

THE BRAIN BRAKE

Version four. The comic strip. Shooting and animation document.

RUNNING TIME	00:01:57:10 (limit 2:00)
TIMEBASE	25 fps non drop, HH:MM:SS:FF
FORMAT	16:9, 2731 x 1536
ENTRY	Breakthrough Junior Challenge 2026
PRESENTER	Manan Periwal
CAMERA	Venkatesh, Pondicherry
ANIMATION	Kristijan Kaurić, Brojka, Zagreb
PRODUCER	Neha Sonthalia Periwal

THE FILM IN NUMBERS

- 51 frames
- 21 drawn frames, animation only
- 24 frames with Manan filmed and placed in a drawn panel
 - 5 strip panels where a character speaks in a bubble
 - 8 lines Manan speaks to camera
 - 13 lines Manan speaks in the booth
 - 6 speech bubbles, already recorded
- 24 frames with no words at all

BY SCENE

SCENE	FRAMES	DRAWN	LIVE	IN	OUT
1 The Mystery	6	4	2	00:00:00	00:11:12
2 The Old Theory	5	2	3	00:11:12	00:20:01
3 The Full Tank	5	1	4	00:20:01	00:34:05
4 The Gatekeeper	7	0	7	00:34:05	00:59:19
5 The Experiment	8	2	6	00:59:19	01:17:07
6 The Release	10	9	1	01:17:07	01:32:02
7 The Verdict	4	2	2	01:32:02	01:40:14
8 The Invitation	6	1	5	01:40:14	01:57:10
TOTAL	51	21	30		01:57:10

The three layers

Nobody in the audience is told any of this. They absorb it in the first twenty seconds.

DRAWN

Everything imagined

Pencil on warm cream paper. The factory inside the muscle, the hall of tanks, Coach Brain, the lever. This layer is the explanation, the model people built in their heads to make sense of the body.

LIVE ACTION

Everything true

Manan. Real skin, real hoodie, real hands, photographed against grey and placed inside the drawings, casting a real shadow onto the paper. This is the evidence, and the person who came to look.

THE BOOTH

The film being made

A dark room, a music stand, a microphone, one warm light behind him. He is a silhouette and the only lit thing in frame is the page in his hands. A shadow, reading, which is exactly what a narrator is. It opens the fourth wall: for a few seconds we are behind the film, in the room where a boy is making it.



The booth shots are cutaways, three or four across the film, dropped in when it wants you to remember somebody is telling you this.

What changed from version three

The runner

New character, and the film now opens on his face in close up rather than a wide. Empathy before curiosity: the audience feels him before they wonder about him.

The format

Fifty composite shots became a moving comic strip. Characters speak in bubbles instead of being animated. No lip sync, no walk cycles, no character animation.

The script

Cut from 311 words to 192. Where the picture already said it, the voice stopped saying it. The chalkboard writes the chain, so nobody narrates the chain. The stamp reads CASE CLOSED, so nobody says case closed.

The silence

There are now 25 frames with no words at all. In version two the film was 157 seconds of speech in a 120 second film, which was impossible.

The bubbles

Every bubble is also spoken aloud, so nobody has to read anything on screen. The character voices are cast, directed and already recorded.

The booth

A new setup and a new layer. See the previous page.

Delivery

Artwork arrives finished and in separate layers: background alone, each character as a transparent PNG, bubbles empty so the font is yours, and a placeholder marking where Manan goes.

The shooting day

A Grey backdrop, walking and reacting

Eye level on sticks, locked off. Soft key from camera left at forty five degrees. Fill from the right at half strength. Frames 1.5, 1.6, 2.6, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6.

B Seated eyeline, reacting to Coach Brain

Same lighting as A, unchanged. Tennis ball on a stand at seated height, camera left. Do not relight, only move the mark. Frames 4.2, 4.7.

C White void, still, to lens

Flat even light both sides, no modelling, no shadow on the backdrop. Frames 7.3, 7.6, 8.1, 8.3, 8.5, 8.6, 8.7.

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

Same as C, wider, room above his head.

E His room, at his desk

Warm window light, no lamps fighting it. Frames 2.3, 4.5, 5.4.

F His room, at the blackboard

Same light, standing. A real blackboard, shot completely clean. Frame 2.1.

G His room, on the stationary bike

Same light. Wide, closer, close. Frames 5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9.

H THE BOOTH. New.

A small room made dark. Music stand with the script pages, microphone on a stand, headphones. One warm light low and behind him, everything else falling away. He reads as a silhouette and the page in his hands is the only lit thing. His face does not need to read. Three or four shots.

EXT One quiet road, early morning

Riding hard, side on. Thirty minutes. Frame 5.5.

