

THE BRAIN BRAKE

camera guide · everything that happens in front of a lens

FOR VENKATESH

SHOOTING DAY · TUESDAY 18 AUGUST 2026 · BENGALURU

version three · built from the film, not typed by hand

THE ONE THING TO UNDERSTAND

You are not filming a film. You are filming a boy in an empty grey room, talking to a lens, reacting to things that do not exist yet. The runner, the factory, the mission control room, Coach Brain and every drawn world in this story are made in Zagreb afterwards and built around him.

So the job is to hand over a clean, consistent, evenly lit boy who can be cut out and placed anywhere. Consistency beats beauty on this one. A gorgeous take we cannot cut out is worth nothing, and a plain take we can is worth everything.

THE DAY, IN NUMBERS

Frames in the finished film	50
Frames that need you	27
Frames with a line to camera	10
Setups on the day	8
Cast	Manan only
Finished running time	1:57

TECHNICAL

- 4K, 25 fps, 16:9, no in camera sharpening
- Original camera files, untouched. No transcode, no grade.
- Separate audio with the slate intact. His voice is the film.
- Photograph the wardrobe and each lighting setup before you strike them.

Manan is fourteen and he has ADHD. The whole shooting method is built around that, and it happens to produce a better film anyway.

- One sentence per take. Never ask him to run a paragraph.
- Let the camera roll through the resets. The moment between takes is often the take.
- No counting down and no pressure language. Roll, and let him go when he is ready.
- Break every twenty minutes. A tired take is a wasted card.
- Shoot past the point where it feels finished. Take six is usually the one.
- He has rehearsed from a book that gives him one line per page. If you ask for a line by its number, he will know exactly which one you mean.

THE FOUR SETUPS

SETUP A Grey backdrop, walking and reacting

ON GREY · 7 frames · 1.5 1.6 2.6 3.2 3.3 3.4 3.6

Cut out later and placed inside a drawn world. Soft key from camera RIGHT at forty five degrees. Fill from the left at half strength.

Eye level on sticks, locked off. This is the setup the film lives in. He is cut out of this grey and placed inside drawn worlds, so keep clear space around him on all four sides and never relight between frames.

SETUP B Standing eyeline, reacting to Coach Brain

ON GREY · 4 frames · 4.2 4.4b 4.7 4.8

Cut out later and placed inside a drawn world. Same lighting as A, unchanged. Key from camera RIGHT.

CORRECTED 19.8.2026 from seated to STANDING, against the footage. In version four, the comic strip, Manan stands throughout the film and it is Coach Brain who sits. The earlier wording said seated eyeline and was wrong. Ball on a stand at his standing eye height, camera left, for the mark. Do not relight, only move the mark. Coach Brain is drawn in later.

SETUP C White void, still, to lens

ON WHITE · 6 frames · 7.3 8.1 8.3 8.6 8.7 8.8

Cut out later. The world has fallen away behind him. Flat even light both sides, no modelling, no shadow on the backdrop.

The end of the film. He is still, dead to lens, and the world has fallen away behind him.

SETUP D Jump, high frame rate. Optional, five minutes.

ON WHITE · 0 frames · optional

Cut out later. The world has fallen away behind him. Same as C.

Wider, room above his head. Only if the day allows it. Nothing depends on it.

SETUP E His room, at his desk

IN HIS ROOM · 3 frames · 2.3 4.5 5.4

A real room, shot as it is. Not cut out. Warm window light, no lamps fighting it.

A real room, shot as it is. These frames are NOT on grey and are not cut out.

SETUP F His room, at the blackboard

IN HIS ROOM · 1 frames · 2.1

A real room, shot as it is. Not cut out. Same warm window light, standing.

A real blackboard, shot completely clean except for one vertical chalk line down the middle. He writes with real chalk. Everything that appears written is added later, so it does not matter what he writes, only that his arm genuinely moves in front of it. Give a clean locked off pass of the empty board with no Manan, five seconds.

SETUP G His room, on the stationary bike

IN HIS ROOM · 4 frames · 5.6 5.7 5.8 5.9

A real room, shot as it is. Not cut out. Same warm window light.

Wide, closer, close. NOT on grey. A stationary bike that stays in one place, ideally with a solid wheel and handlebars that do not move, because the line this scene turns on is that nothing about his legs changed.

SETUP H The booth

THE BOOTH · 1 frames · 8.9

Voice only. Nothing is seen. One warm light low and behind him, everything else falling away.

