

THE INTERVIEW ROOM

A Mystery/Crime 2-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Mystery/Crime	Format: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast)	Runtime: 5 - 8 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 2-Character Short Film (Duo Cast) Character 1: Detective Shikha (41)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Police interrogation room ka fluorescent tube light zinda bhi tha aur thaka hua bhi. Ek metal table, do kursiyan, aur deewar ke us paar ek one-way mirror jo bas apna hi khali-pan dikhata tha. Detective Shikha, forty-one, plain shirt aur formal pants mein, file ke pages ulat rahi thi. Uske coffee-stained notes uski aadat ka saboot the—jab baaki log evidence dhundhte the, Shikha evidence ko evidence banana jaanti thi.

Samne baithi thi Mala, thirty-eight, school librarian, simple sari mein. Haath mein handbag itna tightly pakda hua tha jaise uske andar sirf paisa ya keys nahi, kuch aur bhi chhupa ho. Uski aankhon mein ghabrahat thi, lekin awaaz poori tarah tooti hui nahi thi. Woh carefully bol rahi thi, har sentence se pehle jaise ek invisible test pass kar rahi ho.

Shikha ne shuruat seedhi ki. School ke library corridor se theft suspect ko nikalte dekhne ki baat. Mala ne wahi jawab diya jo Shikha expect bhi kar rahi thi aur nahi bhi—bahut precise. Kaunsa waqt, kaunsi direction, kaunsi shelf ke paas shadow gira, sab kuch itna exact ki jaise kisi ne scene pehle se rehearse karaya ho. Shikha ne ek evidence photo table par slide ki. Photo mein theft ke baad ka corridor tha, aur usmein ek blurred figure library ke back gate ki taraf ja raha tha.

Mala ne photo dekhi aur sirf itna kaha, “Haan, yehi tha.” Na zyada, na kam. Shikha ko wahi moment suspicious laga. Witness ya to detail bhoolta hai, ya detail todta hai. Yeh aurat detail ko polish kar rahi thi.

Interrogation aage badha. Shikha ne poocha, “Aap school librarian ho. Itni raat ko library mein kya kar rahi thi?” Mala ne jawab diya, “Lost-and-found register update kar rahi thi.” Shikha ne eyebrow uthayi. “School ke lost-and-found mein theft suspect ka kya kaam?” Mala ne halka sa smile diya, bas ek second ka. “Madam, school mein jo cheezein gum hoti hain, woh kabhi kabhi cheezein nahi hoti.”

Yeh line Shikha ke andar jaakar atak gayi. Usne file band ki, phir kholi. Uske notes mein ek old case ka reference tha—teen saal purana, ek missing child, jo officially runaway declare hua tha. Shikha ne us case ko kabhi publicly discuss nahi kiya tha. Koi bhi nahi jaanta tha ki us missing file mein ek naam aisa tha jo uske liye sirf case number nahi, guilt tha.

Mala ne dheere se handbag khola aur ek library card table par rakha. Card purana tha, corners ghise hue. “Ye aapka hai,” usne kaha. Shikha ne card ko dekha. Card par uska naam nahi tha. Ek aur naam tha—ek bacche ka, jo uski purani investigation se juda hua tha. Shikha ka chehra pehli baar hila. “Ye aapko kahan mila?”

Mala ne seedha uski aankhon mein dekha. “Children ke lost-and-found records mein. Har cheez ka ek pattern hota hai, Detective. Books, lunch boxes, mittens... aur kabhi kabhi log.”

Ab room ka temperature badal gaya. Shikha ne samjha ki Mala dar rahi nahi thi—woh map bana rahi thi. Usne school library ke records, misplaced books, late-return slips, aur abandoned belongings ko use karke detective ke hidden past tak raasta banaya tha. Jo witness lag rahi thi, woh actually hunter thi. Aur jo kahani woh suna rahi thi, woh suspect ko nahi, Shikha ko corner karne ke liye thi.

Shikha ne thandi awaaz mein poocha, “Tum kaun ho?”

Mala ne handbag se ek aur folded paper nikala, table par rakha. “Main woh hoon jo aapki file mein kabhi likha nahi gaya. Main us bacche ki badi behen hoon, jiska naam aapne galti se nahi, choice se chhoda tha.”

Silence. Tube light ki buzzing aur tez ho gayi.

Shikha ka haath file par jam gaya. Usne samjha ki theft sirf school se nahi hua tha. Kisi ne records churaaye the, identity badli thi, aur years se ek aadmi—ya ek network—bacchon ke lost-and-found ke through real identities ko track, erase, aur relocate kar raha tha. Mala ne us system ko expose karne ke liye detective ko yahan bulaya tha, kyunki Shikha hi woh ek insaan thi jo truth ko officially open kar sakti thi. Lekin twist aur gehra tha: Mala sirf informant nahi thi. Woh mastermind thi. Usne Shikha ke guilt ko study kiya, uske purane case ko padha, aur uske past ko leverage bana kar is room tak khincha.

Mala ne aakhri vaar mein kaha, “Aapko lagta hai aap mujhe question kar rahi hain. Nahi, Madam. Main aapko choice de rahi hoon—file khol ke sach likh dijiye, ya phir phir se ek bacche ko ‘missing’ rehne dijiye.”

Shikha ne pehli baar nazar hatai. One-way mirror mein kuch bhi nahi tha. Sirf unka reflection, aur beech mein table par rakha hua evidence photo, library card, aur woh khamoshi jo kisi bhi confession se zyada dangerous thi.

Aur tab Shikha samajh gayi—iss interrogation room mein witness kabhi aayi hi nahi thi. Shikha khud evidence ban chuki thi.