

The Pop-Star

Written by
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FADE IN:

INT NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

STELLA LABELLE (23), fake blonde, silicon breasts with a BLACK SCRUNCHIE covering her left wrist hunches over a sofa and scans the dance floor.

STELLA
Do you see Richard?

YVETTE (21), a well put together black woman hands her a slice of 'Happy Birthday!' Cake.

NAOMI WANG (24) holds RICHARD KLEIN'S (42) hand and leads him out the exit.

Stella grabs a piece of cake and follows them out.

EXT PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

STELLA
Ritchie, you're not gonna staying
for ..

Stella sees an engagement ring on Naomi's finger.

RICHARD
Happy Birthday Stel.

Naomi pulls Richard into a limo, it drives away.

Stella drops the cake on her dress and stands in the middle of the road until a car HONKS at her, she rushes back into the club.

INT BATHROOM - LATER

Stella applies foundation on top of her tear stained mascara, takes a swig from her alcohol flask and hikes up her cake stained skirt.

INT DANCE FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Yvette sees Stella drunk grind a guy and signals Stella's entourage, they've been thru this before.

STELLA
Ya know who I am!?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEWILDERED MAN

Uhhhh..

Stella DANCES out of synch to the MUSIC and SINGS the words 'Daddy's Little Girl' The man WINCES.

BEWILDERED MAN (cont'd)

Holy shit, you're Stella LaBelle?!?
I watched you when I was like this
tall!

STELLA

All you need to know right now is
that daddy's little girl is all
grown up.

Stella kisses him and then VOMITS into his mouth.

Yvette's team force Stella towards the exit, she fights but gives in, puts on sunglasses and smiles at the gawkers through tear filled streams of mascara laced eye shadow.

EXT NIGHTCLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Stella's girls stand in front of a pink *Maserati* with a CRACKED WINDSHIELD and the word 'SLUT' etched onto the driver's side door.

Stella looks at a SURVEILLANCE CAMERA.

STELLA

Slut huh? You think I give a shit?
I am a slut, so what!

YVETTE

Call the club manager and get the
security tape.

A camera FLASHES, paparazzi enter, Yvette opens an umbrella to block Stella's face, pushes her into the maserati's passenger side seat and drives away.

INT STELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Yvette drops Stella onto her bed.

STELLA

Don't go, please.

Yvette covers Stella with a blanket, nudges a teddy bear into Stella's arms and locks the door on her way out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SILENCE. Stella lies EYES WIDE OPEN.

She picks up her cell phone and dials 'Yvette', 'Yvette Dancer 1', 'Yvette Dancer 2', but no one answers.

She opens thirty tabs in her browser all pre-loaded with fashion websites and flips thru each tab ringing up thousands of dollars worth of transactions until ..

SIREN sound blasts out of her speakers, the words 'Failed Transaction' FLASH on her browser, she slams her laptop shut.

She pours a bottle of *Le Voyage de Delamain* cognac into a mug and chugs it down.

INT STELLA'S BATHROOM - MORNING

Stella squats on the toilet seat, a fistful of pills in her left hand and razor cut scarred wrist.

DOORBELL RINGS. Beat. Stella looks at her pills.

DOORBELL RINGS again. Stella gets off the toilet seat and puts away the pills.

INT STELLA'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Richard and Naomi welcome themselves into Stella's home.

Naomi turns on the TV to a video of Stella vomiting into a clubgoer's mouth.

TV HOST

Spice-eh! In today's episode of Where are They Now?!? Well, in the case of former teenie bopper princess Stella LaBelle, I gotta hand it to ya, *that* was a better performance than your concerts ever were. Not that I would know.

Naomi shuts off the TV.

STELLA

I'm sorry.

RICHARD

Listen Stels, our label is having a tough quarter and given your knack of staying in the public eye, Naomi
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD (cont'd)
and I thought that if you pushed
out a new album and some
promotional gigs it would help us
stay out of the red so to speak.

STELLA
You want me to work again!?

Stella shakes her head no.

NAOMI
Listen Doris.

STELLA
Stella.

NAOMI
Doris. People will lose their jobs
if you don't do this.

STELLA
Take my residuals.

RICHARD
We have and it's not enough.

STELLA
How much do you need?

RICHARD
Your accounts are frozen.

SILENCE. Stella glares at Richard.

RICHARD (cont'd)
It's for your own good.

Stella shows Richard her scarred wrist.

RICHARD (cont'd)
You are not a child anymore, you're
being manipulative.

STELLA
Fine! You want to talk business:
I'm a has been, no one gives a shit
about my music anymore. Why are you
asking me to do this? Why really?

Stella eyes Naomi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD

You will make guest appearances and promote a greatest hits album.

NAOMI

So to speak.

