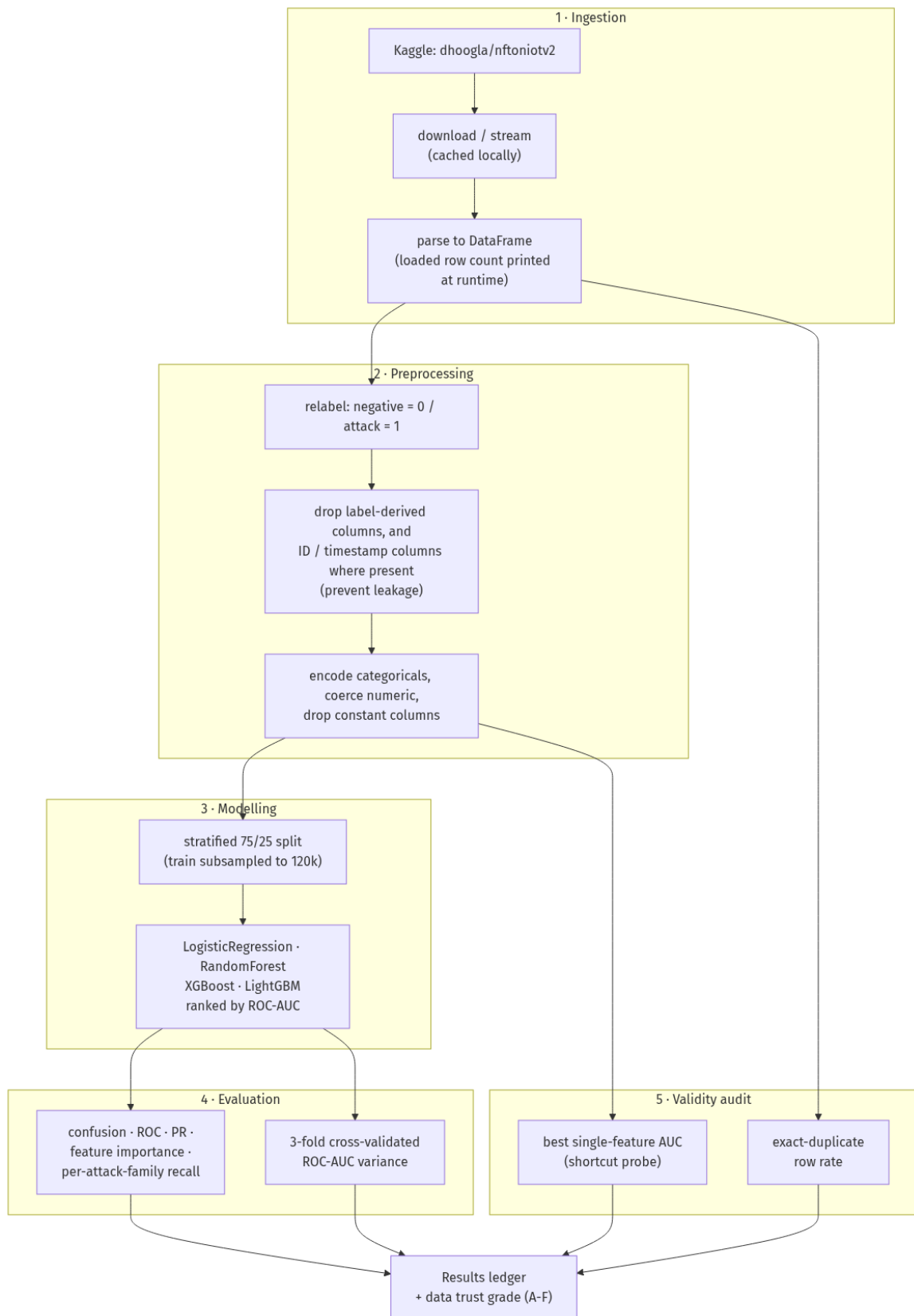
Figure 4.1 — Solution design (methodology).



5. Implementation architecture

Five stages — ingestion, preprocessing, modelling, evaluation, and a parallel validity-audit path — feed a single graded results ledger. Leakage defences (dropping label-derived and identifier columns) live in preprocessing, before any model sees the data.

Figure 5.1 — Implementation architecture.



