

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE FAMILY PHOTO

2 Male + 1 Female (M + M + F) | Genre: Slice of Life/Family | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE:

A father stages a seemingly simple family photo on a late-afternoon terrace, but the frame slowly reveals his hidden unemployment and quiet shame. In the soft golden light, a mother's steady patience and a son's reluctant love turn a lie into an honest family portrait.

DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT:

- Visual tone: warm, intimate, observational slice-of-life realism with gentle comedy and an emotional undercurrent.
- The terrace should feel lived-in and ordinary—laundry, potted plants, parapet, tripod—so the emotional reveal lands through everyday details, not melodrama.
- Pacing should begin with playful domestic friction, tighten into awkward silence at the reveal, then release into a soft, truthful ending.
- The golden late-afternoon light must evolve from forgiving warmth to a quieter, more reflective softness as the truth emerges.
- Blocking should emphasize Neelam as the emotional center and frame-setter, Mahesh as the man trying to control the image, and Sahil as the resistant observer who slowly softens.
- Comedy should come from timing, posture corrections, and family habits, never from broad performance.
- The final image should feel honest rather than perfect: a family held together by care, not by performance.

CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS:

- **character:** Mahesh | **age:** 47 | **look:** Formal shirt, slightly awkward posture, camera remote in hand, a man trying to look composed while carrying visible inner pressure. | **dramatic_arc:** Begins as controlling and defensive, insisting on a polished family image. His irritation and embarrassment give way to vulnerability when his unemployment is revealed, ending in relieved honesty and a genuine smile.
- **character:** Neelam | **age:** 44 | **look:** Sari, calm presence, practiced hands, always physically adjusting the frame and the people inside it. | **dramatic_arc:** Starts as the patient mediator between father and son. She notices the hidden truth before it is spoken, responds without judgment, and becomes the emotional anchor who turns tension into acceptance.
- **character:** Sahil | **age:** 19 | **look:** Hoodie and sneakers, phone tucked away, bored college-son energy with a hidden softness that appears in brief flashes. | **dramatic_arc:** Begins detached, sarcastic, and resistant to posing. After the reveal, his defensiveness drops and he sees his father with empathy, finally stepping into warmth and taking on the role of photographer.

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:

A modest home terrace at late afternoon with layered realism: laundry lines crossing the space, cloths moving lightly in the breeze, potted plants clustered near the parapet, and a tripod positioned as the visual center. The terrace should have a slightly weathered concrete texture, sun-warmed surfaces, and practical household clutter that feels authentic but not messy. The parapet should allow a clean family-photo composition while still showing domestic life around it. The tripod bag must sit close enough to the action to conceal the folded paper. Spatially, the terrace should allow clear blocking between the wall, tripod, and plant area so Neelam can move through the frame and physically mediate the family. The environment should support both comedy and emotional intimacy without needing any additional set dressing.

2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY:

- **character:** Mahesh | **costume:** Formal shirt, neat but slightly stiff, suggesting effort and self-consciousness. The shirt collar is important because Neelam straightens it. Keep the look clean and respectable, with no visible signs of distress until the emotional reveal. | **continuity_notes:** Collar must remain adjustable for Neelam's repeated fixing. Shirt should read as the outfit chosen for a serious photo.
- **character:** Neelam | **costume:** Sari with a practical, lived-in elegance. The look should be simple, familiar, and capable of movement as she steps between Mahesh and Sahil. | **continuity_notes:** Sari should allow her to move comfortably across the terrace and physically reposition both men without restriction.
- **character:** Sahil | **costume:** Hoodie and sneakers, casual and slightly dismissive in attitude. The hoodie hood is specifically handled by Neelam, so it should sit naturally and be easy to adjust. | **continuity_notes:** Phone stays pocketed for most of the scene. Hoodie should remain consistent so Neelam can straighten it during blocking.

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

- **prop:** Tripod | **details:** Placed near the parapet, slightly wobbly when nudged. It must be visible enough to anchor the photo setup and support the final click.
- **prop:** Camera remote | **details:** Held by Mahesh at first, later taken by Sahil. It should be small, practical, and clearly readable as the object controlling the photo.
- **prop:** Phone | **details:** Held or hidden in Mahesh's hand with the screen tucked away. The screen briefly suggests a template and later supports the reveal that the photo is for a job interview.
- **prop:** Folded paper | **details:** Found near the tripod bag. It is a job interview email printout with the line: "Please attach a professional family photograph if possible."
- **prop:** Tripod bag | **details:** Placed near the tripod, functioning as the hiding place/adjacent location for the folded paper.
- **prop:** Laundry lines and potted plants | **details:** Environmental props that must remain present throughout, with the plants moved slightly by Neelam to clean the background.