PROPS

Neutral mid dark grey background, about hex 3A3B3D, matte, one stop darker than his hoodie, and he stands at least a metre and a half in front of it. Tennis ball on a stand. Brass magnifying glass. A real blackboard and white chalk. A stationary exercise bike. A bicycle and a plain dark helmet. A small gold key. A ball at chest height for the lever insert. His own phone and laptop. Music stand, microphone on a stand, headphones, printed script pages.

WARDROBE

Grey hoodie everywhere, except on the stationary bike where he is in a plain dark t shirt. He rides the road in the hoodie, comes back sweating, takes it off. Plain mid grey, no logos.

THE MYSTERY



1.1 DRAWN

00:00:00:00 00:00:03:19 94 fr



1.2 DRAWN

00:00:03:19 00:00:04:08 14 fr



1.3 DRAWN

00:00:04:08 00:00:04:22 14 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

For a hundred years we blamed the muscles.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

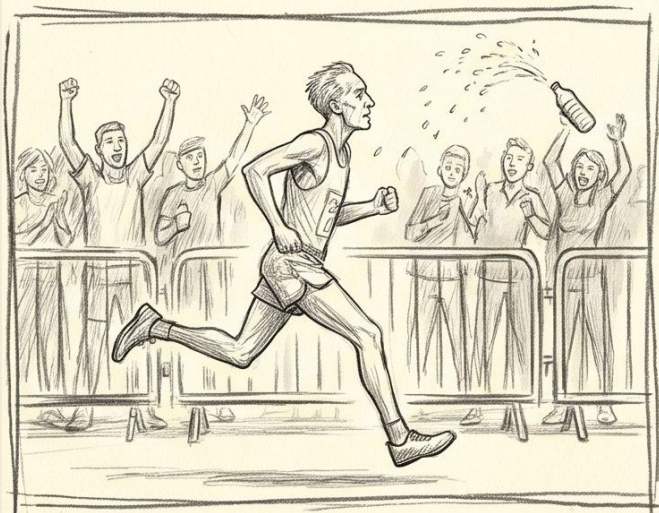
Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



1.4 DRAWN

00:00:04:22 00:00:05:11 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



1.5 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:05:11 00:00:06:00 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



1.6 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:06:00 00:00:11:12 137 fr

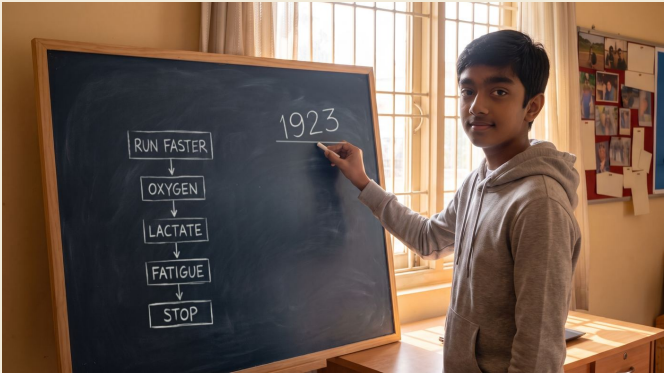
MANAN, TO CAMERA

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

BUILD

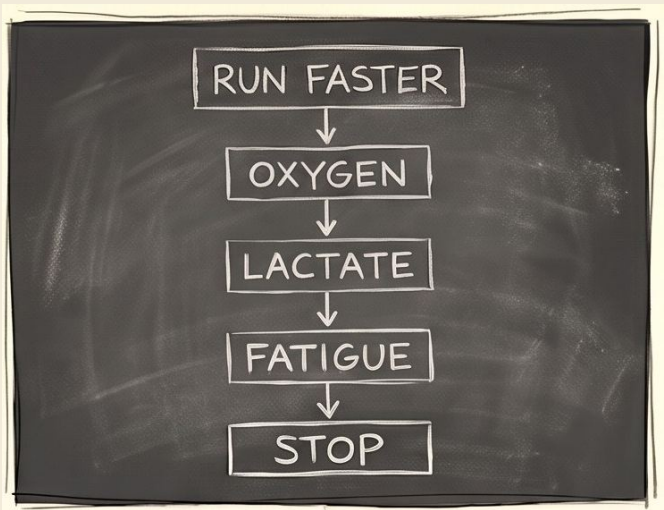
Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.

