

THE BOX

Thriller

Adithya Rajan

2019

1. INT./EXT. APARTMENT/HALLWAY OUTSIDE APARTMENT

The focus is on a hallway of an apartment building. We hear the sound of steps and the sound of voices having a conversation, which we begin to hear halfway through...

SURYA  
You're kidding me

NEHA  
No, I'm serious!

SURYA  
So then what, you just sat there?

NEHA  
(laughing)  
Yeah, what else could I do, he  
wouldn't stop talking

At this point, they reach the door and Surya begins shuffling for his keys.

SURYA  
(Opening the door)  
Well if that homeless dude really  
did invent the iPhone, he's some  
kind of genius

NEHA  
Yeah... I certainly learned a lot  
from him

Now the two characters are inside and begin taking off their coats

SURYA  
(laughing)  
I think we all could, to be honest

NEHA  
So yeah that's why I haven't been  
to McDonald's in 3 years

SURYA  
Hey, so do you still want to go to  
Raghav's party?

NEHA  
Maybe, what's the time?

Surya puts his phone for charge and checks the time as he plugs it in

SURYA  
(checks his phone)  
Oh wow, it's only 8... We have some  
time

NEHA

Honestly, I'm so full from dinner I could crash right now

SURYA

That was some good food though, I can't believe I've never been there before... But come on! the night is young let's do something fun

NEHA

Can't we just stay in and watch a movie?

Surya is just smiling at her

NEHA

What?

SURYA

(Reaching in to put his arms around her)

I can't believe it's been 6 months already... I love you

NEHA

(She gets super wide-eyed and pulls away)

Um... Thank you

They immediately stop hugging and Surya takes a step back and gives Neha a bewildered look.

Suddenly, there is a loud KNOCK KNOCK on the door. They both turn their heads quickly to look at the door but both remain frozen. The knocking gets harder and more aggressive

NEHA

(At the same time as Surya)

I'll get it

SURYA

(At the same time as Neha)

I'm gonna use the bathroom real quick

THE CAMERA FOLLOWS SURYA INTO THE BATHROOM, WHERE HE PROCEEDS TO TALK TO HIMSELF IN THE MIRROR

SURYA

What the fuck does thank you mean? Ok... Ok... It's fine, she doesn't care, she's chill. Maybe 6 months is just too early. You're gonna just walk out there

Suddenly he hears a loud shriek from the living room and rushes outside to check what happened. As he steps out, Neha runs towards him and hugs him, crying.

SURYA

What happened?

Neha doesn't say anything and points towards the door. There lies a big box that is opened. Surya slowly and carefully walks towards the box and peers inside.

THE CAMERA PANS OVER THE BOX TO REVEAL A DEAD BODY INSIDE.  
CUT TO TITLE CREDITS

2. INT. APARTMENT

The scene opens on Surya running back into the bathroom and immediately vomiting into the toilet. He is disgusted and frightened by what he just saw. We then cut to Neha sitting on the couch still in shock over what happened.

WE THEN SEE A PAN OVER THE BODY AGAIN. THE BODY IS FULLY CLOTHED WITH A T SHIRT AND JEANS , ALTHOUGH HIS SHIRT HAS STAINS OF BLOOD. THE BODY IS A BEARED MALE, SOMEWHAT SKINNY AND HAS THICK HAIR. NEAR HIS FEET WE SEE WHAT LOOKS LIKE AN ENVELOPE

Surya walks out of the bathroom and turns towards Neha.

SURYA

What the fuck is going on

NEHA

I don't fucking know, there's a dead fucking body in our living room

SURYA

Are you sure he's dead?

NEHA

You think he could be alive?

SURYA

I don't know... Can you check?

NEHA

I'm not going near that thing, you check

SURYA

Ok fine

Surya pulls his sleeves over his hands and walks towards the body. He leans down to check the body's pulse, but sees the envelope as his finger is against the body's jugular. On the envelope is written in large letters, do not call the police.

SURYA

Hey

Neha is unresponsive

SURYA

Yo, get over here, look at this.

NEHA

(shaking her head as  
though she just regained  
consciousness)

What is that?

