

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

SIGNAL LOST

1 Male + 2 Female (M + F + F) | Genre: Psychological Thriller | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE: A rain-soaked delivery rider takes shelter in a tiny apartment during a storm, only to discover he has walked into a behavioral experiment where every reaction has been monitored. As the room closes in, he realizes the people who seemed to offer help were actually studying how close he could get to breaking.
DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT: • Claustrophobic psychological thriller with a boxed-in visual grammar: door, curtains, sofa, table, laptop glow, and lightning all conspire to trap Eshan. • Performance-first tension: the horror comes from recognition, guilt, and surveillance rather than overt action. • Pacing should begin with uneasy realism, then tighten into controlled dread as the reveal lands and silence becomes the loudest sound. • Visual contrast between cold blue laptop light and harsh tube-light flicker to externalize uncertainty and manipulation. • Keep camera language intimate and observant, as if the room itself is participating in the experiment. • Final beat should feel still, clinical, and devastating rather than explosive.
CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS: • character: Eshan age: 29 look: Bheega hua rain jacket, cracked helmet, delivery bag, exhausted face, tense body language, wet hair, visible stress from the storm. dramatic_arc: He enters seeking temporary shelter and simple confirmation, but the room turns him from visitor into specimen. His arc moves from irritation to confusion, then fear, then the cold realization that he has been observed all along. • character: Dr. Naina age: 37 look: Calm, composed, professional presence on a laptop screen; almost too still, with a controlled, clinical demeanor. dramatic_arc: She begins as an authoritative telemedicine-like presence and gradually reveals herself as the voice of the experiment. Her arc is not emotional but revelatory: the calm mask never breaks, which makes the threat more disturbing. • character: Rupa age: 31 look: Pale, anxious, close to the laptop, trembling hands, guilt visible in her eyes and posture. dramatic_arc: She appears as a worried host, then becomes the emotional hinge of the reveal. Her arc shifts from uneasy assistance to visible remorse as she admits she was told Eshan could be dangerous.
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 tiny apartment living room built to feel boxed in and airless. The sofa should sit close to the coffee table, with the laptop positioned as the brightest object in frame. Curtains must remain fully closed to eliminate any sense of outside relief. The single tube light should be practical and imperfect, capable of flicker and sudden overexposure. Surfaces should feel slightly worn and lived-in, with dampness implied from the storm outside. The door must be clearly visible and feel like the only exit, yet emotionally inaccessible once locked. Spatial layering should be shallow: foreground with Eshan, midground with Rupa and the coffee table, background with the window and curtains, creating a compressed, surveillance-like depth.
2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY: • Eshan: Rain jacket visibly soaked and slightly sticky, delivery bag worn from use, cracked helmet with scuffed visor, practical rider clothing underneath. Continuity must preserve wetness, tension in fabric, and the helmet remaining in his hand until the final beat. • Rupa: Simple home clothing that reads as casual but emotionally exposed; pale, understated, and unguarded. Wardrobe should support her anxious, trapped feeling without distracting patterns. • Dr. Naina: Only visible on screen, so wardrobe should read as professional and controlled through framing and posture rather than costume detail. Keep her appearance clean, composed, and clinical.
3. HERO PROPS MASTER CHECKLIST (PRACTICAL ON-SET ASSETS): • item: Eshan's cracked helmet details: Scuffed visor, visibly damaged shell, used as a key visual object in the final reveal when it reflects the laptop screen and red recording dot. • item: Delivery bag details: Held close to Eshan's chest on entry, reinforcing his identity as a rider and his desire for quick, practical shelter. • item: Laptop details: Blue glow, video call active, glitching image of Dr. Naina, desktop file labeled 'SUBJECT E-29 / AGGRESSION RESPONSE TRIAL', and a visible red recording dot in the reflection. • item: Phone details: Must show 'SIGNAL LOST' early and later a new notification: 'STAGE 2 APPROVED'. • item: Glass of water details: Held by Rupa with a trembling hand, used as a subtle sign of her guilt and Eshan's rising suspicion. • item: Coffee table details: Supports the glass and anchors the cramped geometry of the room.
4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA): Eshan should have rain-soaked skin, damp hair, slight under-eye fatigue, and a flushed face that intensifies as his stress rises. Rupa needs pale makeup, subtle under-eye shadows, and a slightly dehydrated, anxious look. Add fine sweat sheen as the tension escalates, especially under tube-light flicker. For the storm-lit moments, skin should catch cold highlights from the laptop and lightning. No heavy SFX required; the realism should come from moisture, stress, and micro-expressions.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **Eshan:** {'super_objective': 'To secure safety, dignity, and control in a situation that keeps slipping away from him.', 'subtext': 'I just need a moment of relief, but why does this room know me? I am not what you think I am.'}
- **Rupa:** {'super_objective': 'To contain the situation and survive her own guilt while keeping Eshan inside the room long enough for the experiment to continue.', 'subtext': 'Please don't make me say what I know. I'm already complicit, and I hate that you can see it.'}
- **Dr. Naina:** {'super_objective': 'To observe, classify, and predict Eshan's behavior without emotional interference.', 'subtext': 'Your reactions are the data. Your confusion is useful. I will remain calm while you realize the truth.'}