THE OLD THEORY



2.1 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:11:12 00:00:14:10 73 fr



2.2 DRAWN

00:00:14:10 00:00:14:24 14 fr



2.3 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:14:24 00:00:15:13 14 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

A. V. Hill. Nineteen twenty three.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

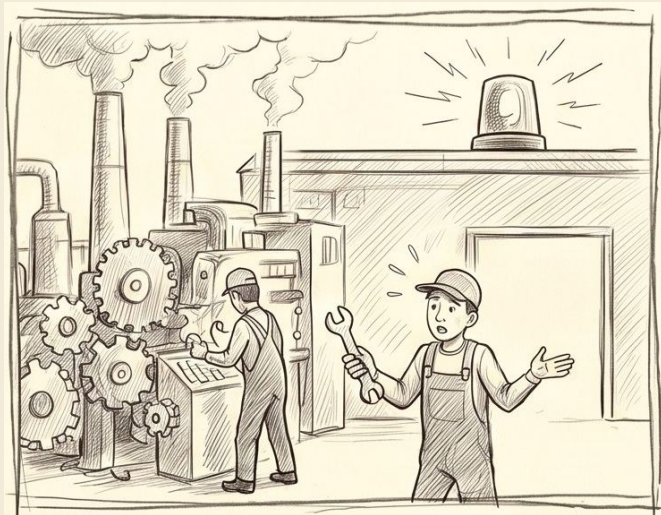
Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



2.4 DRAWN

00:00:15:13 00:00:17:14 51 fr

WORKER, SPEECH BUBBLE

That's it. We're done.

recorded. bubble empty in the artwork, set the type yourself.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



2.6 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:17:14 00:00:20:01 62 fr

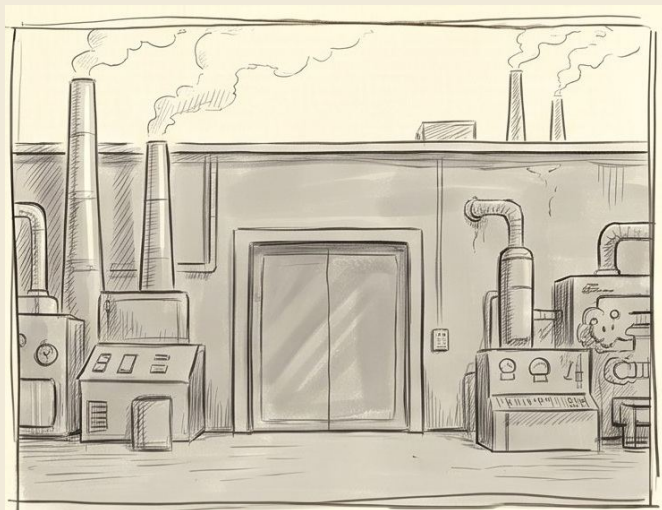
MANAN, VOICE OVER

Except it doesn't explain this.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.

THE FULL TANK



3.1 DRAWN

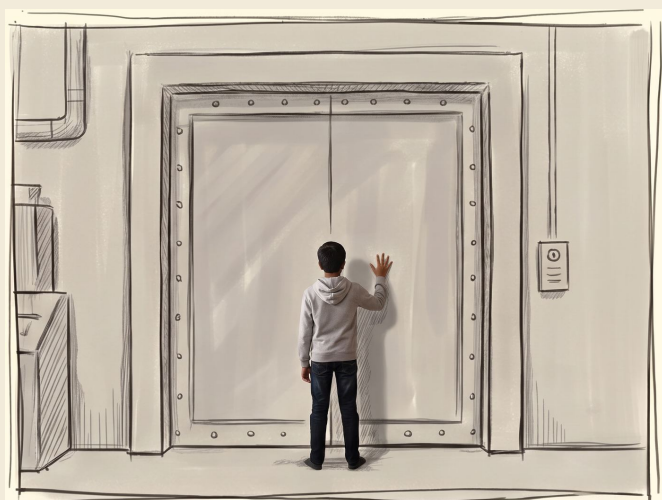
00:00:20:01 00:00:20:15 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



3.2 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:20:15 00:00:23:24 84 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

At the back, a door nobody opens.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



3.3 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:23:24 00:00:24:13 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



3.4 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

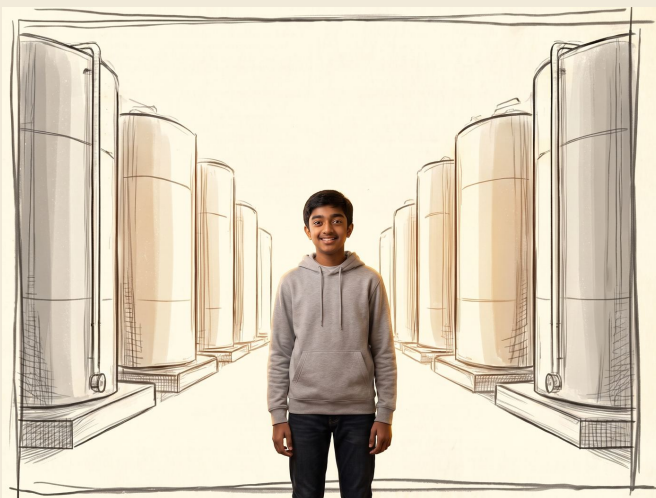
00:00:24:13 00:00:30:11 148 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

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

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



3.6 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:30:11 00:00:34:05 94 fr

MANAN, TO CAMERA

It was never empty. Somebody closed that door.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.

