

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

ECHOES IN THE ELEVATOR

1 Male + 2 Female (M + F + F) | Genre: Horror/Supernatural | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A stalled elevator traps three strangers in a mirrored nightmare where every lie is echoed back to them, forcing a building manager, a security supervisor, and a calm resident to confront a buried death and the truth they tried to erase. As the elevator descends into the impossible, the real horror is not the haunting—it is the guilt they can no longer hide.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Claustrophobic supernatural horror rooted in guilt, not spectacle. • The elevator should feel like a living confession chamber: reflections, echoes, and delayed movement become the threat. • Pace begins with controlled realism, then tightens into psychological dread, ending in a sudden, irreversible reveal. • Visual language: mirrored repetition, flicker-driven unease, red emergency practicals, and cold metallic surfaces. • Performance tone: restrained, internal, and increasingly cracked; fear should emerge from denial collapsing. • The supernatural rules must feel simple and cruel: the space repeats truth, exposes lies, and punishes concealment.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Vikram age: 38 look: Loosened tie, sweaty, shaken, office-manager energy with a controlled exterior that keeps slipping. dramatic_arc: He begins as a rationalizer who hides behind technical explanations, then slowly loses control as the elevator mirrors his lies back at him. His arc ends in terror when he realizes the truth is not escape, but exposure. • character: Leela age: 46 look: Khaki security supervisor uniform, hard-eyed, practical, gripping a key ring like a protective charm. dramatic_arc: She starts skeptical and authoritative, then shifts into defensive guilt as her past report manipulation is revealed. Her arc is the collapse of institutional confidence into personal shame. • character: Ananya age: 27 look: Rain-damp coat, pale face, calm stillness, almost unnaturally composed in the corner of the elevator. dramatic_arc: She begins as an unreadable presence, then becomes the moral force of the scene. Her arc is the reveal of a dead witness who has returned not for revenge, but for truth.
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:

Build the elevator as a tight, practical, mirrored box with enough depth for three actors and a camera operator's controlled movement. Use reflective wall panels that can be selectively dulled for camera angles, with visible seams to enhance realism. The ceiling panel should be a flickering practical source with exposed diffusion to create unstable light shifts. Emergency red strips must run vertically or along the edges to carve the actors into harsh silhouettes. Floor should be slightly scuffed metal or worn laminate with subtle grime, suggesting age and neglect. The elevator panel must be tactile and functional-looking, with buttons that can blink independently. The mirrored walls should create layered spatial confusion, making the space feel crowded and haunted without adding extra bodies. Keep the interior slightly worn, institutional, and under-maintained, with a residential-building authenticity rather than a stylized horror look.

2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY:

- **character:** Vikram | **costume:** Office attire with loosened tie, shirt visibly damp with sweat, slightly disheveled from stress. Colors should stay muted and practical. | **continuity_notes:** Tie remains loosened throughout. Sweat and distress should increase gradually. No wardrobe change.
- **character:** Leela | **costume:** Khaki security supervisor uniform, functional and slightly rigid, with a key ring held constantly in hand. | **continuity_notes:** Uniform should remain consistent and believable. Key ring is always present until it falls. Add subtle stress creasing and tension in grip.
- **character:** Ananya | **costume:** Rain-damp coat with a wet, lived-in texture. Understated clothing beneath, not emphasized. Hospital band is hidden in the coat and later revealed. | **continuity_notes:** Coat must remain visibly damp. Hospital band should be concealed until the reveal. Her look stays unnervingly composed throughout.

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

- **prop:** Elevator panel | **details:** Functional-looking button panel with blinking floor indicators and emergency button. Must support the sense of malfunction and self-activation.
- **prop:** Intercom speaker | **details:** Mounted in the elevator, used as the source of echoed dialogue. Should feel old, crackly, and slightly metallic in tone.
- **prop:** Key ring | **details:** Leela's key ring must be substantial, metallic, and noisy when moved. It later falls to reveal the old name tag.
- **prop:** Floor directory | **details:** Visible inside the elevator, used by Leela as she references the building and the shaft history.
- **prop:** Phone | **details:** Vikram's phone should visibly lose signal, reinforcing isolation.
- **prop:** Wet hospital band | **details:** Pulled from Ananya's coat collar area. It must be visibly wet and show the building address.
- **prop:** Old name tag | **details:** Attached to the key ring after it falls. Must read exactly: 'ANANYA R.'

