

KUEN KAI KADEE

Case File No. 3: The Photograph on Rain Lane



CONFIDENTIAL



Regional Cold Case Review Centre
Unsolved Cases Division
Old Canal Road, Talat Kao District

Ref. CCRC 003/2025

1 September 2025

Re: Request for review of the death of Mrs. Mei Heng-Ankul

To: The Independent Investigation Team

Enclosed: Copy of criminal case file No. 317/2025 (Talat Kao Police Station), one folder,
plus three sealed evidence envelopes

On the night of Friday 22 August 2025, during the 80th birthday dinner of Mr. Heng Heng-Ankul, owner of the Chinese herbal pharmacy **Heng-An Osot** on Soi Fon ("Rain Lane"), the lights in the building went out for about ten minutes. When they came back on, **Mrs. Mei**, the family's daughter-in-law and keeper of the shop's accounts, was found dead in the third-floor accounts room. In her hand she was gripping an old family photograph from 1982. One face in it had been scratched away to white.

Talat Kao Police gathered a great deal of evidence, but everyone at the party was hiding something, and the file still cannot say who caused her death. The Centre is therefore sending you the complete file for an independent review.

Read every document. Check the times carefully. Trust no statement until another piece of evidence backs it up. Some evidence was still being tested when the file was copied; the Centre has sealed it in envelopes that you may open once you have answered each stage. Please report your findings on four points:

1. **Who** is responsible for Mrs. Mei's death.
2. **How** that person reached the third-floor accounts room and left again unseen.
3. **Why** that person had to see her that night.
4. **Whose face** was scratched out of the 1982 photograph.

For your action, please.

Respectfully,

Thana Wongfon

(Thana Wongfon)

Police Lieutenant Colonel
Head, Unsolved Cases Division

*URGENT! Finish the
review before month end. — T.*

Unsolved Cases Division
Internal line 317
Received No. 1240 · 1 Sep 2025

CONFIDENTIAL

How it works

You are all **one investigation team**. No roles, no private secrets, nobody is the killer. Play solo or with as many friends as you like. Spread the evidence across the table, read it together and argue it out.

Step	What to do
1. Main file	Read the Centre's letter, the incident report, the profiles, the statements and Exhibits 1-12. Use the timeline worksheet to take notes.
2. Stage 1	Answer the Stage 1 questions on the answer sheet. Write your answers down first , then open Envelope A . Its first page gives the Stage 1 answers with reasons. If you got it wrong, keep playing.
3. Stage 2	Use Exhibits 13-21 and the new statements. Answer Stage 2, then open Envelope B (its first page gives the Stage 2 answers).
4. Final answer	Use Exhibits 22-30 and Statements 13-14. Answer all 5 questions on the case summary sheet, then open the Solution envelope and read it together.

Stuck? Turn to the **hint page** for that stage. Hints come in 3 levels. Level 1 only points the way. Levels 2 and 3 are printed upside down so you don't read them by accident. Use one level at a time.

House rules

- Every answer should rest on **at least 2 pieces of evidence** (quote the exhibit or statement number).
- **Statements can lie**. Photographs, receipts, police records and recordings can be trusted.
- Everything you need is in this file. No outside research, nothing supernatural.
- Don't open an envelope before you've written down that stage's answers.

Cutting and setup (once, about 20 minutes)

1. Print on A4, single-sided. Black and white works, but colour makes the photographs easier to read. The cover is optional.
2. Pages headed "**Cut Sheet**": **cut along the dashed lines** ✕ to get the real props: photographs, receipts, a business card, notes. Pieces marked "back of photo" can be glued to the back of the photo with the same number, or just laid beside it.
3. Police documents, statements, the floor sketch, the livestream transcript and the worksheets are **used as whole pages. No cutting**.
4. Get 3 brown envelopes (or fold paper into envelopes). Cut the labels from the bottom of the case summary sheet, stick them on, and fill them like this:
 - **Envelope A**: every page headed "Envelope A"
 - **Envelope B**: every page headed "Envelope B"
 - **Solution envelope**: every page marked "Solution" (ideally, **someone who isn't playing** prints and seals it)
5. Lay the hint pages face down at the side of the table. Pens, pencils and sticky notes help a lot.

All characters, shops, companies, agencies and places are fictional and not connected to real people or events · The story involves a death and a family conflict, with no violent images · All ages can play; younger children should play with an adult.

Don't feel like cutting? You can play from the full sheets. The dashed lines are only there for that "real case file" feel.

The household at No. 45 Soi Fon

Thai-Chinese families often call each other by family titles instead of names. The file uses both. This list shows every name you will meet.

Name in the file	Also called	Who they are
Mei Heng-Ankul	Aunt Mei, Sim Mei, "Asim"	The victim, 58. Daughter-in-law, runs the shop's money and keys.
Heng Heng-Ankul (Mr. Heng)	Akong (Grandpa), Tao-kae (Boss)	80 today. Founder of the pharmacy, owner of the building.
Ming Heng-Ankul	Hia Ming (Big Brother Ming), Uncle Ming	55. Akong's elder son, Mei's husband.
Lee	Je Lee (Big Sister Lee)	51. Akong's daughter, Nick's mother. Found the body.
Pao	Apao, Ah Pao	59. Shop assistant since 1995. Not a relative (civil registry).
Nick	—	24. Lee's son, Akong's grandson. Content creator.
Emorn	Auntie Emorn, Mrs. Emorn	68. Next-door neighbour (No. 47). Former owner of Emorn Film photo studio.
Ama Ngek	Grandma Ngek	Akong's late wife (died 2012). Mother of Ming and Lee.
Nuch	—	A woman who lives in another district. Appears in Envelope A.
Wichai Saithan	Pol. Lt. Wichai, "W."	Investigating officer, Talat Kao Police Station.
Somsak	—	Local electrician and locksmith.

Words you will see

Soi · a side lane. **Soi Fon** means "Rain Lane".

Akong / Ama · Teochew Chinese for grandpa and grandma, used by the whole family.

Tao-kae · "boss", the polite word staff use for a Chinese shop owner.

Hia / Je / A- · "big brother", "big sister", and a friendly prefix before a name (A-Pao, A-Mei).

Ua / Lue · old Teochew-Thai for "I" and "you". Akong speaks this way.

Ya hom · a traditional Thai-Chinese herbal aromatic remedy, sniffed or sipped. "Heng-An Ya Hom" is the family's secret recipe.

Chrysanthemum tea · a mild herbal tea. Akong drinks only his own, from his own flask.

Red envelope · a red paper envelope of birthday money given to elders.

Years · Thailand counts years in the Buddhist Era (2025 CE = 2568 BE). This English file converts every date to the Western calendar, e.g. **1982**.

Times · police records use the 24-hour clock: 21:46 = 9:46 pm.

Baht · Thai currency (written "B" or "baht" in the file).

Shoe size 42 · European sizing (about US men's 9).



Talat Kao Provincial Police Station

Preliminary Incident Report · Case No. 317/2025

Reporting officer Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan · Investigator · Call received Fri 22 Aug 2025, 21:55 ·
Arrived on scene 22:35 (lane mouth flooded)

Location	3-storey shophouse, No. 45 Soi Fon (Heng-An Osot pharmacy), third-floor accounts room
Deceased	Mrs. Mei Heng-Ankul, age 58
Found by	Mrs. Lee (the deceased's sister-in-law), approx. 21:51
Weather	Heavy, steady rain since 18:30. No lightning or thunder (confirmed by the Meteorological Department)
Persons in the building	Mr. Heng (80) · Mr. Ming (55) · Mrs. Lee (51) · Mr. Pao (59) · Mr. Nick (24) · Mrs. Emorn (68) · and the deceased. 7 people in total. No one else.
Ways in and out	Front steel grille: locked since 19:00, key held by Mr. Ming · Ground-floor back door: opens onto the back alley, a dead end closed by an iron gate locked from the inside. No signs of forced entry.

Sequence of events agreed by all witnesses

Time	Event
19:00	Dinner begins in the 2nd-floor dining room
20:00	Mrs. Emorn arrives and talks privately with the deceased in a corner for a few minutes
20:30	Mr. Heng announces at the table that he will not sell the building, will not go to a care home, and on Monday will change his will "for the one I have owed all my life"
20:55-21:10	Mr. Ming goes downstairs "to check the flooding at the shopfront". The deceased and Mr. Pao go down at the same time "to check stock in the storeroom". All three are back up around 21:10
21:24	Mr. Heng pours chrysanthemum tea from his personal flask into his dragon-pattern cup and hands it to the deceased
21:25	The deceased carries the tea up to the 3rd floor, saying she is "fetching the red envelope for Akong"
21:35	Mr. Pao goes downstairs, saying he is "getting the cake from the shop fridge"
21:38	Mr. Nick starts a livestream of the party (see Exhibit 9)
21:39	Mr. Ming goes downstairs again, saying he is "checking the water at the front"
21:41	Power fails in the whole building
21:51	Mrs. Lee carries a candle up to fetch the deceased and finds her dead
21:52	Power returns
21:55	Mr. Nick calls the police

The building (see sketch, Exhibit 1)

- **Ground floor:** pharmacy shopfront, with the shop fridge beside the front counter · middle hallway · storeroom at the back, with a back door onto the back alley
- **2nd floor:** dining room (window overlooks the front lane) · kitchen (directly under the accounts room) · Mr. Heng's bedroom
- **3rd floor:** the deceased's accounts room (with an iron safe) · old box room
- **Indoor stairs:** ground to 2nd floor is concrete and silent · 2nd to 3rd floor is old timber and creaks on every step
- **Outdoor iron spiral staircase:** in the back alley. It connects **only** the ground-floor back door and the 3rd-floor back door.





Talat Kao Provincial Police Station

Record of Persons Involved

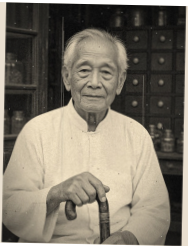
From the civil registry and neighbourhood enquiries · photos from ID cards / family albums

**Mrs. Mei Heng-Ankul · DECEASED**

Age 58 · daughter-in-law, wife of Mr. Ming · shop manager

Married into the Heng-Ankul family in 1995. For almost thirty years she controlled the books, the cash, every key and every employee. The whole lane knew her as strict, thrifty and never one to back down.

Lately she had been pushing to sell the building to a property developer and to find a care home for her father-in-law. It put her at odds with almost everyone in the house.

**Mr. Heng Heng-Ankul ("Akong")**

Age 80 (on the day) · founder of the shop, owner of the building

Opened Heng-An Osot in 1967. His wife, "Ama Ngek", died in 2012. They had two children together: Mr. Ming and Mrs. Lee.

Had knee surgery in 2017 and walks with a cane. Sleeps in a 2nd-floor bedroom. Kind but stubborn; does not want to sell. At the party he announced he would change his will.

A poor sleeper for years: his doctor prescribes one sleeping pill a night. He drinks only chrysanthemum tea from his own flask, from the one dragon-pattern cup he has used for forty years, and lets no one else touch it.

**Mr. Ming Heng-Ankul ("Hia Ming")**

Age 55 · Mr. Heng's elder son · husband of the deceased

Lives in the building with his wife. Mainly drives the delivery van and looks after regular customers. Left all money and property matters to his wife.

Neighbours call him kind and eager to please. Lately he has looked stressed and is often on the phone.

**Mrs. Lee ("Je Lee")**

Age 51 · Mr. Heng's younger daughter · mother of Mr. Nick · found the body

Married and moved to her husband's home at 25. Sells cosmetics online. Often quarrelled with the deceased over "**Heng-An Ya Hom**", Ama Ngek's herbal remedy recipe, which the deceased kept locked away from everyone.

CERTIFIED COPY

Michai

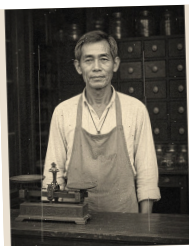
Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan



Talat Kao Provincial Police Station

Record of Persons Involved

From the civil registry and neighbourhood enquiries · photos from ID cards / family albums



Mr. Pao ("Apao")

Age 59 · shop assistant since 1995

From another district, no family, rents a small room behind the market. Knows all one hundred and twelve herb drawers by heart. Makes up Mr. Heng's medicines and delivers them to him every morning.

Quiet and polite. Calls Mr. Heng "Tao-kae". Regular customers say he is the most honest man on the lane.



Mr. Nick

Age 24 · Mr. Heng's grandson, Mrs. Lee's son · content creator

Runs a channel called "Old Things, New Stories" with about forty thousand followers. Wants to turn the ground-floor shop into a herbal café. On the night, he livestreamed the party from 21:38.



Mrs. Emorn

Age 68 · next-door neighbour (No. 47) · former owner of Emorn Film studio

Ran the photo studio on this lane for forty years and closed it in 2015. Has photographed the Heng-Ankul family since they were young. Still carries a film camera everywhere.

Family tree (per civil registry)

- **Mr. Heng** (80) + **Ama Ngek** (died 2012)
 - **Mr. Ming** (55) + **Mrs. Mei** (58, deceased) · married 1995 · no children
 - **Mrs. Lee** (51) · married, lives elsewhere
 - **Mr. Nick** (24)
- **Mr. Pao** (59) · employee, not a relative
- **Mrs. Emorn** (68) · next-door neighbour, not a relative

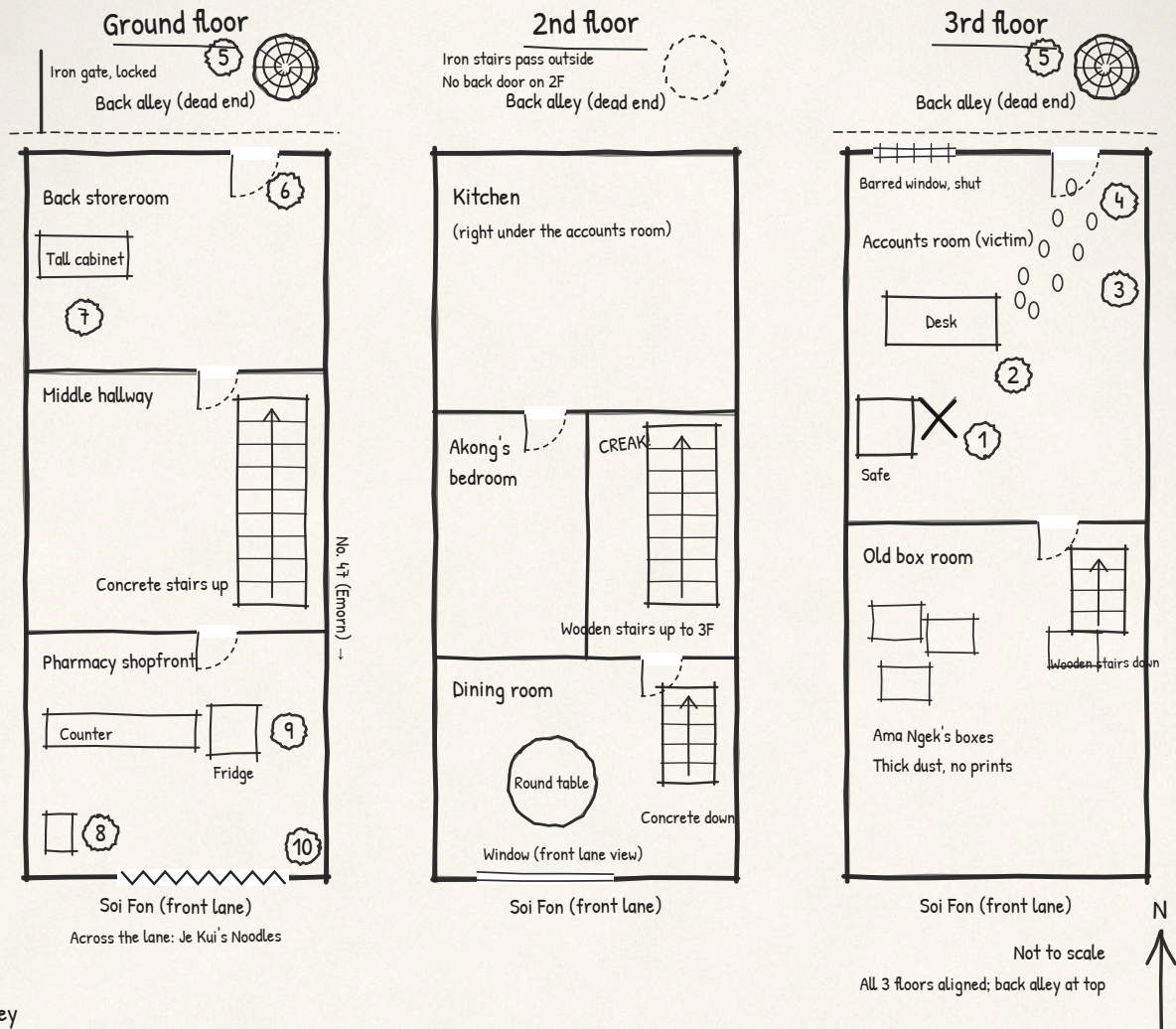
CERTIFIED COPY

Michai

Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan



Talat Kao Provincial Police Station

Sketch Map of the SceneScene 3-storey shophouse, No. 45 Soi Fon (Heng-An Osot), Drawn by Pol. Lt. Wichai SaithanDate and time drawn Fri 22 Aug 2025, 22:50 Scale not to scale

Key

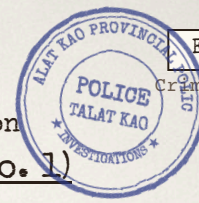
- | | |
|--|---|
| ① Body found beside the safe (X) | ⑥ Ground-floor back door (storeroom) |
| ② Victim's wristwatch, by desk leg | ⑦ Fuse box now (hidden by tall cabinet) |
| ③ Wet prints: back door → desk → back door | ⑧ Old fuse box by front (empty shell) |
| ④ 3F back door locked, not forced | ⑨ Shopfront fridge (the cake) |
| ⑤ Outdoor iron spiral stairs: G ↔ 3F only | ⑩ Front steel grille, locked from 19:00 |

Notes to the sketch (checked in person by the officer)

- Timber stairs, 2nd to 3rd floor: tested. However lightly you step, every stair creaks. In the dark you cannot skip steps.
- The iron spiral staircase is outside the building. It runs from the ground-floor back door up to the 3rd-floor back door only. There is no landing or door on the 2nd floor.
- The ground-floor and 3rd-floor back doors have deadbolts that need the key to lock or unlock, from inside and from outside.
- The back alley is a dead end. Its iron gate is locked from inside and shows no sign of forcing. No outsider can get in.
- To reach the iron stairs from the 2nd-floor dining room you must go down the concrete stairs to the ground floor, along the middle hallway, and out through the back door in the storeroom.

(Signed) Wichai Saithan Pol. Lt., drawn by

(Wichai Saithan) Investigator, Talat Kao Police



Talat Kao Provincial Police Station
Scene Examination Record (No. 1)

3rd-floor accounts room · recorded by Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan · Fri 22 Aug 2025, 22:40

Position of body	Lying on her side beside the iron safe in the corner. Chair tipped over towards the back door.
Injuries	Left side of the head struck the corner of the safe. No other injuries found. Awaiting post-mortem.
Victim's wristwatch	Came off the wrist; on the floor by the desk leg, glass cracked. Hands stopped at 21:46 (see Exhibit 4).
In right hand	One old black-and-white photograph, gripped tight, hard to remove (Exhibit 3).
On the desk	1 candle (out) · tin box holding 4 struck matches, but no burnt paper or ash · empty brown paper envelope marked "Negatives 22/8/82", no film inside · red envelope marked "Akong 80" · abacus · shop ledger · papers about the building sale and the staff (Exhibits 5-8) · dragon-pattern teacup with a little tea left in the bottom (bagged for testing before photo 4 was taken)
Victim's keys	Dropped under the desk. The ring holds the back-door key, the safe key and the desk-drawer key.
Safe	Closed and locked. Opened with the victim's key. Inside: the shop's cash book and the Heng-An Ya Hom recipe book .
Desk drawer	1 drawer locked, not yet opened (sent for examination later).
3rd-floor back door	Shut and locked with a key . No sign of forcing.
Wooden floor	Wet footprints, rubber sandal tread , leading from the back door to the desk and looping back to the back door · sent for size measurement
Timber stairs (2F to 3F)	Dry . No water marks or wet prints.
Observations	Accounts-room window shut tight and barred · 3rd-floor box room: nobody hiding, thick dust, no footprints.

Signed Pol. Lt. *Wichai*, recording officer

Note: she went up at 21:25. Looks like she was getting ready to burn something (4 matches) but never managed it · So where did the film from that envelope go?