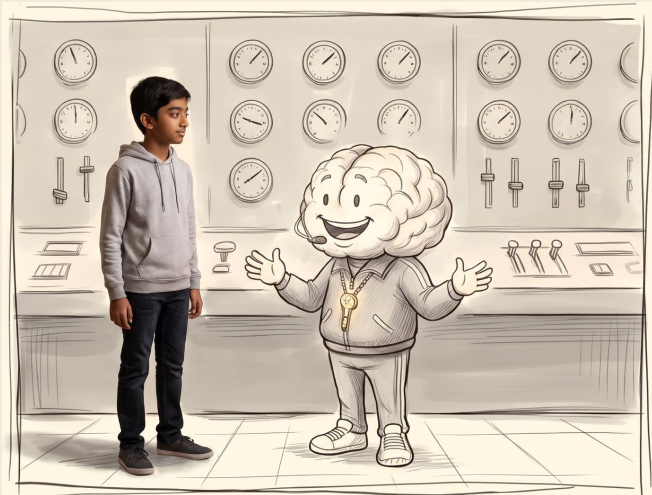
THE GATEKEEPER



BUB_4_1.wav 2.8s Male English Actor

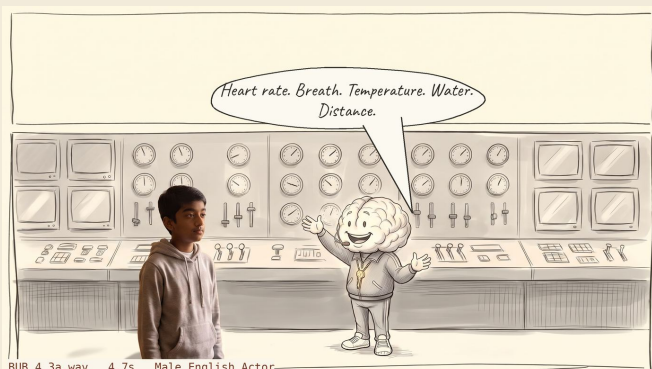
4.1 STRIP PANEL, BUBBLE

00:00:34:05 00:00:37:14 84 fr



4.2 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:37:14 00:00:39:15 51 fr



BUB_4_3a.wav 4.7s Male English Actor

4.3 STRIP PANEL, BUBBLE

00:00:39:15 00:00:42:13 73 fr

COACH BRAIN, SPEECH BUBBLE

You found me. Took you long enough.

recorded. bubble empty in the artwork, set the type yourself.

BUILD

Background, character and bubble are delivered as separate layers.

MANAN, TO CAMERA

You closed that door.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.

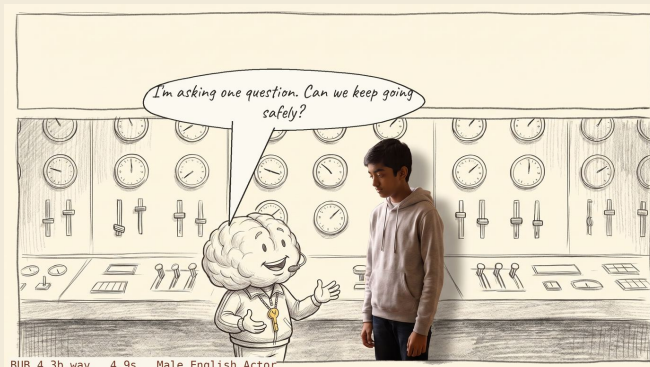
COACH BRAIN, SPEECH BUBBLE

Heart rate. Breath. Temperature. Water. Distance.

recorded. bubble empty in the artwork, set the type yourself.

BUILD

Background, character and bubble are delivered as separate layers.



4.4 STRIP PANEL, BUBBLE

00:00:42:13 00:00:46:18 105 fr

COACH BRAIN, SPEECH BUBBLE

I'm asking one question. Can we keep going safely?

recorded. bubble empty in the artwork, set the type yourself.

BUILD

Background, character and bubble are delivered as separate layers.



