



**DAD'S
IN THE ATTIC**

Series bible by James Nadler

“Hey, did you know Dad’s in the attic?”

“Yeah. Just don’t let him out.”

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Revised: June 11, 2007

DAD'S IN THE ATTIC

A half-hour, live action comedy

IN THE BEGINNING:

For Eli, Avalon and Veronique (Ronnie) Keller life is sweet. Three latchkey kids, they've made their house into the neighbourhood social hub. Their folks work long and hard at their careers and the Keller kids like it that way. Teen insanity rules!

But then their Dad is downsized. And the Keller kids' world will never be the same.

A self-proclaimed "corporate gunslinger," Dave Keller now works from home out of his office in the attic. He issues the kids briefcases and business cards. They are now employees of the Keller Family Corporation, a going concern. Dave applies every rule he ever learned in the business world to the business of parenting. Will the Keller kids survive? Will Dave?

Too bad the kids can't just fire Dad.



Dave Keller at Sealtan Industries in happier days.

THE SERIES:

A half-hour comedy, DAD'S IN THE ATTIC is about parents and kids and how we crash our way together through our frantic lives. How do we survive parent vs. kid power struggles, peer pressure, and the first *HUGE oh-my-God* teen crush on a stock offering? This is a show the family can watch together -- if Mom and Dad aren't stuck working late again or under indictment for insider trading.

DAD'S IN THE ATTIC is also a comedy of adjusted expectations. Dave Keller never expected to slip off the corporate ladder. Antonia Keller never expected to be the main family breadwinner. And the Keller kids never expected any interference.

DAD'S IN THE ATTIC is not really about Dad. It's about how parents affect their kids. And how kids work around their parents. We see the world through the eyes of the Keller kids. It's their desires and dilemmas that kick off the stories.

Avalon, Eli and Ronnie think they can deal with anything on their own. But, first, Dave offers a quick fix business solution. Can the Keller kids get around Dave's latest scheme or overcome his well meaning advice. In the end, together, Dave and his kids will find the answer. It's just never the answer they expect.

DAD'S IN THE ATTIC mixes the business games of THE APPRENTICE with the fast-paced anarchy of MALCOM IN THE MIDDLE.

Idiosyncratic and upbeat, DAD'S IN THE ATTIC takes family life to the extreme.



THE CHARACTERS:

Eli Keller (16), Reluctant Leader. Eli is a regular kid: gawky and hormone addled. Eli's brain only has so much available RAM and he is always very, very focused on his latest thing. Eli has no perspective, no brakes. **Eli goes with the flow and gets swept away.**

Monday, he wants to be a rock and roller. On Tuesday, an extreme snowboarder. ("Better work on that inner ear thing,") Ronnie advises. Thursday, a news anchor. Eli heard that Trace DuPont-Royer, the hottest girl in school, wants to go into Journalism. Eli will do anything to impress Trace except --

Eli won't give up *Silt*, the coolest videogame. Eli can play 72 hours straight and reach the *Seventh Circle of Sand*. No, Eli can't sacrifice *Silt*. Not even for Trace. Certainly, not for school. And that's Eli's dark secret: he is the ultimate fanboy. Obsessed. Eli knows he should sell his *Silver Skull* comic book collection for a profit but he can't let it go.

Good thing Eli's got his buds, Caitlin, Dakota Toyota and Dakota Flowers watching his back. (There are three Dakota's in Eli's class – it was 1992's trendiest baby name.) Eli's got his baggy prison look down. Eli's got his slacker 'tude. Eli's got everything but his own dreams. Dad plans to mould his son into the next great Junior Account Exec but Eli yearns for something more. But what? When exactly can you turn pro at video games?

For now, Eli's like any 16-year-old calling to his bud --

“Dude! Wait, lemme try that again. Duuuuuuuude!”

One thing about Eli, he is intensely loyal. Eli is always there for his sisters. When stirred to action, Eli organizes the girls to undo Dad's latest scheme. But it does take a major crisis to get Eli moving. He needs his sleep. He needs fridge-loads of food. And then, after a big snack, Eli needs his nap. Then, a mid-nap snack. Maybe a meatloaf sandwich with a little mustard, some tomatoes, a little onion...

PERSONNEL FILE	
HUMAN RESOURCE EYES ONLY	Employee #: 021871138
Name: Eli Keller	
Title: Junior Account Exec / Eldest Son	
Status: Full time (when awake)	Hire Date: 04/06/1992
Infractions: Level 9 Conduct Violation (Sleeping in, 1st offence)	
Level 6 Conduct Violation (Improper use of company email -sent digitally altered image of supervisor (Dad) to Coworkers (Grade 10 class of MacDonald-Massey)	
Level 9 Conduct Violation (Sleeping in, 2nd offence)	
Level 6 Conduct Violation (Playing " <i>Silt</i> " on company time. Failure to deliver report (okay, homework) on time)	
Level 9 Conduct Violation (Sleeping in, 3rd offence)	
Action Taken: Allowance reduction of \$.25/hr	

Avalon Keller (15), the Planner. Avalon just arrived at MacDonald-Massey High. Extremely bright, Avalon cruises through classes with straight A's. Denying and hiding her inner geek, Avalon works hard to get in with the cool kids. Avalon quickly sizes up her society's social structure. **In school, girls rule and one day Avalon will rule the girls.** Mac-Mass High will be Avalon's first hostile takeover.

With Hip Hop, spin classes, flute and violin, Avalon is over-programmed and overstressed. She takes after her Mom that way. If Avalon's ambitious schedule makes Avalon seem a little overbearing -- so what? If you're not part of the Avalon Plan then you are part of the Problem.

Avalon strategizes her every move in life. Unfortunately, Avalon suffers really bad karma. Every time something really cool is going to happen for Avalon, the Gods intervene (usually in the form of Dad) and dash her dreams. Despite Avalon's rising social status, Avalon will never hook up with teen heartthrob Dakota (Cody) Flowers. For now. It's just bad luck and...her family. Every night Avalon prays --

“Can't. They. Just. Go. Away?”

Avalon is embarrassed by her older brother. Eli needs a trip to Old Navy and a personality transplant – STAT.

Avalon is embarrassed by her Dad. Does he have to pick her up at school? And does he have to tell her friends that he named her after liquid soap? “Best product launch ever,” Dad boasts. “I put Avalon soap into every truck stop from Quebec to Florida.”