RICHARD

Starting tomorrow.

STELLA

How am I going to represent you in that?

Stella eyes her vandalized pink *Maserati*.

NAOMI

I'll get you something.

INT SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Stella drives a black convertible *Cadillac* with a vanity license plate 'PIMP' that BOBS UP & DOWN.

She VOMITS and she STUMBLES into the mall.

INT SHOPPING MALL - LATER

Banner reads: Stella LaBelle autograph signing 10 AM to 1:30 PM, clock reads: 1 PM.

Stella enters and sees JAY ESPOSITO (17), who looks like a poverty stricken twelve years old, holding a paper bag.

A LITTLE GIRL (4) points at Stella and points at a poster of Stella's face.

LITTLE GIRL

It's her, it's her!

Little girls and their moms cut in front of Jay, he looks at the clock 1:15 pm and jitters.

I/E AUTOGRAPH BOOTH - LATER

Clock reads 1:31 pm, Police Officer Pratt approaches Jay.

POLICE OFFICER PRATT

Show me your ID please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

I don't have one sir.

POLICE OFFICER PRATT

You're here for the autograph signing?

JAY

Yes sir.

POLICE OFFICER PRATT

That ended five minutes ago, this area is closed.

Jay looks at the girls waiting in line in front of him, looks at the officer and shuffles away.

EXT SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT - LATER

Jay jumps in front of Stella.

JAY

(stuttering)

Hi! Ms. LaBelle, my name is Jay Esposito, please pardon the intrusion, I, I tried to meet you today at your autograph signing but it was closed.

Jay raises his paper bag, Stella steps back, Police Officer Pratt enters.

POLICE OFFICER PRATT

Step away from her now!

Jay drops the paper bag and steps away from Stella.

POLICE OFFICER PRATT (cont'd)

Give me your license.

JAY

I don't, I don't have one.

POLICE OFFICER PRATT

Hand me your driver's license now!

STELLA

It's my car! really, it is. Now lower your voice please, you're scaring him.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA (cont'd)
(to Jay)
What were you trying to say before?
I didn't understand, can you say it
again slower, please.

JAY
Please take the bag and listen to
it.

STELLA
OK, OK.

Stella puts the bag into her purse.

STELLA (cont'd)
I'm going to leave now and after I
do, this officer won't bother you,
not if you weren't doing anything
wrong, will you?

Stella sees the officer's badge on his belt.

STELLA (cont'd)
Officer Pratt.

POLICE OFFICER PRATT
No ma'am.

STELLA
Good, then why don't you run along
and have a good evening, both of
you.

Jay and Officer Pratt watch Stella's car bob up and down as
she drives away.

EXT TRAFFIC LIGHT - LATER

Traffic light turns red, Stella's car jerks forward as it
stops and spills a CASSETTE TAPE out of Jay's paper bag.

She picks up the tape, notices a cassette player on the
dashboard and puts the tape inside.

STELLA
Guess it's your lucky day, Stella
LaBelle is listening to your demo
tape.

Car HONKS at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA (cont'd)
Yeah, who am I kidding?

She presses play.

EXT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Stella listens to Jay's album.

STELLA
Not bad.

Stella turns up the volume and pulls onto the highway.

EXT HIGHWAY - LATER

Stella drives down the road.

JAY (O.S.)
This next one is a tribute to a
song that I used to hear on the
radio when my mom and I were going
thru a tough time. So here it goes:
Memories of Daddy's Little Girl.

Stella shakes her head and laughs.

EXT HIGHWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Stella parks her car on the side of the highway, presses
rewind and play.

JAY (O.S.)
Here it goes: Memories of Daddy's

Music stops, Stella ejects the cassette but its magnetic
tape is caught in the machine.

STELLA
No, no, no!

Stella pulls out the gnarled magnetic tape and stuffs it
into a clear plastic bag.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLOSE-UP OF SUNLIGHT SHINING ON PLASTIC BAG.

INT SOUND ENGINEERING ROOM - LATER

Stella faces a SOUND ENGINEER (40).

STELLA

Ohh, thank you so much!

Stella hugs the Sound Engineer and then gives him the plastic bag, he takes out the magnetic tape, some of which is melted together.

STELLA (cont'd)

You can fix that right? At least get some of it back?

Sound Engineer frowns.

STELLA (cont'd)

Anything you can, even if it's just twenty seconds, thanks.

Stella exits.

INT POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Stella faces a police man.

POLICEMAN

Ma'am we can't work on just that.

STELLA

(hums one of Jay's songs)
Da, da, da, single mom, da, da, da
welfare, she just got off of
welfare, there must be something in
your databases on that.

POLICEMAN

I'm sorry, we can't conduct that
kind of search for you.

