

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

MUTED

3 Male (M + M + M) | Genre: Psychological Thriller | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE:

Aarav receives a series of silent videos from inside his own apartment, forcing him into a corridor standoff with the building superintendent and a neighbor as the line between witness, intruder, and occupant collapses. Each new clip reveals that the apartment may already belong to someone else.

DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT:

- Visual tone: claustrophobic, cold, and paranoid; the corridor should feel longer than reality, with shadows swallowing the frame edges.
- Thematic depth: identity, occupancy, and the terror of being displaced in your own home; silence becomes a weapon and a confession.
- Pacing: slow-burn escalation with sharp, sudden reveals; each phone vibration should function like a jump cut in emotional stakes.
- Performance style: restrained, minimal movement, with tension built through eye-lines, micro-reactions, and withheld information.
- Camera language: observational and invasive; the audience should feel like they are receiving the same cursed footage as Aarav.
- Sound philosophy: silence is never empty—bulb buzz, phone vibration, distant stairwell air, and tiny interior knocks carry the dread.

CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS:

- **character:** Aarav | **age:** 26 | **look:** Hoodie-clad, exhausted eyes, visibly drained, holding a key card and smartphone; body language suggests low battery both physically and emotionally. | **dramatic_arc:** Begins as a confused tenant seeking explanation, then becomes increasingly terrified as the evidence turns inward, ending in the realization that his own presence is no longer secure.
- **character:** Suresh | **age:** 48 | **look:** Thick mustache, stern face, carrying a security logbook and flashlight; composed, practical, and slightly rigid in posture. | **dramatic_arc:** Starts as the calm authority figure trying to contain the situation, but his certainty fractures as the chain, the logbook, and the final video expose a deeper truth.
- **character:** Mihir | **age:** 31 | **look:** Neat shirt, polite smile, unnervingly still; his calmness reads as controlled and observant rather than comforting. | **dramatic_arc:** Introduced as the polite neighbor with useful information, then gradually becomes the most unsettling presence in the corridor as his composure reveals hidden knowledge.

FESTIVAL & AUDIENCE TARGET: Ideal for Short Film Festivals, Indie Showcases, and YouTube Creator Channels. Focus on tight performances, sound design, and authentic Hinglish dialogue delivery.

SET ARCHITECTURE & PROPS

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ART, WARDROBE & PROP MASTER

1. SET DESIGN & SPATIAL DEPTH PLAN:

The entire set is a dim apartment corridor outside a single front door, designed to feel compressed and psychologically stretched. Use a narrow hallway with a slightly exaggerated perspective so the ends disappear into shadow. The overhead bulb should be visibly buzzing and imperfect, with practical flicker control to create unstable exposure. The stairwell spill should be a colder, harder light source from one side, creating a split-temperature environment. The front door must feel lived-in but vulnerable: a visible chain lock, key card reader or lock area, and a surface that can catch flashlight glare. Walls should have subtle grime, scuffs, and matte paint that absorbs light. The corridor floor should reflect just enough to suggest moisture or polished wear without becoming glossy. Add spatial layers through door frames, the opposite apartment door, and the stairwell opening so the corridor feels like a trap with multiple sightlines.

2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY:

- **Aarav:** Casual hoodie, slightly rumpled and worn from exhaustion; muted colors that blend into the corridor. Continuity note: hoodie must remain consistent across all beats, including the hoodie visible in the second video.
- **Suresh:** Practical building-superintendent attire with a stern, functional look; neutral shirt or uniform-like clothing that supports authority. Continuity note: flashlight and logbook are part of his visual identity.
- **Mihir:** Neat shirt, clean and pressed, with a polite, controlled appearance. Continuity note: his tidy presentation should remain unchanged even as tension rises, reinforcing his unnerving stillness.

3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS):

- **prop:** Smartphone | **details:** Aarav's phone must clearly show silent video messages, vibration alerts, and the unknown sender state. Screen brightness should be visible enough for inserts.
- **prop:** Key Card | **details:** Held by Aarav at the start; later it should appear to slip from his pocket in the final reveal. It must feel like a real access card tied to the apartment entry.
- **prop:** Security Logbook | **details:** Carried by Suresh; should look official, slightly worn, and practical. It is used as a symbol of order and denial.
- **prop:** Flashlight | **details:** Suresh's flashlight should produce a hard, directional beam that can inspect the lock and keyhole, creating sharp highlights and deep shadows.
- **prop:** Door Chain | **details:** A visible chain lock on the apartment door, shown being opened in the first video and later revealed to be engaged from inside.
- **prop:** Earbuds Case | **details:** Visible in the final video in the hands of the unknown occupant; must be identifiable as Aarav's earbuds case.