Avalon is embarrassed by her Mom. Antonia is way too sophisticated and intimidates the other regular Moms. Does Antonia have to fly in from Rome for a parent-teacher conference and have her assistant Giles take minutes?

Avalon is embarrassed by...well, everything.

PERSONNEL FILE	
HUMAN RESOURCE EYES ONLY	Employee #: 021871151
Name:	Avalon Keller
Title:	Vice President of Self Marketing / Middle Child
Status:	Full time and on the job
Hire Date:	10/13/1993
Infractions:	Level 8 Conduct Violation (Midriff showing in public, 1st offence) Level 6 Conduct Violation (Improper use of company facilities – jamming phone lines to win boy band concert tickets from a radio station call-in) Level 9 Conduct Violation (Failure to invite direct supervisor (Dad) to boy band concert)
Action Taken:	Allowance reduction of \$.10/hr/

Veronique (“Ronnie”) Keller (11), Daddy’s girl. “You’re fired!” Ronnie loves how that sounds. She worships Donald Trump. Still, Ronnie was appalled by her Dad’s fall from corporate grace. Not *her* Daddy. She wrote Sealton Industries a stiff e-mail in protest. Ronnie knows that Dad will claw his way back on top. Ronnie will be there to help him retrain and retool. Has Dave considered the exciting world of iPod repair?

Ronnie adores her Dad and defends his lamest actions to Eli and Avalon. She brings Dad his mid-afternoon snack. She loves to eavesdrop on his conference calls. Ronnie thinks that business is so cool -- almost as cool as the latest outfit from the Lizzie Borden ‘tween collection. (Ronnie’s outgrown Barbie and Hillary Duff).

Ronnie is deep. She has a lot on her mind. Is there a God? What happens when we die? Should she start a lemonade stand or a fried chicken franchise? Which comes first: MBA or law school? As a young businesswoman, she needs to develop the right skill set.

Ronnie can’t remember when Mom and Dad were not away on a business trip. She’s pretty much raised herself this far and done a solid job. Ronnie totally believes that she’s smarter and more on the ball than Eli and Avalon. Ronnie feels that their friends are really her friends too.

So when Ronnie is often dragged by Eli and Avalon along on their insane schemes, Ronnie refuses to play sidekick. That’s when “Business Girl” transforms into “Voice of Reason Lass.” Ronnie asks the hard, sensible questions Eli and Avalon do not want to hear. When they keep bossing her around, Ronnie shoots back with --

“You’re fired!”

Of course, Ronnie does not mean that. Not really.

PERSONNEL FILE

HUMAN RESOURCE EYES ONLY

Employee #: 021871152

Name: Ronnie Keller
Title: Vice President, Finance (Acting) / Favourite Child
Status: Full time until bedtime
Hire Date: 7/13/1997

Infractions: None.

Notes to file: Excellent turkey sandwich 09/17/05. Milk cold and good consistent use of grape jelly throughout. Collates well.

Action: Recommend promotion to permanent position of Vice President, Finance – as soon as basic Financial Accounting mastered.

David Keller (42), Corporate Dad. David was Corporate Hero, the best Senior Executive VP Logistics and Corporate Strategic Planning Sealton Industries ever had. No one has ever heard of Sealton Industries. No one understands what Dave really did, including, sometimes, Dave. But Dave had it all – blistering hot career, great marriage and terrific kids. Of course, he never saw the kids but he always scanned the weekly memos with tabbed appendixes prepared by his equally career-driven wife, Antonia. (Actually Tonia’s assistant Giles prepared the memos but Tonia did sign off).

Then Dave is downsized -- okay, fired. He knows that one day his old boss will come around begging him to come back. But, for now, Dave works as a business consultant from the attic. Nothing gets him down. Every day he pulls on a crisp shirt and tie and faces...a phone that will not ring. Unacceptable!

A man of action, Dave needs to take charge. He refuses to sit around all day playing Spider Solitaire on his PC. He is a problem solver who must find problems to solve. He needs short term projects with measurable goals leading to positive results.

So, to the Keller kids’ horror, their Dad seizes this opportunity to "re-involve" himself in their lives. Dave *knows* he can solve his kids’ normal, adolescent problems. All he has to do is apply sound management techniques to parenting.

In memos Dave dictates to Antonia, Dave claims that he is adjusting to life at home. He is wrong. He misses going into work and adult conversation. He forgets how low the attic ceiling is and bangs his noggin every time he stands up.

For all his good intentions, Dad never quite gets that his ‘biz speak’ and ‘biz think’ never really solves anything. And yet, somehow, he guides his kids along their paths in life.

Or, really, is it Avalon, Eli and Ronnie who help Dad find his way?

PERSONNEL FILE	
HUMAN RESOURCE EYES ONLY	
	Employee #:00000002
Name:	David Keller
Title:	President/CEO/after-school chauffeur
Status:	Full time until transfer/escape/rehire to office situation with free coffee.
Hire Date:	9/13/2008
Infractions:	None. Stellar employee. Deserves major bonus. - DK
Notes to file:	Everything is under control. Everything is under control. Everything is...
Action:	Make the best of current situation. See attached business plan, cash flow. Plan to build own consulting company approved by former C.E.O. Garcés-Keller.

Anna María Antonia Garcés-Keller (42), Corporate High Flyer. Antonia is relieved that Dave now works from home. Maybe he can bring their kids under control.

Antonia grew up in South America, attended the Sorbonne for Art History and INSEAD for her MBA. The epitome of sophistication, Tonia is exotic, womanly and definitely NOT suburban. She considers herself a citizen of the world. Her life is an adventure. She occasionally mentions the famous people in her past. Picasso was her godfather. She babysat Amy Carter. She assisted on Mick Jagger's emergency appendectomy (Why? It was an emergency and Tonia had the only Swiss Army knife at the Everest base camp).

Antonia lived the London-Vancouver-Beijing Business Class whirl for years. She was named Executive of the Year by Cereal Marketing Magazine (European edition). Then, at a marketing seminar, Dave and Antonia swept each other off their feet. She found his PowerPoint presentation incredibly sexy. They fell deeply, passionately in love.

Now 18 years later, Antonia juggles a high powered career, one husband, two mortgages and three kids. In Toronto. Canada. Where it snows. And then there's the mystery stain on the living room rug. Antonia knows she can't do it all. She certainly can't bake muffins for the school Spring Bake-o-rama. Thank God, she finally has a decent assistant, Giles. His *pains-chocolats* outsell all of the other Moms' baked goods.