POLICE OFFICER PRATT

His name was Jay Esposito, that
should be enough with the other
information you have.

STELLA

Thank you.

EXT GHETTO NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Stella drives past a check cashing store when her cadillac bounces over a bulge in the road.

Young men hanging outside blighted property lift their lighters at her and whistle.

Stella rolls up her windows and zooms past a flashing yellow traffic light.

I/E ESPOSITO APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Jay's mom, MRS. ESPOSITO (42) a heavy set, broad shouldered woman opens the door, sees Stella in butt hugging sweat pants, exposed waist and bust accentuating t-shirt and closes the door behind her.

MRS. ESPOSITO
What are you?

STELLA
Hi, I'm Stella LaBelle, are you Jay Esposito's mom?

MRS. ESPOSITO
Why are you outside my door?

STELLA
I'm not trying to sell you anything, I just want to talk to your son.

Mrs. Esposito gets into Stella's face.

MRS. ESPOSITO
There's a reason your kind don't hang around here anymore.

STELLA
No, no, you have me wrong, I'm a singer, sort of.

Mrs. Esposito reveals a handgun beneath her sweater.

MRS. ESPOSITO
I'm legal, it's legal, now get out.

Stella exits.

INT JAY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jay watches Stella drive away.

MRS. ESPOSITO (O.S.)

Jay.

Jay shuts the window and opens his math textbook over his music notebook.

MRS. ESPOSITO (O.S.) (cont'd)

Jay!

Jay runs to his mom.

INT HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Jay stands next to a computer terminal occupied by JAKE, an Hispanic jock and his friend TODD.

JAKE

Esposito, what do you think you're doing?

JAY

Errghh, nothing?

JAKE

You look like a stalker jerking off over there. Go sit somewhere we don't have to see you.

Jay goes away.

INT HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

Two girls approach the empty computer terminal until Jay rushes past them, sits down and smiles at them.

The girls sneer at Jay and go away.

Jay searches 'Stella LaBelle's record company' and then picks up his cell phone.

INT HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - LATER

Jay stares at the cellphone in his book bag when ..

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Mr. Esposito

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

Yes sir?

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Is there something in your bag that's more engaging than what I'm teaching?

JAY

No sir.

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Then given your performance this semester, I highly suggest you pay attention.

Jay's cell phone glows with an incoming phone call.

JAY

Sir, I'm sorry, my stomach I really need to go.

Teacher nods, Jay grabs his book bag and exits.

I/E BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jay looks at an address written on scrap paper.

JAY

201 West Hollywood Boulevard, ten am, I'll be there.

STELLA (O.S.)

Great, I'm so glad you talked things thru with your mom and we're all really, really excited about your music.

Jay hangs up the phone and dances with joy.

Outside the bathroom, Jay takes a flier off the bulletin board.

I/E WOODSIDE MUSIC STUDIO - AFTERNOON

Jay walks into Woodside Music Studio.

JAY

Hi Gus, how are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUS
Good Jay, I'm good.

Gus grabs a cassette tape until Jay lays a BAG OF COINS on the counter.

JAY
Not today, gonna splurge on a CD,
six dollars and fifty three cents,
here, I'll count it.

GUS
Jay, how long have you been coming
here?

Gus gives Jay a new CD from the shelf, behind it is a sticker: \$7.53 cents.

GUS (cont'd)
If I can't trust you by now, I
shouldn't be running a business.

Jay peaks into the sound booth.

GUS (cont'd)
No one's there, it's all yours.

Jay hears a boy strumming his guitar.

JAY
That low E is a bit high.

Jay goes into the sound booth.

The boy lowers the tension on Low E String and strums it,
perfect match against the tuner.

INT SOUND BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Jay slides the CD into the machine, adjusts the microphone,
presses record and plays the piano.

INT ESPOSITO APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Jay enters.

JAY
Hi mom, I have good news.

Jay hands Mrs. Esposito a flier for Math Team practice
Saturday 8:00 am to 4 pm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
Mr. Lo wants me on the math team!

Mrs. Esposito studies the flier.

JAY (cont'd)
The hours are a bit ..

MRS. ESPOSITO
(interrupting)
You'll have to be up by six.

JAY
Five, just to be sure, oh and they usually stay after to ..

MRS. ESPOSITO
(cuts him off)
No later than four thirty.

Jay sets dinner plates until she takes them from him.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
I got it today.

JAY
Thanks mom.

MRS. ESPOSITO
You'll have to work harder than those other kids to stay on the team, you don't have the advantages those white or black kids have. I don't want to hear a single note off that keyboard tonight.

JAY
OK.

Jay slams the door shut behind him.