Exhibit 3 Photograph in the deceased's right hand

Exhibit 3 Back of
photo (glue to photo 3)

Emorn Film • Soi Fon

*Heng An Oot
Sao-kae's 37th
birthday
22 Aug 1982*

*"This one is not
one of this family."*

(Last line in a different
hand and a different ink,
written later)

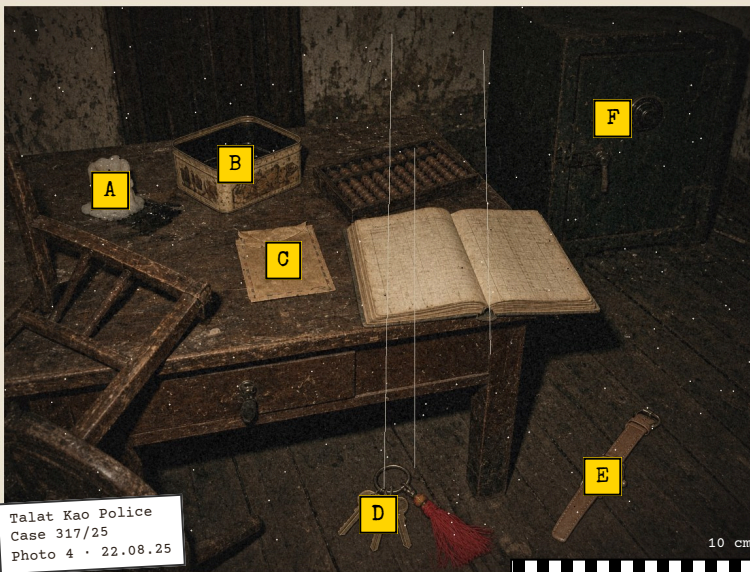


Exhibit 4 Police photo • desk in the 3rd-floor accounts room •
22:45

Exhibit 4 Photo key

- A** Candle (out)
- B** Tin box: 4 struck matches, no paper ash
- C** Envelope "Negatives 22/8/82", empty
- D** Victim's keys (includes back-door key)
- E** Victim's watch, glass cracked, stopped at 21:46
- F** Iron safe; the corner her head struck

Exhibit 5 DRAFT · Agreement to Sell Land and Building**Buyer** Rungnakorn Development Co., Ltd.**Seller** Mr. Heng Heng-Ankul (registered owner)**Property** 3-storey shophouse, No. 45 Soi Fon**Price** 38,000,000 baht (thirty-eight million baht)**Terms** To be signed by 31 Aug 2025 · building handed over empty within 90 days

Seller's signature

..... (blank)

** Must include No. 47 (Emorn) or the company won't pay full price. Use her extension that encroaches on our land as leverage.*

** Akong won't sign → have Ming apply to be his legal guardian?? Ask the lawyer.*

Exhibit 7 Heng-An Osot
FINAL WARNINGTo: **Mr. Pao** (shop assistant)

On Wednesday 20 Aug 2025 the front-counter cash drawer was **8,000 baht short**. Mr. Pao was responsible for the counter that day. If this happens again, or if he does not resign voluntarily, the shop will take legal action.

Shop manager *Mei**Mr. Pao refused to sign for receipt.***Exhibit 6** Sukjai Golden Years Home

Senior residence · 24-hr nursing · 5 meals a day · physiotherapy

Admissions: tel. 080-000-0207

*Single room 207 · move in 1 Sep**Deposit received 10,000 B · contact: Khun Mei***Exhibit 8** Proposal: "Heng-An Café"

Proposed by Nick (grandson) · co-investor: Khun J

Turn the ground-floor shop into a herbal café, keep the old medicine cabinets as a photo corner, run ya-hom blending workshops ...

NOT APPROVED. Not while I'm alive. — Mei



Exhibit 10 Frame from Mrs. Emorn's film camera
(rush-developed by police)

Exhibit 10 Back of photo (glue to photo 10)

*Taken from the 2nd-floor window of the Heng-An building
during the blackout, about 9:44 pm.
Noodle shop opposite: lights ON.
Street lamp ON. Shop signs ON.
Only the Heng-An building is dark.*

— Emorn

Exhibit 11 Somsak Electrical

Wiring · fuse boxes · locksmith · Receipt book 3, No. 0217 (carbon copy)

Date 14 Mar 2017 · **Customer** Heng-An Osot

Contact / site supervisor Khun Pao

Move main fuse box from the shopfront to the back storeroom wall, hidden behind the tall wooden medicine cabinet (Khun Pao's request, to keep kids away)	6,500
New main breaker, 1 unit	2,800
Replace deadbolts on 2 back doors (ground floor + 3rd floor), both on the same key	1,800
Cut 3 keys : Khun Mei 1 · Akong 1 · Khun Pao 1	300
Total	11,400

Good to know: if this breaker **trips by itself** (overload or leak), the lever stops in the **"MIDDLE"** · if the lever is **all the way down**, someone switched it off.

Received by Somsak

Exhibit 12 Dispensing Book · Controlled Medicines Cabinet · Heng-An Osot (page 88 · sign every time you take stock)

Date	Time	Item	Qty	For / reason	Signed
1 Aug	09:30	Sleeping pills (prescription, Talat Kao Hospital)	30 tabs	Akong · 1 tab nightly at bedtime · kept in bedside drawer	<i>Pao</i>
21 Aug	09:10	Knee pain tablets	1 strip	Akong (regular) delivered to 2F room	<i>Pao</i>
22 Aug	09:05	Knee pain tablets	1 strip	Akong (regular) delivered to 2F room	<i>Pao</i>
22 Aug	14:20	Sleeping pills	10 tabs	can't sleep	<i>Lee</i>
22 Aug	16:00	Heng-An Ya Hom	2 bottles	Akong's birthday	<i>Mei</i>

Note (Mei's handwriting): Akong's medicine must ALWAYS be delivered to his 2F room. Doctor's orders since '23: no more than one flight of stairs. Akong can't get up to 3F any more · Lee took sleeping pills AGAIN?? Didn't ask anyone.



Talat Kao Provincial Police Station

Transcript of Livestream "Akong's 80th Birthday" · Mr. Nick's account

Transcribed from the file on his phone · times from the clip's clock · camera stayed on the 2nd-floor dining table throughout · *italics* = viewer comments

Time	Audio
21:38:02	Nick: "Hi everyone! Tonight is my Akong's eightieth birthday! Akong, Mum, Uncle Ming, Auntie Emorn, everyone's here. Aunt Mei went upstairs for the red envelope and Apao went down for the cake. We're waiting to blow out the candles!"
21:38:40	<i>Comment: Akong is sooo cute</i>
21:39:10	Akong: "Nick, another live? Take that camera away from me."
21:39:30	Uncle Ming: "I'll pop down and check the water at the front. This rain is unbelievable." <i>[chair scraping]</i>
21:40:30	Lee: "Where's the cake? Apao's been gone ages."
21:41:10	[POWER CUT. Screen goes black. Only the rain is audible.]
21:41:12	Lee: "Whoa! Lights are out!"
21:41:20	Nick: "Hang on, phone torch first. Akong's right here. I've got his hand."
21:41:40	Emorn: "Is the whole lane out? I'll go and look from the window."
21:42:05	Lee: "I'll find candles in the kitchen."
21:42:30	[Ming shouting up from the ground floor] "The fuse box at the front is gone! There's just an empty cover! Does anyone know where it was moved to?!"
21:42:40	Akong (shouting down): "Ask Apao! Apao knows everything about this building!" <i>[no reply]</i>
21:43:05	Emorn: "Strange. The noodle shop across the lane still has its lights on. Street lamp too. It's only us."
21:44:05	[One camera flash] Emorn: "Let me get a picture of that."
21:44:30	<i>Comment: power cut for real?? creepy</i>
21:45:00	Akong: "My legs are cold. In rain like this my legs give up."
21:46:30	[A single dull THUD from the ceiling]
21:46:35	Nick: "What was that? Lightning?"
21:46:40	Nick: "Mum, found the candles yet?"
21:46:42	[Lee's voice from the kitchen] "Not yet! This drawer's all chopsticks!"
21:47:10	Emorn: "There hasn't been a single clap of thunder tonight. That wasn't lightning."
21:48:00	Akong: "Has Mei come down? Don't come down the stairs in the dark."
21:48:30	Nick: "Guys, my battery's on twenty percent. Send Akong some hearts!"
21:49:30	[Lee, from the kitchen] "Got them. Candles!"
21:49:50	Nick: "Mum, can you go up and get Aunt Mei? Then we can do the cake."
21:50:05	[Timber stairs: CREAK, CREAK, continuous. Someone climbing to the 3rd floor.]
21:51:00	[A scream from upstairs]
21:51:20	[Someone running up from the ground floor, through the room, then the timber stairs rattle up to the 3rd floor] Nick: "Uncle Ming! What's happening?"
21:52:20	[LIGHTS ON] [Apao shouting from the ground floor] "Power's back!"
21:53:00	Nick: "Sorry everyone, I have to end the live." [STREAM ENDS]

Investigator's note: listened 3 times. From 21:41:10 to 21:50:05 there is no sound of the timber stairs at all · the thud came from the ceiling on the kitchen side.





Statement 1 · Mr. Heng (Akong)

22 Aug 25 · 22:50 · 2F bedroom

I, Mr. Heng Heng-Ankul, age 80, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. Where were you when the power went out?

A. Sitting at the dinner table. I never got up. My grandson Nick held my hand the whole time.

Q. Can you get up to the 3rd floor?

A. Not for two years. Knee operation in '17, and now the doctor says no more than one flight of stairs. The iron stairs at the back? Forget it.

Q. Where is the building's fuse box?

A. I don't know. During the '17 renovation I was in hospital for a month. The others handled it.

Q. Do you have a back-door key?

A. One. I keep it in my bedside drawer... (*opens the drawer*) It's gone! Last saw it on Monday. I thought Mei took it.

Q. You announced you would change your will "for the one I have owed all my life". Who did you mean?

A. An old man's business. Nothing to do with this case.

Q. You and the deceased disagreed about selling the building?

A. Yes. Mei wanted to sell, I didn't. On Sunday I told her if this building was sold I'd cut Ming out of my will. But I did nothing to Mei. I can barely walk.

Q. Why did the deceased go up to the 3rd floor at 21:25?

A. She went up on her own, to fetch the red envelope for me. I didn't send anybody.

Q. What did you hear during the blackout?

A. One "thud" from the ceiling. I thought a box fell over in the box room. Not a sound from the wooden stairs until Lee took the candle up.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed *Heng* statement giver

Signed *Wichai* recorder

Statement 2 · Mr. Ming (Hia Ming)

22 Aug 25 · 23:05 · ground-floor shop

I, Mr. Ming Heng-Ankul, age 55, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. Between 20:55 and 21:10 you went downstairs. What for?

A. To check the water coming in at the front. Then I heard Mei and Apao arguing quietly in the hallway outside the storeroom. I only caught pieces. Mei said "*Sign the resignation tonight*", "*or tomorrow I report the drawer money to the police*", "*and I'm burning all of this tonight.*" Apao said "*You have no right, Asim.*" Then it went quiet.

Q. At 21:39 you went down again. Why?

A. To check the water again. The rain was very heavy.

Q. Where were you when the power went out?

A. At the front steel grille. Everything went black. I shone my phone at the fuse box by the door, where it had always been: just an empty cover. So I shouted upstairs and waited there.

Q. Why didn't you go and look for the fuse box?

A. I didn't know where it had gone. Nobody told me. Mei handled everything about the building.

Q. Did anyone walk past you?

A. No. The grille was locked and the key was in my pocket. **The fridge was two steps from me, and nobody came to get the cake the whole time.** When I heard Lee scream I ran up to the 3rd floor.

Q. Do you have a back-door key?

A. No. Mei never gave me one. I only have the grille key and my car key.

Q. Your phone kept buzzing tonight. Who was calling?

A. Work. Nothing to do with this.

Recorder's note: the witness appeared anxious and kept his phone face-down throughout.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed *Ming* statement giver

Signed *Wichai* recorder





Statement 3 · Mrs. Lee (Je Lee) · found the body

22 Aug 25 · 23:15 · 2F dining room

I, Mrs. Lee, age 51 (who found the body), state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. Tell me from the moment the power went out.

