

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

ELEVATOR TO NOWHERE

3 Female (F + F + F) | Genre: Psychological Thriller | Runtime: 6 - 9 Mins

OFFICIAL STORY LOGLINE:

A stuck elevator traps a calm corporate lawyer, a panicked junior architect, and an unreadable building manager between floors—until a sealed basement fire, a redacted witness draft, and a hidden camera turn their claustrophobic wait into a live interrogation. As the elevator reveals who is watching, the three women realize the building is not malfunctioning; it is protecting a buried truth.

DIRECTOR'S DRAMATIC VISION & TONAL CONCEPT:

- Claustrophobic psychological thriller with a single-location pressure-cooker feel.
- Visual language should emphasize mirrored reflections, fractured identities, and the sense of being watched.
- Pacing begins with awkward silence and small irritations, then escalates through reveals, pauses, and sudden mechanical jolts.
- The elevator should feel like a metallic confession booth: cold, reflective, and increasingly hostile.
- Performance tone should stay restrained; the terror comes from subtext, not shouting.
- The final reveal must feel less like a jump scare and more like a surveillance trap snapping shut.

CAST AT A GLANCE & CHARACTER ARCS:

• **character:** Dr. Isha | **age:** 39 | **look:** Calm, composed, navy blazer, controlled posture, lawyerly precision in face and movement. | **dramatic_arc:** Begins as the most grounded presence in the elevator, using wit and logic to defuse tension. As clues connect the basement fire, redacted file, and hidden camera, she shifts into a sharp, prosecutorial force who understands the trap and turns the recording back on the watcher.

• **character:** Rhea | **age:** 28 | **look:** Anxious junior architect with smudged eyeliner, restless hands, tote bag, and papers spilling out under stress. | **dramatic_arc:** Starts panicked and defensive, irritated by the situation and embarrassed by her fear. As the basement fire connects to her family history, she becomes emotionally exposed, then regains focus and actively helps create evidence against whoever is controlling the elevator.

• **character:** Mina | **age:** 55 | **look:** Building manager in a uniform sari, key ring at her waist, still posture, unreadable expression, minimal outward emotion. | **dramatic_arc:** Initially appears detached and in control, speaking in clipped, unsettling lines. As the conversation exposes the sealed incident and the master override tag, her mask cracks and fear surfaces, revealing she is not the ultimate controller but is deeply entangled in the cover-up.

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:

Construct the elevator as a tight, modern corporate box with mirrored walls on at least two sides, a dim digital floor panel, a HELP button cluster, and emergency strip lights that can flicker independently. The mirrored surfaces should be slightly imperfect to create distorted reflections and visual unease. Add a visible ventilation grille with a low hum source hidden off-camera. The floor should be brushed metal or dark rubber with subtle scuffs, so the dropped key ring and papers read clearly. The control panel above or beside the doors should allow for a hidden camera reveal. The space must feel physically small, even if the set is slightly expanded for camera placement, by using reflective angles and tight framing. The key ring and maintenance tag need to be readable in close-up, so the art department should prepare a hero tag with the exact text visible.

2. COSTUME & WARDROBE CONTINUITY:

- **character:** Dr. Isha | **costume:** Navy blazer with a professional corporate-lawyer silhouette, clean lines, neutral inner layer, polished but practical footwear. | **continuity_notes:** Should remain neat and composed throughout, with only subtle stress changes such as slight tension in shoulders or a softened collar line under pressure.
- **character:** Rhea | **costume:** Junior-architect office wear with a tote bag, slightly disheveled by the situation; smudged eyeliner is part of the look. | **continuity_notes:** Tote bag must be present and functional for paper spill. Makeup should progressively look more stressed, but not exaggerated.
- **character:** Mina | **costume:** Uniform sari associated with building management, practical and authoritative, paired with a key ring at the waist. | **continuity_notes:** Key ring must remain attached until the scripted drop. Costume should communicate institutional authority without glamour.

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

- **prop:** Key ring | **details:** Metal key ring worn at Mina's waist, with a small engraved number visible in close-up and a maintenance tag attached.
- **prop:** Maintenance notice | **details:** Paper document in Rhea's tote bag reading: "Basement level sealed until further review." Must be legible on camera.
- **prop:** Tote bag | **details:** Rhea's bag should be large enough to spill floor plans and the maintenance notice when it slips.
- **prop:** Floor plans | **details:** Architectural papers that scatter onto the elevator floor, visually signaling professional stakes.
- **prop:** HELP button panel | **details:** Elevator control buttons with a clearly pressable HELP button that does not respond.
- **prop:** Digital floor panel | **details:** Dim display blinking 11... then 12... then nothing.
- **prop:** Hidden camera | **details:** Mounted above the mirrored panel, revealed by a red blinking light and a click-on moment.

4. PRACTICAL SFX & MAKEUP (MUA):

Keep makeup realistic and grounded. Rhea should show smudged eyeliner and increasing facial tension, with slight perspiration at the temples and upper lip. Isha should remain mostly controlled, with only subtle stress sheen and sharper under-eye shadows as the scene escalates. Mina should be minimally made up, with a harder, more weathered look that can catch the flicker of emergency lights. Add light sweat and skin shine to reflect the cramped, unventilated environment. No heavy SFX injuries are required; the distress is psychological and environmental.

ACTOR MASTERCLASS & HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES

STORYDILSE PRODUCTION BIBLE

DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: ACTORS & CASTING DIRECTOR

STANISLAVSKI SUBTEXT & CHARACTER DRIVERS:

- **character:** Dr. Isha | **super_objective:** To identify the truth behind the sealed incident and turn the surveillance trap into evidence. | **subtext:** She is not merely trapped; she is reading the room like a courtroom and quietly taking control of the narrative.
- **character:** Rhea | **super_objective:** To understand what happened to her sister and why the basement fire was hidden. | **subtext:** Her panic is real, but underneath it is a desperate need to connect the building's secret to her personal loss.
- **character:** Mina | **super_objective:** To protect what she knows while surviving the consequences of the past. | **subtext:** Her calmness is a shield; every line suggests she has lived with this secret long enough to fear its exposure.

CANONICAL HINGLISH AUDITION SIDES (CLIMACTIC SCENE):

RHEA

((pressing buttons))

Arre yaar... seriously? Abhi?

RHEA

Phone bhi dead. No signal. Perfect.

MINA

Agar aap dono chill kar lo, toh main bhi kaam ho jaane ka wait kar loon.

RHEA

Kaam? Aapko lagta hai yeh normal hai?

ISHA

Aaj dono ka internship chal raha hai.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: CINEMATOGRAPHY & SOUND DEPT

1. CINEMATOGRAPHY CONCEPT & LENS PALETTE:

Use tight lenses and compressed framing to make the elevator feel even smaller than it is. Favor close-ups, over-the-shoulders, mirrored reflections, and partial occlusions through metal edges and door seams. Camera movement should be minimal at first, then subtly more unstable as the elevator jolts and the hidden camera is revealed. The visual philosophy is observational and predatory: the audience should feel like they are inside the surveillance system, not outside it.

2. 3-TIER LIGHTING SCHEMATIC:

Tier 1: Flickering emergency strip lights as the primary source, creating intermittent exposure shifts and harsh reflections in the mirrored walls. Tier 2: A dim digital panel and practical elevator indicators provide low, cold fill that isolates faces and hands. Tier 3: The hidden red camera light and any control-room spill should introduce a sinister accent once the surveillance reveal happens. As the scene progresses, reduce overall brightness slightly and deepen shadow contrast so the elevator feels more sealed and airless.

3. SOUND DESIGN & FOLEY ATMOSPHERE:

Build the soundscape around the ventilation hum, which should begin as background texture and gradually become oppressive. Add subtle metallic creaks, button clicks, paper rustle, key ring clinks, and the soft thud of the elevator jolt. The HELP button should produce a dead, unresponsive tactile sound. When the hidden camera activates, introduce a sharp click and a faint electronic beep. Keep room tone dry and enclosed, with reflections making voices feel slightly boxed-in and claustrophobic.

4. COLOR GRADING LUT & PALETTE:

Use a cold, desaturated corporate palette with steel grays, muted blues, and sickly off-white highlights from the emergency strips. Skin tones should stay natural but slightly drained, with red accents reserved for the camera light and any warning indicators. Contrast should increase as the scene progresses, especially in mirrored reflections. The final look should feel sterile, trapped, and morally compromised.



DEPARTMENT HANDOUT: PRODUCER & LINE MANAGEMENT

TIME	ACTIVITY / SCENE BLOCK	KEY DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED
08:00 - 09:30	Load-in, elevator set check, mirror polish, prop placement	Art, Grip, Camera
09:30 - 11:00	Rig emergency strip flicker and digital panel practicals	Electric, Camera, Art
11:00 - 12:30	Blocking with actors, reflection checks, eyeline calibration	Director, Camera, Cast
12:30 - 14:00	Shoot dialogue escalation and paper spill beats	Camera, Sound, Cast
14:00 - 15:30	Shoot hidden camera reveal, key ring drop, door jolt, final blackout	Camera, Electric, Sound, Cast

LOCATION HACK & BUDGET SAVING TIPS:
Use one practical elevator set with mirrored inserts and controlled lighting instead of building a full shaft. Shoot the same space from multiple angles to create coverage without changing set dressing. The hidden camera reveal can be achieved with a simple red LED and a sound cue. Use real office props and printed documents rather than custom fabrication. Keep the number of lighting units low by relying on flicker effects and motivated practicals. Since the film is single-location and dialogue-driven, prioritize performance rehearsal and precise blocking over expensive production design.

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