4.5 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

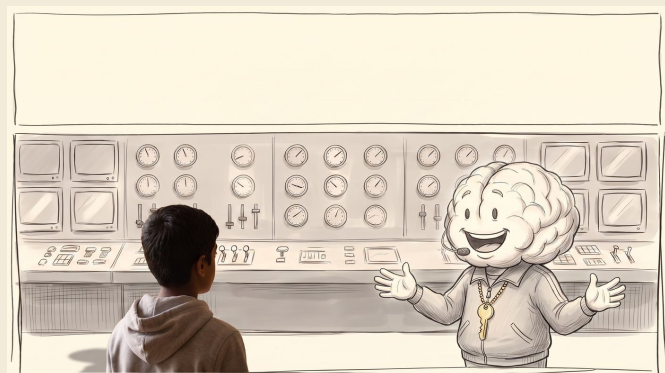
00:00:46:18 00:00:51:09 116 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

Like a phone at twenty percent. Not broken. Protecting itself.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



4.6 STRIP PANEL, BUBBLE

00:00:51:09 00:00:55:14 105 fr

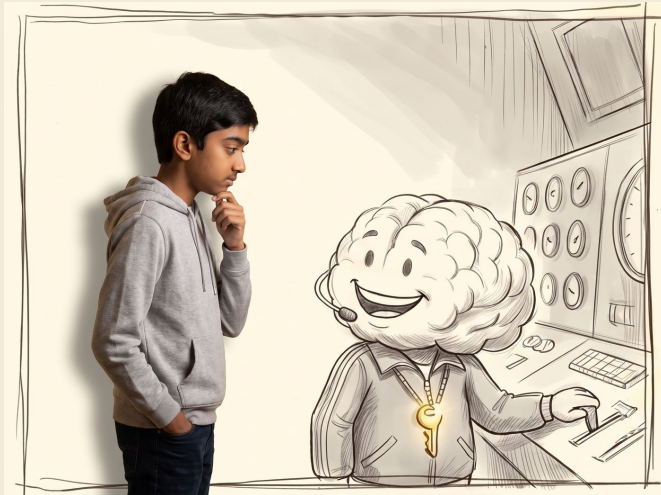
COACH BRAIN, SPEECH BUBBLE

My best judgement. I'd rather you finish than break.

recorded. bubble empty in the artwork, set the type yourself.

BUILD

Background, character and bubble are delivered as separate layers.



4.7 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:00:55:14 00:00:59:19 105 fr

MANAN, TO CAMERA

**So the limit isn't my body. It's
your judgement.**

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.

THE EXPERIMENT



5.1 DRAWN

00:00:59:19 00:01:03:13 94 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

They let him race his own best ride.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



5.3 DRAWN

00:01:03:13 00:01:07:18 105 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

He beat it. So it was never his maximum.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



5.4 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:01:07:18 00:01:08:07 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



5.5 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:01:08:07 00:01:10:08 51 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER
So I tried it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



5.6 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:01:10:08 00:01:10:22 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



5.7 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:01:10:22 00:01:11:11 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



5.8 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:01:11:11 00:01:13:23 62 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

Nothing about my legs changed.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



5.9 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:01:13:23 00:01:17:07 84 fr

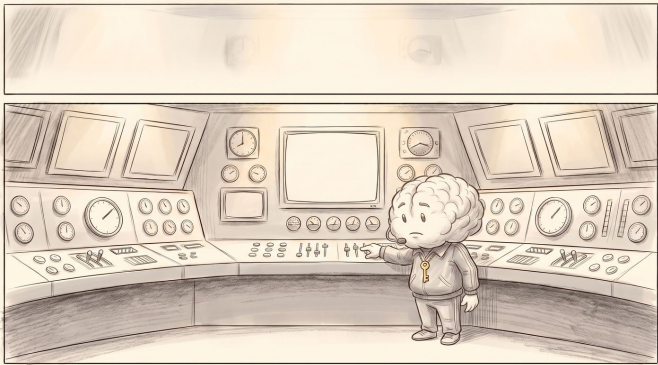
MANAN, TO CAMERA

Only what I believed they had left.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.

THE RELEASE



6.1 STRIP PANEL, BUBBLE

00:01:17:07 00:01:21:23 116 fr

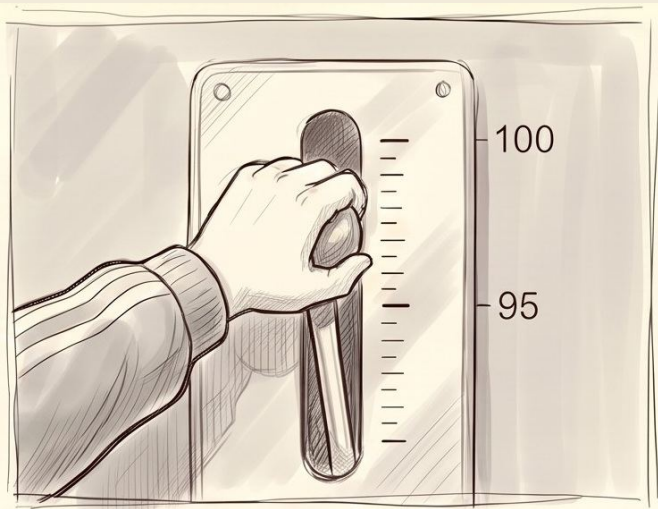
COACH BRAIN, SPEECH BUBBLE

**All right. Everything's holding.
Let's give him a little more.**

recorded. bubble empty in the artwork, set the type yourself.