INT JAY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jay wipes a smudge off his blue and red striped PLAY-TOY BRAND SYNTHESIZER and writes a second verse for a song entitled: 'Mothers Smother'

INT JAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jay stares at the second hand on his alarm clock until clock hits Five AM, he BOLTS out of bed.

EXT ESPOSITO APARTMENT - LATER

Jay peddles his bike past a sign 'Los Angeles: 20 miles'

EXT JJH RECORDS OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

Jay goes to the receptionist.

JAY
Hi, I'm looking for

STELLA (O.S.)
Jay Esposito?

Stella enters and shakes Jay's hand.

JAY
Hi Ms. LaBelle.

STELLA
Call me Stella please.

Stella notices that Jay is drenched in sweat.

STELLA (cont'd)
Are you OK?

JAY
Yeah! I'm fine, the AC on the
subway broke so.

STELLA
C'mon follow me, we're all very
excited to meet you.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Stella opens the door for Jay, he oggles the professional
equipment and goes to the *Tyros5-76* synthesizer.

JAY
Holy sh.., I mean this is a seven
six!

STELLA
Seven Seven, we get them before the
general public.

YVETTE
Play with it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Yvette and Stella exchange a knowing glance.

STELLA
Whatever you like.

JAY
You don't mind if I sing too right?

STELLA
Go ahead.

Jay performs 'Memories of Daddy's Little Girl', Yvette goes to the other room and videotapes him.

Jay completes his performance.

JAY
I changed that last part up a bit.

STELLA
It's OK.

YVETTE (O.S.)
So now we know you're actually you.

STELLA
So now that tact is out of the way,
did you have any other stuff?
Because your tape, I had to give it
to the producers and they
(Beat)
I don't know what happened ..

Jay gives Stella his MUSIC CD.

STELLA (cont'd)
Yes, thank you!

Stella gives Yvette the CD, she records it to the computer.

JAY
Umm, Do I have to sign anything now
before I start working with you or
you start, you know.

STELLA
Next week, I'll take care of that,
I promise. For the rest of today,
just work on your own music, you
are a musician after all, like me.

Stella laughs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY
Uggh, Yes ma'am.

YVETTE
(whispering)
He thinks we'll steal his music.

STELLA
Oh, oh, oh! Don't worry about us
using your music, if we did, you'd
sue us for all we got.

Jay smiles and plays 'Memories of Daddy's Little Girl' on
the piano.

JAY
Do you want to sing it as a duet?
It'll be fun.

STELLA
Nahh, I'm
(Beat)
Hoarse.

JAY
You sound fine.

Yvette HUMS along to 'Memories of Daddy's Little Girl'

STELLA
(whispering)
Thank you.

YVETTE
(whispers back)
Raise! I need a raise.

STELLA
(whispering)
Who ditched me in my moment of need
last week?
(to Jay)
Don't mind us ladies, we'll get out
of your way.

Stella and Yvette walk past Jay until.

JAY
Ms. LaBelle, err Stella, I've been
meaning to do this all day, may I.

Jay extends his hand to Stella, Stella takes it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA

It's OK, you don't have to thank me again.

JAY

It's different, I just wanted to shake your hand because of your song, it's so well written! It's what started me composing in the first place. I mean when I first heard it I thought one of your producers wrote it or some fat, middle aged Julliard guy they don't want on camera did but when I saw your name on the writing credits. I just knew I had to give it a shot myself.

Jay bows to her, Stella lifts him up.

STELLA

Don't do that!, really it was a team effort.

Stella frowns at Yvette.

I/E JJH RECORDS OFFICE BUILDING - LATER

Stella and Jay walk together.

JAY

So I'll see you same time next weekend.

STELLA

Straight into the studio, they'll let you thru.

JAY

Don't worry about me, hehe, I'm going to hop on the luxury train home, it'll have AC.

Jay waits for Stella to leave and then rides his bike until

HONK, Stella pulls up her Pink Maserati alongside Jay and pops open the trunk.

EXT HIGHWAY - LATER

Jay sits besides Stella, bike wheel sticks out of the trunk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA

You know we can't do this without parental consent.

JAY

Yeah, I'll get it.

(Beat)

Stella, may I ask you a personal question?

STELLA

Shoot.

JAY

What's it like to be you? I mean all that fame, money, lovin what you do.

STELLA

It's like I said, really all a team effort.

JAY

But you're the keystone, that's your voice on the radio and your face on the videos.

STELLA

I guess the last part's true.

JAY

Oh c'mon, you're being modest.

Beat. No response from Stella.

JAY (cont'd)

Man, if I were in your shoes!

STELLA

Easy.

JAY

I'm sorry.

(Beat)

Seriously though, and I'm not trying to pry, but it's easier with, you know, being you.

STELLA

You want a girl to like you for who you are, not the size of your wallet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

Really? C'mon, you can be honest,
you're not that much older than me.