SURYA

I don't know, can you open it up

NEHA

Did you check his pulse?

SURYA

Fuck, sorry

Surya puts his finger against the body's neck again.

SURYA

Shit, I don't think so.

NEHA

Oh my god...

SURYA

Yeah I... don't feel a pulse.

NEHA

No, come here look at this. Isn't  
this your dad?

Surya stands up and walks over to Neha

SURYA

What? Give me that.

His eyes get really wide and grabs the stack of papers that Neha is holding from her. He starts flipping through the papers and we see that there is a stack of photographs of their close family and friends

SURYA

There's pictures of my whole family  
in here. And isn't that your  
roommate Shreya?

NEHA

Yeah and they have my other two  
roommates too. They have my whole  
family in there too. But look at  
this

Neha hands him a document. The document contains personal details like the addresses and phone numbers of the people in the pictures.

SURYA

Thats... Shit who's doing this

NEHA

I don't know...

SURYA

How did they get our addresses

NEHA

I don't know...

SURYA

Why are they doing this to us?

NEHA

Do you really think I have any of these answers

SURYA

Sorry, I'm just... Thinking aloud.  
Is that everything in the envelope

NEHA

Well almost. There was this thing

She takes out a smaller envelope that has no markings on it

NEHA

I'm not sure what it is, I havent opened it yet

Surya grabs the envelope from her and tears it open

SURYA

It looks like a series of instructions...

NEHA

Instructions about what?

SURYA

I think... About the body

NEHA

What does it say?

SURYA

Do not call the police. I will find out. You already know I have your private information. And the information of your loved ones. Do not test me.

(MORE)

SURYA (CONT'D)

The consequences will be dire. If you do as I ask, your loved ones will remain unharmed. Just follow all my instructions exactly as they are written here. If you stray from them at all, I will find out.

NEHA

Oh god...

SURYA

Your job tonight is to dispose of the body. You will take it to the location specified by these coordinates: 40... Something, I don't know what the fuck this means

Neha leans over and looks at the letter

NEHA

They're latitude and longitude coordinates

SURYA

Oh shit ok. You will take it to the location specified by these coordinates, whatever this location is, and then it says... Dump the body in the lake. Finish the task by midnight. That is all.

There is a long silence as the two take in what they just read

NEHA

Does this make us accomplices to murder?

SURYA

(pauses and thinks)

I think we should call the police

NEHA

What? No, he just said not to

SURYA

I mean how the fuck is he going to know who I'm calling

NEHA

How the fuck was he supposed to know where your dad lives?

SURYA

Are they even in danger though?  
This shit doesn't even prove  
anything. I could probably find out  
all the same stuff with a couple  
google searches. How do we know  
this guy isn't just fucking with  
us?

NEHA

I reeeeeaaaally doubt he's just  
fucking with us

SURYA

Why?

NEHA

Well for starters, THERE'S A DEAD  
FUCKING BODY IN OUR LIVING ROOM

SURYA

I get that, but don't you think  
this should be handled by the  
police? I mean do you really think  
we're in danger over this?

NEHA

Is that something you want to risk?

SURYA

I don't know what I want right now

NEHA

Surya. We can't call the police. We  
just can't. I can't let you do that

SURYA

(pauses again)

You're right. But are you really  
saying you want to go bury that  
thing?

NEHA

Do we have a choice? If we don't,  
our families or friends could die  
or get hurt or something

SURYA

Do you have your phone?

NEHA

(Pulls her phone out)

Yeah

SURYA

(hands her the letter)

Look up those coordinates. How far  
are they from here?



NEHA

Yeah give me a sec

Surya goes back to the dead body and checks its pulse again

SURYA

(mumbling to himself)

I don't know what I expected

He stands up and starts pacing back and forth

SURYA

Did you find it yet?

NEHA

(looking at her phone  
still)

Yeah give me a sec

SURYA

Ok I'm assuming this isn't nearby so we're going to need to take my car. And we also need to be able to bring the... thing downstairs without anyone noticing. And we have to hope that neither of my roommates come home any time soon, or else they'll freak too. And we need to let Raghav know that we can't make his party. And... Are you ok?

