

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE CALL THAT WASN'T

2 Male + 1 Female (M + M + F) | Genre: Sci-Fi/High-Concept | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A night-shift call center worker receives a call from a woman who predicts impossible details about the room—until the voice reveals itself to be his future self, warning him to answer one call that could save his mother's life. In a cramped pod of monitors and static, time loops into guilt, memory, and one irreversible choice.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Visual tone: claustrophobic sci-fi realism with a cold, nocturnal palette; the pod should feel like a trapped brain under fluorescent pressure. • Thematic depth: fate versus free will, the cruelty of delayed action, and how small professional habits can become moral failures. • Pacing: start with dry workplace rhythm, escalate through precise uncanny beats, then collapse into emotional urgency and a final quiet release. • Performance style: restrained, naturalistic reactions; the horror comes from accuracy, not volume. • Spatial approach: keep the room tight and layered—foreground monitors, midground actors, background neon and access panels—to make the environment feel like a machine that is listening.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Eshan age: 31 look: Headset on, polite smile, night-shift fatigue, controlled posture that gradually breaks under emotional pressure. dramatic_arc: Begins as a rehearsed, professional caller; becomes shaken by impossible predictions; ends by dropping the performance and choosing to answer his mother's call. • character: Mudit age: 29 look: Supervisor energy, clipboard in hand, coffee cup nearby, tired but alert, practical and skeptical. dramatic_arc: Starts as a sarcastic skeptic who treats the call like a prank; shifts into evidence-driven seriousness; becomes the grounded witness who helps Eshan act. • character: Rhea age: 30 look: Voice-only presence; emotionally precise, calm at first, then increasingly cracked and urgent as the call progresses. dramatic_arc: Appears as an impossible caller predicting the room; reveals herself as Eshan's future self; transforms from mysterious observer into a desperate warning from a timeline shaped by regret.
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.

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ART, WARDROBE & PROP MASTER

1. SET DESIGN & SPATIAL DEPTH PLAN: A small call center pod at night with cramped practical realism. Use a narrow workstation layout with two adjacent seats, low partition walls, visible cable clutter, and a locked basement access panel on one wall. The monitor glow should be the primary source of visual texture, with neon signage outside casting blue-pink reflections across glass and plastic surfaces. Surfaces should feel slightly worn: matte desk laminate, scuffed chair arms, coffee ring marks, sticky note residue, and a faint dust sheen caught by monitor light. Add spatial layers: foreground keyboard and monitor edges, midground actors and clipboard, background access panel and window/glass with neon reflections. The room should feel air-conditioned, sterile, and emotionally sealed, like a machine bay disguised as an office.
2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY: • character: Eshan costume: Call center night-shift attire: neat but slightly tired shirt, headset, and office-appropriate trousers. Clothing should read as functional and repetitive, with no flashy styling. continuity_notes: Headset remains on through most of the scene, then is removed at the climax. His polished presentation should visibly collapse when he realizes the call is real. • character: Mudit costume: Supervisor-appropriate office wear with a practical, slightly rumpled night-shift look. Clipboard and coffee cup are part of his visual identity. continuity_notes: Coffee cup must remain consistent for the spill beat. His posture and clothing should suggest fatigue mixed with authority. • character: Rhea costume: Voice-only; no physical wardrobe on screen. continuity_notes: Her presence is conveyed through vocal texture and timing rather than costume.
3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS): • prop: Headset details: Worn by Eshan throughout most of the film; should feel like standard call center equipment with visible mic boom and cable. • prop: Clipboard details: Held by Mudit; used for ticking off notes and later as a visual sign of his shift from sarcasm to seriousness. • prop: Coffee cup details: Mudit's cup with lid; must be able to slip and spill a small amount of coffee onto the desk. • prop: Monitor details: Primary visual prop; must show call logs, a blank voice-note entry, a hidden admin screen, routing path, warning text, and the future timestamp/name reveal. • prop: Keyboard and desk setup details: Desk surface should support the pen drop, coffee spill, and visible call-center clutter. • prop: Pen details: A simple desk pen that falls from the left side exactly as predicted. • prop: Locked basement access panel details: Wall-mounted panel that visually supports the mention of the voice optimization unit.
4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA): Keep makeup naturalistic and night-shift tired: slight under-eye shadows, mild skin sheen from AC-cold but stressful conditions, and subtle fatigue on both men. Eshan should gradually show stress through tightened jaw, widened eyes, and a faint sweat sheen as the call becomes personal. Mudit should read as alert but worn, with no exaggerated distress. No heavy SFX required; the only effects are performance-driven reactions, monitor-light reflections on faces, and a slight visual emphasis on the dead pixel and screen glitch moments.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **character:** Eshan | **super_objective:** To maintain control and professionalism until he can understand what is happening. | **subtext:** He is terrified that the impossible caller knows him better than he knows himself, and even more terrified that he may have already failed his mother once.
- **character:** Mudit | **super_objective:** To protect the integrity of the shift and make sense of the anomaly through evidence. | **subtext:** He hides concern behind sarcasm, but once the proof appears, he becomes the practical ally who wants to stop a disaster before it happens.
- **character:** Rhea | **super_objective:** To force Eshan to act before the fatal mistake repeats. | **subtext:** She is speaking from regret, urgency, and love; every prediction is both a proof and an emotional plea.