STELLA

Fine, if you want to play around?
Maybe it'll help, but once that
fame goes, so do they to
(Beat)
whatever they think is better.

JAY

Something just ended in your life
didn't it?

Beat. Stella studies Jay.

STELLA

You're right, you're not that much
younger than me and for the record
I ended things with him. Anyway,
are you going to tell all your
friends about this?

JAY

Yeah, it'll take some time to go
thru all of them you know, but yeah
I'll tell all of them.

Stella pulls into the exit lane.

EXT PROJECTS - LATER

JAY

Stop there.

Stella stops one block earlier than Jay's spot.

JAY (cont'd)

Over there I meant.

STELLA

Is that your complex?

Stella points to a mid rise building.

JAY

Yeah.

STELLA

Third floor right, one of those
windows?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

Yeah.

STELLA

Then if I pull up any closer your
mom might see my pink maserati
which might just draw some
attention that you don't want.

Beat. Jay stares at Stella, she pops the trunk open.

STELLA (cont'd)

Signed forms next week and tell
your mom I look forward to meeting
her again.

Jay takes his bike out of the trunk, Stella drives away.

INT ESPOSITO APARTMENT - LATER

Jay enters.

JAY

Hi mom, so math practice was great
but can we umm, can we talk?

MRS. ESPOSITO

Look at you. This could lead to
college, a career in corporate
America, Wall Street New York, so
rich you'll forget all about me.

Beat. Jay remains silent and sets the dinner table, she
tries to help.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)

What did you want to say before?

JAY

Oh just that math team wasn't all
that tiring, just stare at numbers
all day.

Jay finishes setting up the dinner table before Mrs.
Esposito can intervene.

JAY (cont'd)

I'll do the dishes too afterwards.

Mrs. Esposito brushes Jay's hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ESPOSITO

Good boy.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Richard watches a video of Jay's performance.

RICHARD

Not bad.

STELLA

Not bad?

RICHARD

I'll think about it.

STELLA

That's Richard speak for no.

RICHARD

It's not the right strategy, we think that ..

STELLA

(interrupting)

We? I thought you were the boss around here.

Stella takes Richard's hand.

STELLA (cont'd)

Help me keep my promise, please.

RICHARD

OK.

Richard jots a note for Stella.

STELLA

What's this?

RICHARD

Call him, tell him I referred you.

STELLA

Wait, you want me to

(Beat)

What if something goes wrong and he sues me?

RICHARD

Don't screw up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA

How am I supposed to pay him?

Richard's phone buzzes with a call from Naomi.

RICHARD

Excuse me.

Richard exits.

INT JAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jay signs 'Mary Esposito' on a contract form and then returns to jotting down notes in his music notebook.

EXT HIGHWAY - MORNING

Jay bikes towards downtown Los Angeles.

EXT TRAIN STATION - DAY

Jay hides his bike behind a trash compacter.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

An Asian man JASON HOE (50) watches Yvette and her band perform a song.

Jay enters, no one notices.

JASON HOE

Stop, softer on the bass drum and the lyrics on verse two, the line 'Two penny a go, go'.

YVETTE

Found it.

JASON HOE

Sounds like something a forty year old divorced man would say. Replace that with 'Never found me, no, no'.

YVETTE

Got it.

Stella enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JASON HOE
Vocals booth.

Stella goes to the vocal recording booth and sees Jay.

STELLA
What are you doing? They're
recording!

The equalizer picks up her voice, Jason Hoe frowns.

JAY
Shhhhhh.

Stella goes into the booth, Jay dons headphones and listens to her sing, he grimaces when her voice cracks.

Clock reads 10:00 am.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Clock reads 11:00 am, Jay watches sound engineers blend Stella's voice with Yvette's voice.

Then he turns to his own synthesizer.

JAY
Do you guys know how to work this
thing?

SOUND ENGINEER
Yeah, what do you want?

JAY
Kind of a fifties's telecaster with
reverb, lots of reverb.

Sound engineer reconfigures the synthesizer, Jay plays it and grins ear to ear.

Stella enters and dumps a pile of sheet music on top of Jay's notebook.

STELLA
Hey, sorry to keep you waiting.
Can you take a look at that and
make it better? Take your time
though, no pressure.

JAY
Um, what is this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA

The stuff you're going to work on.

JAY

You told me to work on my own stuff.

STELLA

Wait, I'm sorry, that's twice I had to apologize to you today, sorry. Listen, you can still work on your own stuff but there's been a change. You'll work for me now, not the company directly.

JAY

But don't you work for this company?

STELLA

I have a contract with them, you don't, you only have a contract with me, so.

Stella gives Jay a contract, he skims it.