A small room made dark. Music stand with the script pages, microphone on a stand, headphones. He reads as a silhouette and the page is the only lit thing. His face does not need to read. Three or four shots. Voice only.

SETUP EXT One quiet road, early morning

EXTERIOR · 1 frames · 5.5

A real road, early morning. Whatever the morning gives. Early, before the traffic.

Riding hard, side on, a real road. Thirty minutes. The only exterior in the film.

IF THE PICTURE AND THE WORDS DISAGREE

Follow the picture for anything you can see: light, direction, framing, wardrobe, where he stands.
Follow the words for anything you cannot: what happens, what he says, how long it is on screen.
Then tell us, so we can fix the words.

In film order, which is not shooting order. Group them by setup on the day and shoot whatever is lit. Each page carries the timecode it lands on in the finished film, how long it is on screen, the words he says over it if any, and what the camera has to do. The picture is a reference for framing and mood. It is not a photograph of anything real, it was drawn to show you the intention.

00:00:04:11 → 00:00:04:21

10 frames · 0.4 seconds on screen

NO LINE. PICTURE ONLY.



CAMERA

He enters at camera LEFT and moves to the right, as the reference shows, stops, and looks off. Half a second on screen. Shoot the walk in six or seven times and let him arrive differently each time.

00:00:04:21 → 00:00:10:05

134 frames · 5.4 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“Hold on. He had nothing left. So where did THAT come from?”



CAMERA

The first time he speaks to us. Straight to lens, glass at chest height. He has just seen something impossible and he is asking us about it, not telling us. Shoot past the point where it feels finished. Take six is usually the one.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS FRAME AFTERWARDS

THROUGH THE GLASS. Push in on the lens until the circle fills the frame. The next scene, the lecture room of 1923, appears inside the glass, bending at the edges as if seen through it, then straightens as we come out the other side into 2.1.

00:00:10:05 → 00:00:13:00

70 frames · 2.8 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · VOICE OVER, HIS FACE NEED NOT BE TO LENS

“A. V. Hill. Nineteen twenty three.”



CAMERA

He writes on the empty board and says the name and the year over it. His arm must pass in front of where the writing will be.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS FRAME AFTERWARDS

THE BOARD IS SHOT COMPLETELY EMPTY except for one vertical chalk line down the middle. Everything else is composited afterwards. Manan must actually write on it on the day, so the chalk in his hand moves and his arm passes in front of the writing. The left half carries a quick chalk sketch of A. V. Hill and his year. The right half carries 1997, T. Noakes, and the new chain.

00:00:13:10 → 00:00:13:20

10 frames · 0.4 seconds on screen

NO LINE. PICTURE ONLY.

**CAMERA**

At his desk. The glass raised toward the lens, the circle filling as much of frame as it can. This is a transition, we travel through it, so hold it long and hold it steady. Push the camera in on a chair rather than zooming.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS FRAME AFTERWARDS

THROUGH THE GLASS. Same move. The factory inside the lens grows until the circle fills the frame and we are inside the factory for 2.4.

00:00:15:17 → 00:00:18:01

59 frames · 2.4 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · VOICE OVER, HIS FACE NEED NOT BE TO LENS

“Except it doesn't explain this.”



CAMERA

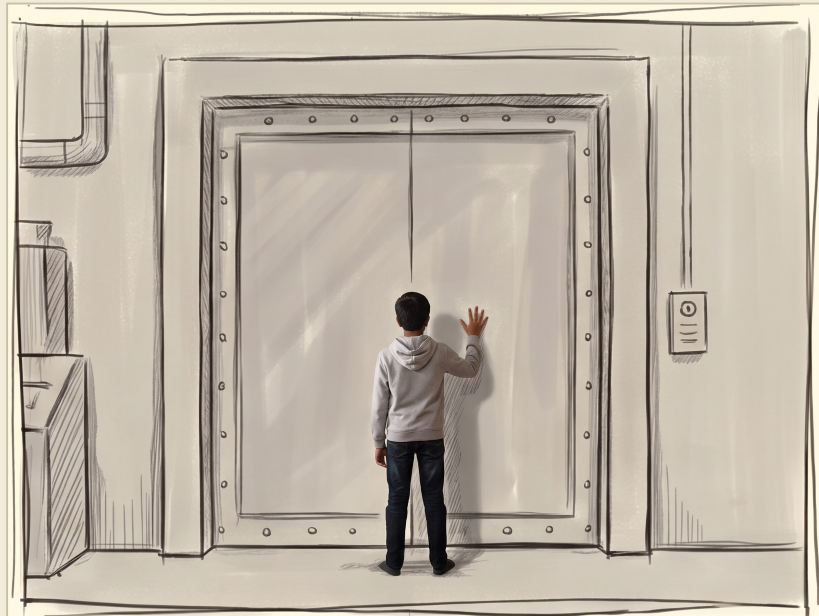
Over his shoulder, looking back at the board. Voice only, so his face can be three quarters. Shoot a clean profile as well.