When Dave is downsized, Antonia copes. She accepts a promotion to Senior VP Marketing for Mother Granola's Cereals. It means more travel and more money to keep the Kellers' heads above creditor infested waters. Since the Kellers can't afford a nanny, Antonia must let Dave pick up the slack. If she had more time, Antonia would see through Dave's and the kids' schemes immediately. Giles certainly does.

For now, Antonia concentrates on supporting her family landing the next huge account. Antonia knows her brood won't starve. They can always eat the latest samples from Mother Granola's test kitchen. Wheat Germ Crisps. Yum.

Antonia is often away on business. At night, in lonely hotel rooms, she often thinks --

"It's so quiet. Ahhhh."

PERSONNEL FILE	
HUMAN RESOURCE EYES ONLY	
	Employee #: 1
Name:	Anna María Antonia Garcés-Keller (Tonia)
Title:	Past C.E.O.
Status:	Seconded to Mother Granola Cereals
	Hire Date: CLASSIFIED
Infractions:	None that I'm willing to list here - DK
Notes to file:	None that I'm allowed to list here - DK
Action:	Tentatively scheduled to meet next Thursday after office hours to discuss kitchen flood and fire of 10/19.

KELLER FAMILY DYNAMICS

No one is in charge -- no matter what Dave and Antonia say. Dave and Tonia try to present a united front versus the kids. But it's hard. The kids are too clever. Dave and Antonia desperately need a second secret language so they can plot in private. Good thing Dave picked up a tape of *Learning Business Klingonese*.

The relationship between the kids and their parents constantly changes. Alliances shift depending on what's at stake. Sometimes, it's Eli vs. his sisters. Sometimes, Ronnie and Avalon unite to take on Eli and Dad -- two falls out of three. And each Keller kid knows how to play his/her parents against each other. Divide and conquer.

But Ronnie's adulation of Dad is the one constant within Keller Corp. Avalon teases Ronnie and calls her a D-A-D-D-Y-S G-I-R-L. Too bad Ronnie knows the password to Avalon's laptop. Ronnie denies sending mushy instant messages to teen heartthrob Cody Flowers on Avalon's IM account. Ronnie knows she won't get in trouble. As the baby of the family, Ronnie can do no wrong.

Dave and Tonia consider Eli their most responsible kid. Bad choice. Eli will agree to anything to get more free time to listen to music and shoot hoops. However, in the end, Eli comes through and does the right thing -- so long as he is not playing the Internet computer game *Silt*.

It's tough on Avalon being the middle kid. She identifies most with her Mom and lives up to Antonia's great expectations. Even so, despite her straight A's and circle of friends, Avalon can get overlooked. This bugs Avalon. Totally.

In the end, the Keller kids sabotage their parents' best efforts to lay down the law. If they don't want to do something, they will find a way around it. They are, after all, teenagers. And, of course, the kids do have to deal with Dad. Every day. For example...

ELI

Dad, can I borrow the car?

DAVE

Sure, just don't call me that: "Dad." "Dad" implies an us-versus-them power dynamic and we don't have that kind of relationship, do we? Call me...Pops.

ELI

Uh huh. Is there gas in the tank? Pops?

RECURRING CHARACTERS:

TRACEY (TRACE) DUPONT-ROYER (16, African Canadian), dream girl.

Trace is the hottest girl at MacDonald-Massey High. Trace is the ultimate insider. She is the school's Queen Bee. Avalon worships her, her fashion sense, her complete mastery over boys. Trace is also the object of Eli's fevered dreams. Unfortunately, he is so NOT her type. To Eli's horror, Trace takes Avalon under her wing.

How will Eli ever hook up with Trace if Avalon keeps running interference?

CAITLIN, DAKOTA & DATOKA. Eli's best buds.

The three amigos often travel in a pack. They are, in alphabetical order...

CAITLIN CONNERS (16). Caitlin sees the best in everyone. Caitlin believes that everyone should "get in touch" with their feelings regardless of the cost. A foot soldier of the New Age invasion, Caitlin burns incense and grooves to the mournful cries of humpbacked whales. Catlin relates. Caitlin cares. And, as Avalon sees things, Caitlin is evil. Maybe that's because Caitlin has a major crush on Eli and Avalon does NOT approve.

DAKOTA (CODY) FLOWERS (16). Cody hates his name. How can he be the hockey team enforcer with "Flowers" embroidered on his jersey? Riding a reconditioned Harley to school, Cody is definitely the school heartthrob, the bad boy that good girls dig. Avalon swoons in Cody's presence. Cody finds that unnerving. "I mean, like, who swoons?"

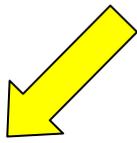
DAKOTA TOYOTA (16). The star winger of the Mac-Mass Maroons until his knee popped, Dakota is 225 pounds of pure...mush. He calls his girlfriend every night until she dumps him. And then he calls his Grandma every night...until she refuses his collect calls. Dakota uses sports metaphors for everything. When faced with a tough decision, Dakota always wonders what Coach would do. Too bad, Coach won't return his calls either.

CAMERON (11), Ronnie's sidekick.

Cameron is Ronnie's best friend since forever -- even though he is a boy. Quiet, studious, always breaking another bone, Cameron relies on Ronnie to protect him. Ronnie relies on Cameron to follow her lead.

Think of Cameron as a young version of ...





GILES (28), Antonia’s assistant.

Loyal and domestically gifted, Giles sacrifices the prime of his life for Antonia and Mother Granola Cereal. A true believer in the power of fibre.

Stylishly dressed in the latest cool suit with chunky, trendy glasses. Giles graduated with his MBA, works extremely hard and never seems to be rewarded. But Giles lives with Hope (Hope is his pet dwarf hamster). Giles knows that he can learn everything he needs to know about succeeding in business and life from Antonia. He watches her carefully for clues as to how to build his own career.

Giles admires Tonia and does anything he can to impress her. If asked, he will pick up the kids. If required, he will present Ronnie’s geography report to her class.

Antonia is Giles’ mentor. He is her acolyte.

MR. PATEL (26), the Family’s Telemarketer

Mr. Patel works for a telemarketing service in India, Bombay Telemarketing. He pops up here and there and becomes the “ACME” of our stories. Just like the Coyote in the Roadrunner cartoons always orders his diabolical stuff from the ACME Company, the Kellers order everything they need from Mr. Patel.