NEHA

I can't figure this out

SURYA

Just enter the coordinates into google maps

NEHA

Yeah that's what I did

SURYA

What? Give me that

Neha shrugs her shoulders. Surya is looking up the coordinates of the location

SURYA

Ok this place is only about an hour from here. It's some kind of farm or something. If we leave like right now, we can make it back before midnight

NEHA

Where's your car?

SURYA

I parked it down the street. Can you go get it while I pack this box up again?

NEHA

Yeah, gimme your keys

SURYA

(tosses her his keys)  
Here, help me move this thing into my bedroom just in case anyone walks in in the meantime

NEHA

Yeah

They position themselves at the opposite ends of the box and start carrying it.

SURYA

There's a dead body in my bedroom

NEHA

I'm gonna go get the car

SURYA

I can't sleep here ever again

They hear the door opening and walk out of Surya's room to see his roommate Jamal taking off his coat

### 3. INT. APARTMENT

JAMAL

(taking off his coat)  
Hey guys

SURYA

Hey, I thought you were at the library

JAMAL

I've been there all day, I needed a fucking break. Goddamn I hate exams. How was your date?

SURYA

Yeah, it was fine

JAMAL

Cool cool

NEHA

We're gonna be in his room

They go back into Surya's room

NEHA

What now? Can you tell him to leave?

SURYA

I don't know, we can't tell him to leave, that's going to raise suspicion

NEHA

We don't exactly have a lot of time left

SURYA

How far away is the... Uhh... Spot again?

NEHA

An hour-ish I think

SURYA

Shit we gotta get this thing out of here like... now

NEHA

Yeah, you think?

Surya gives her a look

NEHA

Sorry... I'm just... Stressed. But my point is, we can't just walk this thing out the front door with this guy out there?

SURYA

(glances over at the window and shrugs)  
Well...

NEHA

We are not throwing the body off of our balcony

SURYA

Do you have a better idea?

NEHA

Any idea is a better idea. How about I figure a way to distract him and get him back to his room.

SURYA

What? How?

NEHA

Uhh... I'm gonna go out there and tell him there's a rat in his room and maybe that'll get him to get up

SURYA

Sure go distract him but come up with a better excuse than that please

Neha runs out of Surya's room and starts shouting as she runs to the living room

NEHA

JAMAL THERE'S A FUCKING RAT IN YOUR...

She immediately stops as she sees Jamal at the dining table looking through the contents

JAMAL

What are these?

NEHA

(pretending not to know)  
Wha... What are those?

JAMAL

(reading from the letter)  
Do not call the police? The consequences will be dire? What the fuck is going on?

NEHA

Nothing! It's all fine

JAMAL

Is this yours?

Surya walks in to check on Neha

JAMAL

(turns towards Surya)  
Do you know about this?

SURYA

Uhhh

JAMAL

It looks like someone's threatening you

SURYA

Did you read the whole thing?

JAMAL

Yeah and they have pictures of your parents and shit dude

SURYA

Yeah... Listen bro I need you  
forget you saw any of that

JAMAL

I mean fuck... they have pictures  
of me too. Did you guys call the  
police?

NEHA

I really don't think we should call  
the police

JAMAL

I think your lives are in danger

SURYA

If we call the police your life  
will be in danger too

JAMAL

Who's doing this?

SURYA

Does it look like I fucking know?  
Look, I just want to get this the  
fuck over with. I'm not trying to  
put anyone else in danger. And that  
means doing whatever the fuck this  
guy says to do

JAMAL

Wait... Where's the dead guy?

NEHA

In his room

JAMAL

Can I see?

SURYA

What? No. Look dude for our sake.  
Actually for your own sake. Just  
forget you saw this.

JAMAL

No, let me help you!

SURYA

Please just give me the envelope so  
we can get this over with.

JAMAL

Dude if you're not going to call  
the cops at least let me help you.  
I know I'm kinda high right now but

Suddenly the door opens and the third roommate, Neil, walks in. He has headphones in his ears and is jamming to music. Neha grabs the papers out of Jamal's hands and hides them behind her back. Neil takes his shoes off and nods towards the others.