00:00:18:11 → 00:00:21:17

81 frames · 3.2 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · VOICE OVER, HIS FACE NEED NOT BE TO LENS

“At the back, a door nobody opens.”



CAMERA

He looks at something low and to camera left that is not there. Give him a mark. Curious, not worried.

00:00:21:17 → 00:00:22:02

10 frames · 0.4 seconds on screen

NO LINE. PICTURE ONLY.



CAMERA

His hand reaching forward, palm open, at chest height. The door is drawn in later. Shoot the hand alone as an insert too.

00:00:22:02 → 00:00:27:22

145 frames · 5.8 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · VOICE OVER, HIS FACE NEED NOT BE TO LENS

“Tested the moment they gave up, the muscles could still do far more.”



CAMERA

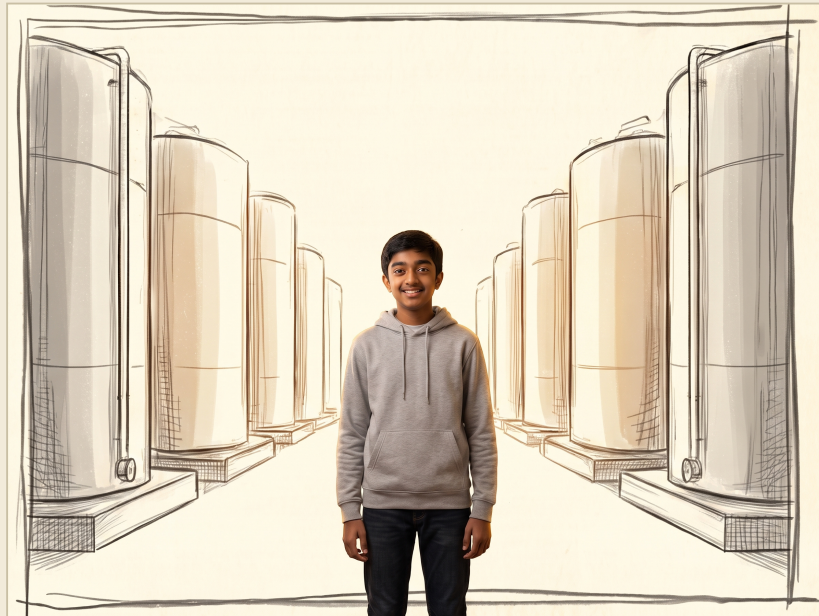
Wide, him small in frame, looking up and around at nothing. He is standing in an enormous room that does not exist yet. Give him time to actually look.

00:00:27:22 → 00:00:31:13

91 frames · 3.6 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“It was never empty. Somebody closed that door.”



CAMERA

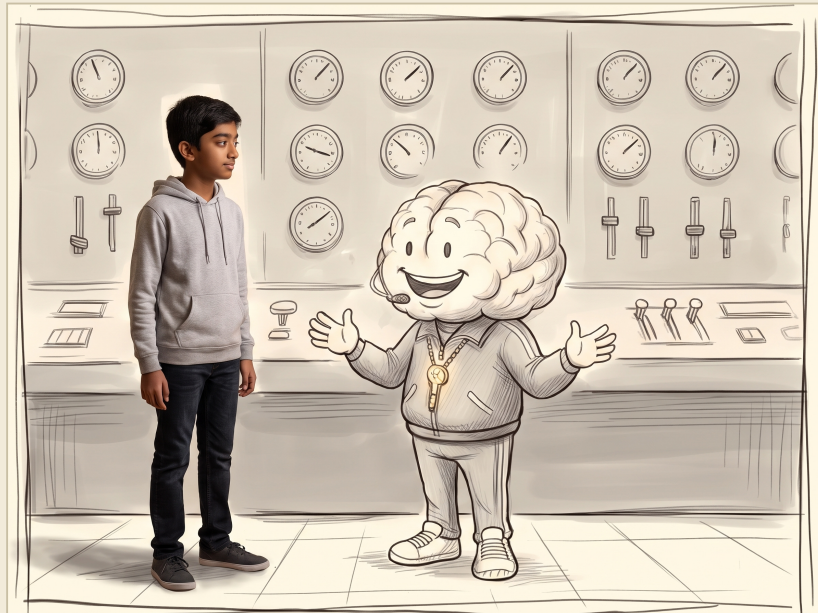
To camera. The end of the mystery and the start of the argument. Certain, quiet, no push.

