FAMILY BIZ

"Damage Control" [Prod Ep #102]
(formerly "Day One")

by James Nadler

FINAL POST SCRIPT

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FADE IN:
INT. KELLER LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT
1:00 AM. ELI KELLER (16, gaming demi-god) plays SILT, a first person shooter PC game. Its sandy-blue colors wash across his face in the darkened room. Eli rocks.

We hear CHA-BOOM from the screen. Victory for Eli!

ELI
(to the screen)
You just got owned. You enter my realm you... ah... wipe your feet!
For... I! Am! Eli!

And we hear alien warriors GASP, CRY their last.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON & RONNIE'S ROOM -- SAME TIME

AVALON KELLER (15, social striver) ignores the alien death CRIES. Cell glued to her ear, she chats with a gal pal.

AVALON
(into phone)
No, that's just Eli. Hormones, aliens... he's going through that boy phase.

RONNIE KELLER (11, sensible) is in her bed watching the ALL NIGHT SHOPPING CHANNEL on a small TV.

RONNIE
Shhhhh! This is important.

There's a BEEP BEEP on Avalon's line.

AVALON
(into phone)
Oh. One sec. Another call.

DAVE KELLER (early 40s, sleep deprived, former corporate gunslinger) stumbles in...half asleep.

DAVE
Wha... what's going on?
AVALON
Nothing, Dad. Go back to sleep.
(into phone)
No, Trace did not snub me.

ON DAVE as he tries to wake up and focus. LULLABY THEME PLAYS.

AVALON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
That's just a rumor. I'm sure she'll return my calls. Some time.

From the living room below we hear more ALIENS DIE.

ELI (O.S.)
(triumphant)
AH HAH!

DAVE
(groggy)
Who's yelling? Someone's in pain.

RONNIE
Eli. Downstairs.

DAVE
Eli's in trouble..?

RONNIE
Shhhh.

DAVE
(head clears)
Oh yeah, riiight. Eli is in trouble. (to Ronnie)
Get to bed.

RONNIE
I am.

DAVE
Get to sleep.

RONNIE
I don't have a bedtime.

AVALON
(into phone)
That's just my Dad. It's like he's always around now. Yeah, we're adjusting.

Dave shoots Avalon the classic Dad glare. LULLABY MUSIC plays.

AVALON (CONT'D)
(smiles)
Good night, Dad. Love you.
DAVE

'Night!

And Dave kills the light. From the darkness...

AVALON (O.S.)

Hey!

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -- NIGHT

Eli wins. Eli pumps his fist in victory.

ELI

Okay! Bring on the Seventh Level!

Eli leans back in his chair. Content. At peace. Falls instantly asleep.

A moment later, Dave pads into the room.

DAVE

Eli do you have any idea what time..?

Dave reaches to turn off the computer.

ELI

(eyes closed)

Don't.

Dave reaches again.

ELI (CONT'D)

(eyes closed)

No. Seventh level.

Dave reaches forward one last time.

ELI (CONT'D)

(eyes still closed)

No. What did I say?

DAVE

How does he do that?

Defeated, Dave takes off.

HOLD ON Eli blissfully snoring as we -

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. MAC-MASS HIGH SCHOOL: HALLWAY -- DAY

Eli and his best bud DAKOTA TOYOTA walk and talk.

ELI
Last night, I took it to the next level.

DAKOTA TOYOTA
With Caitlin? 'Bout time, man.

ELI
What are you talking about?

Dakota Toyota realizes that he may have said too much.

DAKOTA TOYOTA
Dunno. What are you talking about?

ELI
Silt. Seventh Level. I qualified for the International Silt Tourney.

DAKOTA TOYOTA
You're a lock. There is no gamer or shut-in alive who can take you. Dude!

ELI
Dude!

Like jungle beasts, they bump chests. Dakota falls back against the locker.

DAKOTA TOYOTA
Owwww! That hurt.

ELI
In more ways than one.

