

THE CONFESSION BOOTH

A Mystery/Crime 1-Character Solo Monologue in Hinglish

Genre: Mystery/Crime	Format: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor)	Runtime: 4 - 6 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 1-Character Solo Monologue (Single Actor) Character: Former Public Defender Turned Notary (Female, 39-46)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Raat ka waqt nahi hai, par office aise chup hai jaise kisi ne saans lena bhi legal issue bana diya ho. Desk lamp ka peela gola meri table par gira hua hai, aur baaki sab kuch frosted glass ke paar dhundhla, door, aur thanda. Main apne reading glasses ko thoda upar dhakelti hoon, stamp ko seedha rakhti hoon, aur legal pad ke corner par pen tap karti hoon. Habit hai. Purani habit. Public defender rahi hoon, ab notary hoon. Log samajhte hain badlav bada hota hai. Nahi. Kabhi-kabhi bas shor kam ho jata hai.

Bell nahi bajti. Koi knock nahi. Bas ek envelope mere desk par aakar rukta hai, jaise kisi ne use dar ke saath slide kiya ho. Main usse uthati hoon. Bahut mota nahi, par heavy enough to feel guilty. Upar likha hai: "Urgent. Witness only. Seal immediately." Main hansi rok leti hoon. Witness only? Yeh line usually shadiyon mein sunne ko milti hai, ya phir aise logon se jo apni life ko file number samajh kar handle karna chahte hain.

Andar ek typed statement hai. Main padhna shuru karti hoon, awaaz medium, professional, almost bored. Pehle paragraph mein ek confess karne wala aadmi hai—ya aurat, clear nahi—jo kisi crime ka zimmedar hai. Dusre paragraph mein details. Third mein panic. Fourth mein instructions. Main line by line verify karte hue aage badhti hoon, kyunki notary ka kaam hai signature ko sach ke saath tie karna. Lekin jaise-jaise words aage badhte hain, meri neck ke peeche koi purani yaad jaagti hai.

Yeh murder ka confession nahi hai. Yeh staging notes hain.

Main ek line padhti hoon: "Document to be notarized by Ms. A. Khanna only." Main freeze ho jati hoon. A. Khanna. Mera naam. Purana naam. Woh naam jo main public defender ke dino mein use karti thi, jab files ke beech mein logon ki zindagiyaan sookh jaati thi. Kaun janta hai yeh? Kaun yaad rakhta hai? Main page palat-ti hoon.

Aur phir second page par woh milta hai: mera office ka rough sketch, desk lamp ki position, stamp drawer ka location, aur ek note—"She will verify before sealing. Let her."

Ab mujhe hasi aati hai. Ek chhoti, khatarnak hansii. Kyunki jo insaan meri habits draw karta hai, woh mujhe jaanta hai. Aur jo mujhe jaanta hai, woh ya to meri old cases mein tha... ya unme jala tha.

Main statement padhte padhte notice karti hoon ki har paragraph mein ek naya contradiction hai. Dates galat. Time stamps impossible. Aisa lag raha hai jaise kisi ne confession ko nahi, ek alibi machine ko type kiya ho. Aur beech beech mein chhote instructions: "If questioned, deny receipt." "If she hesitates, mention the Riverside file." Riverside.

Mera pen ruk jata hai.

Riverside case. Woh case jisme ek aadmi ko bina evidence ke andar daalne ki koshish hui thi. Main us waqt public defender thi. Main ne file mein ek missing chain of custody pakdi thi. Main ne judge ke saamne bola tha ki kisi ne police report se line copy ki hai. Main ne kisi ko bachaya tha. Ya shayad kisi ko expose kiya tha. Dono ka nateeja ek jaisa hota hai—log aapko yaad rakhte hain, bas reason alag hota hai.

Ab statement ka last page. "Once notarized, place in envelope. Seal. Do not read again."

Main dheere se kahti hoon, "Wow. Kitni helpful document hai. Bas ek cheez missing hai—tumhara naam."

Koi jawab nahi. Obviously. Main office mein akeli hoon. Lekin ab lamp ki roshni bhi jaise mujhe sun rahi hai.

Main envelope ko utha kar uski seam check karti hoon. Andar kuch aur hai. Ek chhota voice recorder. Purana, cheap, the kind that crackles before truth does. Main play dabati hoon.

Speaker se ek ghhisa-pita male voice aati hai, distorted, breathless: "Aapko bas notarize karna hai. Baaki ka kaam ho chuka hai. Agar aapne file kholi, toh jo Riverside mein hua tha, woh aap par aa jayega."

Main aankhen band karti hoon. Toh yeh blackmail hai. Elegant blackmail. Legal stationery pe likha hua.

Main recorder ko desk par rakh deti hoon aur stamp uthati hoon. Mere haath stable hain. Hamesha stable rehte hain. Panic ko bhi procedure ki zubaan mein translate karna aata hai mujhe.

Main softly bolti hoon, "Sun lo, whoever you are. Agar tum mujhe frame karna chahte ho, toh ek problem hai. Main public defender rahi hoon. Main jhoot ko format mein pehchanti hoon."

Main legal pad par ek naya note likhti hoon—date, time, receipt of suspicious document. Phir envelope ko seal karne ke bajay uska photo leti hoon, voice recorder ko bhi capture karti hoon, aur desk lamp ke neeche statement ko dobara padhti hoon. Is baar loud.

Har word ek clue hai. Har instruction ek confession. Aur har line mujhe yeh bata rahi hai ki jis crime ka blame mere naam pe shift karna tha, uska asli author mujhe office ke darwaze tak la chuka hai—sirf physically nahi, professionally bhi.

Main stamp ko uthati hoon, lekin paper par nahi marti. Hawa mein ek baar ghumati hoon.

"Notarize karna hai?" main muskurati hoon. "Theek hai. Witness bhi karungi. Aur record bhi."

Frosted glass ke paar daylight aur zyada safed ho jata hai, jaise subah nahi, interrogation aa rahi ho. Main envelope ko file tray mein rakhti hoon, apni glasses seedhi karti hoon, aur camera ki taraf nahi—seedha khud se baat karti hoon.

“Jo log samajhte hain ki ek former defender ko dara kar silence kharida ja sakta hai, unhone ek cheez miss kar di,” main kehti hoon. “Mujhe cases se pyaar tha. Ab mujhe patterns se hai.”

Aur jab main final page ke corner par unmasked fingerprint smudge dekhti hoon, mujhe pata chal jata hai: yeh confession kabhi jail ke liye nahi tha. Yeh warning thi. Aur ab warning mere naam pe registered hai.