00:00:34:14 → 00:00:36:12

48 frames · 1.9 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“You closed that door.”



CAMERA

To camera, level, an accusation that is not angry. He has just worked out who is responsible and he is almost pleased about it.

00:00:46:12 → 00:00:49:04

67 frames · 2.7 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“So you're secretly pacing me?”

NO PLATE YET · THIS FRAME IS SHOT ON THE DAY

CAMERA

NEW. Same setup and same eye line as 4.2, one step closer. Not accusing any more, working it out, impressed without wanting to show it. A small pause before the word secretly.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS FRAME AFTERWARDS

TO SHOOT 18 AUG. Manan to camera, same setup and same eyeline as 4.2, one step closer. He is not accusing now, he is working it out. The question lands and he holds it.

00:00:49:04 → 00:00:53:17

113 frames · 4.5 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · VOICE OVER, HIS FACE NEED NOT BE TO LENS

**“Like a phone at twenty percent. Not broken.
Protecting itself.”**

**CAMERA**

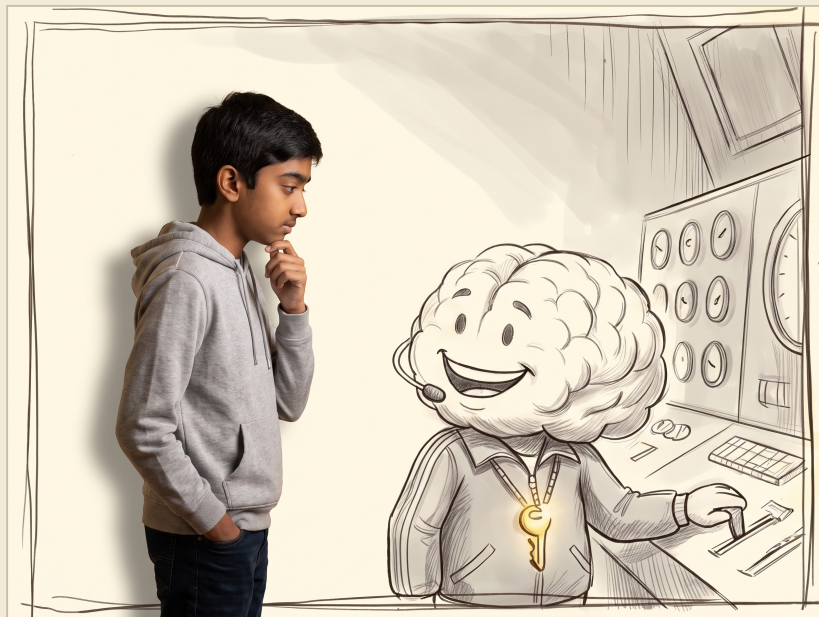
At his desk, in his room. Voice only over a picture of him. He looks down at his own hand as though holding a phone, with nothing in it. Shoot the empty hand clean as well.

00:00:59:16 → 00:01:06:19

178 frames · 7.1 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“So the limit isn't my body. It's your judgement. They call it the Central Governor Theory.”



CAMERA

To camera. He names the theory. A subtitle goes under this later, so leave the lower quarter of frame uncluttered.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS FRAME AFTERWARDS

ON SCREEN SUBTITLE, small, low in frame, held two seconds, nobody speaks it: "Central Governor Theory, proposed by Prof. Tim Noakes, 1997. An influential model. Scientists are still investigating how the brain and muscles produce fatigue." It costs no running time because it is not spoken, and it is what protects the film on scientific accuracy.

00:01:06:19 → 00:01:12:09

140 frames · 5.6 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“It sets your limit in advance, and keeps something in reserve.”