6. Data acquisition & preparation

Every line below is commented so a student can re-run and modify each step. The cell ends by producing the standard analysis variables: `df`, `X` (clean numeric features), `y` (binary label), `feat` (feature names), and `family`. `family` is the per-group label used for the recall breakdown. It is an attack family on the intrusion corpora, but a transaction type, merchant category or malware category on the fraud/malware ones.

```
In [1]: %matplotlib inline
import time, warnings; warnings.filterwarnings('ignore') # keep output clean
import numpy as np, pandas as pd # numerics + dataframes
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt # static plots
(embed in HTML+PDF)
plt.rcParams['figure.dpi'] = 120 # crisp figures
RANDOM_STATE = 0 # single seed
used everywhere
np.random.seed(RANDOM_STATE) # reproducible sampling
NEG_WORD, POS_WORD = 'benign', 'attack' # class names
(overridden by some loaders)
```

```
In [2]: import os, glob
# Kaggle auth: token read from ~/.kaggle/access_token (students supply their own).
os.environ.setdefault('KAGGLE_KEY',
open(os.path.expanduser('~/.kaggle/access_token')).read().strip())
import kaggle; kaggle.api.authenticate()
REF = 'dhoogla/nftoniotv2'; DEST = '/tmp/kg_' + REF.split('/')[1]
if not os.path.exists(DEST): # download + unzip once (cached)
    kaggle.api.dataset_download_files(REF, path=DEST, unzip=True,
quiet=True)
NROWS = 1_500_000 # per-file read cap (memory bound)
files = sorted(glob.glob(DEST + '/*/*/*.parquet', recursive=True))
df = pd.concat([pd.read_parquet(f) for f in files], ignore_index=True) # combine day/part files
df.columns = [str(c).strip() for c in df.columns] # strip header whitespace
LABEL = 'Label'; FAMILY = 'Attack'
df['y'] = (df[LABEL].astype(str).str.strip().str.lower() != '0').astype(int) # benign=0
df['family'] = df[FAMILY].astype(str).str.strip() # descriptive attack family
df = df.reset_index(drop=True)
assert len(df) >= 1_000_000, f'floor not met: {len(df):,}' # honesty gate: >= 1M rows
DROP = list({LABEL, FAMILY, 'y', 'family'} | set([])) # never leak label cols
feat = [c for c in df.columns if c not in DROP]
from sklearn.preprocessing import LabelEncoder
X = df[feat].copy()
idlike = [c for c in X.select_dtypes(include='object').columns if X[c].nunique() > 0.5*len(X)]
```

```

X = X.drop(columns=idlike) # drop
ID/timestamp-like leaky columns
for c in X.select_dtypes(include='object').columns: # encode
    remaining_categoricals
    X[c] = LabelEncoder().fit_transform(X[c].astype(str))
X = X.apply(pd.to_numeric, errors='coerce').replace([np.inf,-
np.inf],np.nan).fillna(0.0)
X = X.clip(-1e15, 1e15) # clip huge
NetFlow counts (float32-safe)
X = X.loc[:, X.nunique() > 1] # drop
constants
import re # LightGBM
rejects special chars in names
_seen, _cols = {}, []
for _c in X.columns: # sanitize
    to unique, safe names
    _c = re.sub(r'^0-9A-Za-z_+', '_', str(_c)).strip('_') or 'f'
    _seen[_c] = _seen.get(_c, -1) + 1
    _cols.append(_c if _seen[_c] == 0 else f'_{_c}_{_seen[_c]}')
X.columns = _cols; feat = list(X.columns)
y = df['y'].to_numpy() # STANDARD
CONTRACT
NEG_WORD, POS_WORD = 'benign', 'attack' # class names for
plots
print(f'loaded {len(df):,} rows x {len(feat)} features; positive rate
{y.mean():.4f}')

```

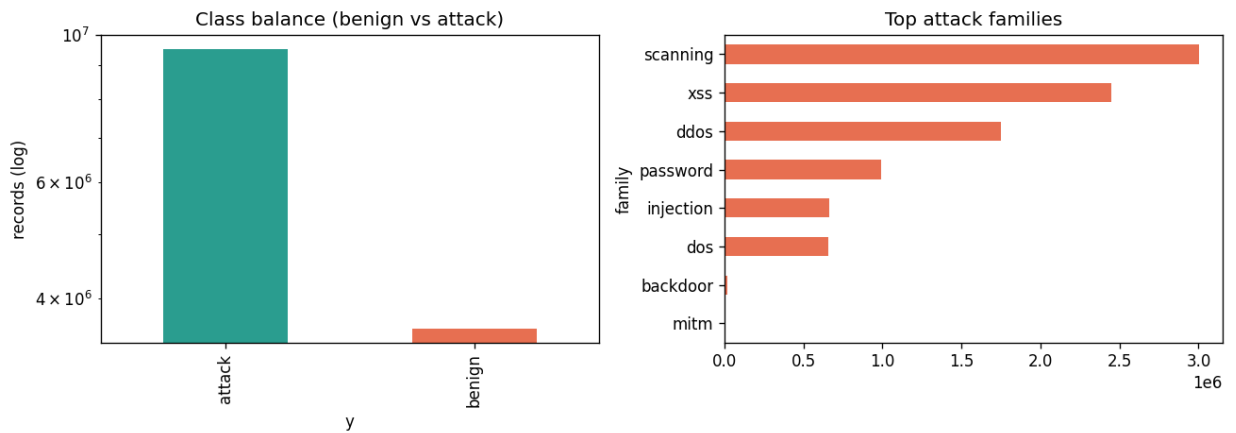
loaded 13,135,881 rows x 41 features; positive rate 0.7258