Eli extracts a mashed chocolate bar from his breast pocket... shrugs... unwraps and eats.

ELI (CONT'D)
Later, man.

They split off and Eli shambles to -

INT. MAC-MASS HIGH: HALLWAY #2 -- CONTINUOUS

- where he sees his bud CAITLIN (16, gamer chick). Caitlin tries to play it cool... but she's smitten. As they pass -
CAITLIN
Hi... Eli.

ELI
(oblivious)
Hey, Caitlin.

And Eli moves on. Avalon falls into step with him.

AVALON
Hey, big brother.

ELI
Oooookay, what do you want?

AVALON
Yellow Stayne.

ELI
Man, I really hope you are talking about the band.

Eli peels off into a class trying to end their talk but --

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MAC-MASS HIGH: CAFETERIA -- LATER
-- Avalon sits at Eli's table to continue their conversation.

AVALON
You are going to book Yellow Stayne for our house party.

ELI
Didn't Dad say no more unsupervised parties? No more late nights? No more fun... of any kind?

AVALON
Exactly. This is a major crisis. I heard that my social status has slipped.

ELI
If you're still hanging with me it's not just a rumour.

AVALON
We have to do something. We need to do some serious damage control.

ELI
"Damage control?" Who talks like that?

WIPE TO:
EXT. KELLER HOUSE/ADMIRAL ROAD -- DAY

Dave walks with ANNA SOFIA ANTONIA GARCÉS-KELLER (42, chic) as she heads to her airport limo. Dave carries her bags.

DAVE
We need serious damage control.

TONIA
David...

DAVE
I'm really worried about the kids. Did you know that Ronnie doesn't have a bedtime?

TONIA
She has a bedtime.

DAVE
Which is..?

TONIA
When she goes to bed.
(reality check)
Honey, I know we have not been around. But it's not like they've been raised by wolves... they've been raised by absentee wolves. Okay, wolves away on business trips.
(off Dave's panic)
I'm sure you can handle it.

They kiss. Tonia's limo pulls away.

OFF Dave waving, concerned --

CUT TO:

INT. MAC-MASS HIGH: CAFETERIA -- MOMENTS LATER

Eli and Avalon.

ELI
Why do we have to throw a party?

AVALON
Not just a party. The biggest bash ever. Damage control, remember. How do we turn this around? We need to boost my - I mean our - social standing.
(off his confusion)
Let me put this in terms you understand. Basketball.

FLASH TO:
INT. BASKETBALL ARENA OF THE MIND (FANTASY) -- DAY

...where Avalon strides through the gym decked out in her Team Avalon Basketball jersey.

Her jersey falls right to the hardwood. She passes...

STUDENTS wear a mix of basketball uniforms and regular street wear. They flirt with each other on the benches or dribble their balls to class.

AVALON
(narrating)
High school is just like basketball.
And I am a star player. I can see every social play before it happens.

Avalon tosses the ball. It rolls to...

ELI AND HIS BUDS.

Eli stops the ball with his foot. He sits with Caitlin and Dakota Toyota completely "nerded out" playing computer games.

AVALON (CONT'D)
Okay, Eli, there's you and your "buds" trapped in your own zone.

ANGLE ON THE BENCH -

Eyes never leaving his game, Eli kicks the ball to -

AVALON (CONT'D)
The Drama Club. Warming the bench.

Black clad THESPIANS stare out in teen despair.

AVALON (CONT'D)
They're dying to get in the game but don't know how. And at Center Court, holding court...

TRACY DUPONT-ROYMONT (16, sleek, powerful, African Canadian). Self-absorbed and self-assured, Trace spins a basketball on her finger and glitters in the silvery spotlight.

She is attended by her POSSE: glam girls OCEAN, RIVER & BROOKE guard her. Trace tosses the ball away.

BACK TO ELI. He looks up from his video game.

ELI
(smitten)
Tracy DuPont-Roymont.

AVALON
Everyone likes her.
Avalon tries to get through to Trace but the Posse play the man (Avalon) and blocks her out.