NO PLATE YET · THIS FRAME IS SHOT ON THE DAY

CAMERA

NEW, AND IMPORTANT. Shoot as one continuous take with 4.7, on the same breath. We cut it into two panels afterwards. This is the only sentence in the film that states the science plainly, so it is slow, still, and straight down the lens. A clear beat before and keeps something in reserve.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS FRAME AFTERWARDS

TO SHOOT 18 AUG. Direct continuation of 4.7, identical setup, identical light, cut on the same breath so the two panels read as one take. This is the only sentence in the film that states the science plainly, so he says it slowly and to camera. Noakes and 1997 stay on the lower third underneath.

00:01:20:02 → 00:01:20:12

10 frames · 0.4 seconds on screen

NO LINE. PICTURE ONLY.

**CAMERA**

At his desk. Close, his face as an idea lands. No line. Shoot a long unbroken take of him thinking and we will find the moment.

00:01:20:12 → 00:01:22:10

48 frames · 1.9 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · VOICE OVER, HIS FACE NEED NOT BE TO LENS

“So I tried it.”



CAMERA

EXTERIOR, early morning, real road. Riding hard, side on. Voice only over it. Thirty minutes is enough. This is the one place in the film where he is genuinely moving through the world.

00:01:22:10 → 00:01:22:20

10 frames · 0.4 seconds on screen

NO LINE. PICTURE ONLY.



CAMERA

In his room, on the stationary bike. Wide. Riding, working, not yet suffering.

00:01:22:20 → 00:01:23:05

10 frames · 0.4 seconds on screen

NO LINE. PICTURE ONLY.



CAMERA

Closer. The hardest moment. Effort, not pain. He is working, not collapsing.

00:01:23:05 → 00:01:25:14

59 frames · 2.4 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · VOICE OVER, HIS FACE NEED NOT BE TO LENS

“Nothing about my legs changed.”



CAMERA

Close. Eyes closed, still, breathing, the bike stopped or nearly stopped. Shoot a full unbroken minute and we will use the stillest twenty frames. No performance at all.

00:01:25:14 → 00:01:28:20

81 frames · 3.2 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“Only what I believed they had left.”



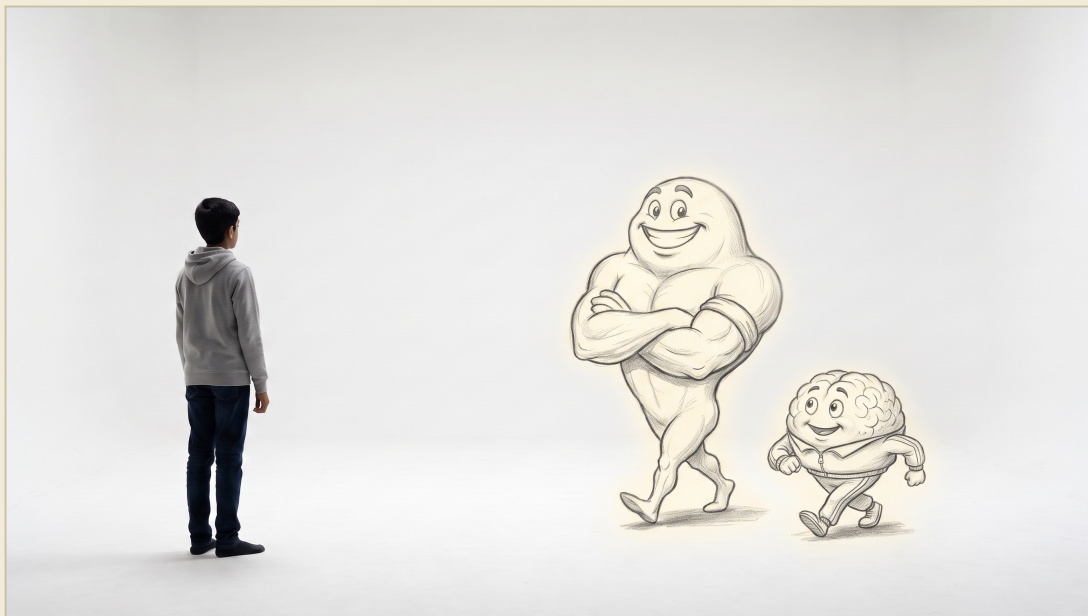
CAMERA

Eyes open, to camera, still on the bike. The quietest line in the film and the one the whole experiment is for. Do not let him push it.