Mr. Patel is youngish, professional and speaks without an accent. He is proper and considerate and very, very good at his job. He studies at night for his engineering degree and saves his money to start his own business. He admires Dave as a man of action. Dave does not disillusion Mr. Patel with the facts.

In Outsourcing, he is not Dave’s boss. However, while screening the Keller calls, Mr. Patel cannot resist and negotiates a consulting contract for Dave.

Dave’s dream office...

...without Dave



CHARACTER ARCS FOR SEASON ONE

Each episode stands on its own. The characters do grow slowly over time – except for Dave, of course, who hangs onto all of his illusions that Sealton Industries will call him back to work and he will climb that corporate ladder to its heights. In Season One some relationships between our heroes and their friends evolve as follows.

ELI

Eli pursues Trace. Avalon runs interference. Trace finally recognizes that Eli exists. Eli celebrates. Trace forgets his name again. Fighting his tendency to let things slide, Eli pursues Trace again. Now Caitlin runs interference. Eli can't catch a break.

But, by the end of the year, Eli and Trace lock lips and play tonsil hockey. Why? Maybe Trace is suffering from insomnia and briefly loses her mind. Or maybe she secretly digs the fanboy, Eli. Nope. It's temporary insanity.

When Caitlin pursues Eli, Dakota Toyota plays matchmaker to the best of his ability. Too bad Eli is oblivious.

Meanwhile, Dave intensifies efforts to prepare Eli to conquer the world of industry. Eli still has a couple years before University but you can never start early enough.

AVALON

Avalon pursues Cody Flowers. Cody realizes that Avalon exists but cannot get around the fact that in his mind that she is Eli's younger sister. Besides, Cody is a flirt and a bad boy and always has a girlfriend.

Avalon pursues Trace as well. Trace is her only competition in terms of popularity at Mac-Massey High. If Avalon can persuade Trace to acknowledge her than Av's social status in high school seems assured. Will her plans succeed? Not with Dad always there to help.

Avalon keeps pushing Eli and Ronnie to help her help Dave find a job. Ronnie resists this: Ronnie loves having Dave around. This tension between the two girls grows to a blow-out towards the end of the year.

RONNIE

Ronnie starts out the school year taking advantage of her life long chum, Cameron. However, by the end of the year she grows to appreciate Cam and their friendship evens out. However, her ongoing rivalry with Avalon intensifies.

DAVE

The great thing about Dave is he can never allow himself to change. He cannot admit defeat – even to himself. So, Dave constantly chases after new corporate opportunities. He takes small consulting jobs to pay the bills but Dave believes that this situation is only temporary and that Sealton Industries will recall him at any time. They must. How can they survive without him?

Dave feels torn between his desire to be a Captain of Industry and being closer to his three kids. Throughout the first year in his attic, Dad's impact on the three younger Kellers varies:

- § Dave applies pressure on Eli to start organizing his future. Dave wants Eli to Eli wants to slide through and enjoy teen life and maybe get a girlfriend. Dave's parental pressure on Eli builds throughout the year.
- ¥ Ronnie remains Dave's steadfast ally. She believes in every crazed scheme he comes up with.
- £ Avalon gets lost in the shuffle. Only at the end of the year, does Dave realize that Avalon (not Eli) may be his shining corporate star. Now, to Avalon's horror, Dave promises to focus on her career development.

Next year will be a nightmare for Avalon. Unless....

At the end of year, Dave receives a call from Sealton. They need him back. Can he come in tomorrow? STAT? The season ends on this cliff-hanger...will Dave take the offer? (And what exactly is this mystery offer?)

ANTONIA

At first, Antonia thrives with Dave in the attic. Her career takes off. She gets more sleep. She feels on top of things. Her colleagues and Giles appreciate her. She moves and grooves in the company of adults.

But as the year wears on, the travel gets to her. Tonia lives for adventure and adventure is not another marketing conference. She misses Dave and the kids. But then Giles posts another memo about Ronnie's swim meet and Tonia feels better again.

Increasingly, Tonia becomes concerned that Avalon should be encouraged to take the path less traveled. To stretch herself. To learn to tough things out. As the year closes out and the Keller Family Corporation has its first ever annual retreat, Tonia encourages Dave to focus more on Avalon.

Yes, Season Two will be definitely the worst possible year of Avalon's life.

THE STORIES

In DAD'S IN THE ATTIC the humour comes out of the characters and how they view the insane situations they trap themselves in. Each member of Keller Corporation has his/her own unique, whacked world view.

Dave Keller (Dad) – Biz Guy. Dave applies biz speak and business think to everything. Dad always asks himself: What would Bill Gates do?

Ronnie – Logic Girl. Ronnie deals with the world the way eleven-year-olds do by asking intensely *logical* questions. Ronnie sees only the big picture.

Avalon – Mover and Shaker. In assessing a situation, Avalon wants to know how it will benefit her and her ongoing master plan to gain control of MacDonald-Massey High. Avalon sees only the little picture.

Anna María Antonia Garcés-Keller (Mom) – The Player. Sophisticated, worldly, *passionate*, Tonia always applies an anecdote from her adventurous past to the present day problem. This never solves anything but it makes for a great story.

Eli – Duuuuude. Eli always takes the path of least resistance. Easily distracted.

Action is punctuated with flashes of the Kellers' nightmares and fantasies. These are shot at Dutch angles in bright primary colors - like the 1960s BATMAN series. For example, when Dave takes away Eli's computer, Eli sees a horrible image of his future "off the grid." Eli sees himself as a hermit tapping out his manifestos on a manual typewriter. All because Eli's pals could not IM him. *The horror.*

Still, DAD'S IN THE ATTIC stories are grounded in a comic reality. For example, Dave feels the recognizable tug between career and family. He has doubts that he discusses with Tonia in private. But with the kids he is the confident problem solver to solve all problems. The Keller teens' are larger than life but their day-to-day problems are relatable for the audience. The stories always unfold from their point-of-view.

DAD'S IN THE ATTIC follows three independent kids who must now deal with their Corporate Dad as he tries to run the family like a business. The conflict/struggle between the kids and Dave's business schemes plays out in every story. It is not enough for Dad to just give some business advice and then see how events unfold. Dad checks in ("feedback loop") to see how his "employees" at the Keller Family Corp fare on their latest mission. In other words, Dave is often the antagonist in the story. The kids may snipe at each other (the way siblings do) but in the end they often unite to defeat Dad.