7. Exploratory data analysis

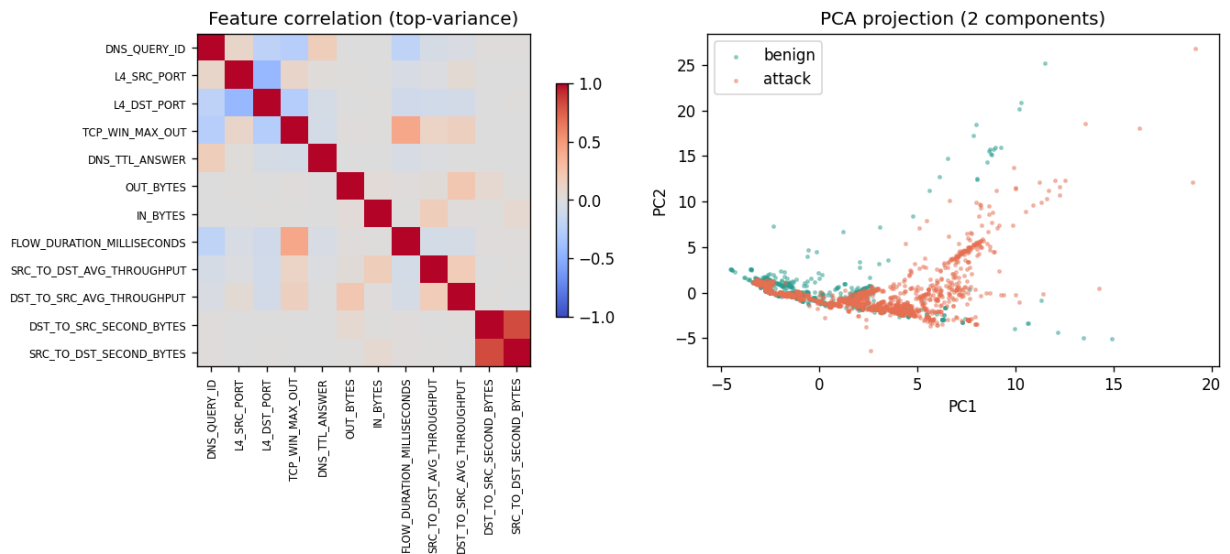
```

In [3]: # --- EDA 1: class balance and the attack-family mix ---
fig, ax = plt.subplots(1, 2, figsize=(11, 4))
df['y'].map({0:NEG_WORD,1:POS_WORD}).value_counts().plot.bar(
# counts per class
    ax=ax[0], color=['#2a9d8f','#e76f51']); ax[0].set_yscale('log')
ax[0].set_title(f'Class balance ({NEG_WORD} vs {POS_WORD})');
ax[0].set_ylabel('records (log)')
df.loc[df.y==1,'family'].value_counts().head(8).plot.barh(
# top attack families
    ax=ax[1], color='#e76f51'); ax[1].invert_yaxis(); ax[1].set_title('Top
attack families')
plt.tight_layout(); plt.show()

```



```
In [4]: # --- EDA 2: feature correlation + a 2-D PCA projection ---
from sklearn.preprocessing import StandardScaler # scale
before PCA
from sklearn.decomposition import PCA
fig, ax = plt.subplots(1, 2, figsize=(12, 5))
topv = X[feat].var().sort_values().tail(12).index # 12
highest-variance features
im = ax[0].imshow(X[topv].corr(), cmap='coolwarm', vmin=-1, vmax=1) #
correlation heatmap
ax[0].set_xticks(range(len(topv))); ax[0].set_xticklabels(topv,
rotation=90, fontsize=7)
ax[0].set_yticks(range(len(topv))); ax[0].set_yticklabels(topv, fontsize=7)
ax[0].set_title('Feature correlation (top-variance)'); fig.colorbar(im,
ax=ax[0], shrink=0.7)
samp = X.sample(min(5000, len(X)), random_state=RANDOM_STATE) #
subsample for a fast PCA
pc =
PCA(n_components=2).fit_transform(StandardScaler().fit_transform(samp))
ys = y[samp.index] # aligned
labels for coloring
for lab, c in [(0, '#2a9d8f'), (1, '#e76f51')]:
    ax[1].scatter(pc[ys==lab, 0], pc[ys==lab, 1], s=4, alpha=0.4, color=c,
label={0: NEG_WORD, 1: POS_WORD}[lab])
ax[1].set_title('PCA projection (2 components)'); ax[1].legend();
ax[1].set_xlabel('PC1'); ax[1].set_ylabel('PC2')
plt.tight_layout(); plt.show()
```



8. Model comparison

Four diverse learners share one held-out split, ranked by ROC-AUC.

Two honesty guards print with the table:

1. The models train on a *stratified subsample* of at most 120,000 rows. The full row count is printed above. So every score here is a subsample number, not a full-corpus claim.
2. The **majority-class baseline accuracy** appears *inside* the ranking table. On imbalanced data, 0.99 accuracy can be worse than always guessing the majority class. Judge each model against that baseline, not against 0.5.

```
In [5]: # --- Model comparison: four learners on the same held-out split ---
from sklearn.model_selection import train_test_split
from sklearn.linear_model import LogisticRegression
from sklearn.ensemble import RandomForestClassifier
from sklearn.metrics import accuracy_score, roc_auc_score
import xgboost as xgb, lightgbm as lgb

# Stratified split keeps the class ratio in both halves.
Xtr, Xte, ytr, yte = train_test_split(X, y, test_size=0.25,
random_state=RANDOM_STATE, stratify=y)
from sklearn.pipeline import make_pipeline
from sklearn.preprocessing import StandardScaler
N_MATERIALIZED = len(y) # the full
corpus we loaded (see printed count)
# HONEST DISCLOSURE: we do NOT train on all N. We fit on a STRATIFIED
subsample (<=120k) because
# these learners saturate long before then on this data. Every headline
below is a SUBSAMPLE
# number, not a full-corpus number – saying otherwise would be the
fabrication this course forbids.
if len(Xtr) > 120_000:
    Xtr, _, ytr, _ = train_test_split(Xtr, ytr, train_size=120_000,
```

```

random_state=RANDOM_STATE,
                                stratify=ytr)                                #
genuinely stratified, not random
MAJORITY_BASELINE = max(np.mean(yte), 1 - np.mean(yte))                    # accuracy
of 'always predict majority'
print(f'materialized {N_MATERIALIZED:,} rows | trained on {len(Xtr):,}
(stratified subsample) | '
      f'held-out {len(yte):,}')
print(f'MAJORITY-CLASS BASELINE accuracy = {MAJORITY_BASELINE:.4f} '
      f'(any model must beat THIS, not 0.5, to be interesting)')

models = {                                                                # four
standard, diverse learners
    'LogisticRegression': make_pipeline(StandardScaler(),
LogisticRegression(max_iter=300)), # scaled!
    'RandomForest': RandomForestClassifier(n_estimators=60, n_jobs=-1,
random_state=RANDOM_STATE),
    'XGBoost': xgb.XGBClassifier(n_estimators=80, max_depth=6,
tree_method='hist', n_jobs=-1,
                                eval_metric='logloss',
random_state=RANDOM_STATE),
    'LightGBM': lgb.LGBMClassifier(n_estimators=80, n_jobs=-1, verbose=-1,
random_state=RANDOM_STATE),
}
rows, fitted = [], {}
for name, m in models.items():                                           # fit +
score each model
    t = time.perf_counter(); m.fit(Xtr, ytr); fitted[name] = m
    p = m.predict_proba(Xte)[: , 1]                                     #
positive-class probability on held-out
    rows.append({'model': name, 'accuracy': round(accuracy_score(yte,
(p>0.5).astype(int)), 6),
                'roc_auc': round(roc_auc_score(yte, p), 6),           # 6 dp: a
1.000000 is a red flag, not a win
                'train_s': round(time.perf_counter()-t, 1)})
rows.append({'model': 'MajorityBaseline', 'accuracy':
round(MAJORITY_BASELINE, 4),
            'roc_auc': 0.5, 'train_s': 0.0})                            # show the
baseline IN the ranking table
comparison = pd.DataFrame(rows).sort_values('roc_auc',
ascending=False).reset_index(drop=True)
_ranked = comparison[comparison.model != 'MajorityBaseline']
best_name = _ranked.iloc[0]['model']; best = fitted[best_name] # winner by
ROC-AUC (excl. baseline)
print('best model:', best_name); comparison

```

materialized 13,135,881 rows | trained on 120,000 (stratified subsample) |
held-out 3,283,971
MAJORITY-CLASS BASELINE accuracy = 0.7258 (any model must beat THIS, not
0.5, to be interesting)
best model: XGBoost

Out[5]:

	model	accuracy	roc_auc	train_s
0	XGBoost	0.990673	0.998863	1.1
1	LightGBM	0.989334	0.998699	2.4
2	RandomForest	0.992011	0.997670	2.3
3	LogisticRegression	0.848169	0.839443	1.3
4	MajorityBaseline	0.725800	0.500000	0.0

9. Results

Diagnostics for the winning model, including **per-group recall**.

The grouping comes from whatever the loader put in `family`. It is *not* always an attack taxonomy. On the intrusion corpora it is the attack family. On the fraud and malware corpora it is a transaction type, a merchant category or a malware category. On binary corpora it collapses to the positive class.

Read it accordingly. Where the groups are genuinely rare classes, they reveal whether detection is real. The dominant flood classes do not.