A. I went into the kitchen and felt around for candles. The kitchen is right under the accounts room. At about 9:46 I heard a "thud" right above my head. Nick shouted had I found the candles yet, and I shouted back not yet. When I found them, Nick told me to go up and get Aunt Mei, so I took a candle up the wooden stairs.

Q. What did you see in the accounts room?

A. Mei lying still beside the safe, the chair knocked over, an old photo in her hand. **There were wet footprints on the wooden floor, from the back door to the desk and round back to the back door.** The back door was shut. The wooden stairs I had just come up were **dry**, no water at all.

Q. When the lights came on, who was with you?

A. Ming ran up behind me. We were both standing in the accounts room when the lights came on. Only then did I hear Apao shout from downstairs that the power was back.

Q. And after that?

A. Around ten o'clock I went down to the shop fridge to get water for Akong's pills. **The cake box was still in the fridge, untouched.** Apao went down for that cake at 9:35. What was he doing down there for seventeen minutes?

Q. Do you have a back-door key?

A. No. I haven't lived in this house for over twenty years. I don't even know where the fuse box is.

Q. What was your problem with the deceased?

A. My own mother's ya hom recipe. Mei kept it from everyone. But if I wanted to kill someone, why wait for a blackout? I could tell her off to her face any day.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed Lee statement giver

Signed Wichai recorder

Statement 4 · Mr. Pao (Apao)

22 Aug 25 · 23:25 · ground-floor storeroom

I, Mr. Pao, age 59, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. At 21:35 you went downstairs. What did you do?

A. I was going to get the cake, but I stopped in the storeroom first. Rain was starting to seep under the back door. Then the power went. I thought the breaker had tripped because of the water, so I went out to drag sandbags across the back door first. I got soaked. Then I came back in and felt for the breaker in the dark. It took a long time because the box is behind the medicine cabinet. When I found it I pushed it back up.

Q. Ming and Akong shouted asking about the fuse box. Why didn't you answer?

A. I was outside the back door. The rain was very loud. I didn't hear.

Q. At nine o'clock you argued with the deceased. What about?

A. Asim told me to sign a resignation letter. She said I stole eight thousand from the drawer. I didn't steal it, so I didn't sign. That's all.

Q. Do you have a back-door key?

A. Yes, one, on my belt. I use it to open and lock up the back every day.

Q. Did you go up to the 3rd floor tonight?

A. Not once. I was on the ground floor the whole time.

Q. What kind of boss was the deceased?

A. Strict with me for thirty years. But I never hated her.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed Pao statement giver

Signed Wichai recorder





Statement 5 · Mr. Nick

22 Aug 25 · 23:35 · 2F dining room

I, Mr. Nick, age 24, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. Where were you when the power went out?

A. Next to Akong, holding his hand the whole time. I was live, too. Three hundred-odd viewers can back me up. I didn't get up until I ended the stream. The clip is still on my phone; I've given it all to the police.

Q. When you started streaming, who was at the table?

A. Akong, Mum, Uncle Ming, Auntie Emorn and me. Aunt Mei had gone up to the 3rd floor at 9:25, Apao had gone down for the cake, and then Uncle Ming went down to check the water at 9:39.

Q. The deceased turned down your café project. Were you angry?

A. Yes. But we just disagreed. I wanted the shop to survive in a way people my age would walk into. I didn't want anyone gone.

Q. When Apao came up after the lights came on, what did he say?

A. That water was coming in the back door and he had to go out and put sandbags down. I was a bit dazed then. I didn't think anything of it.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed *Nick* statement giver

Signed *Wichai* recorder

Statement 6 · Mrs. Emorn

22 Aug 25 · 23:40 · No. 47

I, Mrs. Emorn, age 68, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. Where were you when the power went out?

A. I went and stood at the 2nd-floor window from the moment it went dark until the lights came back. That window looks onto the front lane. The noodle shop opposite still had its lights on, the street lamp too. Only this one building was dark. So I raised my film camera and took one shot, about 9:44. The flash lit up the whole room.

Q. What did you hear?

A. A thud from upstairs, once. It was raining hard tonight, yes, but there was not one clap of thunder.

Q. At eight o'clock you spoke with the deceased. About what?

A. My house. She wanted me to sell it along with this building. She said the extension at the back of my house encroaches on the shop's land.

Q. The photo in the deceased's hand. Do you recognise it?

A. I do. I took it myself, on Tao-kae's thirty-seventh birthday. I was twenty-five then. But I'm not the one who scratched out the face.

Q. Who was the boy whose face was scratched out?

A. It was so long ago... I couldn't tell you.

Q. The empty envelope on the desk says "Negatives 22/8/82". Do you know anything about it?

A. I don't.

Q. Before the deceased went upstairs, did you notice anything unusual?

A. Nothing unusual. Sweet, really. Tao-kae poured tea from his flask into his own dragon cup and handed it to Mei. He said, "You've worked all day. Drink it all up, then go and fetch Akong's red envelope." He'd kept that cup in his own hands all night; never let anyone touch it. A bit after half past nine he told Apao, "Go and get the cake now."

Recorder's note: the witness held her cloth bag tightly against her chest throughout.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed *Emorn* statement giver

Signed *Wichai* recorder



Timeline of the night: who was where? (note the exhibit that proves it)

Time	Victim	Akong	Ming	Lee	Apao	Nick	Emorn
21:25							
21:35							
21:38							
21:39							
21:41							
21:42							
21:43							
21:44							
21:46							
21:47							
21:49							
21:50							
21:51							
21:52							
21:53							

Elimination grid

Suspect	Where at 21:46? (exhibit no.)	Back-door key?	Knew where the fuse box was?	Wet?	Motive / what they're hiding
Akong					
Ming					
Lee					
Apao					
Nick					
Emorn					

Tip: put "?" in any box no evidence confirms yet, and come back to it when you open a new envelope. A statement on its own doesn't count as proof.

Stage 1 · answer from the Main File, then open Envelope A

1. At about what time did the victim die?

Evidence used:

2. By what route did the person responsible reach the accounts room, and leave it?

Evidence used:

3. What did that person need to have on them to use that route?

Evidence used:

Stage 2 · use Envelope A, then open Envelope B

4. Why did the power go out? ☐ by itself (water / fault) ☐ someone cut it on purpose

Evidence used:

5. Who went up to the accounts room during the blackout (one name)? Give 3 pieces of evidence that point to them.

6. What evidence rules out each of the others? (one line each)

Review findings · Case No. 317/2025

1. Who carried it out?

2. Did they act alone? If someone was behind it, who? Give 3 pieces of evidence that point to that person.

3. How: tell it in order, from before the victim went up to the 3rd floor until the lights came back (tea · power · route · key · what was taken · where it was hidden).

4. Why: what was the victim about to do, and why did it have to end before Monday?

5. Whose face was scratched out of the 1982 photograph, and how is that person related to Mr. Heng?

Investigation team Hints used
..... · Time taken min

Score yourselves: 3 points per correct answer · minus 1 for each Level 2 hint and 2 for each Level 3 hint · 14-15 points = legendary detective · 10-13 = sharp inspector · below that = the rain hasn't stopped yet; try the next file.

ENVELOPE A

Open after writing your Stage
1 answers

ENVELOPE B

Open after writing your Stage
2 answers

SOLUTION

Open after all 5 summary answers
are written

Stage 1 answers

1. Time of death: about 21:46. The victim's watch stopped at 21:46 (Exhibits 2, 4). That matches the "thud" on the livestream at 21:46:30 (9), and Lee heard a thud above the kitchen while hunting for candles (Statement 3).

2. Route: the iron spiral staircase at the back, through the 3rd-floor back door. The wet footprints start and end at the back door, while the timber stairs are dry (2, Statement 3). The timber stairs creak on every step (1), yet the livestream has no stair sound at all from 21:41:10 to 21:50:05 (9). The iron stairs can only be reached from the ground-floor back door, and no outsider can get into the back alley (1). **So the culprit is someone inside the building who went out through the ground-floor back door.**

3. What they needed: a back-door key. The deadbolts need a key on both sides, and the 3rd-floor back door was locked from outside with no sign of forcing (1, 2). The victim's own key was still under the desk in the room (2, 4), and only 3 keys exist (11). **So the culprit must have had Akong's key or the third key.**

Your Stage 2 mission

You now know the culprit was inside the building and held a back-door key. This envelope holds new test results, a photo of the storeroom, evidence from phones, and a second round of statements in which several people finally tell more of the truth. Use all of it to answer Stage 2 on the answer sheet: **Did the power fail or was it cut · Who went up to the accounts room · What rules out everyone else**

Form TP-3

Criminal Case No. 317/2025

Talat Kao Provincial Police Station

Exhibit 14 **Back-Door Key Register (everyone in the building searched)**

Search on the night, 23:45 · there are exactly 3 back-door keys, per the electrician's receipt (Exhibit 11)

Key	Issued to	Found
1	Mrs. Mei (the deceased)	On her key ring, under the desk in the accounts room
2	Mr. Heng (Akong)	Not in his bedside drawer · found in Mrs. Lee's handbag
3	Mr. Pao	On the key ring clipped to Mr. Pao's belt

Other persons	Keys on them
Mr. Ming	Front steel grille + car (no back-door key)
Mr. Nick	No keys to the building
Mrs. Emorn	Her own keys to No. 47 (her house has no connecting door to this building)
Mr. Heng	No keys on him



Talat Kao Provincial Police Station

Scene Examination (Report 2) and Further Test Results

Recorded by Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan · Sat 23 Aug 2025, 10:30



Main fuse box (back storeroom)	Examined 23 Aug, 09:00, by Somsak, the electrician who installed it · no leak, no short circuit, no scorch marks, no water inside · when this model of breaker trips by itself, a red flag pops up in a small window and stays there until someone resets it. The red flag had not popped up. · The electrician confirms that on the night the breaker was switched off by hand. It did not trip.
Storeroom and ground-floor back door	The back-door sill is 40 cm above the alley. No sign that any water came in · No sandbags anywhere, in the building or in the back alley · the floor is wet only under the raincoat and the sandals (see Exhibit 15)
Footprints on the 3rd floor	Tread of rubber sandals, size 42 (EU) , matching the wet black rubber sandals in the storeroom. Everyone in the house confirms Mr. Pao wears this pair to work every day · every pair of shoes in the building was checked: all dry except this pair
Iron spiral staircase	A trail of mud and leaves on the steps all the way up to the 3rd floor: someone used it while it was raining
Yellow raincoat	Hooded. Hanging beside the back door in the storeroom, soaked through and still dripping · zipped waterproof chest pocket · sent to forensics, results pending
Clothing of everyone present (checked on the night, 22:40)	Mr. Heng dry · Mr. Ming dry · Mrs. Lee dry · Mr. Nick dry · Mrs. Emorn dry · Mr. Pao: trouser legs wet to the knee, feet wet, but hair and shirt dry
Preliminary post-mortem	Left side of the head struck hard against the corner of the safe; death almost instant · time of death consistent with 21:45-21:47 · no defensive wounds, no scratches, nothing under the fingernails · blood and the tea left in the cup sent to the Institute of Forensic Medicine for a toxicology test, results in 2-3 days
Sleeping pills taken by Mrs. Lee	Found in Mrs. Lee's handbag. 10 tablets counted, all of those she signed for
Further checks requested	Mr. Ming's phone and screenshots from the person he was talking to (16, 17) · contents of Mr. Nick's wallet (18) · Mrs. Lee's phone (19) · contents of the victim's pockets (20, 21)

