

MUTE BUTTON

A Psychological Thriller 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Psychological Thriller	Format: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast)	Runtime: 5 - 8 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) Character 1: Naina (34)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Naina ek polished podcast host hai—silk blouse, perfect posture, aur aisi smile jo camera ke bina bhi trained lagti hai. Riya, uske saamne, hoodie aur jeans mein baithi hai, laptop aur headphones ko aise pakde jaise woh uska shield ho. Dono ek soundproof booth mein hain, jahan acoustic foam walls sab kuch absorb kar rahi hain, bas red tally light jal rahi hai aur monitor ki thandi glow unke chehron par sharp shadows bana rahi hai. Live recording start hone wali hai. Naina apni usual calm voice mein intro deti hai, Riya levels check kar rahi hai. Sab normal lagta hai—thoda tense, par manageable.

Phir pehla strange moment aata hai. Naina bolti hai, “Aaj ka episode...,” aur uske bolne se ek second pehle, Riya ke headphones mein ek garbled audio cue aata hai: “Aaj ka episode... mat karo.” Riya freeze ho jaati hai. Woh laptop pe waveform dekhti hai—koi visible glitch nahi. Woh Naina ko cut karne ki koshish karti hai, par Naina already next line bol deti hai, exactly wahi line jo cue ne hint ki thi. Riya ke face par panic aata hai. Woh quietly bolti hai, “Maine kuch suna.” Naina forced smile ke saath ignore karti hai. “Noise hota hai, live mein.”

Par phir aur cues aane lagte hain. Har cue Naina ke words ko predict karta hai—kabhi ek word pehle, kabhi poora sentence. Riya ka confidence tootne lagta hai. Woh system check karti hai, laptop ke hidden audio channels, mic routing, monitor feed—sab clean. Booth mein koi aur nahi hai. Naina pehle irritate hoti hai, phir curious, phir visibly unsettled. “Tu mujhe gaslight kar rahi hai ya system mein kuch hai?” Riya ka jawab defensive hai: “Main akeli hoon is booth ko run kar rahi hoon. Main bhi dar rahi hoon.”

Live episode ke beech mein, booth ka hidden system ek aur audio cue open karta hai—this time a voice note jaisa, old and compressed, directly monitor speakers se. A female voice, younger, shaky, says: “Main ye sab record kar rahi hoon kyunki kal subah main sach bol nahi paungi.” Naina ka chehra pal bhar ke liye blank ho jaata hai. Riya bhi sun leti hai, par pehchaan nahi paati. Cue aata hai: “Agar kisi ne ye suna, toh samajh lena... main us raat wapas gayi thi.” Naina ka forced composure crack hota hai. Uski ungliyan water glass par tight ho jaati hain.

Riya stop karne ki koshish karti hai, but system won't mute. Red tally light still on. Live. Naina ko realize hota hai ki yeh random prediction nahi, balki koi purana archive hai—kisi hidden backup mein stored confession. Aur phir final cue aata hai, crystal clear, Naina ki own voice mein: “Mera naam Naina hai. Main 27 ki hoon. Aur maine us raat apne

dost ko wapas bheja tha, jab mujhe pata tha uska phone trace ho raha hai.” Riya ka face pale pad jaata hai. Naina ki saans ruk jaati hai. Woh apni hi awaaz pehchaan leti hai—yeh koi prediction nahi, yeh uska past hai.

Twist ke saath reveal hota hai ki years ago Naina ne ek off-the-record confession record ki thi, kisi incident ko cover up karte hue. Usne socha tha file delete ho gayi, par booth ke hidden system mein backup reh gaya tha—aur aaj, live show ke dauran, woh confession accidentally active ho gaya. Jo “anonymous live cues” lag rahe the, woh actually old confession ke edited fragments the, jo booth ke auto-cue system ne lines ke roop mein play kar diye. Riya, jo sabse zyada nervous thi, actually innocent thi—bas system ka interface samajhne ki koshish kar rahi thi. Naina ka real fear ab public embarrassment nahi, balki us sach ka saamne aana hai jise usne years se mute kiya hua tha.

Final moments mein Naina apni headphones utarti hai. Booth mein sirf tally light ki red glow aur dono ki saans. Riya khamoshi se laptop screen dekhte hue bolti hai, “Main stream cut kar sakti hoon.” Naina pehli baar genuinely vulnerable dikhti hai. “Nahi,” woh dheere bolti hai. “Aaj mute nahi karenge.” Aur phir, live mic ke saamne, woh apni purani confession ko aadhe se zyada control ke saath, aadhe se zyada toot kar, khud bol deti hai. Uska polished persona crack hota hai, aur us crack mein ek insaan dikhai deta hai. Riya bas record karti rehti hai, dar aur empathy ke beech phansi hui. Film ka end is unsettling note par hota hai: kabhi kabhi jo awaaz tumhe predict karti lagti hai, woh tumhara hi woh hissa hota hai jise tumne sabse zyada mute kiya tha.