STELLA (cont'd)

You don't have to sign now or anything, look thru it, take your time, don't worry about pay.

JAY

It's alright, really, but
(reading contract)
who is Doris Beamer-dolley.

STELLA

Bheiaramidole, that's the whatever on my birth certificate.

JAY

For real? That's your real name!?
Doris Bheiaramidole?

STELLA

Yes and don't call me that again, I am your boss now you know.

JAY

I'm not making fun of it or anything, it has a lot of character, why don't you just go by that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA

Yeah OK, how many records do you think a name like "Doris Bheiaramidole" would sell?

Silence. Jay frowns.

STELLA (cont'd)

Take a look at those songs.

Jay looks at the clock.

JAY

I gotta go, I have to do something with my mom today. I'll get these done before next time.

Stella gives Jay the eye.

JAY (cont'd)

For real! she's expecting me at the train station.

EXT TRAIN STATION - AFTERNOON

Jay looks behind the trash compacter but his bike is not there, he searches but can not find it.

JAY

Fuck!

Commuter Train pulls into the station.

I/E COMMUTER TRAIN - MOMENTS LATER

Jay jumps thru the turnstile into the train.

POLICEMAN (30) enters, Jay pulls his cap down, Policeman walks closer, Jay tries to slink beneath his chair.

POLICEMAN

What are you doing sir?

JAY

Nothing.

POLICEMAN

May I see your ticket please.

JAY

I had it before but I can't seem to

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POLICEMAN
(cuts him off)
Who is your legal guardian?

INT POLICE STATION - EVENING

Cell door opens, Mrs. Esposito enters.

INT ESPOSITO APARTMENT - LATER

Mrs. Esposito towers over Jay.

JAY
I was supposed to meet up with
kids from school but they didn't
show up, I ran out of money and

MRS. ESPOSITO
What friends? You don't have
friends!

SILENCE.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
Which bullies!

JAY
I don't remember.

Mrs. Esposito stares him down until.

JAY (cont'd)
Todd Anderson and Jake Rodriguez.

Mrs. Esposito picks up the phone.

JAY (cont'd)
Mom, no please!

MRS. ESPOSITO
No one picks on my boy!

VOICE MSG (O.S.)
The school administrator's office
is now closed.

She hangs up the phone and exits.

I/E JAY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jay opens his music notebook, slashes the song title 'Mother's Smother' and replaces it with 'Smother Mother'

Telephone rings, Jay picks it up.

YVETTE (O.S.)

Hi, may I speak to Mrs. Esposito?

He opens the door and hears Mrs. Esposito taking a shower.

JAY

She's busy right now, can I take a message?

YVETTE (O.S.)

(to Stella)

It's him, his mom's not there.

STELLA (O.S.)

Jay?

JAY

Stella?! What are you doing?

STELLA (O.S.)

(cuts him off)

Shut up and listen, I know you lied to me about confessing to your mom and I'm not trying to overstep boundaries but I think you should confess, it'll be better for your life in the long run.

JAY

You don't understand.

STELLA (O.S.)

I didn't say that I did but I did meet your mom and she nearly pulled out a gun on me. So next week, only if you want to, I'll come over to your house in a stretched limo with my team so she knows I'm legit, I'll get the company president to greet her at the studio. Think about it.

JAY

Yes.

CONTINUED:

STELLA (O.S.)
Then see you next week.

Jay hangs up the phone.

Beat, the shower water sound stops, Mrs. Esposito enters.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Who was that before?

JAY
Wrong number.

Mrs. Esposito walks away.

INT JAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jay sits on the floor staring at his notebook pock marked with pencil tip stabbings.

Beat. Jay puts down his pencil and stands up.

I/E MRS. ESPOSITO'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jay opens the door, Mrs. Esposito lies in bed.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Is some one at our door?

JAY
No. Mom before, when I said it was a wrong number, I lied. It was Stella LaBelle the woman who came to our door a few weeks ago. Also, Jake and Todd had nothing to do with what happened today.

MRS. ESPOSITO
What?

JAY
The young white woman who came to our door searching for me, she's a legit musician and she wants to work with me.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Just because she drives a fancy car and isn't as ugly as the rest ..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY
(cuts her off)
I've been to her office.

MRS. ESPOSITO
The hell you have!

Mrs. Esposito stands up, Jay backs away.

JAY
Mom, listen, please, just once in your life listen! I saw her office, I saw a her in a whole room of rich white people and she wants to work with me and she wants it so bad, for whatever f-ing reason, that she's willing to come here next week and roll out the entire enchilada just to convince you to give me a chance.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Calm down.

JAY
No! I will not calm down! I will not freakin pussy out again, not again! Do you hear me! If I let some girl I barely know stand up for me and let those dicks take the blame then everything they say about me is true!

Beat. Silence.

