

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

THE ROOFTOP WITNESS

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

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A midnight rooftop investigation into a suspected fall turns into a tense truth game when a guarded resident lies, and an underestimated elderly gardener hears what everyone else misses. On a cluttered terrace where footsteps matter more than faces, Inspector Nidhi must decide whether the accident story is a cover-up or a confession.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: - Visual tone: claustrophobic, nocturnal, and observant; the rooftop should feel like a maze of suspicion under a single harsh floodlight. - Thematic depth: truth is not always seen, sometimes it is heard; the story explores how society underestimates older women and how that invisibility becomes power. - Pacing: tight, escalating interrogation with small pauses that land like punches; every beat should reveal one more layer of deception. - Performance style: restrained realism, with micro-expressions and delayed answers carrying the tension. - Spatial storytelling: use the rooftop layout as a psychological map—locked gate, water tank, plants, laundry lines, and corners all become clues.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Inspector Nidhi age: 36 look: Practical clothes, notebook and flashlight in hand, alert posture, clean and grounded police presence. dramatic_arc: Begins as a methodical investigator scanning for facts, then sharpens into suspicion as physical clues and witness testimony contradict Sanjay's story. Ends with controlled authority, ready to let the truth reveal itself. • character: Sanjay age: 39 look: Plain T-shirt, tense body language, evasive eyes, bruised knuckle repeatedly hidden from view. dramatic_arc: Starts defensive and over-explaining the fall as an accident. As Nidhi and Bina corner him, his confidence collapses into silence, suggesting either guilt, fear, or both. • character: Bina age: 61 look: Faded house dress, rooftop gardener energy, moving through potted plants with ease and familiarity. dramatic_arc: Initially appears chatty and underestimated, almost comic. She then becomes the most dangerous presence in the scene by revealing she hears everything, ultimately exposing the truth through sound and observation.
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: • location_build: A cluttered apartment rooftop at night with a single floodlight as the primary source, distant city glow as background ambience, and a few dangling bulbs near a water tank. • spatial_layers: Foreground should include laundry lines and hanging cloths that create partial visual obstruction. Midground should hold potted plants arranged like a maze, a water tank, and the locked gate. Background should open to the city glow and rooftop edge, giving depth and isolation. • textures: Weathered concrete, rusted metal gate, dusty planter pots, damp laundry fabric, chipped paint on the water tank, and slightly grimy bulb fixtures. • practical_details: The rooftop must feel lived-in and functional, with enough clutter to hide movement and create suspicion. The locked gate should be visibly important, and the planter area should allow Bina to enter naturally from between plants. • continuity_notes: Keep the key ring near the planter visible once discovered. The rooftop should remain consistently cluttered, with the same laundry, plants, and gate positions throughout the scene.
2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY: • Inspector Nidhi: {'costume': 'Practical clothes suitable for field investigation, no glamour, no unnecessary accessories beyond notebook and flashlight.', 'continuity': 'Wardrobe should remain clean but functional, with no major changes during the scene.'} • Sanjay: {'costume': 'Plain T-shirt, casual resident look, slightly rumpled to reflect tension.', 'continuity': 'Bruised knuckle must remain visible only when Nidhi's flashlight catches it; Sanjay should keep trying to hide it.'} • Bina: {'costume': 'Faded house dress, worn but comfortable, clearly a rooftop regular who tends plants.', 'continuity': 'Should look consistent with someone who has been gardening for years, not newly dressed for the scene.'}
3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS): • prop: Flashlight details: Handheld, used by Nidhi to isolate the bruised knuckle and later to hard-light Sanjay during the final line. • prop: Notebook details: Used by Nidhi to record timings and key details; should be visibly opened and then shut at the turning point. • prop: Water tank details: Large rooftop tank near dangling bulbs; serves as a landmark and clue area. • prop: Key ring details: Found near a planter by the water tank; must look like a practical building key ring, not decorative. • prop: Potted plants details: Multiple rooftop plants arranged to create a maze-like feel; Bina moves through them naturally. • prop: Laundry lines and clothespins details: Hanging lines that sway slightly and create visual obstruction; Bina fingers the clothespins while speaking. • prop: Locked gate details: Clearly locked, important to the investigation, and visually distinct as a boundary element.
4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA): • Inspector Nidhi: Minimal makeup, matte skin suitable for night exterior. Slight under-eye realism and practical sheen only if needed from rooftop humidity. • Sanjay: Subtle sweat on forehead and upper lip, tense facial tightness, bruised knuckle makeup with visible discoloration and slight swelling. Skin should react to flashlight beam with natural highlights. • Bina: Age-appropriate makeup with lived-in texture, soft lines, and a believable rooftop-gardener look. No glam; slightly weathered skin and natural night-time realism. • sfx_notes: Use controlled sweat and distress on Sanjay to support anxiety. Flashlight beam should create hard facial contrast and emphasize the knuckle bruise. No heavy injury effects beyond the bruised hand.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **Inspector Nidhi:** {'super_objective': 'To uncover the truth behind the fall and identify the real sequence of events.', 'subtext': 'I already know someone is lying; I need the lie to crack without losing control of the room.'}
- **Sanjay:** {'super_objective': 'To protect himself or someone else from the consequences of what happened on the rooftop.', 'subtext': 'If I keep the story simple, maybe the truth won't catch up to me.'}
- **Bina:** {'super_objective': 'To assert the power of being overlooked and to reveal what she has heard.', 'subtext': 'You all ignored me, but I know more than you think—and I will say it when it matters.'}