NEIL  
 (taking his headphones  
 off)  
 Hey, how was your date tonight?

JAMAL  
 (nervously)  
 What I didn't have a date tonight?

Neil gives him a weird look

JAMAL  
 Oh you meant them

SURYA  
 Yeah it was fine

NEHA  
 It was great, actually

Surya gives her a look

NEIL  
 Ohhhkay well cool. Wait so are you  
 guys going to Raghav's tonight?

NEHA  
 Don't think we can, sorry

NEIL  
 Come on, please don't make me go  
 alone

SURYA  
 We're a little busy sorry man

NEIL  
 (sighs)  
 Jamal?

JAMAL  
 Uhh I don't know I might have to  
 head back to the library

NEIL  
 Come on man, I can't go to this  
 fucking party alone sober. Gimme  
 one sec I'm gonna change I'll be  
 right back and then you're gonna go  
 shot for shot with me.

Surya turns towards Jamal

SURYA  
Ok, I need to forget about  
everything you saw in that  
envelope.

JAMAL  
But...

SURYA  
Look, Neil can't find out about  
this too

JAMAL  
But...

NEHA  
Jamal, please

SURYA  
Just distract him for us please

Jamal sighs.

Neil walks out, heads to the couch and grabs a handle of  
alcohol from the kitchen

NEIL  
You guys ready?

JAMAL  
(reluctantly)  
Yeah, screw it, come on

Surya looks at Jamal and nods at him. Jamal hesitates and  
nods back. Neha and Surya head back to his room

NEHA  
Fuck, now Neil is out there too.

SURYA  
It's fine, just... Same plan as  
before ok?

NEHA  
Yeah, fine

Neha is about to open the door and then turns back towards  
Surya

NEHA  
This isn't gonna end well, is it

Surya sighs. Neha rushes back to him and gives him a quick  
hug which he did not expect. She runs out

## 4. INT./EXT. APARTMENT/PARKING LOT UNDER APARTMENT

Neha walks back into the living room. Neil and Jamal are on the couch packing a bowl. Jamal looks at her with a concerned look as she walks across the room towards the door.

NEIL

Where are you going?

NEHA

Home. Hey Jamal

JAMAL

Yeah

NEHA

Thanks. For the thing from before

Neha leaves. Neil looks at Jamal confused

Neha walks down the stairs and gets in the car. She begins to move the car to be parked under Surya's window.

Meanwhile, Surya is in his room and closes the door, then looks at the box and sighs. He looks under his bed for his box of stationary and takes out a roll of packing tape. He closes the box and starts applying the packing tape over it.

Neha finishes parking the car in position and gets out of the car and looks up at the window, waiting for Surya to give the signal.

Surya opens the window and signals to Neha to move out of the way. He goes back to the box and struggles to lift the heavy box. He eventually gets one end of the box over the ledge and manages to shove the box off over the ledge.

The box gets damaged and it springs open upon impact. The body rolls out and Neha runs towards it.

Surya quickly runs out of his room and heads for the door, walking past Neil and Jamal still on the couch.

SURYA

(similarly to how Neha  
said before)

Hey Jamal

JAMAL

You good?

SURYA

Yeah. Yo, thanks, for the thing  
from before

Surya leaves and shuts the door



NEIL  
What thing from before?

JAMAL  
What? Nothing

NEIL  
You guys are acting mad sus  
There's an awkward silence

JAMAL  
Here just drink

5. EXT. PARKING LONG UNDERNEATH APARTMENT

Surya walks down to see Neha trying to put the body back into the box.

SURYA  
His head didn't bust open on impact  
or something did it?

NEHA  
Ew no

SURYA  
Aight pop the trunk

Neha pops the trunk

SURYA  
Here help me with this

They each grab one end of the body and toss him in the back of the trunk and we see them looking down at the body from the perspective of the trunk

SURYA  
Do you have the address of the  
place we're supposed to go?

NEHA  
Yeah it's still on my phone I think

SURYA  
How much time do we have left?