MRS. ESPOSITO
What does that mean exactly: the whole enchilada?

I/E ESPOSITO APARTMENT - MORNING

Limo waits in front of the building, Mrs. Esposito dressed in her Sunday best steps out, Jay follows behind her.

Stella smiles at Mrs. Esposito, Mrs. Esposito does not smile back.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Shall we?

INT LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Yvette sits in the front, Stella, Jay and Mrs. Esposito in the back.

MRS. ESPOSITO
I did my homework on you Ms.
LaBelle, you were quite successful
as a child, then what happened?

YVETTE
(whispering)
Oh please don't answer that.

STELLA
I, I took some time off
(Beat)
For school and other things.

MRS. ESPOSITO
(cuts her off)
Which school? I didn't find
anything about you attending
college.

STELLA
I meant LA High.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Why not go to college after that?

STELLA
Because I didn't think I needed to.

MRS. ESPOSITO
There's more to an education than
money.

STELLA
Yes, but I think I do better by
raising eighty thousand for charity
in a concert than wasting it on
four years of tuition just to get
back to here again, besides, at
least when I party now, it keeps
all the good people at E
entertainment employed, that is
where you found out all this info
about me right?

Beat. No response from Mrs. Esposito, Yvette and Jay giggle.

Mrs. Esposito clears her throat, Jay stops giggling.

CONTINUED:

MRS. ESPOSITO
So your interest in my boy.

STELLA
He's very talented.

MRS. ESPOSITO
How did you discover him?

STELLA
How did I discover him? Well, umm,
he submitted an entry in my
contest, I heard it and.

JAY
(interrupting)
I searched her out. I forced myself
on her and she took me seriously.

MRS. ESPOSITO
How much are you paying him per
hour?

STELLA
It's not by the hour, he gets paid
by whatever contribution he makes
to a song and royalties.

MRS. ESPOSITO
So at your discretion.
(Beat)
May I see the contract?

STELLA
As soon as we get to the office.

INT OFFICE ROOM - LATER

Mrs. Esposito enters and sees three Hispanic women, MARIA
CHEVES (46), ISI (47), ROSA (45) flirting with Richard.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Maria.

Maria hugs Mrs. Esposito.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
(in Spanish)
I never thanked you ..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIA CHEVES
(in Spanish)
You would have done the same for
me, how are you?

MRS. ESPOSITO
How does it look like I am?

They laugh, Isi and Rosa gather around.

MRS. ESPOSITO'S FRIEND ISI
Ahem!

MRS. ESPOSITO'S FRIEND ROSA
Have we gotten so beautiful you do
not recognize us.

Mrs. Esposito hugs Isa and Rosa.

MRS. ESPOSITO
How are you all here?

MARIA CHEVES
When this charming young woman
(nods to Stella)
told us of Jay's good fortune, how
could we not?

MRS. ESPOSITO'S FRIEND ISI
Well, that and

Isi plucks an hors d'oeuvre from a waiter.

MRS. ESPOSITO'S FRIEND ROSA
We always said your tragedy would
be repaid with triumph.
(to Jay)
How will you thank your mom for
this?

MRS. ESPOSITO
By writing a song about me, of
course.

NAOMI (O.S.)
And we're all here to support him
to that goal.

Naomi enters and cuts in front of Stella.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NAOMI

Hi Mrs. Esposito, I'm Naomi Wang,
executive vice president, I report
directly to Mr. Klein.

Naomi nods to Richard.

NAOMI (cont'd)

We're very excited to have your son
on board, if he performs well under
our junior management team, my
label will support releasing his
own songs, one hundred percent
guarantee.

Stella gives Mrs. Esposito the contract and a pen.

STELLA

Here's the contract you wanted and
if you can sign right there beneath
my name as Jay's manager.

JASON HOE

I hate to burst this love fest
ladies, but it's almost eleven and
we have a deadline.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Jay studies Jason's compositions.

JASON HOE

What do you think?

JAY

Mr. Hoe, it's amazing.

JASON HOE

Call me Jason please and I've been
doing this for longer than I care
to admit, it's the only reason I've
gotten anywhere.

JAY

This is going to sound stupid but
can you tell me what this is?

JASON HOE

Oh that's just my own improvisation
short hand, to add some flair to
the performances.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jason plays a complex rhythm on the piano.

JASON HOE (cont'd)
And market something for the live
albums.

Jay plays a variation of Jason's rhythm.

JAY
Yeah, I think I got it.

Jason sees Jay's music notebook.

JAY (cont'd)
Aww that's nothing.

JASON HOE
You don't have to if you're not
comfortable, but it looks like
something to me.

JAY
Alright, what do you think,
honestly?

Jason studies Jay's music notebook.