Signed Pol. Lt. *Wichai*, recorder





Exhibit 15 Police photo · back storeroom of the shop · 22:55

Exhibit 15 Photo key

- A** Main fuse box, hidden behind the edge of the tall cabinet. You can't see it from the hallway door; you have to know it's there
- B** Tall wooden medicine cabinet
- C** Yellow hooded raincoat, soaked
- D** Black rubber sandals, size 42, wet
- E** Ground-floor back door, to the back alley and the iron spiral staircase

Exhibit 18 Photo Gear
Soi 8

Receipt / abbreviated tax invoice

Wireless microphone set x1
7,990.00

TOTAL	7,990.00
CASH	8,000.00
CHANGE	10.00

WED 20/08/2025 15:32

Thank you for shopping with us
(found in Mr. Nick's wallet)

Receipt

Exhibit 20 I, Mrs. Emorn, have received a bank transfer from Khun Mei Heng-Ankul of 20,000 baht for one strip of film negatives (group photo in front of the Heng-An shop, 22 Aug 1982). Handed over 22 Aug 2025 at 20:05.

Signed, Emorn

Transfer · Successful · 22 Aug 25, 20:05 · 20,000.00 baht

From Mei Heng-Ankul → To Emorn S. · Note: "film"
(slip printed from the victim's phone)

Found in the victim's shirt pocket, clipped to note 21

Exhibit 21 Small note, the victim's handwriting

"Got everything now. Photo + film + letter → burn the lot tonight, before Monday."

██████████

Screenshot from Nuch's phone

Video call · Papa Ming · 04:58



Screenshot 22/08/25 21:45:18

Two screenshots given to police:
21:41:04 (the shop lights behind him have just gone out) and 21:45:18 (this one) · in both, the background is the Heng-An shop's front steel grille and the noodle shop opposite, its lights still on

██████████

Mr. Ming's phone · messages and call log

Nuch · 21:37
Phum's got a fever, he keeps crying for Papa. Can you video call so he can see your face?

21:38 · One sec, let me go downstairs first

Outgoing video call	Nuch
Started	21:40:20
Ended	21:49:40 (9 min 20 sec)
Signal	Same cell tower for the whole call

Phone wallpaper: a woman and a boy of about 8

██████████

Mrs. Lee's phone · photo album and a draft email

Photos of the pages of the "Heng-An Ya Hom Recipe Book": 12 photos
Taken Tue 19 Aug 2025 at 23:10
Background: the desk in the 3rd-floor accounts room, lit by a torch
No photos at all on 22 Aug after 18:00

Draft email to "Ladda Beauty Co.": "I have the complete formula now. Ready to sign the contract."



Statement 7 · Mr. Ming (second)

23 Aug · 11:00 · Talat Kao Police

I, Mr. Ming Heng-Ankul, age 55, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. During the blackout your phone was on a video call with "Nuch". Who is she?

A. ...Nuch is the mother of my son, little Phum. He's eight. They live in another district. I've sent her money every month for eight years. Mei didn't know. Or maybe she'd found out. I didn't dare say so last night, because I was afraid everyone would think I had a reason to kill my wife.

Q. Where were you during the call?

A. Standing at the front steel grille the whole time. That's where the signal is best. My son wanted to see my face, so I kept the camera on for the whole call.

Q. What did you hear from inside the shop?

A. The metal back door in the storeroom went "clack" **twice**. The first time around 21:43, the second around 21:49, just before I hung up. I thought it was the wind. But there wasn't much wind that night.

Q. Who supervised the renovation of the building in 2017?

A. I had to take Akong to hospital every day. Apao handled the workmen from start to finish. I never even went to look.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed Ming statement giver

Signed Wichai recorder

Statement 8 · Miss Nuch (by telephone)

23 Aug · 13:00

I, Miss Nuch, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. When were you on the video call with Mr. Ming on the night of the 22nd?

A. From about 9:40 until nearly 9:50 pm. My son was ill and crying for his dad.

Q. What did you see on the screen?

A. He was standing in front of the shop's steel grille the whole time. I could see the rain and the noodle shop across the lane behind him. After a while **the lights in the shop behind him suddenly went out**. He jumped, turned to shine his phone at something beside the door, and shouted a question to the people upstairs. Then he lit his own face with his phone light and kept talking to our son. He didn't go anywhere. I took two screenshots because I was worried about him.

Q. Anything unusual during that time?

A. He looked behind him twice and said, "Back door's banging. The wind, probably." A bit later he said he had to go back up or people would get suspicious, and hung up.

Read back; confirmed correct.

(taken by telephone, not signed)

Signed Wichai recorder

Statement 9 · Mrs. Lee (second)

23 Aug · 11:30 · Talat Kao Police

I, Mrs. Lee, age 51, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. Police found Akong's back-door key in your handbag.

A. Yes. I admit it. On Tuesday night I took the key from Akong's bedside drawer. I waited until Aunt Mei went out to a friend's funeral at ten, then went up the iron stairs at the back, unlocked the 3rd-floor back door and photographed the ya hom recipe in her desk drawer. I only wanted to see my own mother's recipe. What's wrong with that? I just hadn't put the key back yet.

Q. Did you use that key last night?

A. No. Last night I was in the kitchen the whole time. My voice is on Nick's clip, answering him only a few seconds after the thud. If I'd been on the 3rd floor, how could I have got down to the kitchen that fast? And my clothes were dry.

Q. The sleeping pills you signed out that afternoon?

A. They're mine. I've been under a lot of stress and can't sleep. All ten are still in my bag.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed Lee statement giver

Signed Wichai recorder





Statement 10 · Mr. Nick (second)

23 Aug · 12:00 · Talat Kao Police

I, Mr. Nick, age 24, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. The receipt for a microphone in your wallet is dated Wednesday the 20th, 15:32.

A. I took the money myself. Eight thousand. On Wednesday afternoon I minded the counter while Apao went for lunch, so I took it from the drawer and bought the mic. I meant to slip it back, but Aunt Mei counted the cash that evening and blamed Apao. I didn't dare tell anyone. Apao didn't steal anything.

Q. Apao says water was coming in at the back door and he had to go out and put sandbags down.

A. That's not true. I've filmed Soi Fon flooding a dozen times. The back alley is higher than the front lane, and the back door is raised on top of that. Water has never come in there. Last year's flood was worse than this and it only reached the shopfront. And we've never owned any sandbags.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed Nick statement giverSigned Wichai recorder

Statement 11 · Mrs. Emorn (second)

23 Aug · 14:00 · No. 47

I, Mrs. Emorn, age 68, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. A receipt in your handwriting was in the victim's shirt pocket.

A. Yes. I sold Mei the negatives of that photograph for twenty thousand. She first asked to buy them on the 18th. I needed the money, so I handed them over at five past eight, in the corner of the room. I had no idea she meant to burn them.

Q. Did you notice anything else that night?

A. When Apao came up after the lights came on, **his trouser legs were wet to the knee and he was barefoot, but his hair and shirt were bone dry.** I've taken pictures all my life; I notice details. A man who's been dragging sandbags in that rain would be soaked to the scalp. Unless he was wearing a raincoat with a hood.

Q. Is there anything else you want to tell me?

A. ...Could I have one more night to think?

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed Emorn statement giverSigned Wichai recorder

Statement 12 · Mr. Pao (second)

23 Aug · 15:00 · Talat Kao Police

I, Mr. Pao, age 59, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. No water came into the storeroom, and the shop has no sandbags at all.

A. I... may have remembered wrong. I just went and stood at the back door watching the water.

Q. You said you were soaked, but your hair and shirt were dry.

The witness did not answer.

Q. The yellow raincoat in the storeroom is soaked. Who wore it?

A. It's the shop's raincoat. Anyone can wear it.

Q. The footprints on the 3rd floor match your sandals.

A. I leave my sandals by the back door every day. Anyone could put them on.

Q. The electrician confirms the breaker was switched off by hand. It did not trip.

The witness did not answer.

Q. Why did you come to work at this shop in '95?

A. I wanted to be near Tao-kae.

Recorder's note: the witness had his shirt buttoned to the collar and kept touching his collar during the interview.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed Pao statement giverSigned Wichai recorder

Stage 2 answers

4. The power did not fail by itself. Someone switched the breaker off. The breaker's red flag did not pop up, the electrician confirms it was switched off by hand, and there was no leak and no water (13). Only this one building went dark (9, 10), and the electrician's receipt explains how to tell a trip from a switch-off (11).

5. The person who went up to the accounts room was Apao.

- He holds key no. 3 (14) · the size-42 footprints on the 3rd floor match his wet sandals (13, 15)
- Wet legs but dry hair and shirt: exactly what you'd expect from someone wearing the hooded raincoat hanging soaked in the storeroom (13, 15, Statement 11)
- His story about floodwater and sandbags is false (13, Statement 10), and he changed his own statement (Statement 12)
- He knew where the hidden fuse box was because he had it moved there himself (11, Statement 7). The power came back on with his voice coming from the ground floor, while Ming was already on the 3rd floor with Lee (9, Statement 3)
- He never fetched the cake at all (Statements 2, 3) · the back door banged at about 21:43 and about 21:49, matching his trip up and his trip down (Statements 7, 8)

6. Nobody else went up to the 3rd floor.

Suspect	Was not the one in the accounts room, because
Akong	At the table, Nick holding his hand (9) · can't climb to the 3rd floor (12, Statement 1) · no key (14)
Hia Ming	On a video call, standing at the front grille the whole time from 21:40 to 21:49 (16, 17, Statement 8) · no key (14) · dry (13)
Je Lee	Answers from the kitchen only 12 seconds after the thud (9) · dry (13) · used the key on Tuesday night, not that night (19) · her sleeping pills are all there, and they were not found in the victim's body (13)
Nick	His voice is on the livestream throughout (9) · no key (14) · he did take the missing money (18, Statement 10), but that has nothing to do with the death
Mrs. Emorn	Her voice at the window, and the camera flash at 21:44 (9, 10) · no key, and her house has no connecting door (14) · dry (13)

Final mission

On 24 August Apao was charged and **confessed that he acted alone** (Statement 13). The file was about to be closed. But on 25 August the forensic results finally arrived (28). The Centre asks you to check whether **this confession fits every piece of evidence**.