4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA):

Aarav should have tired under-eyes, slight sweat sheen, and a progressively paler complexion as fear escalates. Suresh needs minimal makeup with a controlled, weathered look; his sternness should be supported by a grounded, practical realism. Mihir should appear clean and composed at first, with only subtle tension in the jaw and eyes as the scene intensifies. For all three, use sweat control and light-reactive skin prep so the buzzing bulb and flashlight create believable highlights. No heavy SFX is required, but distress should be visible through micro-smudging, damp hairline, and the physical strain of the corridor confrontation.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **Aarav:** {'super_objective': 'To prove that his apartment is still his and that he is not losing control of his own reality.', 'subtext': 'He is not just asking who is inside; he is asking whether he can trust his own memory and presence.'}
- **Suresh:** {'super_objective': 'To preserve order and avoid responsibility for a breach he cannot explain.', 'subtext': 'He wants the situation to remain manageable, because admitting the truth would collapse his authority.'}
- **Mihir:** {'super_objective': 'To remain calm while steering the others toward a truth he already suspects or knows.', 'subtext': 'His politeness is a mask; every soft line is a pressure point.'}

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

AARAV

((*haath kaanpte hue*))

Mere flat ke andar se video aaya hai.

AARAV

Prank mein chain kaun kholta hai, Suresh ji?

MIHIR

((*softly*))

Ek aadmi.

MIHIR

Uske flat ki taraf gaya tha.

MIHIR

Nahi. Par chalne ka andaaz... jaise woh yahin rehta ho.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use a restrained psychological-thriller approach with 35mm and 50mm equivalents for corridor coverage, plus tighter 85mm-style close-ups for reactions and phone inserts. Keep framing compressed, with door frames and corridor lines creating visual traps. Movement should be minimal and deliberate: slow push-ins, subtle handheld instability during reveals, and locked-off tension during silence. The phone-video inserts should feel slightly different in texture and perspective, as if the audience is seeing evidence rather than cinema.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Establishment - one buzzing overhead practical bulb as the primary source, with cold stairwell spill creating a split-tone corridor and deep shadow pools. Tier 2: Investigation - Suresh's flashlight becomes a hard, motivated source that carves faces and lock hardware, increasing contrast and suspicion. Tier 3: Collapse - as the final video and door movement occur, reduce ambient fill further so the corridor darkens around the characters, letting the phone screen and flashlight become the dominant points of visibility.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Build the scene around oppressive quiet: bulb buzz, phone vibration, soft footsteps, logbook page turns, flashlight clicks, and the faint mechanical sound of the lock and chain. The corridor should have a dry, enclosed acoustic profile with minimal reverb, making every small sound feel too close. The silent videos should be unnerving because they remove audio while intensifying visual detail. The final knock from inside should land as a sharp, intimate threat.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a cold, desaturated LUT with blue-gray shadows and restrained skin tones. Keep highlights slightly green-cyan from the stairwell spill and practical bulb, while preserving enough warmth in skin to make fear readable. Contrast should increase as the story progresses, with blacks deepening in the corridor corners. The phone screen can carry a slightly cleaner, more neutral white point to separate evidence from environment.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Set dressing, corridor texture pass, practical bulb test, stairwell spill control	Art, G&E;
09:30 - 10:30	Camera blocking with actors, eyeline mapping, phone insert rehearsal	Director, Camera, Cast
10:30 - 12:00	Shoot master corridor confrontation and first video reaction beats	Camera, Sound, Cast
12:00 - 13:00	Shoot Suresh inspection, Mihir reveal, and dialogue escalation coverage	Camera, Cast, Sound
13:00 - 14:00	Shoot third video insert, final reveal, door opening, and blackout	Camera, Props, Cast

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Keep the entire film in one corridor location with one practical bulb and one controlled spill light from the stairwell. Use a real phone screen for inserts instead of heavy VFX, and shoot the silent videos as simple insert plates with careful framing. Limit art department spend by dressing only the visible corridor zones and door surface. Use motivated flashlight lighting to hide set limitations and create production value. Record clean room tone and foley on set to avoid expensive post fixes. Since the story is performance-driven, prioritize rehearsal time over extra setups.

• **Mandatory Licensing:** Completely free for student/commercial production with on-screen credit: 'Story & Screenplay by Story Dil Se (storydilse.in)'.