AVALON (CONT'D)
Trace is the center of the universe.

CUT TO:

INT. MAC-MASS HIGH: CAFETERIA (REALITY) -- CONTINUOUS
Back to Avalon and Eli. Back to real life.

ELI
If the universe had bleachers and smelled like old socks.

AVALON
So I need to throw a great party to impress Trace. How can I impress her if she won't come to my party? So I make my play. I get the word out.

CUT TO:

INT. BASKETBALL ARENA OF THE MIND (FANTASY) -- DAY
Avalon guns her ball to her gal pal, JADE, a lanky blonde dressed in a Ref's uniform.

FREEZE ON JADE

AVALON (V.O.)
(narrating)
I tell Jade that Yellow Stayne is playing at our house party.

Jade fires a pass to Caitlin.

JADE
Think fast!

FREEZE ON CAITLIN.

AVALON (V.O.)
Knowing that she'll tell Caitlin and she'll tell someone who will tell someone. And on and on until...

In a flurry of fancy passes between the Posse, the ball (and the story) is handed to...

FREEZE ON TRACE.

AVALON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...word gets to Trace who thinks that Yellow Stayne is killer. This is their final reunion tour - Yellow backed by Stayne.
Trace lines up her shot at the basket. FREEZE ON TRACE.

AVALON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Trace has to invite herself over, to hang, to be my friend.

Trace sinks the basket. Three points!

Trace catches up to Avalon.

TRACE
So I guess I'll be dropping by for your big house party.

AVALON
Trace, that's so sweet of you to ask. Friday after school. See you then.

TRACE
See you then.

Trace drifts away.

Avalon leaps in the air. Victory! Avalon does a spasmodic, victory chicken dance.

FLASH TO:

INT. MAC-MASS HIGH: CAFETERIA (REALITY) -- MOMENTS LATER

Eli reconsiders Avalon and her proposal.

ELI
And what do I get in return if I help?

AVALON
Home court advantage. You're so obviously crushing on Trace. She'll be at our place. You can invite her upstairs and finally show her your...
(sarcastic)
Stratosblast comic collection.
(beat, fierce)
But just remember she was my friend first.

ELI
Or I could just ask her out myself.

AVALON
(smiles, kind)
You could. How would that go..?

OFF Eli, imagining -

FLASH TO:
INT. BASKETBALL ARENA OF THE MIND (FANTASY) -- CONTINUOUS

Boldly, Eli heads across the court towards Trace and - WHAM! Eli gets creamed by a HORDE OF RAMPAGING BASKETBALL PLAYERS. Dakota Toyota brings up the rear.

DAKOTA TOYOTA
(passing by)
Dude, you okay?

ELI
No. I can't feel my legs.

And Dakota Toyota keeps going.

FLASH TO:

INT. MAC-MASS HIGH: CAFETERIA (REALITY) -- CONTINUOUS

Eli stares at Avalon, defeated.

ELI
Oh. That hurt.

AVALON
Rejection always does. Now, when Yellow Stayne plays our house, make sure the green room is stocked with candy.

ELI
Avalon, they are on tour. In Japan.

AVALON
That's not my problem. It's your challenge.

ELI
My "challenge?" Who talks like that?

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: Dave leading a seminar.

DAVE
And remember there is no such thing as a problem, only a challenge. Problem. Challenge.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL we are in...

INT. AVALON & RONNIE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

...Avalon and Ronnie's bedroom where Dave is passing on some sound business advice to his young daughter.
DAVE (CONT'D)
They're really two sides of the same coin.

As Dave tucks Ronnie in -

DAVE (CONT'D)
There you go. All comfy cosy. All right? All set?

RONNIE
Is this what a bedtime's like?

DAVE
Yeah. Sure. What...what else should we be doing? Comes next?

RONNIE
You tell me a bedtime story. A real bedtime story.

DAVE
Right. Like one with a princess?