Questions remain. Apao worked here for thirty years without a single problem. What sent him up to the victim through the rain that night? What did the missing negatives prove? Whose face was scratched out?

Use Exhibits 22-30 and Statements 13-14 together with everything else. **Go back and read the Main File documents again**, then fill in all 5 questions on the case summary sheet before you open the Solution envelope.



Exhibit 22 Seized item • found in the chest pocket of the yellow raincoat (storeroom) • lab result 23 Aug, 16:30

One strip of black-and-white film negatives, 3 frames, wrapped in greaseproof paper. Still dry, because the pocket has a waterproof zip • held up to the light, the middle frame matches the photo in the victim's hand (3) exactly, **but the face of the young man on the far right is NOT scratched out** • it fits the empty envelope on the victim's desk (2, 4)

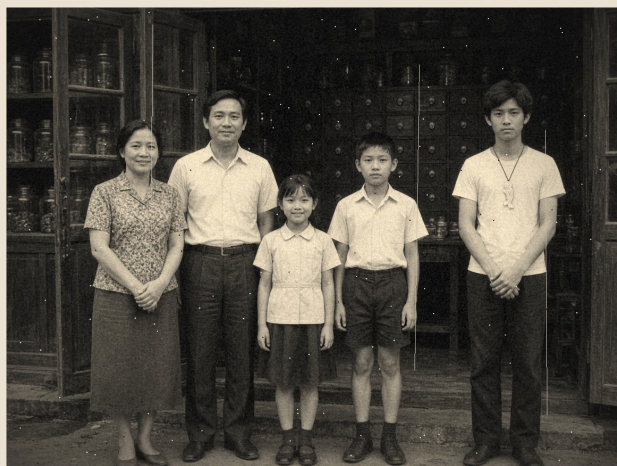


Exhibit 23 New print from the negative • handed to police by Mrs. Emorn, 24 Aug

Exhibit 23 Back of photo
(glue to photo 23)

Emorn Film • Soi Fon

Reprinted from the original negative, 18 Aug '25.

Kept 1 print before giving the film to Khun Mei.

*Boy on the far right: Auntie Jerm's boy,
from Ban Lang Market.
Wears a jade fish.*

— Emorn

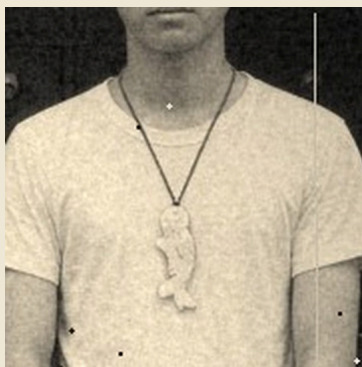


Exhibit 23 Enlargement:
the neck of the boy on the
far right of photo 23
(enlarged by police from the
negative)



Exhibit 27 Taken from Mr. Pao
in a body search, 23 Aug, 17:00: a
jade fish pendant on a red cord,
worn round the neck under his
shirt • key ring (with back-door
key no. 3)

Exhibit 24 Letter • found in the locked drawer of the victim's desk (opened with a key on the victim's ring, 23 Aug)

Ban Lang Market, 12 March 1984

Dear Ah Heng,

I have received the last month's money. Thank you for sending it all these eighteen years. I know Madam Ngek has known everything since the day of the photograph in front of the shop. I blame no one.

Pao has finished high school and found work at the district rice mill. He is hard-working and patient, and he smiles exactly like his mother. You need not send any more money. And I ask you, Ah Heng, do not go looking for him until he decides for himself whether he wants to know his father.

The jade fish you gave Janpen, I have kept for Pao. If one day he comes to you, you will know him by this fish.

Jerm

Exhibit 26 The victim's small notebook (latest pages)

15 Aug: Akong wants the photo from his 37th birthday. "I want to see that boy's face again." → told him I can't find it.

17 Aug: FOUND IT. Ama's box, 3rd floor! Boy's face scratched out + letter from Auntie Jerm + Akong's old accounts.

18 Aug: Emorn still has the negatives!! Offered 20,000. Hand over on birthday night.

18 Aug: Ban Lang Market... P. comes from Ban Lang Market too. Right age.

Always wears a red cord round his neck.

20 Aug: 8,000 missing from the till. Don't know who took it, but **I can use this.**

20 Aug, evening: P. went into Akong's room, door shut, talked almost an hour. Came out red-eyed ??

21 Aug: Lawyer: if a doctor certifies Akong as senile, Ming can apply to be his guardian → care home 1 Sep, before Monday · Ming / Nuch ?? leave for now.

22 Aug: TONIGHT. Make P. sign his resignation + burn everything. If another son turns up to take a share, what's left for Ming? And the building could never be sold.

Exhibit 25 Private accounts • Heng (small notebook, same drawer)

Month	Item	Baht
Jan 1966	Sent to Auntie Jerm, Ban Lang Market • milk money for young Pao	150
Jun 1972	Sent to Auntie Jerm • school fees, young Pao, Grade 1	200
Aug 1982	Sent to Auntie Jerm • school fees, young Pao, Grade 9 + bus fare to the shop, 22 Aug	450
Feb 1984	Sent to Auntie Jerm • last month	500
Mar 1984	Stopped (Ama Ngek's orders)	—

Young Pao born '66 → 59 this year!!

Ban Lang Market = Apao's home town (his job application, '95) — Mei



Forensic Medicine Unit, Talat Kao Hospital

Exhibit 28

Forensic and Toxicology Report

Submitted by Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, 23 Aug 2025 • report issued Mon 25 Aug 2025, 09:15

Deceased Mrs. Mei Heng-Ankul, age 58 • Cause of death head injury from striking a hard, angled object (corner of the safe)

No.	Item tested	Result
1	Victim's blood	Sleeping-pill drug found , the same drug prescribed to Mr. Heng Heng-Ankul (Talat Kao Hospital prescription). The level matches about 3 tablets taken at once , within 30 minutes before death
2	Tea left in the dragon-pattern cup (victim's desk)	Same drug found
3	Tea in Mr. Heng's personal flask (dining room)	No drug found
4	Fingerprints on the dragon-pattern cup	Only Mr. Heng's and the victim's
5	Sleeping pills in Mrs. Lee's handbag (10 tablets)	A different drug from the one in the victim's blood
6	4 matchsticks (victim's desk)	Lit, then went out by themselves; never touched paper

Doctor's opinion: At the time of the incident the victim was drowsy and weak from the drug, which takes clear effect about 15-30 minutes after it is taken. She would most likely have been unable to fight back or cry out for help, which fits the absence of defensive wounds. The force of the blow to the head was **greater than in an ordinary fall**, and there are no other injuries.

Signed *Pakin Srimek*, examining doctor
(Dr. Pakin Srimek), forensic pathologist

3 tablets → who poured the tea? Who held this cup? — W.

CERTIFIED COPY

Wichai

Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan



Statement 13 · Mr. Pao (accused)

Sun 24 Aug · 10:00 · Talat Kao Police · lawyer present

I, Mr. Pao, age 59, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. Do you admit that on the night of the 22nd you went up to the 3rd-floor accounts room?

A. I admit it. I did it alone. I switched off the power, put on the raincoat, climbed the iron stairs and unlocked the door with my own key.

Q. Why did you go up?

A. Sim Mei was going to burn the film, and sack me over money I never stole. I only wanted the film back.

Q. What happened in the room?

A. She refused. She stood up and **shouted that she'd call the whole house up**. I panicked and pushed her. She fell and hit her head on the safe.

Q. Does Akong know you are his son?

A. **No. I've never told anyone.** Tao-kae knows nothing. Please don't go asking him.

Q. What do you know about the tea in the dragon-pattern cup?

A. I know nothing about any tea. That's Tao-kae's cup. I've never touched it.

Q. At 21:35, who told you to go downstairs?

A. I went down on my own.

Q. Why didn't you destroy the film? Why keep it in the raincoat pocket?

A. ...It's the only picture there is of me with this family. I had to keep it for... I wanted to keep it.

Recorder's note: the accused repeated "I did it alone" many times and asked police not to trouble Mr. Heng.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed *Pao* accused

Signed *Wichai* recorder

Statement 14 · Mr. Heng (second)

Sun 24 Aug · 14:00 · 2F bedroom

I, Mr. Heng Heng-Ankul, age 80, state the following to Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan, investigator:

Q. The tea you gave the deceased that night: who poured it, and who touched the cup?

A. I poured it myself. My cup, my flask. Nobody else is allowed to touch them.

Q. How do you take the sleeping pills in your bottle?

A. One a night, as the doctor says. I've never missed a night. I took one on Friday too.

Q. A draft will dated 20 Aug in your drawer names Mr. Pao as your son. Since when have you known?

A. *(long silence)* An old man's business.

Q. Did you know the deceased was going to apply for Mr. Ming to become your legal guardian?

A. I knew. On Thursday I heard her on the phone to the lawyer. She was going to get a doctor to sign that I'm senile, then send me to a care home on the first. I'm not senile.

Q. On the livestream you shouted "Ask Apao! Apao knows everything about this building!" Yet on the first night you said you didn't know where the fuse box was.

A. I'm old. I don't remember what I say.

Q. Mr. Pao has confessed that he acted alone. Do you have anything to say?

A. ...Pao said he did it alone, did he? *(says nothing more)*

Recorder's note: throughout the interview the witness held a jade fish pendant in his hand. It looks like the seized pendant (27), but the fish faces the other way.

Read back; confirmed correct.

Signed *Heng* statement giver

Signed *Wichai* recorder

CERTIFIED COPY

Wichai

Pol. Lt. Wichai Saithan

Exhibit 29 Found in Mr. Heng's bedside drawer, under the pill bottle · a page from the shop's account book, in Mr. Heng's handwriting (confirmed by an expert)

DRAFT WILL

Written in my bedroom, No. 45 Soi Fon

Wednesday 20 August 2025

I, Heng Heng-Ankul, leave building No. 45 and the Heng-An

*Qsot pharmacy, to Pao, my first son, by Jappen. This building
My savings to be divided equally between Ming and Lee.
is never to be sold.*

Signed, Heng

Lawyer appointment Mon 25th · don't let Mei find out first

Talat Kao Hospital · Pharmacy
Name **Mr. Heng Heng-Ankul** HN
41277

Sleeping pills (as
prescribed)

Take **1 tablet at bedtime**

Quantity **30 tablets** ·
dispensed **1 Aug 25**

Causes drowsiness. Do not
give to anyone else.

Exhibit 30 Label on Mr.
**Heng's pill bottle (bedside
drawer)**

Counted Sat 23 Aug, 11:00: **5
tablets** left in the bottle ·
bottle not cracked, cap
tightly closed

Counted twice: 5 tablets. – W.

Read one level at a time. Levels 2-3 are printed upside down: turn the page to read only the box you need, and cover the others with a spare sheet.