4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA):

Vikram: sweat buildup on forehead, upper lip, and collar line; slight under-eye fatigue; escalating panic flush. Leela: minimal makeup with controlled skin texture, then pale drain as the truth lands; subtle tension lines and stress shine. Ananya: pale, still complexion with a damp, cold look; no overt supernatural makeup, but her stillness and delayed reflection do the work. SFX should be practical and subtle: moisture on coat, sweat continuity, and a slight cold-room effect on skin tones. No gore required. Lighting reactions should emphasize pallor, red-strip contrast, and flicker-driven shadow shifts.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **character:** Vikram | **super_objective:** To keep control and avoid accountability. | **subtext:** He is constantly trying to convert guilt into logic. Every technical explanation is a shield against confession.
- **character:** Leela | **super_objective:** To protect her authority and preserve what she has hidden. | **subtext:** She acts like the one person who understands the building, but underneath she is terrified that the building remembers her lie.
- **character:** Ananya | **super_objective:** To force the truth into the open. | **subtext:** She is not trying to scare them for entertainment; she is the embodiment of the consequence they buried.

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

VIKRAM

Arre yaar, bas ek minute. Technical fault hai. Kuchh serious nahi.

INTERCOM (V.O.)

Technical fault hai. Kuchh serious nahi.

LEELA

((under her breath))

Bola tha na. Yeh building seedhi nahi hai.

ANANYA

Yeh lift unko trap karti hai jo jhooth bolte hain.

VIKRAM

Main maintenance complaints time par forward nahi karta.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use a confined, intimate camera language with long-lens compression avoided in favor of close, spatially aware framing that makes the elevator feel smaller as the scene progresses. Start with stable medium shots and controlled coverage, then move into tighter close-ups, mirror inserts, and reflection-based compositions. Favor subtle handheld tension or micro-drift over aggressive movement. Lenses should emphasize facial detail and reflective distortion, with occasional wider frames to reveal the impossible geometry of the mirrored walls. Camera movement philosophy: observe first, then corner the characters as the truth emerges.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Establishment. Emergency red strips and a dim, flickering ceiling panel define the space with practical motivation. Keep the red low and ominous, the ceiling light unstable but readable.

Tier 2: Escalation. Increase flicker frequency and contrast as confessions begin. Let faces fall in and out of shadow, with mirror reflections catching delayed movement and creating visual unease.

Tier 3: Reveal. Stabilize the emergency light briefly at the key reveal moments so the audience can clearly read the hospital band, name tag, and final truth. Then allow the space to collapse back into darkness and red, ending on blackout.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

The soundscape should be dominated by elevator hum, intermittent electrical crackle, intercom buzz, and the metallic clatter of the key ring. Use subtle room tone that feels too enclosed, with low-frequency pressure suggesting the shaft beyond the walls. The intercom echo must be precise and unnerving, repeating lines with slight delay or distortion. Add tiny sounds of breath, fabric movement, and phone signal loss to heighten isolation. The final elevator shudder and door movement should feel heavy, mechanical, and inescapable.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a cold, desaturated base with strong red practical accents from the emergency strips. Skin tones should remain slightly pale and stressed, with green-gray shadows in the metal surfaces. The mirrors should reflect a harsher, more contrasty version of the scene. Grade toward a sickly institutional palette: steel gray, dirty white, emergency red, and occasional black voids. Keep the final reveal slightly brighter for readability, then crush into darkness for the ending.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:00	Load-in, elevator set dressing, mirror safety check	Art, Grip, Camera
09:00 - 10:30	Rig practical red strips, ceiling flicker panel, intercom playback test	Electric, Sound, Camera
10:30 - 11:30	Blocking with actors, mirror reflection marks, performance timing for echoes	Director, Cast, Camera
11:30 - 13:30	Shoot dialogue escalation and confession beats	Camera, Sound, Cast
14:30 - 16:00	Shoot reveal of hospital band, name tag, and final door opening	Camera, Art, Cast
16:00 - 17:00	Pickup inserts: panel buttons, key ring drop, mirror reaction shots	Camera, Sound, Art

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:
Use a single practical elevator set with mirrored panels and controlled lighting instead of building multiple locations. Create the illusion of depth with careful reflection management and selective blacking out of mirror edges. Use one flickerable ceiling practical and inexpensive red LED strips for all horror beats. Record intercom lines separately and play them back on set for timing, then enhance in post. Keep wardrobe simple and character-specific. Use sound design and performance rather than VFX for the supernatural effects. The delayed reflection can be achieved with editing and precise blocking rather than expensive compositing.

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