00:01:39:18 → 00:01:40:03

10 frames · 0.4 seconds on screen

NO LINE. PICTURE ONLY.



CAMERA

Him against white, small, still. A breath between two scenes. No line.

00:01:40:13 → 00:01:40:23

10 frames · 0.4 seconds on screen

NO LINE. PICTURE ONLY.

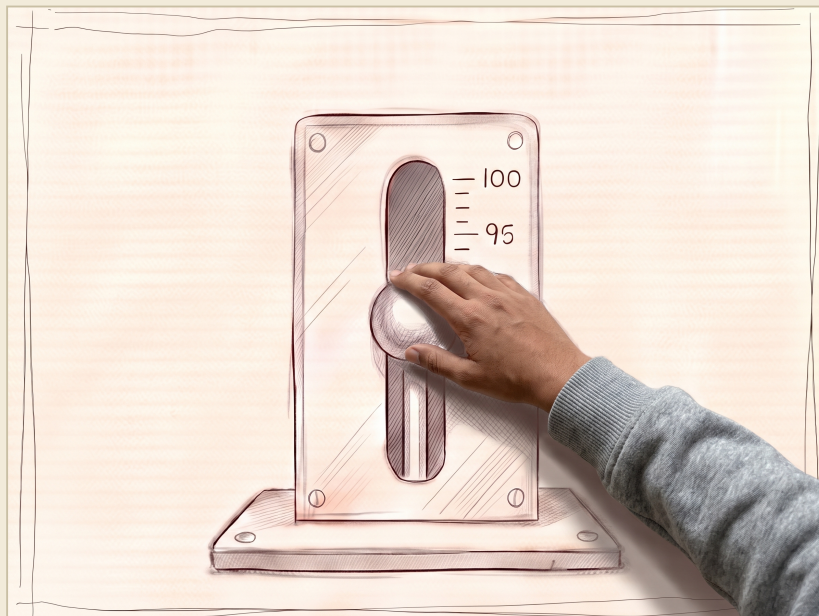
**CAMERA**

Breathing, eyes closed, calm. Like 5.8 but at the end of the film rather than the middle, and on white rather than in his room. Shoot it separately so the two do not match too exactly.

00:01:40:23 → 00:01:41:08

10 frames · 0.4 seconds on screen

NO LINE. PICTURE ONLY.

**CAMERA**

His hand, raised, closing around something that is not there. The lever is drawn in later. Insert, twice, at two heights.

00:01:41:08 → 00:01:45:24

116 frames · 4.6 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“Next time somebody finds one last burst of speed,”**CAMERA**

The first line of the ending. He is already looking at us before he speaks. He is setting something up and he knows it, so the line does not finish. Leave it open.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS FRAME AFTERWARDS

Image inherited from the retired 8.5. The key in his hand, held up, the setup line of the closing triplet. He is already looking at us before he speaks.

00:01:45:24 → 00:01:50:03

104 frames · 4.2 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“don't just wonder how strong their muscles are.”



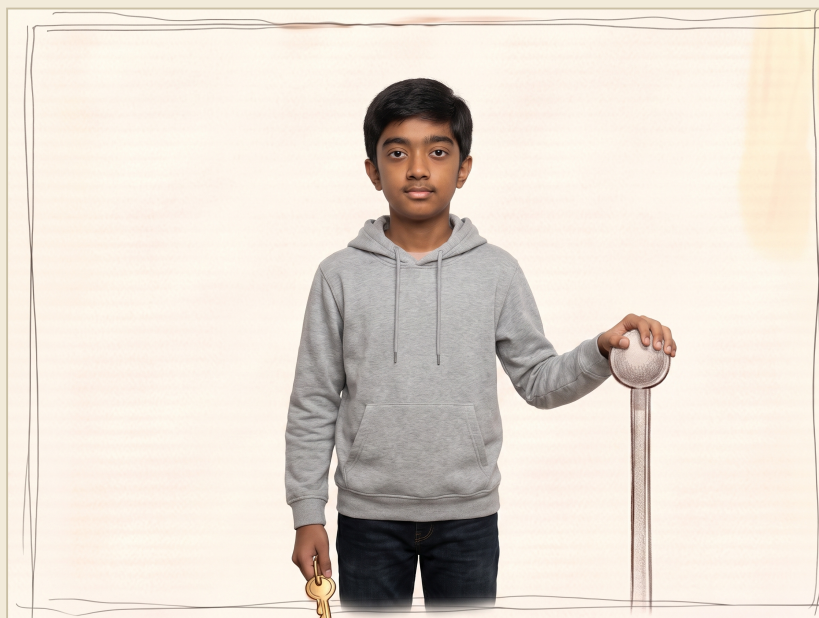
CAMERA

The turn. Gentle, not a telling off. Everyone gets this wrong including him at the start of the film.