The stories avoid being sentimental and sweet. If the kids hug Dad it is for purely strategic reasons and they are embarrassed they had to hug Dad in public. Yuckola.

We always leave our teen audience laughing.

Day One

Three latchkey kids, Eli (16), Avalon (15) and Ronnie Keller (11) have the run of their house. This is the place to hang after school for the teens of MacDonald-Massay High. And why not? There's a full fridge, loud music and no parents to be detected. Their folks, Dave and Antonia Keller, are distracted by their careers.

So the Keller kids are independent and popular; wild and undisciplined; thriving and happy. The Keller house rocks. Teen insanity rules.

Avalon maneuvers her brother Eli into booking the EMO band Yellow Stain for the house party to end all house parties. With this blow out, Avalon plans to cement her rising social status at school. What could go wrong?

But then, the front door bangs open. A mysterious man in a business suit stands in the doorway carrying a ficus. Who is that? Avalon stares at the apparition and gasps:

“Dad? You're home?!”

“Yes!” Dave Keller seems excited. “And isn't that great!”

“But you're never home,” Avalon protests. “Not during daylight.”

And what's with the ficus?

As Dave sets up the attic as his new home office, he explains. The ficus is from his old office at Sealton Industries. His *old* office? Yes, Dave has been “downsized” (okay, fired). Ronnie gapes, shocked: Not her Daddy! No, it's for the best, Dave reassures her. This brief adjustment in career trajectory will allow Dave to flex his entrepreneurial muscles and get to know his kids better.

His kids are *not* thrilled. Dave's very presence threatens their house party, freedoms and cherished way of life. What are they going to do?

For Tonia, Dave's downsizing means that she must accept a promotion. It will be a sacrifice. But Antonia will have to put up with the raise, the glamorous travel and the five star hotel accommodations. And she's off...

Back at home, despite Avalon and Eli's best efforts, they can't keep Dave out of the house. And Dave pulls the plug (literally) on their home concert. He promises (threatens) the kids that he will always be there for them. Dave's new slogan: *All Dad, All the Time*.

To Avalon's mortification Dave wades into the crowd at her house party. “Let's meet your friends!” Dave booms, high-fiving as he goes. This is **Day One**. From here on:

Dad is in the house.

Shake the Box

The aftermath of the cancelled party and Dad's lost job:

When Dave kills the house party, Avalon is totally embarrassed in front of her social set (i.e. Trace Royer-DuPont). Can she ever recover her social status?

Dave cancels Ronnie's phone order of the latest in 'tween fashions. Ronnie argues that Dad left her a credit card for emergencies. This was a fashion emergency. Dave cancels the order anyway.

Dave nails Eli for smashing the windows of their house. Dave appreciates a good golf swing as well as the next executive, but Eli should practice his nine iron somewhere else...and pay for the repairs.

The Keller kids fear life will never be the same. And Dave thinks that's great! Sure he expects to be recalled to Sealton at any moment. But every now and then in life, like in business, you have to **Shake the Box**. Toss out your preconceptions. Do something new.

Still, deep down, Dave misses the corporate whirl. To feel useful, he launches the Keller Family Corp. He issues briefcases and business cards to his kids.

Dave decides he wants to get to know his kids better. Dave conducts a small marketing survey of Eli and Avalon's friends (only three hundred multiple-choice questions). What do they see as Eli and Avalon's strengths and weaknesses? Where do they think Eli and Avalon will be in five years? What skin care products do they like and why? Avalon freaks. After her Dad interrogates her friends no one will talk to her. Now she never wants to go back to school. "That's it!" Eli exclaims. That's what they'll do.

To drive Dave back to work, Eli proposes that Dave home school the three kids. Dave can never survive that kind of intense "quality time," Eli reasons. But to Eli's horror, Dave leaps on the idea like a man throwing himself on a grenade. Dave believes he can deliver a better educational product than Mac-Massay High. And home schooling will give the Keller family even more time to bond.

Within forty-five minutes of home schooling, Dave is exhausted. The three Keller Kids drive Dave crazy. He gives up on the home schooling but not his attic office.

The Keller kids realize that Dave will be hard to crack. They want their freedom, their *lives* back. They have to shake the box. And fast.

Outsourcing

Avalon's social life is out of control even for Avalon. She can't return all her calls. Eli complains that his friends can't get through on the phone. "You have friends?" Avalon shoots back.

Dave explains that they can't afford a second "teen line." Instead, Dad does a little **Outsourcing**. He engages Mr. Patel of Bombay Telemarketing to field Avalon's calls. Following Dad's instructions, Mr. Patel does his job too well and sorts out the "good boys" from the "riff raff with shaky values." Unfortunately, Avalon likes bad boy, Cody Flowers, Grade 10 heartthrob. Mr. Patel refuses to put Cody's calls through.

Can Eli and Ronnie stop Mr. Patel and Dad to save Avalon's social life? Do they want to? No, not really. But Eli, Ronnie and Avalon conspire to overload Mr. Patel's phone circuits and drive the conscientious man to exhaustion and regain control of the phone.

Fine Art of Negotiation

Eli and Avalon double book Dave. For Friday night, Eli and buds need a lift from Dave to a pro basketball game. Avalon and her gal pals need transportation to a Boy Band concert -- at the exactly same time.

Dave advises them to use the **Fine Art of Negotiation** to settle the issue. Avalon and Eli come to terms. They agree that Dave must drive them around for eight hours straight. Dave loses it, refuses and goes on strike. No more Dad duty.

At first, Avalon, Eli and Ronnie celebrate. Life returns to a happy pre-Dad-in-the-attic world. They can come, go and party as they want. But Avalon realizes that they still need Dave to chauffeur Friday night. They must break Dave's strike by breaking Dave. The kids let the house fall apart. Laundry and rotting food pile up. Can Dave resist the urge to put things right? (Meanwhile, Ronnie becomes a negotiating demon and wins dessert for dinner. She also settles outstanding issues between NATO and the Warsaw blocks).

Dad escalates his "job action." He pickets the living room, hands out leaflets and uses his bullhorn at Mac-Massey High to put his message across. He chains himself to the stove.

Meanwhile, lack of laundry reduces Avalon to wearing Antonia's power suits and Eli into pulling clothing from the bottom of his laundry pile. Avalon's classmates call her "Ma'am." And worse: "Sir." Eli's social life declines as fast as his aroma increases. They can't go out Friday like this. They've must end Dad's strike – and fast.

Eli and Avalon bring in their ace negotiator – Ronnie. Ronnie settles the strike with minutes to spare. In the rush and confusion to get to the basketball game and concert, Eli ends up at Boy Band concert. Disaster...except for the sea of hormone charged girls. Avalon ends up at basketball game. Disaster...except for the hot sweaty boys. *Sweet!*

Blamestorming

Dave and Antonia return from their adults-only-dinner date. Romance hangs in the air. They slip up to the attic for some privacy. They remember that magic night at the Marketing Conference when they first met. Just like tonight, the stars glittered. Dave and Tonia gaze up at the night sky through the hole in the roof. *The hole in the roof?*

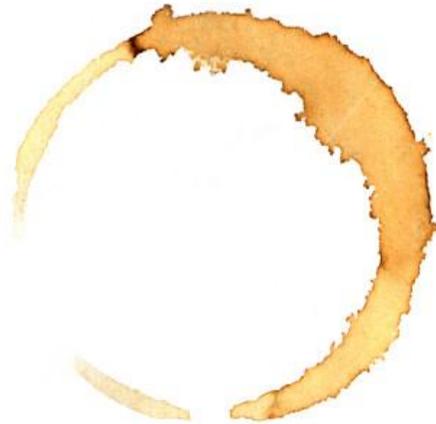
Dave convenes a **Blamestorming** session. When businesses want to determine why a project failed, they make the team responsible “blamestorm” the disaster. Someone must take the fall for the hole in the roof. The tribunal is Dave, Antonia and Giles on speaker.

In a series of flashbacks, Dave uncovers the truth. (But can he handle the truth?) To cut costs, Dave cancelled the cable, forbade pizza orders and told Ronnie she could not have a pet. But the Keller kids work their way around Dad. Ronnie befriends a raccoon in the back laneway. Eli installs a “borrowed” satellite dish on the roof to catch the PPV boxing match for his buds (including Avalon’s crush Cody Flowers). Not relying on delivery pizza, Avalon cooks a special picnic to romance Cody. Avalon manipulates events so that she and Cody find themselves locked out alone on the roof. Tonight will be magic.

But who knew the raccoon’s nest would weaken the timbers? Who knew the weight of the satellite dish would strain the roof? Who knew the raccoon would make a grab for Avalon’s picnic dinner? Who knew Cody Flowers was terrified of raccoons? (And it is one scary raccoon) Who could predict that Cody would lurch backwards into Avalon and their combined weight would punch a hole in the roof? Who knew?

So the kids agree – Dad is to blame. If Dave hadn’t cancelled the cable, forced Avalon to cook and refused Ronnie a pet, the roof would still be there. Besides, Dave weakened the roof by constantly bonking his head on the eaves. AND Antonia shares the responsibility. After all, Tonia did hire the incompetent (but competitively priced) Giles to install the roof in the first place.

So the Keller kids dodge all blame. Plus they get their cable and pizza reinstated.



Liquidity

Eli drives donuts with the wrestling team's bus and scrapes the paint off the bus. Can he raise the cash for the repairs? Not if that means actually working. To Eli's surprise, Dave takes the bad news well. So what if Eli is broke, in debt. What a fantastic challenge! Dave declares that they will work together to make the Eli Division of the Keller Corporation debt free. Dave tells Eli that anything can be turned from an asset into cash (the principal of **Liquidity**). To pay for the bus, Dave plans to liquidate everything Eli owns. Oh no!

It's a race. Can Eli raise the cash before Dave sells off his beloved *Silver Skull* comic book collection? (*Silver Skull* is the classic comic about a mysterious superhero wrestler). Meanwhile, Ronnie follows Dad's example to the extreme and becomes a mini-mogul on the 'Net site Buy-Sell-Unload.com.

To get out from under Dad, Eli arranges a charity wrestling exhibition with pro wrestler Trish Stratus. (Eli is the charity). But Trish crushes Eli's vertebrae and spirit. No one can defeat her to win the money for charity. But in his wrestling guise of Corporate Drone, Dave steps in. He lasts long enough in the ring with Trish to win the prize for charity.

Eli cheers. All his problems are solved. Unfortunately, Dave and Trish insist that the proceeds go to a real charity NOT Eli. Finally, in traction, Eli is prepared to make a sacrifice. He will sell his prized *Silver Skull* comic collection. Dave is pleased. Maybe, Eli has learned something. Well, no. Eli sells authorized limited edition reproductions of the comic. And he gets Ronnie the Internet Auction Queen to do all the work. Sweet.

Skunk Works

Ronnie, Eli and Avalon need to get Dave a job. Somewhere. Anywhere. Just to get him out the house and get their lives back to normal. Avalon has a theory. Maybe Dad can't get hired because something wrong with him. Can they improve on their basic Dad?

But how? Without telling Dave what project they are working on, the Keller kids ask him how he would improve a product. Dave recommends that Eli and Avalon conduct a **Skunk Works**. A Skunk Works is a top secret corporate retreat where engineers redesign a product (in this case Dad) without interference from senior management (in this case Dad). After a sleepless night fueled with hot chocolate and nachos, the Keller Kids totally redesign their Dad (his look, his level of cool, his packaging). They hope that this will land him a new job and return to them their pre-Dad in the attic freedom.

The Skunk Works works. New Improved Dave lands job interview after job interview. He is hip and happening. Unfortunately, the repackaged Dad lands a job as Avalon and Eli's guidance counselor. After all, hip happening Dad really relates to young people.

Now Dave controls Eli and Avalon's futures. He even chooses what classes they take. (Commerce and Accounting) And at Mac-Massey's Guidance Counselor, Dave teaches

the mandatory Hygiene Class (Sex Ed). Sex Ed with Dad! With flow charts! “Pluck out my eyes NOW!” Avalon begs.

The Keller kids have to get Dave fired. But how? Their Skunk Works molded him into the best Dave Keller possible. The ultimate Dad. But maybe they can show him for the non-hip corporate guy he really can be. They assemble a DVD of Dad exactly in his native environment. Once they post *Dave Gone Wild* on the Internet, he loses all credibility and steps down from his new job.

Okay, so Dad is back in the attic but at least he is out of their school. Except.....

Dave Gone Wild turns Dave into a teen cult phenom (ala the *Star Wars Kid*). Walking down the halls of Mac-Mass High, Eli and Avalon face the nightmare of dozens of teens acting just like their Dad. There is no escape. Nooooooooooooo!

Branded!