RONNIE
No. Like what you did at Sealton. Tell me about the big bad merger. What did you do before they fired you, Daddy?

Dave swallows, nervously.

OFF Dave, trying to be brave -

FLASH TO:

INT. SEALTON INDUSTRIES (PAST-STORY) -- DAY

A grey office in a grey world. Dave addresses his fellow WORKERS. Dave fires them up.

DAVE
Why can't we have a paperless office? I say: Shred it! Shred it all!

Workers CHEER! Dave shreds.

HAL GROOM (38, corporate drone) sifts through shreds of paper from the recycle bin.

HAL
But I needed that file. It had my notes. And my lunch money.

FLASH TO:
INT. AVALON & RONNIE'S ROOM (PRESENT)-- MOMENTS LATER

Ronnie's all tucked in, ready for her bedtime story.

**RONNIE**
That's great, Daddy. Tell me another one. Only this time act it out with stuffies.

She hands him her stuffed toy, BLUEBERRY THE BROWN OWL.

**RONNIE (CONT'D)**
This can be you.

And she hands him a DOLPHIN.

**RONNIE (CONT'D)**
And this can be your team member. I think this will become my favorite bedtime story.

**DAVE**
Okay... well, Ronnie, at Sealton I was a problem solver.
(mimes the dolphin talking)
Oh no! Something horrible has happened and I don't know what to do.
(mimes the owl as himself)
Hal, do we have a problem...?

FLASH TO:

INT. SEALTON INDUSTRIES: DAVE'S CUBICLE (PAST/STORY) -- DAY

Dave (in business suit and 'tude) perches on his desk opposite Hal. Hal holds a coffee mug.

**DAVE**
...or a challenge?

**HAL**
(tries to escape)
No, no problem, Dave. Really.

**DAVE**
Hal, you can share.

**HAL**
We... oh...
(gives in)
We're out of sugar, Dave.
DAVE
(man of action)
Okay. Let's get a committee going, Hal. I want to know why you're not getting the sugar you need. Book the boardroom, Sue. And can you get the VP of Purchasing on the line, STAT?
(to the room)
And folks, call your loved ones. It's gonna be a late one.

Dave leaves. Pause. Work continues. Daves pops back into the room.

DAVE
Hey! Let's bounce on this, people!

OFF Dave's winning smile -

FLASH TO:

INT. AVALON & RONNIE'S ROOM (PRESENT)-- MOMENTS LATER

Ronnie's stuffies including DUCK DUCK the duck are arranged on the floor around a child's play table conducting their board meeting.

RONNIE
(worried)
Daddy, did you do something wrong at Sealton Industries?

DAVE
On no, Pumpkin. I was good. Maybe too good.

OFF Dave remembering -

FLASH TO:

INT. SEALTON INDUSTRIES (PAST)- DAY

Hal and BEARDED GUY sip coffee and watch Dave work the phone.

DAVE
(into phone)
Yes, invoicing is a challenge. But so was polio. And we conquered that.

ANGLE ON HAL AND BEARDED GUY -

HAL
He'll solve all our problems until we have no problems. And no jobs.
BACK TO DAVE -

DAVE
(into phone)
Global warming? No no. Not a problem. Let's build a fluorocarbon filter around the planet. Any old underwear 'round the office?

BACK TO HAL AND BEARDED GUY -

HAL
Someone's becoming a problem.

BEARDED GUY
Or a challenge.

Dave overheard that last remark. He half turns...

OFF Dave's concern -

FLASH TO:

INT. AVALON & RONNIE'S ROOM (PRESENT)-- NIGHT

Dave quickly wraps up the story and puts back the stuffies.

DAVE
And they all lived happily ever after in a paper-less world. Yay!
(mimics Blueberry)
I like that. No paper. Eco-friendly.
(normal voice)
Okay sweetheart, that's it for tonight. Alright?

RONNIE
(stalling for time)
Just one more story, Daddy? Please?

As LULLABY MUSIC PLAYS...