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

ESHAN((*annoyed*))

Bas yaar... ek confirmation hi toh chahiye tha.

RUPA((*softly*))

Usne aaj subah lift mein kisi se jhagda kiya tha.

DR. NAINA

You're a subject.

ESHAN((*boiling*))

Main delivery rider hoon! Main koi test sample nahi hoon!

DR. NAINA

We are building a model to predict violence before it happens.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use intimate, compressed framing with a preference for medium close-ups, over-the-shoulders, and tight inserts that trap the audience inside the room. Lenses should feel slightly long enough to flatten space and intensify claustrophobia, while occasional wider frames reveal how little escape exists. Camera movement philosophy: minimal, deliberate, and observant; let subtle push-ins do the psychological work. Avoid flashy movement until the reveal, where a slow, controlled drift can underline the collapse of Eshan's certainty.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Entry and suspicion — cold laptop glow as key, weak tube light as practical fill, storm lightning as intermittent backlight. Keep shadows soft but enclosing.

Tier 2: Interrogation and reveal — increase contrast, let tube light flicker harder, allow laptop glow to dominate faces, and use lightning flashes to punctuate discoveries like the file and the locked-room realization.

Tier 3: Final trap state — reduce ambient comfort, hold on harsh practicals and screen light, with the room feeling clinically exposed. The red recording dot should become the most psychologically aggressive visual accent.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Storm ambience should remain constant: heavy rain, distant thunder, occasional sharp lightning cracks. Inside the room, emphasize small sounds: wet jacket rustle, phone buzz, glass set down, laptop fan, cursor clicks, and the subtle hum of the tube light. When the reveal lands, let silence expand around the dialogue so the room feels acoustically sealed. Dr. Naina's glitch moments should carry a faint metallic or digital artifact, but never become sci-fi; keep it grounded and unsettling.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Cool, desaturated palette with blue-black storm tones and sickly tube-light greens. Laptop glow should read as cold cyan, while lightning flashes briefly push highlights toward white and steel. Skin tones should remain slightly drained, with selective warmth only in the most human moments, such as Rupa's guilt and Eshan's fear. Contrast should rise as the truth emerges, with blacks deepening and the red recording dot standing out as the only aggressive color accent.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Set dressing, wet-down continuity, and practical light placement	Art, Grip, Camera
09:30 - 10:30	Block actors in the cramped living room and rehearse reveal beats	Director, Cast, AD
10:30 - 12:00	Shoot entry, first dialogue exchange, and laptop call setup	Camera, Sound, Cast
12:00 - 13:00	Shoot confrontation, file reveal, and water glass beat	Camera, Art, Cast
13:00 - 14:00	Shoot final reveal, helmet reflection, notification insert, and silence beat	Camera, Sound, Cast

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:

Shoot in a real small apartment to preserve authentic compression. Use one strong laptop practical, one flicker-capable tube light, and a phone flashlight or off-camera LED for lightning accents. Keep the set dressing minimal but precise: sofa, coffee table, curtains, laptop, glass, helmet, and delivery bag are enough. Use sound design to sell the storm instead of expensive effects. The laptop screen can be composited or preloaded with the file and notification inserts. Limit coverage by designing blocking that allows multiple emotional beats in the same setup. Prioritize performance and sound over production complexity.

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

