

THE WRONG FUNERAL

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: Detective Meenal (38)	Language: Hinglish	Credit: Story Dil Se Team

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Beige walls, soft light, aur phoolon ki meethi-gandi si smell ke beech funeral home ka viewing room ek ajeeb sa pressure banata hai—jaise har saans ke saath koi secret aur heavy ho raha ho. Casket ke upar safed flower garland rakhi hai, curtains band hain, aur guest register ek side table par khula pada hai. Detective Meenal, apni plain formal shirt aur notepad ke saath, room mein aate hi sabse pehle silence ko note karti hai. Uske saamne Saira khadi hai—black attire, immaculate makeup, bilkul composed—but uski aankhon mein wohi defensive shine hai jo tab aati hai jab koi sach ko paperwork mein dabaane ki koshish kare. Thodi der baad Ira room mein ghusti hai, simple salwar suit mein, handbag ko aise pakde jaise usmein uski poori family ki yaadein band ho. Uske haath mein folded death certificate hai, aur uski awaaz kaanpti hui bhi seedhi chubhati hai: “Yeh meri behen ka hai. Aap logon ne body galat family ko dikha di.”

Saira turant counter karti hai ki yeh sirf clerical mistake hai. “Funeral home mein kabhi-kabhi forms mix ho jaate hain, madam. Body same hi hai, bas file number galat ho gaya.” Meenal bina react kiye guest register uthati hai, signatures ko dekhte hue poochti hai ki agar mistake thi, toh do alag families ka naam ek hi page par kaise aaya. Saira ke jawaan, polished answers dheere-dheere chipakne lagte hain. Ira, jo ab tak bas grief mein toot rahi thi, achanak ziddi ho jaati hai. Woh death certificate unfold karke date aur morgue tag number dikhati hai—aur bolti hai ki uski behen ka body last week se yahin tha, lekin aaj usko jo face dikhaya gaya, woh kisi aur aurat ka tha. Usne pehchana kyun? Kyunki behen ke left wrist par ek purana burn mark tha. Casket mein jo body thi, us wrist par koi mark nahi tha.

Meenal ka notepad thoda aur tight ho jaata hai. Woh Saira se calmly poochti hai ki morgue access kis-kis ke paas hai. Saira ke jawab mein pehle irritation, phir carefulness aati hai. “Sirf authorized staff.” Meenal ek simple sa sawaal karti hai: “Aur authorized staff mein aap khud kitni baar records edit karti hain?” Room ka temperature jaise ek degree aur gir jaata hai. Ira, pehli baar grief se nikal kar suspicion mein aati hai, aur guest register ke neeche se ek envelope nikaalti hai jo usne notice kiya tha—unopened, pehle casket ke paas rakha hua. Uske andar insurance claim forms hain, multiple signatures ke saath, aur ek note: “Body release after payment confirmation.” Ira ka chehra safed pad jaata hai. Woh bolti hai ki uski behen ke naam par already ek insurance policy thi, lekin family ko kabhi bataya nahi gaya tha. Meenal turant jodti hai—body swap, fake identity, aur claim money.

Saira pehli baar poori tarah defensive se offensive mein aa jaati hai. Woh kehti hai ki funeral home pe ilzaam lagana aasaan hai, par proof? Meenal casket ke phool hata kar side seam inspect karti hai. Ek chhota sa tag, partially hidden, reveal hota hai—morgue tray number alag hai, aur ink fresh hai. Ira ke haath kaanpne lagte hain jab woh death certificate aur tag ko compare karti hai. “Yeh stamp baad mein maara gaya hai,” Meenal quietly bolti hai. “Aur ye envelope? Ismein jo claim hai, woh us body ke liye hai jo yahan honi hi nahi chahiye thi.” Saira ki silence sab kuch bol deti hai. Phir ek beat ke baad woh thandi awaaz mein admit karti hai ki kuch forms “adjust” kiye gaye the—upar se aane wale logon ke kehne par. Lekin uska confession half-truth hai; woh poora network nahi batati.

Climax mein Meenal guest register ke page ko tear karke, casket ki flower garland ke neeche se ek aur hidden tag nikaalti hai. Dono tags ek hi mortuary code ke hain—do bodies ko ek hi file mein merge karke insurance payout double karne ka system. Ira ka gussa sadness ko tod deta hai. Woh apni behen ke naam ko loudly repeat karti hai, jaise kisi ne use file number bana diya ho. Saira finally crack hoti hai—woh batati hai ki records ka swap inside job tha, aur funeral home ke andar se hi claims process hote the. Bodies ko kabhi-kabhi “wrong family” ko dikhaya jaata tha taaki jaldi signatures mil jaayein, aur phir asli body swap ho kar dusri file mein chali jaati. Meenal ke liye case solve ho chuka hota hai, lekin room ke andar jo moral stain reh jaata hai, woh zyada bada hai: yahan maut bhi paperwork ki tarah manipulate ki ja rahi thi.

Ant mein, casket ke saamne teenon khadi hain—ek detective, ek mourner, aur ek woman jo system ki wajah se complicit thi. Curtains band hain, par sach khul chuka hai. Meenal apna notepad band karti hai aur seedha Saira se kehti hai, “Ab jo bhi hua, ab record mein sahi likha jaayega.” Ira apni behen ke death certificate ko seene se lagati hai. Aur room mein pehli baar silence respect ka nahi, exposure ka lagta hai.