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

RHEA (V.O.)

Left side pe jo pen giraane wale ho... mat uthana.

RHEA (V.O.)

Coffee spill bhi hoga. Aur tumhara supervisor bolega coincidence.

RHEA (V.O.)

Main Rhea hoon. Kal se call kar rahi hoon.

RHEA (V.O.)

Kyunki main tum hoon. Thodi der baad wali version.

RHEA (V.O.)

Eshan ke left wrist pe scar hai. School mein cycle se.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use intimate, compressed framing with a strong preference for close-ups, over-the-shoulders, and monitor-reflected faces. Lenses should feel slightly long to flatten the pod and intensify claustrophobia, while occasional wider frames establish the cramped geometry and the neon-lit isolation. Camera movement should be minimal and deliberate: mostly locked-off or subtle push-ins as the truth escalates, with only slight handheld tension during the reveal and emotional climax. Let screens, reflections, and foreground objects partially obstruct faces to reinforce the idea of a reality mediated by systems and logs.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Establishing night-shift base light using monitor glow as key, with cool blue ambient from AC and neon signage outside. Keep faces underlit and reflective, emphasizing fatigue and isolation.

Tier 2: Uncanny escalation with sharper screen contrast, small specular highlights on eyes and coffee cup, and a subtle increase in monitor brightness during prediction beats and log reveals.

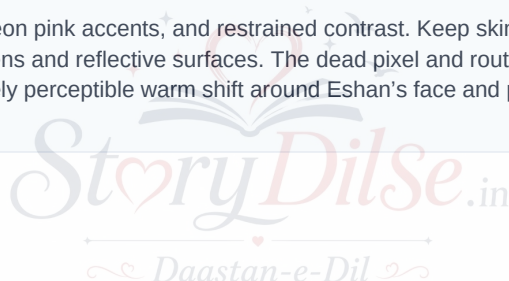
Tier 3: Emotional climax with a slightly warmer practical spill from the phone/screen area when Eshan calls his mother, while the rest of the room remains cold. The contrast between cold environment and human urgency should become the visual thesis of the ending.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Build the soundscape from AC HUM, keyboard taps, distant office silence, headset static, and the soft room tone of a late-night workplace. The pen drop and coffee spill should land with crisp, isolated Foley. Rhea's voice should begin clean and intimate, then develop slight digital texture and emotional crack as the timeline destabilizes. Use subtle monitor glitch tones and a faint routing-system hum during the hidden screen reveal. The final beat should strip back to AC hum and a quiet phone ring, leaving the room acoustically hollow.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Cold sci-fi realism with a blue-cyan base, neon pink accents, and restrained contrast. Keep skin tones slightly desaturated under monitor light, with selective highlight bloom on screens and reflective surfaces. The dead pixel and routing-screen moments should pop as tiny visual anomalies. In the climax, allow a barely perceptible warm shift around Eshan's face and phone call, but preserve the overall nocturnal chill.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Set dressing, monitor playback prep, and practical neon checks	Art, Camera, G&E;
09:30 - 10:30	Block actor positions and headset/clipboard/coffee continuity rehearsal	Director, Cast, Script Supervisor
10:30 - 12:00	Rig monitor glow, AC ambience playback, and screen-content tests	Camera, G&E,, Post/Playback
12:00 - 13:30	Shoot dialogue escalation and prediction beats	Camera, Sound, Cast
14:30 - 16:00	Shoot log reveal, hidden routing screen, and climax phone call	Camera, Art, Sound, Cast
16:00 - 17:00	Pickups: dead pixel insert, coffee spill insert, final blackout beat	Camera, Art, Sound

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Use one real office pod or a dressed corner of a room with practical monitors and controlled reflections. Replace expensive VFX with on-screen graphics and simple screen overlays. Shoot the dead pixel, log reveal, and routing warning as insert shots on a monitor rather than full-screen composites. Keep the neon outside as a practical tube or LED source through glass. Use one location, one night, and minimal wardrobe changes. Let performance carry the sci-fi concept; the mystery is in timing and sound, not expensive effects.

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