4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA):

Keep makeup natural and minimal, with late-afternoon warmth on skin. Mahesh may carry subtle under-eye fatigue and a slightly stressed complexion to support the hidden unemployment pressure. Sahil should look fresh but casual, with no heavy styling. Neelam should appear composed and grounded. Add a light sheen of sweat or sun warmth only if needed to match the terrace heat and golden light. No heavy SFX required; the emotional distress should be expressed through performance and subtle facial tension rather than makeup effects.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **character:** Mahesh | **super_objective:** To preserve dignity and appear capable in front of his family. | **subtext:** If the photo looks respectable, maybe I can still be seen as the man who holds this family together.
- **character:** Neelam | **super_objective:** To keep the family emotionally balanced and protect everyone from unnecessary hurt. | **subtext:** I already know something is wrong; I just need to bring the truth out gently.
- **character:** Sahil | **super_objective:** To resist being controlled while still protecting his own emotional distance. | **subtext:** I'll act bored, but I'm watching more closely than I admit.

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

SAHIL

Fake smile se acha hai no smile.

MAHESH

Pichle kuch mahine se... kaam nahi hai.

SAHIL

Job mil jaayegi, Papa.

NEELAM

Main photo mein bhi tumhari tension pakad leti hoon.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE: Use intimate, naturalistic framing with a preference for medium shots, over-the-shoulders, and close-ups that catch micro-reactions. A 35mm or 50mm lens family is ideal for a realistic terrace perspective, with occasional tighter close-ups for the reveal and emotional turn. Camera movement should be minimal and observational, letting blocking and performance carry the scene. The tripod setup itself should be part of the visual language, with the final photo click acting as a punctuation mark. Avoid flashy movement; the emotional shift should feel discovered, not announced.
2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC: 1) Opening: warm golden late-afternoon sunlight as key, with soft ambient bounce from terrace surfaces; shadows are gentle and forgiving. 2) Mid-scene tension: maintain the same natural source but let the light feel slightly lower and softer as the family friction builds, with subtle contrast on faces to emphasize awkwardness. 3) Reveal and ending: reduce the harshness further into a mellow, diffused glow as the truth is admitted, keeping the family faces softly lit and emotionally open. The final click should happen as the sun dips softer behind the water tank, creating a calm, honest finish.
3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE: Natural terrace ambience should dominate: soft wind, laundry fluttering on lines, faint city hush in the distance, and small cloth/plant movement. Foley should emphasize the camera remote click, the tripod wobble, the paper unfolding, and subtle fabric rustle from sari, hoodie, and shirt adjustments. Dialogue should feel close and domestic, with room tone that supports intimacy. The silence after the reveal must be noticeably quieter than the rest of the scene, even though the terrace ambience continues.
4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE: Use a warm, soft, naturalistic LUT with golden highlights and gentle skin tones. Early scene palette should lean amber and honey, with muted greens from the plants and neutral concrete grays. As the truth emerges, slightly desaturate the image and soften contrast to create emotional honesty without losing warmth. The final frame should preserve the sunset glow while keeping the family tones grounded and real.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Scout terrace, mark blocking, and place tripod, laundry lines, and plant positions	Direction, Art, Camera
09:30 - 11:00	Prep wardrobe, props, and continuity for Mahesh, Neelam, and Sahil	Wardrobe, Props, Makeup
11:00 - 12:30	Rig natural-light support, bounce, and minimal negative fill for terrace coverage	Camera, G&E;
12:30 - 13:30	Rehearse family blocking, posture corrections, and reveal beat with folded paper	Direction, Cast
13:30 - 15:00	Shoot dialogue build-up and comedic posing beats	Camera, Sound
15:00 - 16:30	Shoot reveal, emotional turn, and final photo click in softer sunset light	Camera, Cast, Sound

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:
Use one real terrace location and dress it with existing household items: laundry, plants, tripod, and a simple bag. Shoot in available late-afternoon light to avoid heavy lighting costs, adding only bounce and minimal fill. Keep the cast to three performers and let performance carry the scene. Use one camera body with a small lens set and avoid coverage bloat by designing blocking around the reveal. The folded paper can be a printed email on standard paper, and the phone screen can be a simple static image or template. Record clean room tone and practical foley on location to reduce post-production complexity.

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