BUILD

Background, character and bubble are delivered as separate layers.



6.2 DRAWN

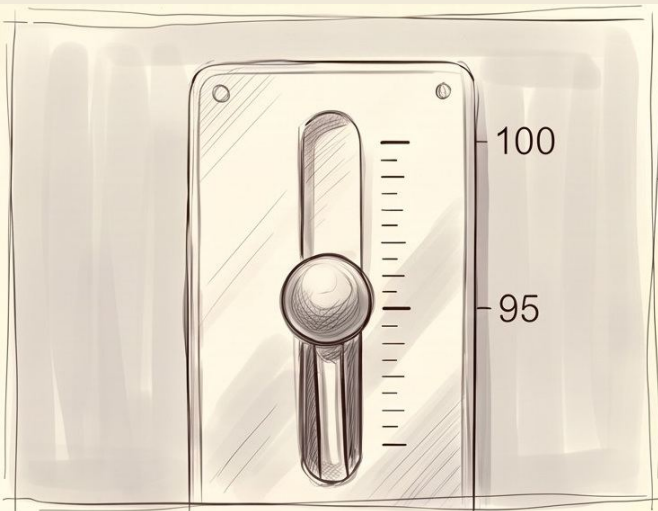
00:01:21:23 00:01:22:12 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



6.3 DRAWN

00:01:22:12 00:01:24:24 62 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

Still not all of them.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



6.4 DRAWN

00:01:24:24 00:01:25:13 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



6.5 DRAWN

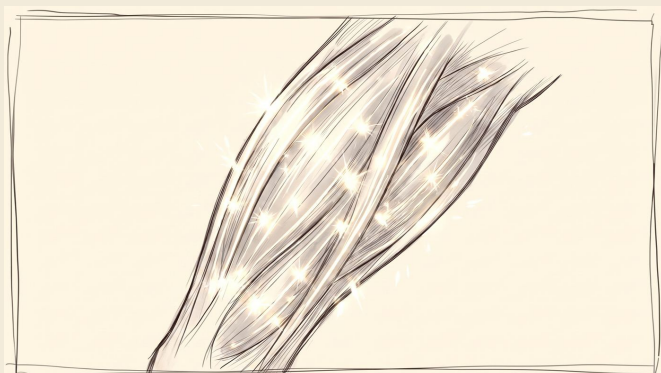
00:01:25:13 00:01:26:02 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



6.6 DRAWN

00:01:26:02 00:01:26:16 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



6.7 DRAWN

00:01:26:16 00:01:27:05 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



6.8 DRAWN

00:01:27:05 00:01:27:19 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



6.9 DRAWN

00:01:27:19 00:01:28:08 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



6.10 DRAWN

00:01:28:08 00:01:32:02 94 fr

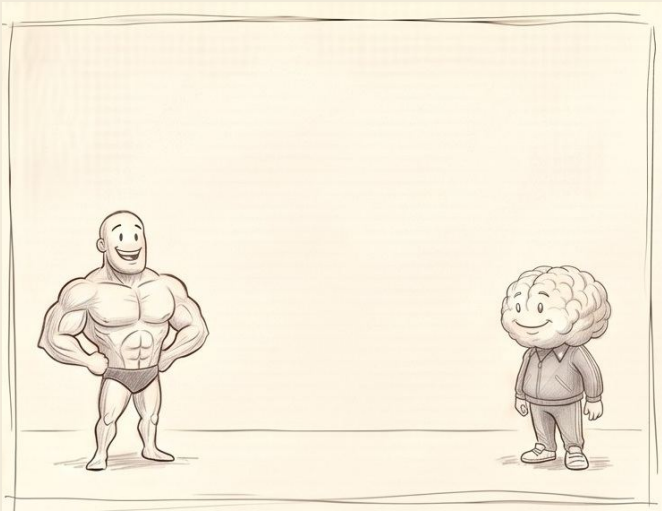
MANAN, VOICE OVER

It didn't make new energy. It gave permission.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.

THE VERDICT



7.1 DRAWN

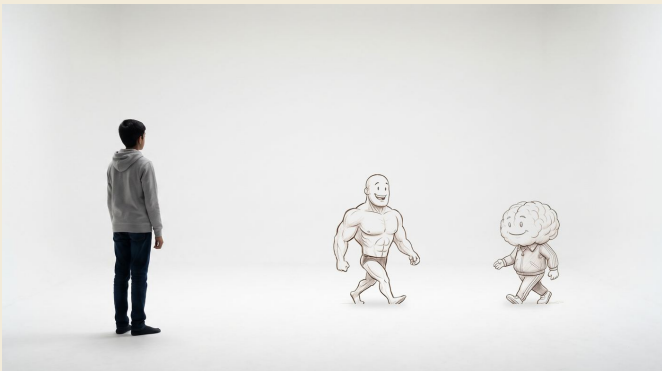
00:01:32:02 00:01:32:16 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