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

NIDHI

Sanjay. Neeche se body mili hai. Tum keh rahe ho accident tha?

SANJAY

Haan, madam. Slip hua hoga. Rooftop hai, slippery bhi hota hai.

NIDHI

Aur tumhare haath pe yeh?

SANJAY

Gate ka lock jam tha. Main bas... khol raha tha.

BINA

Oho. Lock jam tha ya zubaan?



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use a restrained, investigative camera language with mostly handheld or subtle shoulder-mounted movement to preserve immediacy. Favor medium close-ups and tight singles for interrogation, with occasional wider frames that reveal the rooftop maze and the characters' spatial power dynamics. Lenses should feel naturalistic: wider focal lengths for environment and tension, longer focal lengths for isolating reactions and the bruised knuckle. Camera movement should be patient, observant, and slightly predatory, mirroring Nidhi's search for truth.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Establishing night rooftop with a single harsh floodlight as the key source, supported by distant city glow and faint practical bulbs near the water tank.
Tier 2: Interrogation lighting with flashlight motivated accents, creating hard shadows on Sanjay's face and hand while leaving Bina partially textured in the background.
Tier 3: Final confrontation lighting with the flashlight beam tightened on Sanjay and the rooftop bulbs subtly flickering, increasing contrast and emotional pressure while preserving the night atmosphere.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Foley should emphasize rooftop realism: soft footfalls on concrete, laundry flutter, clothespin clicks, distant city hum, faint electrical buzz from the floodlight, and the subtle rattle of the locked gate. Room tone should be replaced by open-air rooftop ambience with occasional wind gusts. Bina's key reveal should be supported by a slight sonic drop so her footsteps line lands clearly.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a cool, desaturated night palette with steel blues, muted greys, and sodium-tinged practical highlights. Keep skin tones natural but slightly contrasty under the flashlight. The floodlight can lean neutral-white while city glow and bulbs add faint amber accents. Overall grade should feel gritty, realistic, and suspenseful.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
18:00 - 19:00	Load-in, rooftop safety check, and art dressing of plants, laundry lines, gate, and water tank area	Art, Grip, Safety
19:00 - 20:00	Rig floodlight, practical bulbs, and establish city glow simulation	Electric, Grip, Camera
20:00 - 21:00	Block interrogation positions and rehearse flashlight beats	Director, Cast, Camera
21:00 - 22:30	Shoot dialogue coverage and clue reveals near water tank and planter	Camera, Sound, Script Supervisor
22:30 - 23:30	Shoot Bina reveal, key ring discovery, and final confrontation	Camera, Sound, Cast
23:30 - 00:00	Pickups, insert shots of knuckle, keys, and locked gate; wrap and strike	Camera, Art, Grip

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:
Shoot on a real rooftop with minimal dressing and use one strong floodlight plus a few practical bulbs to create production value. Keep the cast blocking tight so the rooftop feels larger through lensing rather than set expansion. Use one flashlight as both a story prop and a lighting tool. Favor natural wind and ambient city sound over heavy sound design. Capture inserts of the key ring, bruised knuckle, and locked gate in the same setup to save time. Let performance and dialogue carry the suspense instead of expensive action or stunt work.

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