Don't know where to start

1 Pointer	Start with the timeline worksheet. Go through the livestream transcript (Exhibit 9) line by line and note who is where, minute by minute.
2 Evidence	Everyone whose voice is on the stream is on the 2nd floor at that moment. For anyone who is silent for a stretch, put "?" for now.
3 Nearly there	Stage 1 doesn't ask who did it. It only asks when, which route, and what they needed . Focus on Exhibits 1, 2, 4, 9 and 11.

Q1 · Time of death

1 Pointer	One object in the room stopped when the victim fell, and there was one sound everybody heard.
2 Evidence	Look at the victim's watch in Exhibits 2 and 4, then find the strange sound on the stream (9) and in the statement of the person right under the accounts room (Statement 3).
3 Nearly there	Watch stopped at 21:46 · thud on the stream at 21:46:30 · Lee heard the thud above the kitchen → about 21:46

Q2 · The route

1 Pointer	The timber stairs in this building have one special habit.
2 Evidence	The timber stairs creak on every step (1). Listen to the stream during the blackout (9): any stair sounds? Then see where the wet footprints start and end (2).
3 Nearly there	No timber-stair sound, timber stairs dry, wet prints come from the 3rd-floor back door → the outdoor iron spiral staircase , which can only be reached from the ground-floor back door. No outsider can get into the back alley.

Q3 · What they needed

1 Pointer	What state was the 3rd-floor back door in when the police arrived?
2 Evidence	The deadbolts need a key on both sides (1). The door was locked (2). So where was the victim's own key (2, 4)?
3 Nearly there	They needed a back-door key , and only 3 exist (11). The victim's key was still in the room, which leaves Akong's key and key no. 3.

Read one level at a time. Levels 2-3 are printed upside down: turn the page to read only the box you need, and cover the others with a spare sheet.

Q4 · Why the power went out

1 Pointer	The electrician's 2017 receipt has an important note on it.
2 Evidence	Read the note on the receipt (11), then the fuse-box findings in report 13 and the photo of the lane (10).
3 Nearly there	The red flag didn't pop up, the electrician confirms it was switched off by hand, and only this building went dark → someone cut the power on purpose

Q5 · Who went up to the accounts room

1 Pointer	Compare the key register (14) with your timeline at 21:46.
2 Evidence	Only 2 people held a key. One has a voice on the stream 12 seconds after the thud; the other is silent the whole time. Look at the sandals, the raincoat, and who was wet (13, 15).
3 Nearly there	Apao · key no. 3 (14) · size-42 footprints (13, 15) · wet legs, dry hair (13, Statement 11) · the sandbag story is false (13, Statement 10)

Q6 · Ruling out the others

1 Pointer	Take one person at a time: what evidence puts them somewhere else at 21:46, and do they have a key?
2 Evidence	Hia Ming is missing from the stream for a long time: look at the phone evidence (16, 17) and Statement 8 · Je Lee has a key, but check when her voice is on the stream (9) and the date on her phone (19).
3 Nearly there	Akong: can't climb to the 3rd floor + Nick holding his hand · Ming: video call at the front grille + no key · Lee: answers from the kitchen 12 seconds after the thud + dry · Nick: his voice is on the stream throughout · Emorn: camera flash at the window + no key

Hints · Final answer

use after opening Envelope B · Q1 (who did it) is on the first page of Envelope B

Read one level at a time. Levels 2-3 are printed upside down: turn the page to read only the box you need, and cover the others with a spare sheet.

Q2 · Did he act alone?

1 Pointer	Check the confession (Statement 13) against the forensic report (28), sentence by sentence. Which sentence can't be true?
2 Evidence	The victim took about 3 tablets. The drug was in the teacup, not in the flask (28) · who poured her tea, and who kept hold of that cup all night (Incident Report, Statements 6, 14) · whose pill bottle was counted (12, 30)
3 Nearly there	The cup has only Akong's fingerprints and the victim's. Akong poured the tea into it himself at 21:24 · Akong's pills: 30 - 22 nights = 8 should be left, but only 5 are → 3 tablets missing the draft will of 20 Aug (29) means Akong already knew Pao was his son

Q3 · How

1 Pointer	Line up what two people did from 21:24 to 21:53: one at the dinner table, one on the ground floor.
2 Evidence	The tea in the dragon cup (Incident Report, 28) · who sent the victim upstairs, and who sent Apao down (Statement 6) · storeroom → raincoat → fuse box → iron stairs → 3rd floor (13-15, Statement 7) · where is the film (22)
3 Nearly there	21:24 Akong gives the victim drugged tea and sends her up for the red envelope · 21:35 he sends Apao down "for the cake" · Apao puts on the raincoat, cuts the power at 21:41, climbs the iron stairs, unlocks with key no. 3 · the drowsy victim can't fight back; her head is struck against the safe at 21:46 · he takes the film, hides it in the raincoat, power back on at 21:52

Q4 · Why

1 Pointer	What was the victim about to do, and to whom, before Monday? (21, 26, 5, 6)
2 Evidence	The victim's notebook (26), entry of the 21st · the care-home card (6) · the notes on the sale contract (5) · Statement 14 · the draft will (29)
3 Nearly there	She was getting a doctor to certify Akong senile, making Ming his guardian, moving Akong into a care home on 1 Sep and selling the building · sacking Apao · and burning the negatives, the last proof that Pao is Akong's son · if they waited until Monday, the new will would be worthless

Q5 · The scratched-out face

1 Pointer	What is the boy on the far right of the new print (23) wearing round his neck?
2 Evidence	The letter (24) says how Akong will recognise the boy. Then look at the seized items (27) and Akong's private accounts (25).
3 Nearly there	Pao , Akong's first son by Janpen, born 1966 (25) = Apao, 59, who wears a jade fish under his shirt (27)

SOLUTION ENVELOPE · KUEN KAI KADEE CASE FILE 3

STOP!

**Open only when all 5 questions on the case summary
sheet are answered**



Fold this page to the outside and put it in the envelope labelled "Solution"

The truth on Rain Lane (read it aloud together)

Forty-three years ago, a sixteen-year-old boy stood half a step apart from the Heng-Ankul family in the group photo Emorn took in front of the shop. Round his neck hung a jade fish. His name was **Pao**: the first son of Heng and Janpen, a young woman from Ban Lang Market who died after giving birth. Auntie Jerm raised him. That night Ama Ngek learned the truth, and scratched the boy's face out of the family's print until it was white.

In 1994, before she died, Auntie Jerm told Pao the truth and gave him the jade fish. The next year Pao came back to the shop as a hired hand. He never told anyone. All he asked was to be near his father, and for thirty years he made up his father's medicine every morning.

This month Akong wanted to see his first son's face again, and asked Mei to find the photo. Mei found the photo, the letter and the old accounts, lied that she couldn't find them, and worked out that the boy was Apao. On Wednesday the 20th, after being handed a warning over money he had never stolen, Apao went into Akong's bedroom and laid the jade fish on the bedside table. Akong took out the other fish of the pair, which he had kept for sixty years, and laid it beside it. That night Akong wrote a **draft will** leaving the building to "my first son" (29).

On Thursday Akong overheard Mei on the phone to the lawyer. She would get a doctor to certify that Akong was senile, make Ming his guardian, move Akong into a care home on 1 September, and sell the building. She already had the negatives from Emorn and would burn them, with everything else, on the birthday night. If they waited until Monday, the new will would mean nothing: there would be no proof that Pao was his son, and Akong would no longer be living in the building he had built with his own hands. **So Akong made a plan.**

Akong set the timing for everything that night. At half past eight he announced at the table that he would change his will on Monday, so that Mei would hurry to burn the evidence that same night, alone, on the 3rd floor. At **21:24** he poured chrysanthemum tea from his own flask into the dragon-pattern cup no one else was ever allowed to touch, stirred in three sleeping pills he had saved from his own bottle, and handed it to Mei with a smile. "Drink it all up, then go up and fetch Akong's red envelope." Ten minutes later he told Apao, "Go and get the cake now."

Apao did not go for the cake. He put on the yellow raincoat, **switched off the breaker at 21:41**, went out of the back door, climbed the iron spiral staircase in the rain, and unlocked the 3rd-floor back door with his own key, no. 3. Meanwhile, on the livestream, Akong shouted, "Ask Apao! Apao knows everything about this building!", which kept everyone sitting at the table. Nobody went looking for the fuse box.

Mei sat by candlelight. She struck four matches, but her hands had no strength left to burn anything. She was too drowsy to stand up and fight or to call for help. At **21:46** Apao struck her head against the corner of the safe, to make it look as if she had fallen in the dark. He took the negatives from their envelope. He did not destroy them. He zipped them into the raincoat's waterproof pocket, because they were the one piece of evidence his father could use to prove he was his son. Then he locked the door, went back down the iron stairs, and pushed the power back on at 21:52.

When the evidence pointed at him, Apao confessed that he had acted alone and begged the police not to trouble Tao-kae. But his confession described a woman who jumped up and shouted, when the victim was so drugged she could barely speak. And it described a father who knew nothing, when the draft will was dated two days before the party.

Apao struck the blow · Akong Heng, his father, planned it and drugged the tea. Both were charged with premeditated murder, acting together.

Case summary sheet answers (3 points each)

Question	Answer that scores
1. Who struck the blow	Apao
2. Did he act alone?	No. Akong (Mr. Heng) planned it and drugged the tea. (Full 3 points with at least 3 of: drug in the cup, not the flask + fingerprints (28) · Akong poured

Question	Answer that scores
	the tea himself (Incident Report, Statements 6, 14) · 3 of Akong's pills missing (12, 30) · draft will of 20 Aug (29) · false points in the confession (Statement 13) · Akong sent the victim up and Apao down (Statement 6 contradicts Statement 1) · "Ask Apao" on the stream contradicts Statement 1)
3. How	21:24 Akong gives the victim drugged tea and sends her to the 3rd floor · 21:35 he sends Apao down · Apao puts on the raincoat, switches off the breaker , goes out of the back door, climbs the iron spiral staircase and unlocks the 3rd-floor back door with key no. 3 · strikes the drowsy, helpless victim's head against the safe at 21:46 · takes the negatives, locks the door again, hides the film in the raincoat pocket, power back on at 21:52 (full points only with both the tea and the route)
4. Why	The victim was going to make Ming Akong's guardian, put Akong in a care home on 1 Sep, sell the building, sack Apao, and burn the negatives, the last proof that Pao is Akong's son , all before Monday, when Akong would make the will leaving the building to Pao
5. The scratched-out face	Pao (Apao) , Akong's first son by Janpen