7.3 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

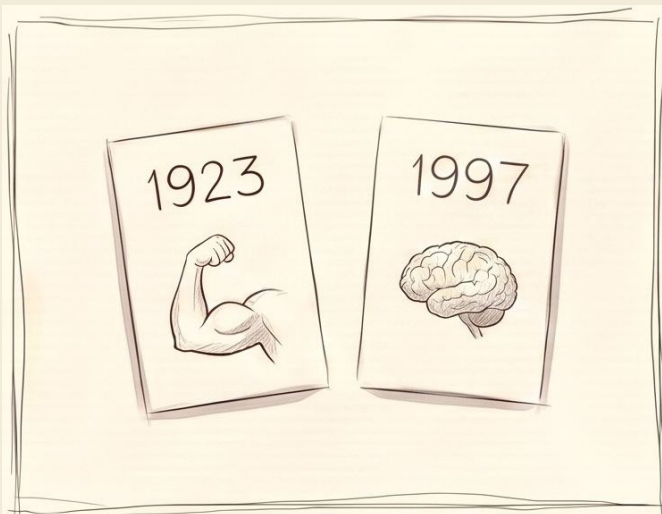
00:01:32:16 00:01:33:05 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



7.5 DRAWN

00:01:33:05 00:01:33:19 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



7.6 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:01:33:19 00:01:40:14 170 fr

MANAN, TO CAMERA

Great ideas aren't accepted because they sound convincing. They're accepted because people keep testing them.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.

THE INVITATION



8.1 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

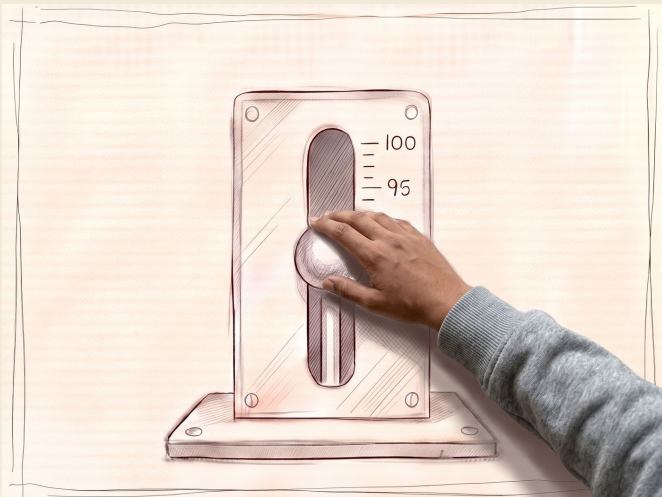
00:01:40:14 00:01:41:03 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



8.3 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:01:41:03 00:01:41:17 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



8.5 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

00:01:41:17 00:01:45:11 94 fr

MANAN, TO CAMERA

The wall is real. But somebody set it.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



8.7 LIVE ACTION IN A DRAWN PANEL

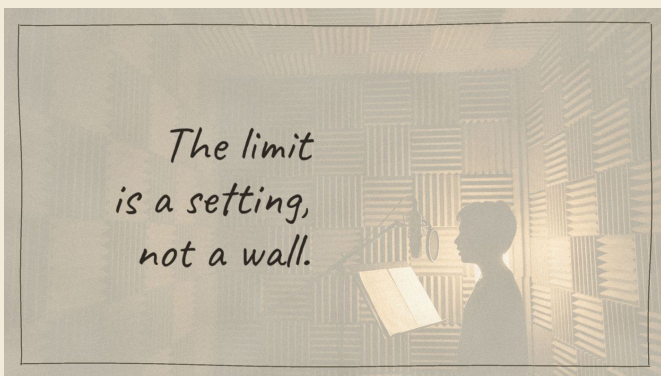
00:01:45:11 00:01:53:02 191 fr

MANAN, TO CAMERA

So next time somebody finds one last burst of speed, ask what their brain believed was safe.

BUILD

Manan filmed against grey, cut out, placed in the drawn panel. His shadow is drawn onto the paper.



8.8 THE BOOTH

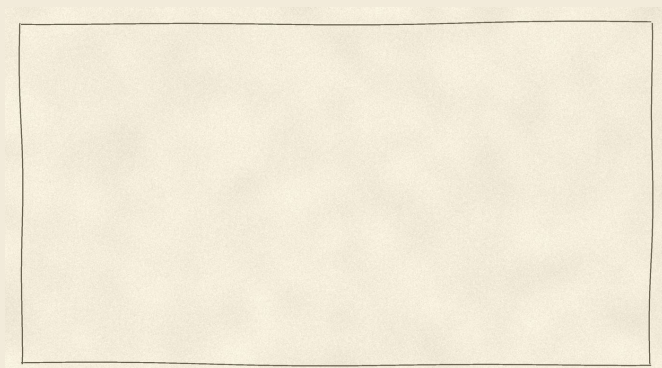
00:01:53:02 00:01:56:21 94 fr

MANAN, VOICE OVER

The limit is a setting, not a wall.