Dave discovers that Ronnie is the odd girl out at school. At recess, the girls pair up and exclude her. Dave refuses to have any product (kid) coming out of the Keller Family Corporation to be undervalued. Dave comes up with a killer solution: Ronnie needs to be better **Branded**. He develops the Ronnie Brand. *Ronnie: The Friend You Need to Have*.

Ronnie hesitates: she sees herself as a person not a product. But she is also Daddy's Girl. So Ronnie agrees to a small test marketing campaign. Dave launches an aggressive ad campaign: posters, infomercials and soap-on-a-rope giveaways. He raises "consumer" awareness of Ronnie with makes her the girl everyone wants as a friend. At first, Ronnie enjoys the attention. But then she feels overwhelmed with her celebrity. She fights Dave's ad campaign; she tears down the posters and cancels the infomercials. But Dave keeps on promoting. The man is a machine.

Tonia intervenes. She sympathizes with Ronnie: Dave has it all wrong. Ronnie has a moment of flickering hope: maybe Mom can stop the madness. Tonia tells Ronnie that Dave is handling the Ronnie Brand all wrong. Tonia feels that the Ronnie Brand should be *exclusive* not mass market. Ronnie realizes that she is caught in the middle as her Mom and Dad compete to prove who is the best marketer.

The parental promotions work. Now everyone knows Ronnie. But no one hangs with her. The girls who want to be popular think Ronnie is too "exclusive," too above it all. The non-conforming girls think Ronnie's just a Brittany wannabe. For Ronnie, it was hard being lonely. But it is worse being lonely when everyone knows your name.

Can Avalon and Eli undo Dad's handiwork? They do with their own, cheeky, anti-Dad campaign. "Do your parents drive you insane? Talk to Ronnie: The Friend You Need To Have." Ronnie is no longer just a product. She is her own person telling every kid in her grade how to deal with their crazy parents.

Just-In-Time

Eli promised his best friends, the two Dakotas, that they'd check out cheerleader tryouts together. And he promised his other best friend, Caitlin, that they'd hit the comic book store for the Free Comic Day. And, oh yeah, he promised to pick up Ronnie. The responsibility, the stress is too much.

Dave steps in and tells Eli to apply the principal of **Just-In-Time**. Here's how it works. Car manufacturers never have all their parts on hand. The parts arrive when needed. "Think like a hubcap, Eli," Dave explains, "Roll to each of your appointments Just-In-Time." Dave volunteers to help. Eli tries to refuse. Dave insists: Eli needs his dad. After all, Dave was the best Vice President, Logistics Sealton Industries ever had.

Dave shadows Eli everywhere he goes and complicates Eli's life more than it already was. Eli manages to make his appointments...barely. Only one thing – where's Ronnie?

How can Eli and Dave tell Antonia they lost Ronnie? And Tonia is due back that night from a business trip selling her latest brainstorm Mother Granola' Great Gruel. Dave and Eli must work together to discover where they lost Ronnie. In public Dave never loses faith: he keeps telling Eli that they will deliver Ronnie Just-in-Time. (Actually Ronnie is never lost, she just went home to watch TV).



Mother Granola's newest cereal

Try some. It keeps your lower colon moving and a-grooving.

Don't Sweat the Small Stuff

Ronnie has a school project due. But she just can't finish her topographic model of Jamaica. Ronnie gets bogged down by the details.

David gives her the best advice he ever got from a quick fix business paperback: **Don't sweat the small stuff**. In fact, Dave now applies this mantra to the overall operations of the Keller Family Corporation. Eli, Avalon and Ronnie take advantage and use this to justify slacking off completely. Personal hygiene – a mere detail. Household chores – will anyone care in ten thousand years? Ronnie's project – how important really is spelling?

But pretty soon, the Keller kids learn that the devil is in the details. And, by ignoring small details, Eli becomes trapped in the dairy section of an Ocho Rios (Jamaica) market.

The Focus Group. Saturday night. Dave discovers that Eli is desperate and dateless. Again. Eli claims that he'd rather play his videogame *Silt* than go out. But Dave hounds Eli for the truth until his son confesses that he simply does not know what girls want.

Dad wishes that Eli had come to him sooner. Eli should learn what his target market (hot babes) want in a date (um...well...Eli). Dave quickly organizes a focus group just for Eli – with the six most popular girls. Eli can ask the girls anything. Dad graciously acts as the session facilitator moving the questions along. Unfortunately, Eli himself soon becomes the focus of the girls' probing questions. They question his choice of clothes, of friends, of everything. Will Eli break down and reveal his secret obsessive love of *Silt*?

And, why is the achingly beautiful Trace DuPont-Royer taking so many notes?

Management by Wandering Around. Avalon's marks are slipping, especially in Math. Over Avalon's objections, Dad decides to use the business technique of "management by wandering around" to help. Dave will wander around school, ask questions and give Avalon intense personal attention to boost his marks.

Avalon freaks. She can't maintain a social life with her Dad around. Avalon sits as far from the classroom door as possible. If Dad can't spot her, he won't talk to her. And no one will have to know they are related.

Dave discovers that Avalon's Math problem is that she now sits next to Cody Flowers, teen heartthrob. Who wouldn't be distracted? Seats are shuffled. Problem solved. Or so it seems. So why do Avalon's Math marks keep falling?

In Too Deep. Eli wants to date Trace DuPont-Royer. Dad advises him to "Sell in Depth." Eli should make his sales pitch that he's a "good guy" to everyone in the Trace DuPont-Royer organization who could scotch the deal/date by saying no. Sales fall through, Dave explains, when the salesman ignores the gatekeepers. Reach out to Tracey's entourage and her parents. Don't give them a reason to say no. Dad insists on accompanying Eli to show him his sales ropes. At first, in depth selling works. Trace hears good things about Eli from the people around her. She shows some interest.

But then Trace's parents take advantage of Eli. (Such a nice young man!) They force Eli and Dave to do all their yard work and change every light bulb in their house. And then Trace's truly irritating girlfriend Doreen falls for Eli. Doreen thought he was being nice to her because he likes Doreen.

Avalon offers to save Eli – if he makes it worth her while. Is Eli willing to put in a good word for her with Cody Flowers? It seems Avalon also wants to sell in depth.

The Field Test. Avalon forges her Dad's signature to opt out of the class orientation session. Dave finds out. Avalon thinks she did nothing wrong: the Keller kids always sign their own permission slips. Dave decides that Avalon will do the orientation weekend and so will he. Tagging along are the other two kids who skipped the session.

