

WEDNESDAY

The clerk opened the file at 4:18 p.m.

The death certificate was already there. So was the emergency contact.

Emergency Contact: Nguyễn Văn Hùng

Relationship: Unspecified

She clicked the relationship field. The system had run its checks.

Family link: None

Financial link: None

Direct messages: None

Recurring shared location: 743 instances

Last occurrence: 14 March

Relationship classification: Unresolved

She dialled the number.

He answered on the fourth ring.

She explained where she was and asked him to come in.

He arrived twenty-three minutes later, folding a damp umbrella behind him.

“Sit down, please.”

She looked at the screen.

“How did you know him?”

“We met on Wednesdays.”

“For how long?”

“A long time.”

“Where?”

“A café near the market.”

She typed.

“Family?”

“No.”

“Work?”

“No.”

“Money?”

“No.”

“Messages?”

“No.”

She checked the screen.

“Wednesdays?”

“Yes.”

“And after March fourteenth?”

“He didn’t come.”

“Do you know why?”

“He went into hospital.”

She entered it.

The next field was blank.

Reason for emergency contact:

“Do you know why he put your name here?”

The man looked at the desk.

“I never asked.”

She opened the relationship list.

Parent / Spouse / Child / Sibling / Friend / Other

“Friend?”

He was quiet for a moment.

“Probably.”

She selected Friend.

She closed the file.

He stood and picked up his umbrella.

“Anything to sign?”

“No.”

He nodded and left.

At 4:24 p.m., she opened the next file.