NEHA  
It's a little after 10 right now so  
we gotta get going

SURYA  
Aight let's go then, give me your  
phone, I'll navigate

They both get into the car and Neha pulls out of the parking lot. The car ride is mostly silent as they drive towards the location

6. INT. CAR

Neha is driving while Surya is in the passenger seat navigating. They pull out onto the highway and are driving with music playing on the radio.

NEHA

How far out are we?

SURYA

(checking the phone)

Uhhhhh, 22 minutes

More silence follows

NEHA

How are we supposed to...

SURYA

(points to the right)

Take this exit right here

NEHA

I was just saying... How are we supposed to go back to our normal lives tomorrow. Like do we just forget all this happened?

SURYA

(being reticent)

Yeah, I don't know

NEHA

That's all you have to say?

SURYA

This isn't exactly a normal occurrence for me either

NEHA

Hey, are you ok?

SURYA

Are you?

NEHA

I mean no, but...

SURYA

Do you think anyone should feel normal about this whole thing?

NEHA

No! That's not what I mean

SURYA

Look, I just wanna get this over with and then we can worry about how to go back to normal later

NEHA

Yeah, it's just... Look, are we good?

SURYA

Yeah why wouldn't we be?

NEHA

No it's just... Look, you've been acting weird all night

SURYA

Yeah, because we are about to bury and hide a body

NEHA

No, that's not why. I mean I'm not saying it isn't a weird situation

SURYA

Neha, just...

NEHA

No let me finish. Ok you've been a little off ever since you told me you loved me and I know I could have come up with a better response than thank you but it kind of caught me off guard and I didn't know what else to say. All that being said I just want you to know that just because I can't say it back to you right now doesn't mean I won't be able to in the future and doesn't mean that I don't care about you now

SURYA

I just... I just thought you would have felt the same way

NEHA

Look, it's only been 6 months. And I've cherished every moment of it with you. These things take time

SURYA

Yeah, I know, I know... I'm not mad by the way, I guess I was just being awkward

NEHA  
 (looks over at Surya)  
 I don't know how but... We're gonna  
 get through this

The car pulls into the lot at the lake. Neha and Surya get out of the car and go towards the trunk to be get the body out

7. EXT. LAKE

Surya and Neha pull the body out of the trunk and carry it over towards the dock. They manage to bring it to the end and lay it down on the ground before throwing it off.

SURYA  
 (sighs)  
 We're almost done

NEHA  
 Why us though?

SURYA  
 Huh?

NEHA  
 All this was so elaborately planned out, I just want to know why whomever is doing this chose us

SURYA  
 I don't know why he chose us. None of this makes any sense. I'm just going to pray that we never hear from him again.

NEHA  
 Shall we push him off then?

SURYA  
 I wonder who he is... Was. What a horrible way to die. No one deserves to go like this

NEHA  
 We have no other choice though

They push the body off the dock into the lake. Surya turns towards Neha and gives her a hug.

SURYA  
 We're done

Suddenly we hear a gunshot and Neha collapses to the ground.

SURYA  
 Neha? NEHA!

He begins to kneel down to check on her.

KILLER  
STAND UP

SURYA  
Who the hell are you?

KILLER  
That doesn't matter

SURYA  
Oh god, Neha tell me you're alive  
please

KILLER  
SHUT UP

He tosses an envelope towards Surya

KILLER  
Follow the instructions inside

SURYA  
Why are you doing this?

KILLER  
I SAID SHUT UP

SURYA  
Just kill me too, please

KILLER  
Pick up the envelope

SURYA  
(picking up the envelope)  
What the hell do you want me to do

KILLER  
Don't forget, I know where your  
family lives. I know where her  
family lives. Follow the  
instructions in the envelope. And  
they will be safe. I don't give a  
shit about killing you. Just follow  
the instructions.

SURYA  
(looking down at the  
envelope)  
Oh god...

8. INT. UNKNOWN PERSON'S APARTMENT

A couple are having dinner at the dining table when the doorbell suddenly rings.

The man walks towards the door and opens it. He looks left and right, but no one is there. He then looks down and sees a large box with the words DO NOT CALL THE POLICE written on the top.