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Eli cuts through the room with Dakota Toyota close behind.

DAKOTA TOYOTA
How are you gonna book Yellow Stayne?

ELI
I'm not... exactly. I just need to access one document on their manager's PDA. I hack in... change their schedule and presto they arrive.

Eli flings open the door to discover that...
INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

...the computer, his computer, is gone.

ELI
Where's my computer? Where's everything?

DAKOTA TOYOTA
Someone cleaned your house. Spooky.

ELI
(yells)
Dad!

OFF Eli's frustration --

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE
FADE IN:

EXT. KELLER HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

We CRANE UP to the attic where...

CUT TO:

INT. ATTIC -- CONTINUOUS

...Dave clears boxes to find a spot for Eli's computer on his desk.

ELI
But it's my computer.

DAVE
It's the family computer.

ELI
And I'm family. I need the computer.

DAVE
For what? Homework?

ELI
No...

DAVE
To help the homeless? Stop world hunger?

ELI
...After I get some other stuff done.

DAVE
Eli, while I'm here, sorting things out, getting my career mojo moving again, I need a working office. Sorry.

Dave hands Eli the plug. Eli plugs the computer in.

CUT TO:

INT. AVALON & RONNIE'S ROOM -- DAY

Avalon and Ronnie.

AVALON
You let him take my cell phone? I just left it here to charge!
RONNIE
Dad said your cell gets the best reception. Potential clients need to be able to reach him at any time.

AVALON
Why are we listening to him? And why are you in bed?

The LULLABY MUSIC plays.

RONNIE
It's bedtime.

AVALON
It's five o'clock.
(yells up)
Dad!

CUT TO:

INT. ATTIC -- SAME TIME

Eli and Dave. Dave kind of heard Avalon's cry of anguish.

DAVE
Who keeps yelling...?

ELI
If you take the computer, you're taking me off the grid. No Silt. No e-mail. No instant messaging. You know what this will do to me?

OFF ELI, considering his future -

FLASH TO:

EXT. LANEWAY BEHIND THE KELLER HOUSE (FANTASY) -- DAY

ELI THE HERMIT (now 35, long dirty hair, a toothless wonder) pushes along his shopping cart of recyclables.

Dakota Toyota (now 35, cardigan) is shocked at Eli's state.

DAKOTA TOYOTA
Eli? Eli Keller?
(off Eli's confusion)
When you stopped text messaging, they said you died.

Eli the Hermit experiences a moment of lucidity.

ELI THE HERMIT
Dakota? Dakota Toyota? Without wireless, I've been so alone. Do you... want to read my manifesto?
Eli thrusts a ream of crumpled paper into Dakota's hands.

DAKOTA TOYOTA
This isn't even typed, Dude.

ELI
Yeah, I can't even read it myself any more.

FLASH TO:

INT. ATTIC (REALITY) -- MOMENTS LATER
Eli shakes his head clear of his vision.

Dave keeps going, moving boxes, clearing his work space as he talks.

DAVE
Come on Eli, we went through this the other day. We all have to adjust our expectations. I know this won't be easy but - okay, do you really need all that gear?

ELI
Well... yes...

DAVE
No, you don't. Things have to change around here. And I'll be with you kids every step of the way.

OFF Eli's concern -

CUT TO:

INT. FAMILY ROOM -- NIGHT
Eli and Avalon confer.

AVALON
Eli, we can't reschedule. Trace is already coming.

ELI
She is..? Did she mention me..?

AVALON
She mentioned boys in general and you do fall into that category...

ELI
Awesome. Okay! This party must happen.
INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT

Eli sneaks Dakota Toyota inside...

Dakota Toyota knocks over the old bird cage.

ELI
Shhhh.

Eli and Dakota Toyota operate the computer, Mission: Impossible style. All whispers.

ELI (CONT'D)
Here we go. Yellow Stayne. Accessing their site...

DAKOTA TOYOTA
You have no clue what you are doing, do you?
(admiration)
Man, you fake it so well.

