

BLACK SCREEN.

Ominous, atmospheric music rises – deep, pulsing tones echo like a heartbeat. The screen stays dark, letting the weight of the sound sink in.

Slowly, a word fades in – stark white and bold across the black:

C O N F I D E N C E

The “O” is shaped like a white pill.

It glows faintly as the rest of the word subtly pulses, expands – then dissolves into the void.

A moment of stillness.

Then, a quote appears on screen:

“Confidence is key – once you have that, you are
unstoppable.”

– Timothy Weah

The music softens. The screen begins to fade...

FADE IN:

INT. LEINAD LABS – VICTOR'S OFFICE – NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

VICTOR EVANS (55) stands alone in his office – disheveled, bruised, the sharp edges of his former self dulled. His suit is wrinkled, shirt stained, collar open. He's motionless, eyes fixed on nothing. The silence around him is heavy, but what fills his mind is louder: fragments of a boyhood marked by cruelty, buried deep but never far.

He lingers in the lab, slumped, eyes scanning the wreckage around him – overturned equipment, shattered glass, remnants of a truth laid bare.

A MEDIUM SHOT ON VICTOR. THE CAMERA PUSHES IN SLOWLY AS HE STANDS ALONE.

Victor stands near the window, gently parting the curtains. His posture is heavy, his face etched with quiet melancholy.

THE CAMERA PUSHES IN ON VICTOR, SETTLING INTO AN OVER-THE-SHOULDER SHOT AS HE STARES OUT.

A flicker of pain crosses Victor's face as he sinks into memories of a childhood marked by quiet cruelty.

VICTOR

I was just a child, a scared child.
Like prey to a predator.
An ant to a human.
They made me feel so small.
I never wanted to wake up. God, why
did you wake me up?
I can still hear and see the
laughs!
(shouting)
Stop pointing at me!

Victor's words grow more intense as his face twists with anger. The scene dissolves into a memory of Victor at a high school assembly in 1983.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK

INT. VICTOR'S HIGH SCHOOL - ASSEMBLY HALL - DAY (1983)

Students and teachers flood into the assembly hall, their footsteps thundering like a stampede. Sunlight beams through the tall windows, illuminating the room in a pale glow. The crowd buzzes with anticipation.

Victor stands offstage, sweat dripping down his face as he prepares to sing The Star-Spangled Banner. His breath is unsteady. From the corner of his eye, he catches JOSH (17), his biggest tormentor, grinning from ear to ear. Beside him, AARON (17, jittery), shifts nervously, casting uneasy glances around the room. Josh and his gang of senior boys whisper among themselves, their eyes locked on Victor—ready to strike.

JOSH

Alright, guys, you know the plan.
This is gonna be legendary.

AARON

Man, I just hope we don't get
caught. My parents would kill me.

JOSH

Too late to worry about that now,
Aaron. Let's get these buckets set
up.

With Josh and his friends on the assembly committee, they had direct access to the program and performer list-making it the perfect opportunity to prank Victor.

Victor, timid and shy, steps onto the stage, his hands trembling with fear. He approaches the podium, his nerves palpable, ready to speak.

TEACHER

Don't worry, Victor. You'll do just fine.

Victor nervously scans the audience, his heart pounding. He takes a deep breath and grips the microphone tightly, his hands like a vise.

VICTOR (V.O.)

I can do this. Just breathe.

Victor, exhales, eyes fixed on the audience.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

O say can you see, By the dawn's
early light, What so proudly we
hailed At the twilight's last
gleaming, Whose broad stripes and
bright stars Through the perilous
fight...

As Victor solemnly recites The Star-Spangled Banner, a bucket tilts above him—tar and feathers cascade down.

Victor freezes. Thick tar drips from his face, feathers cling to his clothes. His eyes, wide with shock and horror, dart to the audience. The room is silent. Embarrassment sets in—he stands motionless, unsure of what to do next.

CAMERA PANS TO JOSH AND HIS FRIENDS.

They erupt into diabolical laughter, clucking like chickens. STEVE (17), usually the quiet one, shifts uncomfortably, glancing at Victor with guilt.

CAMERA PANS BACK TO VICTOR—

His lips tremble. Hands clenched. Visibly humiliated.

JOSH (O.S.)

Cluck, cluck! Nice feathers,
Victor. It's not Halloween yet.
Looks like we've got ourselves a
new mascot—the chicken!

STEVE

Maybe we shouldn't have gone this far.

JOSH

You sound like Aaron. Don't chicken out—get it? Chicken out!

(laughs)

Classic humor!

Josh clucks and jeers at Victor, laughing. Aaron and Steve stand frozen, shifting uncomfortably.

Teachers rush to the stage. The crowd remains stunned into silence.

TEACHER

Victor!

Victor pushes past the teachers and bolts offstage. Tears dry on his cheeks, his face twisting from shame to anger as he vanishes through the doors.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. VICTOR'S ROOM - DAY

Victor bursts into his room, knocking over furniture and tearing through his belongings. Tears streak down his face as he trashes the room, his body trembling with rage.

CAMERA PANS AND ZOOMS IN ON A ROPE HANGING IN VICTOR'S CLOSET.

Victor's gaze lands on a rope in his closet.

VICTOR

I can't do this anymore! I'm tired of feeling this way!

Victor lets out a scream that shreds the silence, his pain filling the room. His hands shake as he grips the rope, then ties it to the ceiling fan. Sweat trickles down his face. His breath hitches—one last inhale.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(takes a deep breath)

No one will care anyway.

Victor slowly shifts one foot off the chair just as his parents enter.

The door swings open—VICTOR'S MOM (40s, caring and attentive) and VICTOR'S DAD (40s, pragmatic but caring) step inside, unaware of what they're about to walk into.

VICTOR'S MOM
Victor, I've been calling—
(gasp)
Victor!

With shock and relief, Victor's parents rush to his side, yanking him away from the chair.

VICTOR'S MOM (CONT'D)
HONEY! OH MY GOD! What were you
thinking?!

VICTOR'S DAD
Well, we know what he was about to
do. The question is—why, son?

Victor's mom bursts into tears, her chest tightening with the weight of her son's pain.

VICTOR'S DAD (CONT'D)
Let's step outside for a moment,
dear.

Victor sinks to the floor, head in his lap, overhearing his parents' conversation outside his room. Guilt washes over him—he blames himself.

VICTOR'S MOM (O.S.)
(concerned)
What are we going to do now?

VICTOR'S DAD (O.S.)
I'm not sure, dear. But we need to
act—fast.

VICTOR'S MOM (O.S.)
(through tears)
I can't bear to see him suffer like
this!

VICTOR'S DAD (O.S.)
I know, dear. It's hard, but it's
the right thing to do. I'll call
the doctor.

Victor's mom sobs quietly, her body trembling as his father steps away to make a call.

DISSOLVE TO: