



THE ANSWERING MACHINE

A Mystery/Crime 1-Character Solo Monologue in Hinglish

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LOGLINE: A private investigator returns to her office to find an answering machine full of messages from a woman asking for help with a case she never took. As she plays them back, she realizes the caller is a witness from the one investigation she failed to solve—and the voice knows exactly why she disappeared.

CAST / CHARACTERS: FORMAT: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor) | Character: Private Investigator with a Broken Past (Female, 40-47)

LOCATION: A small office with blinds half-closed, lit by a desk lamp and the blinking light of an old answering machine. The room is sparse and functional, with case files stacked in neat, uneasy order.

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INT. PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR OFFICE - NIGHT

A small, sparse office. Half-closed blinds. A desk lamp throws a hard circle of light over stacked case files, a magnifying glass, cassette tapes, and an OLD ANSWERING MACHINE with a blinking red light.

A woman in her early-to-mid 40s, sharp-eyed, short-haired, wearing a leather jacket over a plain shirt and practical boots, enters and closes the door behind her.

She pauses. Takes in the room.

No one else is here.

She sets her bag down slowly.

PI

Same room. Same light. Same bad habit of pretending nothing can touch me.

She looks at the answering machine.

PI (CONT'D)

Blink kar raha hai. Jaise bol raha ho: "Aaj tum bhaag nahi sakti."

She notices a stack of files arranged too neatly.

PI (CONT'D)

Neat order. Jhooth ka sabse clean version.

She sits at the desk, still guarded.

The machine BLINKS.

She presses PLAY.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)

Miss Verma? Mujhe pata hai aap case lena pasand nahi karti. Par aapko lena padega. Kyunki jo hua, uska saboot mere paas hai.

She freezes.

PI

Yeh awaaz...

(beat)

Kahin suni hai.

She rewinds and plays again.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)

Miss Verma? Mujhe pata hai aap case lena pasand nahi karti. Par aapko lena padega. Kyunki jo hua, uska saboot mere paas hai.

She leans back, jaw tight.

PI

Saboot. Haan. Saboot hi toh tha jo mujhe tod ke gaya tha.

She presses PLAY again.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)

Aapne us investigation ko adhoora chhoda tha. Main wahin thi.

She stands abruptly.

PI

"Wahin thi."

(quietly)

Nahi...

She picks up a cassette tape labeled: W-9.

PI (CONT'D)

W-9.

Wahi numbering jo main tab use karti thi jab mujhe lagta tha sab control mein hai. Funny. Control.

She opens a drawer. Inside: an envelope, old photos, a torn receipt, and a handwritten note.

She reads the note.

INSERT NOTE: IF YOU PLAY THIS BACK, IT MEANS THEY FOUND YOU.

She stares.

PI

"They found you." Mujhe? Ya usko?

She presses PLAY on the machine again.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)

Aapne mujhe bachaya nahi tha. Aapne mujhe chhod diya tha.

She swallows hard.

PI

Main wapas aayi thi. Main... wapas aayi thi.

No response. Only the machine's blinking light and the lamp's faint BUZZ.

She looks at the photos with the magnifying glass.

INSERT PHOTO: A blurred reflection. A warehouse sign. A partial police badge.

PI (CONT'D)

Rain-slick road. Warehouse. Ek naam...

(beat)

Jo main loudly nahi bolti.

She presses PLAY once more.

ANSWERING MACHINE VOICE (V.O.)

Aapko lagta hai main witness hoon. Main thi. Ab nahi.
Ab main woh hoon jisne aapko yaad rakha. Aur jo aapne
dekha tha, woh murder nahi tha. Cover-up tha. Aur aap
us raat ke baad gayab nahi hui thi, Miss Verma...
aapko chupaya gaya tha.

She slams STOP.

Silence.

She grips the magnifying glass, then the photos, then the edge of the desk.

PI

Chupaya gaya tha...

(a beat, almost a laugh)

Toh main victim thi? Ya witness? Ya dono?

She takes a breath, steadies herself.

PI (CONT'D)

Agar tum sach mein wohi ho... toh ek aur message
bhejo. Is baar naam ke saath.

The answering machine continues to BLINK.

She stares at it, unsettled.

PI (CONT'D)

Aur is baar... main bhaagungi nahi.

She sits in the desk lamp's hard circle of light, surrounded by files,
tapes, and the machine's red blink.

FADE OUT.