BUILD

The booth setup. Silhouette, backlit, page lit.



8.9 DRAWN

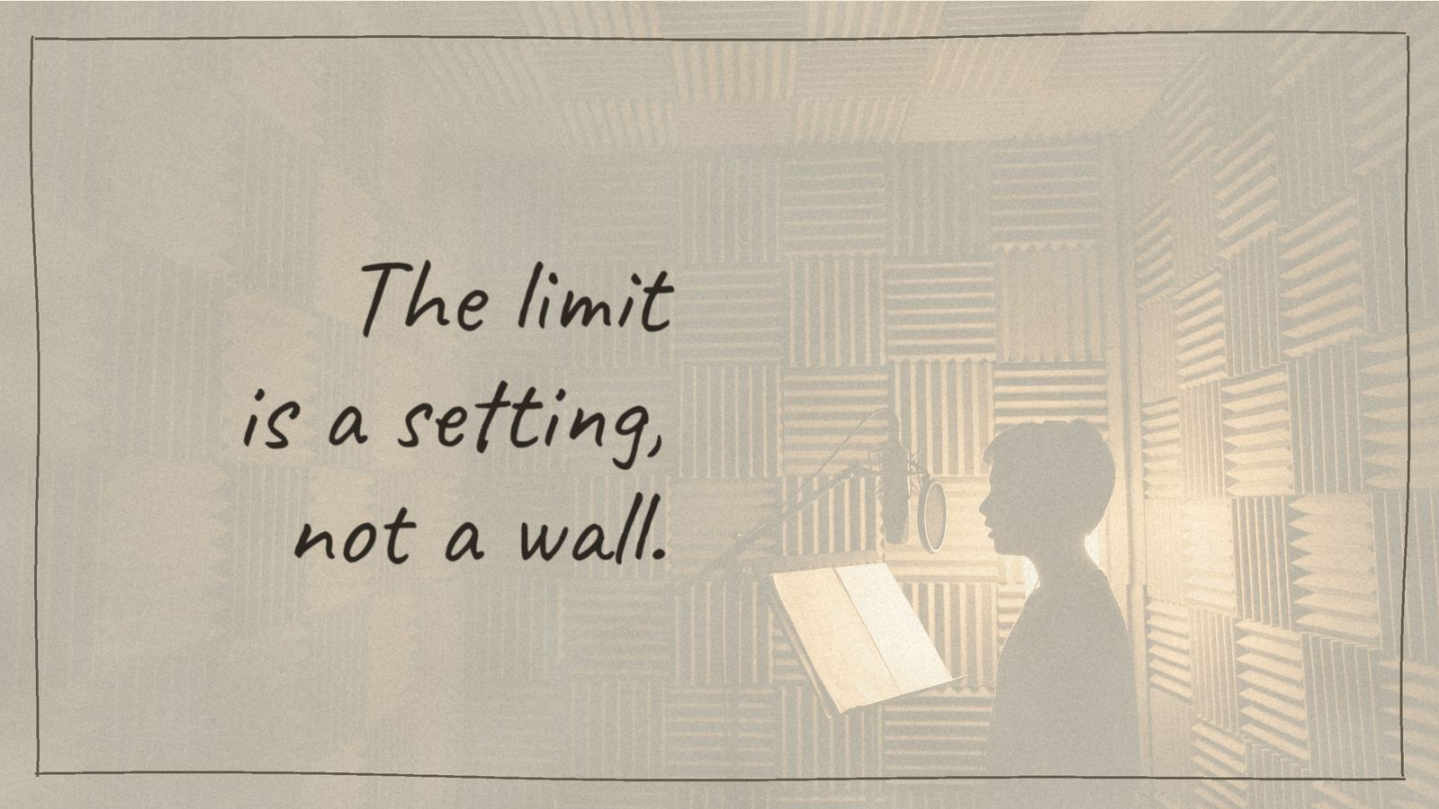
00:01:56:21 00:01:57:10 14 fr

NO WORDS

Let it hold. The picture is doing it.

BUILD

Animation only. Nobody on the shooting day.



*The limit
is a setting,
not a wall.*

THE LAST FRAME BUT ONE · then the sheet goes blank

*Everything collapses into one plane. The drawn boy breathing, the two theories
ghosted at the edges, and the real boy's shadow reading it into being.
The sentence is hand drawn, because everything explained in this film is drawn.
Then the sheet goes blank, and we are back at the beginning.*