00:01:50:03 → 00:01:53:19

91 frames · 3.6 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · TO CAMERA

“Wonder what their brain believed was safe.”**CAMERA**

The last thing he says on camera in the whole film. Completely still, dead to lens, no movement at all. Let the last take be the tired one. It will be the best.

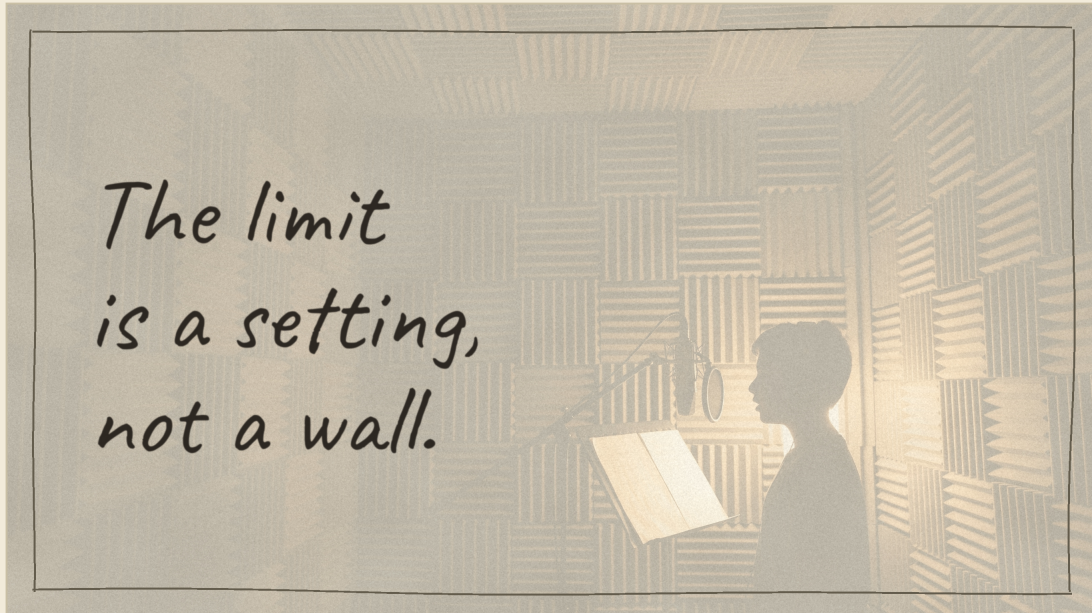
WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS FRAME AFTERWARDS

The payoff of the triplet. Eyes open, dead to camera, no movement. The last thing he says before the paper writes itself.

00:01:53:19 → 00:01:57:10

91 frames · 3.6 seconds on screen

HE SAYS THIS · VOICE OVER, HIS FACE NEED NOT BE TO LENS

“The limit is a setting, not a wall.”**CAMERA**

Voice only, in the booth. Nothing is filmed. The end card is written on paper afterwards.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS FRAME AFTERWARDS

THE WORDS ARRIVE AS HE SPEAKS THEM. Nothing is on the paper when the frame opens. Each word is written on, in his own hand, in time with his voice, as though somebody is writing while he reads. Finish the last word, hold, then the sheet goes blank.

8.9 is the end card. It is voice only, recorded separately in a quiet room, and needs nothing from the camera. If there is a quiet corner on the day we will take it there, otherwise it happens later.

Every word Manan speaks in this film is his own voice. Nothing he says is replaced later, so the sound you record is the sound in the finished film. If a take sounds right and looks wrong, keep it anyway and tell us.

DELIVERY

- Original camera files, untouched.
- Separate audio files, slate intact.
- A photograph of the wardrobe and of each lighting setup.
- Upload within 48 hours. The whole Zagreb schedule starts the moment they land.

IF IN DOUBT

Shoot it wider and shoot it longer. We can crop and we can trim. We cannot invent what is outside the frame.