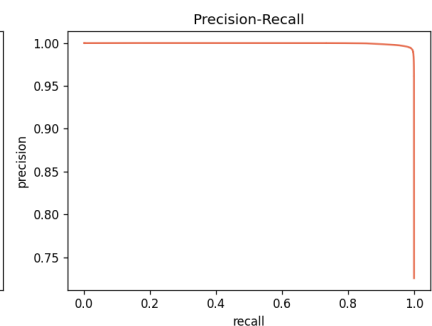
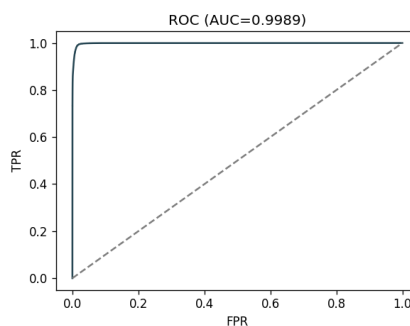
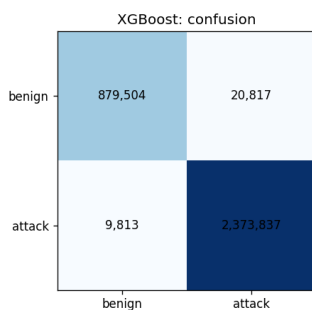
```
In [6]: # --- Results for the best model: confusion, ROC, PR, importances, per-
        # family recall ---
        from sklearn.metrics import confusion_matrix, roc_curve,
        precision_recall_curve, recall_score
        pb = best.predict_proba(Xte)[: , 1]; pred = (pb > 0.5).astype(int)
        fig, ax = plt.subplots(1, 3, figsize=(15, 4))
        # (1) confusion matrix
        cm = confusion_matrix(yte, pred); ax[0].imshow(cm, cmap='Blues')
        ax[0].set_title(f'{best_name}: confusion'); ax[0].set_xticks([0,1]);
        ax[0].set_yticks([0,1])
        ax[0].set_xticklabels([NEG_WORD, POS_WORD]);
        ax[0].set_yticklabels([NEG_WORD, POS_WORD])
        for (i,j),v in np.ndenumerate(cm):
            ax[0].text(j,i,f'{v:,}',ha='center',va='center')
        # (2) ROC and PR curves
        fpr,tpr,_ = roc_curve(yte, pb); prec,rec,_ = precision_recall_curve(yte,
        pb)
        ax[1].plot(fpr,tpr,color='#264653'); ax[1].plot([0,1],[0,1],'--',c='grey')
        ax[1].set_title(f'ROC (AUC={roc_auc_score(yte,pb):.4f})');
        ax[1].set_xlabel('FPR'); ax[1].set_ylabel('TPR')
        ax[2].plot(rec,prec,color='#e76f51'); ax[2].set_title('Precision-Recall');
        ax[2].set_xlabel('recall'); ax[2].set_ylabel('precision')
        plt.tight_layout(); plt.show()

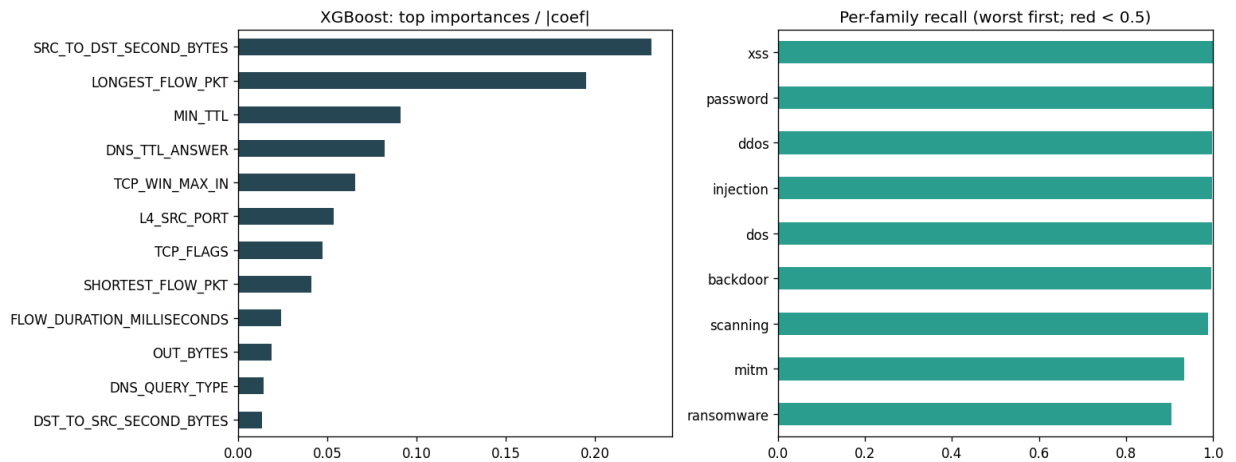
        # (3) feature importances + (4) per-attack-family recall
        fig, ax = plt.subplots(1, 2, figsize=(13, 5))
        imp, names = None, feat
        importances, robust to the scaled-LR pipeline
        if hasattr(best, 'feature_importances_'):
            # tree
```

```

models
    imp = best.feature_importances_; names = list(getattr(best,
'feature_names_in_', feat)[:len(imp)])
elif hasattr(best, 'named_steps') and 'logisticregression' in getattr(best,
'named_steps', {}):
    imp = np.abs(best.named_steps['logisticregression'].coef_[0]); names =
feat # LR pipeline
elif hasattr(best, 'coef_'):
    imp = np.abs(best.coef_[0]); names = feat
if imp is not None:
    pd.Series(imp,
index=names[:len(imp)]).sort_values().tail(12).plot.barh(ax=ax[0],
color='#264653')
ax[0].set_title(f'{best_name}: top importances / |coef|')
# Per-family recall, WORST-first so rare, hard classes are visible, not
just the dominant floods.
fam_te = df.loc[Xte.index, 'family']
fr = {}
for fam, cnt in fam_te[yte==1].value_counts().items():
    if cnt < 5: continue # need a
few positives for a meaningful recall
    mask = (fam_te==fam).to_numpy(); fr[fam] = recall_score(yte[mask],
pred[mask], zero_division=0)
srt = pd.Series(fr).sort_values()
show = pd.concat([srt.head(9), srt.tail(3)]) if len(srt) > 12 else srt #
worst 9 + best 3
show = show[~show.index.duplicated()]
show.plot.barh(ax=ax[1], color=['#e76f51' if v < 0.5 else '#2a9d8f' for v
in show]); ax[1].set_xlim(0,1)
ax[1].set_title('Per-family recall (worst first; red < 0.5)')
plt.tight_layout(); plt.show()
# Operational numbers, not just figures: false-positive rate and the worst
per-family recalls.
tn, fp = int(cm[0,0]), int(cm[0,1])
fpr_op = fp/(fp+tn) if (fp+tn) > 0 else float('nan') # benign
wrongly flagged @0.5
print(f'operational FALSE-POSITIVE RATE @0.5 = {fpr_op:.4f} ({fp:,} benign
flagged of {fp+tn:,})')
print('worst per-family recalls:', {k: round(v, 3) for k, v in
srt.head(6).items()})