COMPUTER SITE
Enter authorization sample.

ELI
Back door to their server...find the Easter Egg...

COMPUTER SITE
System accessed. Stand by. Stand by.

ELI
And it worked...it worked...
(can't believe his luck)
IT WORKED! Shhh. And I just change their itinerary on their manager's computer...from New York to...my house.

COMPUTER SITE
Stand by. Stand by. Entering now.

CUT TO:

INT. ANIMATION -- CONTINUOUS

CSI STYLE we DIVE INTO THE COMPUTER...ZIP ACROSS the cyber-superhighway, dodge a COMPUTER VIRUS and reach -

CUT TO:
INT. YELLOW STAYNE'S LIMO: BACK SEAT -- DAY

ECU FAX MACHINE

The machine DING-DONGS. A MAN rips a fax from the car machine.

LIMO DRIVER (O.S.)

This is for you, Mr. Stayne...

MICK YELLOW (punkish, puckish Brit) grabs the fax and reads it. SIMON STAYNE (30, razor thin, all mascara) snoozes beside him, exhausted.

MICK YELLOW
The Avalon? Don't know that venue.
I thought we were flying to Sidney.
(hands in the air)
Send us where you will oh tour
director. I am just a rolling stone.

OFF Stayne, asleep...

CUT TO:

DAVE'S DESK TOP

Animated time transition. The week speeds by and we are in...

CUT TO:

INT. MAC-MASS HIGH: HALLWAY -- DAY

Exhausted, Eli shlumps to class. Caitlin accosts him.

CAITLIN
Why won't you return my e-mails?

ELI
I haven't been on-line. Things with my Dad are kinda out of control.

CAITLIN
So why am I off your IM buddy list? If you've got a girlfriend and she's territorial, I understand.

ELI
I don't have a girlfriend.

CAITLIN
I can see why if you never answer her e-mails.

OFF Eli, confused --
INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Avalon and Eli walk the room as Eli gives Avalon his update.

ELI
Stage goes here. Lighting, here. And here. Three equipment trucks. They'll all need parking, Avalon.

AVALON
Do it.

ELI
Yeah but we can only park two on the street.

AVALON
It'll work out. What about Dad?

ELI
He can find his own parking. (beat, off Av's look) We'll... have to work around him.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN / LIVING ROOM -- DAY

Dave pours himself a coffee. Avalon does her homework on the island but really she's keeping watch on Dave.

In the Living Room Eli gives a ROADIE ADVANCE MAN the pre-concert tour.

ELI
The green room will be out this way. (and so on)

DAVE
Who was that with Eli?

AVALON
(covering)
Ahhhh... math tutor.

DAVE
Eli's having trouble in math? I'm on it.

CUT TO:

INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT

Dave tutors Eli late into the night. Eli is dying of boredom.

DAVE
And then we carry the four!
ELI

Got it.

The LULLABY THEME PLAYS.

ELI (CONT'D)
(tries to leave)
I'm bushed. Got to get some sleep. Want to build the old bone density.

DAVE
Come on son, we can do this.
(upbeat)
Hey, let's pull an all-nighter!

OFF Eli, exhausted...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- DAY

Eli zonked from lack of sleep nearly drowns in his cereal. Avalon pulls his head up by his hair.

ELI

Owww.

AVALON

Hey, I thought you were the king of the all nighters.

ELI

When I'm playing Silt... not when I'm baby sitting Dad.

AVALON

But everything's cool for the party, right?

ELI

No, no, definitely uncool. I can't get Dad out of the house.

AVALON

You have to do something. Send him on a shopping excursion. I know - get him a job.

ELI

By Friday?

AVALON

Today is Friday.

ELI

That's a problem.
AVALON
Challenge.

ELI
Problem. Problem. Problem.

AVALON
You can do it. Yes, you can.
(claps, a cheerleader)
Okay! Team! Let's go! Go! Go!
Okay. Team.

Eli just stares at her.

