



THE HOSTAGE CLAUSE

A Mystery/Crime 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

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LOGLINE: Rana is held hostage and told to confess where the missing company funds are hidden, but the kidnapper seems more interested in the names on the payroll than the money. As the two men trade threats and truths, it becomes clear that the abduction is part of a larger embezzlement scheme. The twist: the kidnapper is actually Rana's former partner, and the real target is the CEO who set them both up.

CAST / CHARACTERS: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) | Character 1: Rana (38)

LOCATION: A locked storage room in a commercial building, lit by one hanging bulb and a narrow strip of light under the door, with stacked cartons creating claustrophobic shadows.

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INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Ek chhota, locked storage room. Stacked cartons. Ek hanging bulb. Door ke neeche se thin strip of light.

RANA, 38, sweaty, loosened tie, button-down shirt crumpled, wall ke paas baitha/adhmara sa. Uske wrists duct tape se bandhe.

IMTIAZ, 42, dark hoodie, gloves, boots, mask on. Controlled, still, dangerous.

Silence.

IMTIAZ

(confident)

Confess kar, Rana.

RANA

Main ne kuch nahi chhupaya.

IMTIAZ

Missing funds ka sawaal nahi kar raha.

RANA

Toh kis cheez ka sawaal kar raha hai?

Imtiaz flashlight on karta hai. Light ledger par padti hai.

IMTIAZ

Payroll.

RANA

Kya?

IMTIAZ

Names. Kisne entries badli. Kisne sign-off kiya.

RANA

Main accountant hoon, bhai. Kidnapper nahi.

IMTIAZ

Exactly. Isliye toh tu useful hai.

Imtiaz ledger kholta hai. Pages par marks, circles.

IMTIAZ (CONT'D)

Yeh naam pehchanta hai?

RANA

Main itne saare naam yaad nahi rakhta.

IMTIAZ

Rakhta hai. Jab salary se zyada khauf account mein ho.

Rana tries to laugh. Fails.

RANA

Agar paise chahiye toh seedha bol.

IMTIAZ

Mujhe paise ki jaldi hoti, toh mask pehen ke aata hi kyun?

Beat.

Imtiaz ek page Rana ke saamne karta hai.

IMTIAZ (CONT'D)

Is line mein dekh.

Rana squints.

RANA

...Mera naam.

IMTIAZ

Aur iske neeche?

Rana freezes.

RANA

Imtiaz Qureshi...

A beat. Room colder.

RANA (CONT'D)

Nahi...

IMTIAZ

Haan.

RANA

Tu...

IMTIAZ

Do saal pehle partner bolta tha.

Rana ki saansein atak jaati hain.

RANA

Tu zinda hai?

IMTIAZ

Main zinda tha tab bhi, jab tum logon ne mujhe dead file ki tarah close kar diya tha.

RANA

Main ne kuch nahi kiya.

IMTIAZ

Chup raha.

Rana looks away. Guilty.

RANA

CEO ne bola tha... audit ke baad sab theek ho jaayega.

IMTIAZ

Aur tu maan gaya.

RANA

Mujhe job bachani thi.

IMTIAZ

Mujhe bhi thi.

Imtiaz phone nikaalta hai. Play button.

CEO (V.O.)

Agar audit hua, blame accounting pe daal dena. Rana manageable hai. Imtiaz already gone hai.

Rana stunned.

RANA

Yeh... yeh edited hai?

IMTIAZ

Sun aur.

CEO (V.O.)

Payroll mein jo extra names hain, unko quietly settle kar do. Cash maintenance vault ke through move karwa dena.

Rana's face drains.

RANA

Maintenance vault...

IMTIAZ

Haan. False panel ke peeche. Tujhe yaad aaya?

RANA

Mujhe laga tha woh sirf temporary hide tha.

IMTIAZ

Har crime temporary hi hota hai, jab tak pakda na jaaye.

Rana struggles with tape, desperate.

RANA

Tu mujhe maarne aaya hai?

IMTIAZ

Agar maarna hota, ab tak ho chuka hota.

RANA

Phir kya chahiye?

IMTIAZ

Sach. Aur ek call.

Imtiaz the phone toward Rana.

IMTIAZ (CONT'D)

CEO ko call kar.

RANA

Main kyun karun?

IMTIAZ

Kyuki usne mujhe giraaya. Tujhe bhi.

Rana looks at ledger, then phone.

RANA

Aur agar main na karun?

Imtiaz steps closer. Calm.

IMTIAZ

Toh tu aaj bhi usi fraud ka witness rahega.

Beat.

Rana swallows, nods.

RANA

Theek hai.

Imtiaz cuts the duct tape on Rana's wrists enough to free his hands, but not fully.

RANA (CONT'D)

Bas... agar yeh sab sach hai, toh tu pehle kyun nahi aaya?

IMTIAZ

Aaya tha.

RANA

Kab?

IMTIAZ

Jab tu dar ke maare meri taraf dekh bhi nahi saka tha.

Rana dials. Speaker on.

PHONE RINGING.

CEO (V.O.)

Kya bakwaas hai?

Rana looks at Imtiaz.

RANA

Sir... humein ek problem mil gayi hai.

IMTIAZ

(soft, to Rana)
Ledger ka photo bhej.

Rana snaps a photo of the ledger.

RANA

Problem... payroll mein hai.

A beat. On the line, CEO goes quiet.

CEO (V.O.)

Kaun hai saath mein?

Rana and Imtiaz exchange a look.

IMTIAZ

(under mask, almost a smile)
Ab game shuru hua hai.

Rana, trembling, holds the phone tighter.

CUT TO BLACK.