```





operational FALSE-POSITIVE RATE @0.5 = 0.0231 (20,817 benign flagged of 900,321)

worst per-family recalls: {'ransomware': 0.904, 'mitm': 0.934, 'scanning': 0.989, 'backdoor': 0.997, 'dos': 0.998, 'injection': 0.999}

10. Validity audit — is the score real?

Three diagnostics. **(a)** How well can the *single best feature*, alone, separate the classes? A near-1.0 single-feature AUC means that feature is *near-sufficient* — a shortcut (which may be legitimate signal or an artifact), not the same as target leakage. **(b)** The exact-duplicate row rate. **(c)** The **train/test exact-row contamination** — the fraction of held-out rows that are duplicates of training rows, which is what actually inflates a held-out score. The trust grade is the worse of the single-feature and contamination concerns.

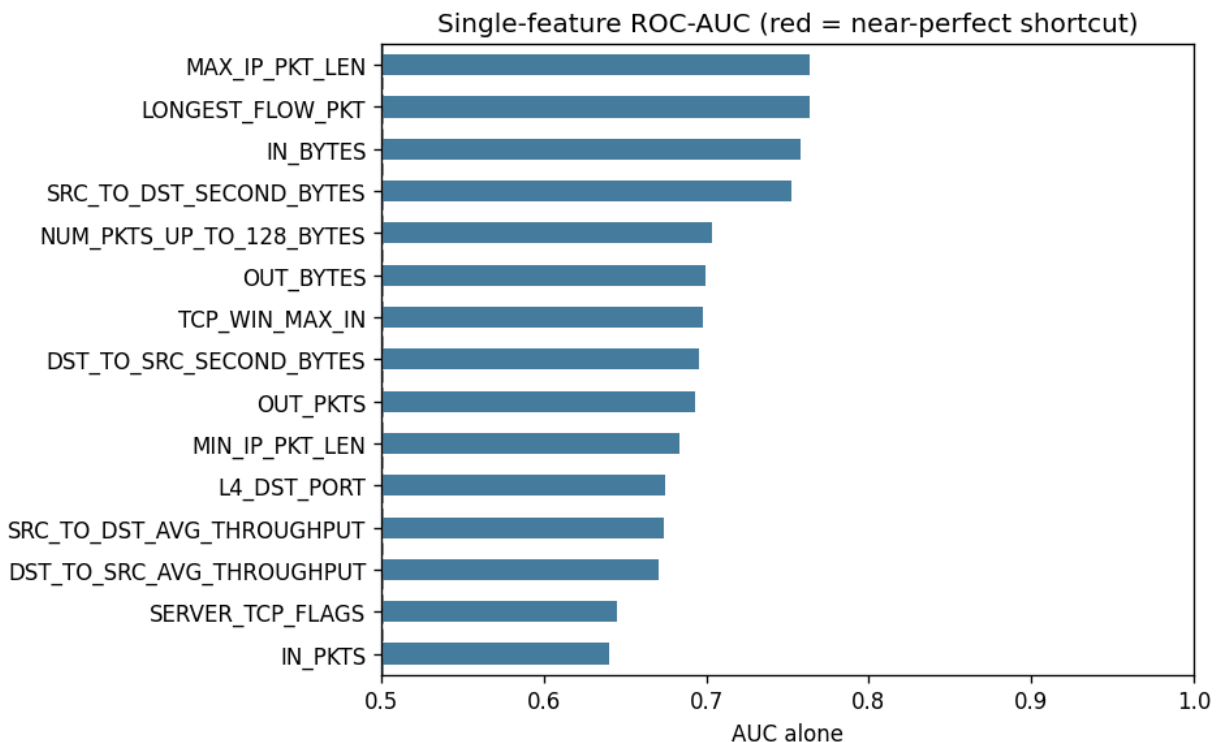
```
In [7]: # --- Validity audit: is the score real detection, or a data shortcut? ---
from sklearn.metrics import roc_auc_score
samp = X.sample(min(60_000, len(X)), random_state=1); ysamp = y[samp.index]
aucs = {}
for c in feat:                                     # AUC of
    EACH feature alone
        col = samp[c].to_numpy(float)
        if col.std()==0: continue
        a = roc_auc_score(ysamp, col); aucs[c] = max(a, 1-a)      #
direction-agnostic
best_auc = max(aucs.values()); best_col = max(aucs, key=aucs.get)
dup_rate = 1 - X.drop_duplicates().shape[0]/len(X)           # exact-
duplicate feature rows (whole set)
# The statistic that actually inflates a held-out score is TRAIN/TEST
CONTAMINATION: how many test
# rows are exact duplicates of a training row. Measure it directly on the
split used above.
_trkeys = set(map(tuple, np.round(Xtr.to_numpy(), 6)))
_te = np.round(Xte.to_numpy(), 6)[:50_000]
contam = float(np.mean([tuple(r) in _trkeys for r in _te]))    # fraction
of test rows seen in train
# Trust grade reflects BOTH failure modes and takes the WORSE of the two: a
near-perfect single
# feature (shortcut) OR heavy train/test contamination each independently
invalidate the headline.
```

```

_ga = 'F' if best_auc>=0.999 else 'D' if best_auc>=0.99 else 'C' if
best_auc>=0.95 else 'B' if best_auc>=0.85 else 'A'
_gc = 'F' if contam>=0.5 else 'D' if contam>=0.3 else 'C' if contam>=0.15
else 'B' if contam>=0.05 else 'A'
grade = max(_ga, _gc) # 'max'
letter = worse grade (A best, F worst)
print(f'best single-feature AUC = {best_auc:.4f} (feature: {best_col})')
print(f'    note: a near-1.0 single-feature AUC means this feature is *near-
sufficient* (a shortcut),\n'
      f'    which may be legitimate signal OR an artifact – it is NOT the
same as target leakage.')
print(f'exact-duplicate row rate (whole corpus) = {dup_rate:.3f}')
print(f'TRAIN/TEST exact-row contamination      = {contam:.3f} (single-
feat grade {_ga}, contam grade {_gc})')
print(f'==> data trust grade: {grade} (worse of the two; F = shortcut
and/or heavy contamination)')
s = pd.Series(aucs).sort_values().tail(15)
fig, ax = plt.subplots(figsize=(8,5))
s.plot.barh(ax=ax, color=['#e76f51' if v>=0.99 else '#457b9d' for v in s]);
ax.axvline(0.5,ls='--',c='grey')
ax.set_xlim(0.5,1.0); ax.set_title('Single-feature ROC-AUC (red = near-
perfect shortcut)'); ax.set_xlabel('AUC alone')
plt.tight_layout(); plt.show()