AVALON (CONT'D)
A little spirit here?
(pointed)
Okay. Who wants to dance with Trace?

ELI
(claps)
Let's go. Go, go, go! Okay. Team.

AVALON
Gooooo ELI! Whooooo!

ELI
Yeah.

OFF Eli, thinking things through -

CUT TO:

INT. ATTIC -- DAY

Dave stares out the window.

Eli stares at Dave staring out the window. KNOCKS lightly on the door jamb.

Dave turns...

DAVE
Hey. Shouldn't you be heading to school?

ELI
Yeah. I just wanted to talk.

DAVE
Do I have this in my book?

ELI
No. Dad, this is that spontaneous talk thing.
DAVE
Okay. I'm good with that. What's up?

ELI
I've been thinking. A lot. About this week. About something you once told me.

DAVE
(quoting Dave-isms)
The customer is always right except when they're wrong?

ELI
No.

DAVE
Keep to your knitting?

ELI
No.

DAVE
Always tighten the lid on the mayo?

FLASH TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- SAME TIME
Avalon struggles to uncap the mayonnaise.

AVALON
Dad!

FLASH TO:

INT. ATTIC -- MOMENTS LATER
Back to Eli and Dave. Dave looks around, trying to place the scream of anguish.

ELI
No, Dad. About you getting back out there. Out of the attic. You told me that there are no problems in life, only challenges.

DAVE
Well that was a stupid thing to say. You're sixteen and I wouldn't tell your sisters this but we have a real honking big problem.

ELI
Uh... really?
DAVE
I am out of a job.

ELI
You know in many ways I'm like still a kid so...

DAVE
You know how hard it is for someone my age to get his career moving again?

ELI
...so you don't have to tell me everything.

DAVE
I'm a guy who solves problems and I don't know how to solve this.

ELI
(flailing)
But. But. But you could try. Right?

DAVE
(beat, realization)
Yeah. I could.

Eli realizes he has an opening and runs with it.

ELI
And, and you're going to go out there and try, try all day - out there - at least until ten p.m. That would make us ah... so proud of you, Dad.

DAVE
I'm turning this around, Eli. I am turning this ship around. I am.

ELI
Yeah!

DAVE
Come here you inspirational little Dude.

Dave crushes Eli in a bear hug.

ELI
Dad? Oxygen?

DAVE
We're gonna do this.

ELI
Yes, we are!

OFF Dave, misting up -
Avalon is in front of the house. Eli trots down the walk.

ELI
All clear!

AVALON
It worked?

ELI
Sound check's at three.

YELLOW STAYNE'S EMO PUNK ANTHEM "In the Ghetto" (by Trip the Off) PLAYS over the action.

EXT. STREET BY PARK -- DAY

Dave and two CORPORATE EXECUTIVES stride up the street on the way to work. Dave takes a deep breath. This is it. A new start.

Dave slows. Stops. Considers his options and...

Dave swerves off the sidewalk and into...

EXT. PARK -- MOMENTS LATER

Nowhere to go, Dave approaches an OLD MAN sitting at a chess table.

OLD MAN
Five bucks a game - no credit.

The Old Man takes out a chess clock.

Dave takes off his jacket, takes his seat.

EXT. KELLER HOUSE/ADMIRAL ROAD -- DAY

Eli waves in a huge EQUIPMENT TRUCK.

JUMP CUTS TO:

ROADIES jump out the parked truck. Unload equipment. Haul cables through the front door.

A SECOND TRUCK backs in. BEEPS as it goes.

Mick Yellow and Simon Stayne step out from their limo. As Mick Yellow surveys the house -

MICK YELLOW
Well it's small...but authentic.

(MORE)
MICK YELLOW (CONT'D)
(nostalgic)
Reminds of playing the Rock Cave.
That first gig... the smell and spit
of the crowd pressed against the
stage... the human connection...
(beat)
Rock and roll!

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER -

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK -- DAY

Dave plays chess with the Old Man.