Dave decides to take Avalon and the others camping. This will build their leadership skills in a **Field Test**. Avalon panics. Camping never fit within Dave's job description. Avalon will just die of embarrassment: she has no clue what Dave will do. Avalon makes him promise not to go crazy on her. No PowerPoint presentations of her baby pictures with fully annotated growth charts. Please.

Dave does his research. He comes prepared with complete set of tabbed research notes of how to start a fire, pitch a tent and tourniquet a severed limb. So what if he forgets to bring the food? Kids should learn to forage in the wilderness. That builds self-reliance and character! How poisonous are these mushrooms? Dave wonders.

Will Avalon and her Dad forge a deeper bond in the deep woods? Probably not. (Especially since they end up camping in the laneway behind their house.)

Managing Up. Dave and Antonia crave some private, adult time. Or, at least, a dinner without kids and ketchup. Antonia penciled Dave in for a 'power date' on Friday. Her next free window is October. Dave prepares a complete user's guide for the house and puts Eli and Avalon in charge. Ronnie is in a snit. She does not need a baby sitter. Certainly not Eli. Or Avalon. Ronnie rebels. The Keller kids ran the house for years but what can she do? Well....

Ronnie remembers that Dad mentioned the business technique of **Managing Up**. As an employee, you are also supposed to manage your bosses and manipulate them into doing what you want. Ronnie begins to "manage up" first Eli and Avalon and then Dave and Antonia with success. So much for Eli and Avalon's plans for the evening. So much for Dave and Tonia's special time.



THE SETTINGS:

The Keller's Street

The Kellers live on Admiral Road, a leafy street in the old Annex neighbourhood of Toronto. The kids can walk to school -- if Eli wakes up in time. Number 153 is a big old Victorian house that the Kellers can no longer really afford. The lawn needs weeding. The front door should be repainted. Dave promises to fix things up when he has the time. Who knew that being under-employed would keep Dave so busy?

Most houses on Admiral have been gentrified but it is still in a big city's downtown. The kids are not sheltered in the suburbs. There is a rough rooming house at the bottom of their street. The kids are aware that other people do not have things as easy as they do.

Dad's Attic

Dave's refuge. His command station from which he plans to take on the world. Ronnie's drawings and Dave's law degrees are taped to the walls. Cramped, choked with files and filing-to-do, the attic gets great light from two skylights. Too bad the air-conditioning never quite makes it to the third floor and Dave roasts from June to September.

Another problem: the eaves slope down sharply into the work space and Dave bashes his head on the ceiling every time he stands up from his desk.

But Dad's attic is fun. The attic has a strange, strong gravitational pull. No matter what Dave is working on, his kids find their way to his home office. Why do your homework in your own room when you can work at Dad's spare desk and completely break his chain of thought? But Dave does not mind all that much. He enjoys having the kids invade his space.

The Family Room

The Keller family room could be mistaken for a trailer park diner after the tornado hit. Dirty dishes fester in the kitchen sink. Eli's hockey bag lives and breeds behind the couch. Ronnie's stuff is everywhere. Any pretence of adult furniture or adult conversation areas has been long abandoned. Vacuuming is merely an option.

MacDonald-Massey High

A basic, universal high school. So ugly it's beautiful...No, it's just plain butt ugly.

THE STANDING SETS

Writers can use these without limitation.

- Dad's attic office
- The Kitchen
- The Family / Living room
- The back yard / back laneway where Eli shoots hoops (basketball)
- The school hallway
- Ronnie's bedroom
- Bedroom (redressed for Eli's, Avalon's and Dave/Tonia's room as needed)

BLOCK SETS

For each block of episodes there will be certain common sets and locations. Ideally, each swing set or location must be able to support 10 pages of story/script between several episodes so that it makes a full day.

Block A

(Currently: *Outsourcing*, *Skunk Works*, *Day One*, *Shake the Box*, *Fine Art of Negotiation*, *Liquidity*).

- Mr. Patel's cubicle / Dave's cubicle (redressed)
- A classroom
- A school cafeteria
- The roof of the Keller house
- School gymnasium
- Antonia's hotel room
- Eli's hut
- Admiral Road

Block B

(Currently: *Blamestorming*, *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*, *Branded* and 4 episodes TBA).

- The Keller house roof
- Admiral Road
- Mother Granola Board Room

THE LOOK AND PACE:

Single camera, fast paced. Visually ambitious, DAD’S IN THE ATTIC has no laugh-track. Each episode is an off-kilter mini-movie of teen angst, parental goofs and general wackiness.

Structurally, DAD’S IN THE ATTIC follows a classic half hour model. Each episode features a strong comic “A” story kicked off by Dad’s involvement with one of his kids. At first, things get better for the Keller kid. Then quickly things go to the worst case scenario. And then the situation gets much, much worse.

The “A” story is intercut with a subplot centering on another Keller kid (“B” story). Ideally, the “B” story comments or reflects on the main story. A comic runner (“C” story) helps knit the “A” and “B” stories together. DAD’S IN THE ATTIC scripts and production plan will be designed to allow for a maximum number of scenes per episode to build pace. We cut into scenes late and out of scenes fast to build comic momentum.

Each episode stands on its own yet builds on the character revelations of the past.

Music plays an extremely important role in DAD’S IN THE ATTIC. The score will be hip and hot and avoid overly “comic” cues. Song will be carefully chosen to build the story and play off the teen angst and settings. Bands in the style of Green Day, The Smoking Popes and Simple Plan are featured. No boy bands or bubble gum need apply.

Locations will be distorted for comic effect. We don’t need to go to S. Bart’s Coffee for a story where the Keller kids become baristas. We just need to show the Keller kids’ personal views of the horrors of McJobs with POV images like:

- the up-close-and-personal SIZZLE of the hot milk spout exploding;
- SUV MOMS (the meanest customers) looming into Avalon’s personal space and demanding service;
- the grease trap out back; and,
- Dave smiling down at Eli and Avalon with fatherly pride. Don’t they look keen in their spiffy green S.Bart aprons! Maybe a franchise is available.

In other words, the Keller family emotions are rooted in realism. However, the more things fall apart in their lives, the more Eli, Ronnie and Avalon see their world as a strange and out-of-control place. Once their personal problems of the week are resolved, DAD’S IN THE ATTIC returns to a low key “normal” look and pace. The Keller kids will always find their sanctuary with Dad in Dad’s attic.