The full true timeline

When	What happened
1965	Heng (20) falls in love with Janpen and gives her one jade fish from a pair; he keeps the other
1966	Heng marries Ama Ngek · Janpen gives birth to Pao and dies · Auntie Jerm takes him in · Heng starts sending money
22 Aug 1982	Heng's 37th birthday · Auntie Jerm brings Pao (16) to the group photo · Ama Ngek learns the truth and scratches out the boy's face
Mar 1984	Money stops · Auntie Jerm's last letter (24)
1994-1995	Auntie Jerm dies and gives Pao the jade fish · Pao (29) comes to work at the shop
Mar 2017	Heng's knee operation · Pao supervises the renovation, has the fuse box moved behind the medicine cabinet, has 3 back-door keys cut (11)
Fri 1 Aug 2025	The shop collects Akong's sleeping pills: 30 tablets, 1 a night (12, 30)
Fri 15 Aug	Akong asks Mei to find the photo from his 37th birthday
Sun 17 - Mon 18 Aug	Mei finds the photo, the letter, the old accounts; asks to buy the negatives from Emorn; works out that it's Apao (23, 26)
Tue 19 Aug, 23:10	Lee uses Akong's key to go up and photograph the ya hom recipe (19)
Wed 20 Aug	15:32 Nick takes money from the till to buy a mic (18) · evening: Mei gives Apao the warning (7) · night: Apao spends almost an hour in Akong's room (26) · Akong writes the draft will (29)
Thu 21 Aug	Mei talks to the lawyer about guardianship; Akong overhears (26, Statement 14) · Akong starts saving 3 pills
Fri 22 Aug	
14:20	Lee signs out the shop's sleeping pills (a different drug, nothing to do with the case)
20:05	Emorn hands over the negatives; Mei transfers 20,000 baht (20)
20:30	Akong announces he will change his will on Monday
21:00	Mei pressures Apao to resign; Ming overhears part of it (Statement 2)
21:24	Akong pours drugged tea into the dragon cup, hands it to Mei, tells her to fetch the red envelope (Statement 6)

When	What happened
21:25	Mei goes up to the 3rd floor with the cup
21:35	Akong tells Apao, "Go and get the cake now" · Apao goes down to the storeroom and puts on the raincoat
21:37–21:40	Nuch messages; Ming goes down to the shopfront; video call starts 21:40:20
21:41:10	Apao switches off the breaker · 21:42:40 Akong shouts "Ask Apao!"
~21:43	Apao goes out of the ground-floor back door (first "clack") and up the iron stairs
21:46:30	Apao strikes the victim's head against the safe ; the drug has left her unable to fight back
~21:47–49	Takes the film, locks the door, down the iron stairs, back into the storeroom (second "clack")
21:50–21:51	Lee climbs the timber stairs and finds the body · Ming runs up from the ground floor
21:52:20	Apao pushes the breaker back up and shouts "Power's back!"
24 Aug	Apao confesses he acted alone (Statement 13) · Akong does not deny it (Statement 14)
25 Aug	Forensic results: the drug in her blood and in the teacup (28)

Step-by-step reasoning (every step rests on at least 2 pieces of evidence)

- 1 • **Death at about 21:46** · watch stopped at 21:46 (2, 4) + thud at 21:46:30 (9) + Lee heard it above the kitchen (Statement 3) + post-mortem (13)
- 2 • **The culprit used the iron stairs at the back** · wet footprints start and end at the back door, timber stairs dry (2, Statement 3) · no timber-stair sound from 21:41:10 to 21:50:05 (1, 9) · mud on the iron stairs (13)
- 3 • **They needed key 2 or key 3** · deadbolts need a key, the door was locked (1, 2) · 3 keys (11), the victim's was in the room (2, 14)
- 4 • **The power was cut by someone switching off the breaker** · only this building went dark (9, 10) · red flag didn't pop up (11, 13) · no water came in (13, Statement 10)
- 5 • **Apao is the one who went up to the 3rd floor** · key no. 3 (14) · size-42 footprints (13, 15) · wet legs, dry hair (13, Statement 11) · knew where the fuse box was hidden (11, 15, Statement 7) · film in the raincoat (2, 22) · his own confession (Statement 13)
- 6 • **The victim was made helpless first** · ~3 tablets in her blood, taking effect after 15–30 minutes (28) · no defensive wounds (13, 28) · no cry on the stream, only the thud (9) · 4 matches lit but nothing burned (2, 28)
- 7 • **The drug came from the cup Akong handed her, not from anyone else** · drug in the cup, not in the flask; only Akong's and the victim's fingerprints on the cup (28) · Akong poured the tea into his own cup for her at 21:24 (Incident Report, Statement 6) and confirmed himself that "nobody else" touches it (Statement 14) · same drug as Akong's, not Lee's (28) · Akong's pills: 30 dispensed on 1 Aug, 1 a night up to the 22nd → 8 should be left, but only 5 are = 3 missing (12, 30, Statement 14)
- 8 • **Akong knew Pao was his son, and they planned it together** · draft will of 20 Aug, "my first son" (29) · the victim noted "P. in Akong's room almost an hour" (26) · Akong holds the other fish of the pair (Statement 14, 27) · Akong sent the victim up and Apao down at just the right moments (Statement 6), yet lied that he "didn't send anybody" (Statement 1) · shouted "Ask Apao! Apao knows everything about this building!" (9), contradicting his claim not to know where the fuse box was (Statement 1)
- 9 • **Apao's confession is partly false, to protect his father** · "she stood up and shouted" contradicts the drug and the stream, which has no cry (9, 28) · "Akong knows nothing" contradicts the draft will (29) · "I went down on my own" contradicts Statement 6 · he didn't destroy the film; he "had to keep it for..." (22, Statement 13)
- 10 • **Motive** · guardianship, care home on 1 Sep, sale of the building (5, 6, 26, Statement 14) · sacking Apao over the money Nick took (7, 18, 26) · burning the negatives that night (21, 26) · all of it had to happen before Monday, when Akong was seeing his lawyer (29, Incident Report)
- 11 • **The scratched-out face is Apao's** · jade fish in the new print (23) + the letter (24) + young Pao born '66 (25) + the jade fish round Apao's neck (27) + the victim's notebook (26)

Red herrings, and why they're wrong

Clue	Why it looks suspicious	The truth
"Apao acted alone"	Every piece of physical evidence points to him, and he confessed	Only half true. He struck the blow, but his confession clashes with the drug, the teacup and the draft will (steps 7-9)
Akong can't be involved	80 years old, can't climb to the 3rd floor, on the stream throughout (9, 12)	He didn't need to go up. He drugged the tea and set the timing from the dinner table
Hia Ming	Husband, missing from the stream, hiding Nuch (26), gains if the building is sold	Video call at the front grille (16, 17, Statement 8) · no key (14) · never touched the cup (28)
Je Lee	Found the body, had a key, signed out sleeping pills on the day	In the kitchen at 21:46:42 (9) · all 10 of her pills accounted for, and a different drug (13, 28) · used the key on Tuesday night (19)
Nick	Stole money (18), his café plan was rejected (8)	His voice is on the stream throughout (9) · no key (14)
Mrs. Emorn	Sold the film (20), being squeezed over her house (5)	At the window, camera flash at 21:44 (9, 10) · she is the witness who saw the tea (Statement 6)
"The scratched face is Ming's son"	If you learn about little Phum first	The photo is from 1982, but Phum is 8 years old (17, Statement 7)

Logic check: what each piece of evidence proves

#	Evidence	What it proves	Used in step
1-2	Sketch · scene report 1	Creaking timber stairs, iron stairs, deadbolts · watch, footprints, empty film envelope, dragon-pattern teacup	1-3, 6
3-4	Scratched photo · desk photo	Someone "not one of this family" · confirms watch, keys	1, 11
5-6	Sale contract · care home	The plan for guardianship and a care home on 1 Sep	10
7-8	Warning · café	The victim was squeezing Apao · Nick's false motive	10 / herring
9	Livestream	Everyone's position · no stair sound and no cry · "Ask Apao"	1, 2, 6, 8
10-11	Lane photo · electrician's receipt	Only one building dark · Apao moved the fuse box; 3 keys	3-5
12	Dispensing book	Akong's 30 pills on 1 Aug · Akong can't reach the 3rd floor · Lee's pills	7
13	Scene report 2	Switched off by hand · size-42 sandals · who was wet · no defensive wounds · Lee's pills all there	4-6
14-15	Key register · storeroom photo	Leaves Lee and Apao · hidden fuse box, raincoat	3, 5
16-19	Phones · mic receipt	Rules out Ming, Lee · Nick took the money	herring
20-21	Receipt · note	The victim had the film and meant to burn it that night	10
22-25, 27	Film · new print · letter · accounts · jade	Pao is Heng's son · the film was with Apao	5, 11

#	Evidence	What it proves	Used in step
26	Victim's notebook	The victim knew the truth · P. in Akong's room on 20 Aug · guardianship plan	8, 10
28	Forensics	~3 tablets in her blood and the cup, not in the flask · Akong's fingerprints	6, 7, 9
29	Draft will, 20 Aug	Akong knew Pao was his son before the party	8, 9
30	Akong's pill-bottle label	3 pills missing	7
Statements 1, 6, 13, 14	Akong · Emorn · Apao · Akong	Akong lied about sending the victim up · the confession has false points	8, 9

Consistency check (checked: no contradictions found)

- **Ages** Heng born 1945 (37 in 1982, 80 in 2025) · Pao born 1966 (16 in the photo, 59 in 2025) · Emorn 25 in 1982 = 68
- **Days of the week** 22 Aug 2025 = Friday · 20th = Wednesday (date on the draft will) · 21st = Thursday · 24th = Sunday · 25th = Monday (lawyer appointment, and the day the forensic report came out)
- **Pill count** 30 dispensed on 1 Aug · nights of 1-22 Aug = 22 tablets → 8 should be left · 5 counted (30) → 3 missing = the level in her blood (28)
- **Time to take effect** drunk at about 21:25 → clearly drowsy by about 21:40-21:55, which covers 21:46
- **At 21:46:30 everyone is accounted for except Apao** Akong, Nick, Emorn (livestream) · Lee (kitchen) · Ming (video call)
- **Akong never went to the 3rd floor**, and didn't need to. His whole part was played from the dinner table (the tea, the orders, the shout on the stream)
- **The teacup isn't in photo 4** because it was bagged for testing before the photo was taken (2)
- **Why Lee's pills aren't the answer** all 10 are there, and they're a different drug (13, 28)
- **Why Apao kept the film** it was the only proof for the will; he never wanted it destroyed
- **Dates in this English edition** are given in the Western calendar. The film envelope is labelled "22/8/82" (the photo's date) and the camera stamp on photo 10 reads '25 8 22 (year 2025, then month, then day)
- **Every red herring has an explanation**

Case closed

Before the police led Apao down the stairs, Akong asked them to wait a moment. The old man laid the jade fish he had been holding beside the one the police had taken from his son's neck. The two fish faced each other exactly.

"You don't have to take the blame for me," Akong said quietly. "I poured that tea myself."

Apao slowly shook his head. For the first time in his life, he did not call him "Tao-kae".

"Pa... I'm sorry."

On Monday morning nobody kept the appointment with the lawyer. The one hundred and twelve herb drawers are still where they always were. The chrysanthemum-tea flask and the dragon-pattern cup sit sealed in the evidence store at Talat Kao Police Station.

Case File 3: closed