In the background a PALE BOY in a hoodie, carrying a hockey
stick like a scythe, watches the action.

OLD MAN
You some sort of businessman?

The Pale Boy heads closer for a better vantage point.

Dave stares at him, Dad-like.

DAVE
I'm working it out.
(to the Boy)
Shouldn't you be in school? Or doing
something useful with your life?

OLD MAN
(to Dave)
Shouldn't you? Business. Who needs
business? It's all about...

DAVE
Family.

OLD MAN

OFF Dave considering things -

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM -- DAY

ON STAGE and without missing a beat, Yellow Stain WAILS
through their three chord teen angst punk ballad. The room
ROCKS. A mosh pit of Teens pogo, swarm, collide to the music.

Trace arrives. Avalon yells a greeting (overwhelmed by the
music).
Trace nods with excitement. She approves.
Avalon smiles, heads her way through the throng -
ELI JOINS TRACE -

ELI
Hey!

TRACE
Hi! This is - ! This is...

ELI
I know!

Yellow Stayne hits their power chorus.

TRACE
Come on, let's dance!

Eli can't believe his luck. Eli and Trace (and everyone) dances.

The song, teens, lights build to a frenzy.

Trace and Eli share a smile, look in each other's eyes and -

BHHHHSSSSVVVVVMMMM

The lights and sound die. Just. Like. That.

REVEAL DAVID KELLER

He holds up the plug he just pulled.

DAVE
I'm back.

AVALON
I can't believe this. He did it again.
(protest)
Dad. Poor timing. Could we discuss this...

DAVE
Oh we'll discuss this. Later.
(to the teens)
That's it, folks. Wrap it up.

AVALON
No.

DAVE
Show's over.

MICK YELLOW

Encore!
Teens ROAR back.

DAVE
No. No encore! NO ENCORE! No encore in my living room my melodically challenged friends. Thank you for coming.

As Dave restores order -

DAVE (CONT'D)
Thank you. Thank you. Let's go folks.
(to passing kid)
Hey, that's my guacamole!

Dave grabs back a bowl from a passing TEEN.

And as Trace leaves she passes -

TRACE
Later, Avalon. Much later, Eli.

Eli shlumps, defeated. HOLD ON Avalon's despair and -

FLASH TO:

INT. BASKETBALL ARENA OF THE MIND (FANTASY) -- DAY

Jade the Ref WHISTLES Avalon down.

JADE
Number 2. Penalty for social climbing! You're out of the game!

The Drama Club STOMP their feet on the floor.

THESPIANS
One of us! One of us! One of us!

FLASH TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM (REALITY) -- MOMENTS LATER

As Dave escorts the teens from the house...

AVALON
Okay, this is a problem.

ELI
Challenge.

AVALON
Stop that.

CUT TO:
EXT. ROOF TOP -- DAY

Ronnie hangs with Avalon. Avalon puts a positive spin on events.

AVALON
Best party ever. Except for how it ended of course.

RONNIE
It was okay. But next time get loot bags.

OFF Avalon's smile -

END OF ACT TWO
TAG

FADE IN:

INT. YELLOW STAYNE'S LIMO: BACK SEAT -- DAY

Mick Yellow is post-performance pumped, sweaty. Stayne, way cooler, wears his cap low over his eyes.

MICK YELLOW

We ROCKED. Just like in '83. '83...'83? No, '84. Yeah '84. Back to the roots, man. Whoooooo000000!

(beat)
And you what's even better, Stayne? I think we brought a little light to the lives of the Keller family. I heard that their pa is unemployed. Lives in the attic. Sad. We should sit back, collect our royalties and count our blessings. Right, Stayne?

Stayne?

No response. Mick Yellow lifts Stayne's cap. Stayne is asleep. As the LULLABY THEME PLAYS:

MICK YELLOW (CONT'D)

Sleep well, Stayne. Sleep well.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF TOP -- DAY

Eli exults.

ELI

Rock and roll!

FADE OUT:

END OF SHOW