

Questions for a former colleague

Who they were at work — the third of life families rarely see.

You need this paper, a phone that records, and an unhurried hour. Three or four questions are plenty for one sitting — follow the light in their eyes, not this list.

Before you sit down

- ☐ Asked permission a few days ahead, so they can warm to it.
- ☐ Charged the phone and tested the voice recorder once.
- ☐ Turned off the television; silenced my own phone.

The questions

1. What was your first impression of them, and how long did it survive?

2. What were they actually good at — the thing the job title never captured?

3. What did a hard day look like in that work, and what did they do on one?

4. What's a moment they handled that you still think about?

5. What did they teach you — on purpose or by example?

6. What made people want (or not want) to be on their team?

7. What did they talk about at lunch when work wasn't the subject?

8. What should their family know about who they were between nine and five?

Afterward

- ☐ Moved the recording off the phone the same day (computer, family folder, or private archive).
- ☐ Named the file with person, date, and subject.
- ☐ Told them what it meant to me.