

THE WITNESS IN SEAT 4

A Mystery/Crime 3-Character Screenplay in Hinglish

Genre: Mystery/Crime	Format: 3-Character Short Film (Trio Cast)	Runtime: 6 - 9 Minutes
Cast: FORMAT: 3-Character Short Film (Trio Cast) Character 1: Inspector Salim (44)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Raat ka waqt hai. Ek purani city bus khaali khadi hai depot ke kone mein, jahan broken overhead lights har kuch second baad jhilmila karte hain aur bahar sadak ki peeli roshni andar ek noir jaisa mahaul bana rahi hai. Bus ke andar sirf teen aadmi hain: Inspector Salim, rolled sleeves aur notebook ke saath, Tarun conductor jo baar-baar apni uniform ki pocket mein rakhe ticket puncher ko chhoo kar apni ghabrahat chhupa raha hai, aur Faiz, ek neat jacket pehne chup-chaap passenger, jis ke haath mein ek chhota sa bag hai. Salim ne bus mein kadam rakhte hi seedha sawaal daag diya: last route par stabbing kisne dekhi? Tarun aur Faiz dono ne ek doosre ki taraf dekha, phir ek hi baat kahi—"Seat 4 mein koi tha."

Salim pehle ise bachkaani confusion samajhta hai. Bus mein total seats khaali hain, aur seat 4 par sirf dhool aur ek halki si chipchipi nishani. Tarun bolta hai ki usne ticket punch kiya tha, par yaad nahi kis ke liye. Faiz kehta hai ki usne ek aadmi ko seat 4 mein baithte dekha tha—na zyada bolne wala, na zyada hilne wala. Salim apne notebook mein route times, stoppages aur ticket stubs note karta hai. Tarun ki ghabrahat badhti jaati hai, Faiz ka chehra aur bhi thanda hota jaata hai. Inspector ko lagta hai dono kuch chhupa rahe hain, shayad witness, shayad culprit. Par har jawab ke saath ek aur sawal khul jaata hai: agar seat 4 mein koi tha, to bus ke CCTV ya driver record kahan hai? Aur agar koi nahi tha, to stabbing ke baad bus itni der tak chup kaise rahi?

Salim flashlight jala kar seat 4 ke neeche aur side panel mein check karta hai. Wahan use ek torn ticket stub milta hai—half-number, half-timestamp. Tarun ke haath kaanpte hain jab Salim usse puchta hai ki last stop par bus kyun late thi. Tarun bolta hai, "Madam, route pe ek aadmi ne phone chhoda tha... ya shayad gir gaya tha." Faiz pehli baar bolta hai zyada clearly: "Phone nahi, recording thi." Salim ruk jaata hai. Faiz kehte jaata hai ki seat 4 par baitha aadmi koi live passenger nahi tha; bus ke floor par ek purana phone pada tha, screen cracked, aur usme ek video chal raha tha—victim ka apna final moments. Koi us video ko dekhte-dekhte react kar raha tha, aur us reaction ko Tarun aur Faiz ne "seat 4 ka aadmi" samajh liya. Jis cheez ko witness samajha gaya, woh asl mein ek playback tha.

Inspector Salim jab phone on karta hai to broken screen par ek shaky clip chalti hai: ek aadmi ka face, bus ki isi seat se record hua angle, aur uske baad ek jhatka—knife flash, saans kaatne ki awaaz, aur phone ka girna. Khaamoshi bus ke andar aur bhaari ho jaati hai. Salim samajh jaata hai ki stabbing route par hua tha, lekin asli witness insaan

nahi tha; victim ne khud apne final moments record kar liye the. Ab sawal yeh nahi tha ki seat 4 mein kaun baitha tha, balki yeh tha ki us phone ko kaun uthakar chupke se bag mein daal gaya. Tarun ka ticket puncher uske haath mein zyada heavy lagne lagta hai. Faiz ki neeli aankhon mein pehli baar dar dikhai deta hai.

Twist tab aata hai jab Salim Faiz ke bag se wahi phone nikaalta hai—aur Faiz ka quiet demeanor toot jaata hai. Woh confess karta hai ki usne victim ko pehle se pehchana tha. Victim ne us par poison ka hisaab aur ek chhota smuggling deal expose karne ki dhamki di thi. Faiz ne stabbing khud nahi ki, lekin phone utha kar recording delete karne ki koshish ki thi. Tarun ne usse dekh liya, isliye woh bhi jhooth bolta raha. Salim notebook band karta hai aur ek sard sa line bolta hai: “Seat 4 mein koi aadmi nahi tha. Seat 4 mein sach baitha tha.” Bus ke broken lights ek baar phir jhilmilati hain, aur teenon ke beech ka silence crime se bhi zyada bolta hai. Raat, bus, aur ek chhota sa phone—bas itna hi kaafi tha ek murder ko mystery aur ek mystery ko pakde jaane layak sach mein badalne ke liye.