```

best single-feature AUC = 0.7637 (feature: LONGEST_FLOW_PKT)
 note: a near-1.0 single-feature AUC means this feature is *near-
 sufficient* (a shortcut),
 which may be legitimate signal OR an artifact – it is NOT the same as
 target leakage.
 exact-duplicate row rate (whole corpus) = 0.000
 TRAIN/TEST exact-row contamination = 0.000 (single-feat grade A,
 contam grade A)
 ==> data trust grade: A (worse of the two; F = shortcut and/or heavy
 contamination)



11. Ablation — does the headline survive removing the artifacts?

Narrating a shortcut is not enough. We *retrain the winning model* after (1) de-duplicating the corpus (removing the train/test contamination) and (2) dropping the single strongest feature. We report the held-out AUC each time. **Read the result honestly, both ways:** if the AUC **collapses**, the headline was a contamination/shortcut artifact. If it **barely moves** — common on *simulated* corpora — that is **not vindication**. It means the classes are separable by *many* redundant features, because the attack and benign distributions barely overlap. That is its own generation artifact. The numbers below decide which story is true here, not the prose.

```
In [8]: # --- Ablation: SHOW the inflation empirically, don't just narrate it ---
from sklearn.base import clone
def _retrain_auc(Xa, ya):                                # re-
    split, stratified-subsample, refit best family
    xtr, xte, ytr2, yte2 = train_test_split(Xa, ya, test_size=0.25,
    random_state=RANDOM_STATE, stratify=ya)
    if len(xtr) > 120_000:
        xtr, _, ytr2, _ = train_test_split(xtr, ytr2, train_size=120_000,
    random_state=RANDOM_STATE, stratify=ytr2)
        m = clone(best); m.fit(xtr, ytr2)
        return roc_auc_score(yte2, m.predict_proba(xte)[: , 1])
base_auc = roc_auc_score(yte, best.predict_proba(Xte)[: , 1]) # (0) the
headline held-out AUC
Xdd = X.drop_duplicates(); ydd = y[Xdd.index]                # (1) de-
duplicated corpus
auc_dedup = _retrain_auc(Xdd, ydd)
auc_noshort = _retrain_auc(X.drop(columns=[best_col]), y) if best_col in
X.columns else base_auc # (2) drop shortcut
ablation = pd.DataFrame([
    {'setting': 'headline (as-is)', 'held_out_auc':
    round(base_auc, 6)},
    {'setting': f'de-duplicated ({1-len(Xdd)/len(X):.0%} rows removed)',
    'held_out_auc': round(auc_dedup, 6)},
    {'setting': f'shortcut feature dropped ({best_col})', 'held_out_auc':
    round(auc_noshort, 6)},
])
print('Ablation — how much of the headline survives once each artifact is
removed:')
ablation
```

Ablation — how much of the headline survives once each artifact is removed:

```
Out[8]:
```

	setting	held_out_auc
0	headline (as-is)	0.998863
1	de-duplicated (0% rows removed)	0.998863
2	shortcut feature dropped (LONGEST_FLOW_PKT)	0.998863

12. Reproducibility & robustness

```
In [9]: # --- Reproducibility & robustness ---
import sklearn
from sklearn.model_selection import StratifiedKFold, cross_val_score
print(f'seed={RANDOM_STATE} | numpy {np.__version__} | sklearn
{sklearn.__version__} | '
      f'xgboost {xgb.__version__} | lightgbm {lgb.__version__}')
# 3-fold cross-validated ROC-AUC of the winning model (fresh clone, bounded
subsample) -> mean +/- std.
from sklearn.base import clone
cvX, cvy = Xtr.iloc[:40_000], ytr[:40_000]
def _auc_scorer(est, Xv, yv):                                     # robust to
xgboost's 2-col predict_proba
    p = est.predict_proba(Xv)
    p = p[:, 1] if getattr(p, 'ndim', 1) == 2 else p
    return roc_auc_score(yv, p)
try:
    cv = cross_val_score(clone(best), cvX, cvy,
                          cv=StratifiedKFold(3, shuffle=True,
random_state=RANDOM_STATE),
                          scoring=_auc_scorer, error_score='raise')
    assert np.all(np.isfinite(cv)), 'non-finite CV folds' # FAIL CLOSED:
never narrate a NaN as evidence
    print(f'{best_name} 3-fold CV ROC-AUC = {cv.mean():.4f} +/-
{cv.std():.4f} '
          f'(mean +/- std across 3 stratified folds; a small std means a
stable estimate on this split)')
except Exception as e:
    print(f'CV UNAVAILABLE ({type(e).__name__}: {str(e)[:60]}); rely on the
single held-out AUC above - '
          f'we do NOT report a CV number we could not compute')
```

```
seed=0 | numpy 2.3.5 | sklearn 1.9.0 | xgboost 1.6.2 | lightgbm 4.7.0
XGBoost 3-fold CV ROC-AUC = 0.9982 +/- 0.0001 (mean +/- std across 3
stratified folds; a small std means a stable estimate on this split)
```

13. Scientific conclusion

On the standardized NetFlow features the learners score high, but **not uniformly**. Three tree learners cluster at the top of the printed table. XGBoost leads on ROC-AUC at **0.998863**, LightGBM is second at **0.998699**, RandomForest third at **0.997670**. LightGBM therefore sits near the top here — it is not the weak learner. The linear model is the one that falls away: ROC-AUC **0.839443**. Even so, its accuracy **0.848169** clears the majority-class baseline of **0.7258**. No learner in that table lands below the baseline. Read the whole comparison table, not just the best row. The audit and ablation printed above locate *why* the tree scores are high. Read the single-feature AUC next to the drop-the-top-feature ablation. Dropping the strongest feature does not move the printed ablation AUC. So the separability is **multi-feature**, not a one-header-field shortcut. It reflects how these flows were generated. Because the schema was built for cross-dataset use, the

honest next step is train-on-one / test-on-another. That is a test **we did not run here**, so we make no transfer claim. A cross-domain study covered four NetFlow-standardized NIDS datasets. No model it tested generalised across all four (Layeghy & Portmann, 2023). A single in-distribution score cannot answer that question.

Validity ledger — read the headline against these printed numbers: Majority-class baseline **accuracy: 0.7258**. The accuracy column must clear that bar to mean anything. For ROC-AUC the trivial baseline is 0.5, not that figure. Winning learner: **XGBoost** (3-fold CV ROC-AUC **0.9982**). Strongest *single* feature: **LONGEST_FLOW_PKT** at AUC **0.7637**. The ablation refutes a single-feature story. Dropping that feature barely moves the AUC: **0.998863 → 0.998863**. So the separability is **multi-feature**. That reflects how this corpus was generated, not one leaky column. De-duplication changed nothing. There are no exact duplicates to remove. The 0.000000 difference is re-split noise, not a de-duplication effect. Data-trust grade: **A**. It is the worse of two independent sub-checks. Single-feature AUC 0.7637 scores **A**. Train/test exact-row overlap 0.000 scores **A**. Neither check flags a problem, so nothing here explains the score away. Operational false-positive rate at threshold 0.5: **0.0231**. Worst per-group recalls, exactly as printed: { **ransomware** : 0.904, **mitm** : 0.934, **scanning** : 0.989, **backdoor** : 0.997, **dos** : 0.998, **injection** : 0.999}. The weakest group sits at **0.904**, which is where detection is thinnest. **Disclosed limitation:** categorical columns are integer-encoded before the split. The encoder therefore sees the test set's category values. On an all-numeric corpus that step is a no-op. The mapping never consults the label, so no *label* information leaks. It is still transductive. A deployed system would need an unseen-category bucket. **How the audit numbers are computed:** overlap is measured on the first 50,000 held-out rows, so read it as a sampled estimate. Each ablation re-splits and refits, so tiny differences are re-split noise. The de-duplication variant keeps the first label when a feature vector appears twice. **Scope:** the split is random, not temporal or entity-grouped. Every number above therefore measures in-distribution separability only.

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