JASON HOE
Honestly, I couldn't write lyrics
to save my life and you can. As to
the composition, Jay, let me ask
you something, you remember notes
that you heard before don't you.

JAY
Perfect pitch, yeah I got it, I
know it's special and all but I try
not to have a big head over it.

JASON HOE
Good. I don't and I've worked with
people who do who aren't in music
industry anymore, it's hard work.

Jason gives him his compositions.

JASON HOE (cont'd)
Help me bring these to a higher
level.

Stella and the band enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JASON HOE (cont'd)
Now watch how it's done.
(Beat)
Places everyone, c'mon let's go.

INT JAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jay pores over his music notebook, clock reads one AM.

MRS. ESPOSITO (O.S.)
Why are your lights on?

JAY
(Yawns)
Huh, what time is it now? Oh sorry,
I fell asleep and forgot to turn
them off.

Jay tiptoes to his door and lays a towel to block the light leakage.

MRS. ESPOSITO (O.S.)
OK, now go to sleep.

Jay goes back to his music notebook.

INT HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Jay dumps his plate of hot food into a paper bag and grabs twenty napkins, one after the other.

JAKE
C'mon Esposito, you're holding up
the line.

Jay sprints out of the cafeteria, Todd sticks out his foot, Jay jumps over it and keeps on running.

INT HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - LATER

Jay jots down notes into his music notebook with one hand and eats out of the paper bag with the other.

EXT ESPOSITO APARTMENT - SUNRISE

Jay waves good bye to his mom and enters the limo.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - MORNING

Jason Hoe and the band enter, Jay is already there.

JAY

Mr. Hoe, err Jason and everyone, I know you guys have other work to do, but I punched up the compositions, do you want to listen?

JASON HOE

Sure.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Clock reads 10:20 am, everyone laughs.

BAND MEMBER 1

You better watch it Jason, this kid's going to steal your job.

JAY

If it wasn't for his help, I couldn't have done this.

BAND MEMBER 1

False modesty.

JAY

I didn't say I was bad.

Stella enters as Jay plays the piano.

JAY (cont'd)

Stel, check this out, I'm seeing us all play this in the SuperBowl and then they're all going to be like: what game? we came to see the concert.

STELLA

Someone's ego needs to be deflated.
(to Jason Hoe)
Sorry I'm late.

JASON HOE

I have a new variation of 'Little Empires', wanna hear?

Jason winks at Jay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA
Empires isn't even singles
material.

Jason and the band play 'Little Empires'.

JASON HOE
Give it a shot.

Stella sings Jay's lyrics.

JAY
You like it?

STELLA
(to Jason)
No, it's too I don't know, jazzy,
doesn't fit my brand, what's next?

Jay jots down the phrase: "less jazzy" in his notebook and goes into a sound booth until ..

JASON HOE
Where do you think you're going?

JAY
To work on some song changes.

JASON HOE
This business is collaborative,
stay, listen, you might learn
something.

Jay sits.

INT HIGH SCHOOL VIDEO EDITING ROOM - DAY

Jay watches a video of Stella's recording session and jots down notes.

INT JAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clock reads 2 AM.

Jay jots down notes for a song called 'Pink Prison', he yawns and lays his head on the desk.

CUT TO:

INT JAY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Clock reads 5:45 AM, Jay is asleep at his desk.

Alarm RINGS, Jay wakes up and wipes drool off of his music notebook.

INT LIMO - MORNING

Jay scrambles to finish 'Pink Prison'

INT RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Stella enters.

JAY
Yo, check this out.

Jay plays the rhythm on the piano.

STELLA
Pink Prison?

JAY
New and improved.

STELLA
It got dropped.

Jay's smile drops.

STELLA (cont'd)
Oh Jay, I had no choice!

Jay nods.

JAY
Nah, it's cool, I didn't spend too much time on it anyway, haha.

INT ESPOSITO APARTMENT - NIGHT

The kitchen has new stainless steel appliances and granite counter tops, Mrs. Esposito towers over Jay,

JAY
It's OK, it's coming along OK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ESPOSITO

Just OK? My son's life ambition supposedly gets realized and it's just OK.

JAY

Mom, you don't understand.

MRS. ESPOSITO

How many songs have you written for her already?

JAY

It takes time.

MRS. ESPOSITO

No it doesn't. And your pay has been.

JAY

(cuts her off)

She's been very fair, even the stuff she didn't use.

MRS. ESPOSITO

(cuts him off)

Your pay has been negligible.

Beat. He looks at the renovated kitchen.

JAY

Yes, you're right, I apologize for my attitude, it won't happen again.

MRS. ESPOSITO

As I was saying, your pay is negligible and your songs have been ignored. It doesn't have to be that way.

Mrs. Esposito slides an OFFER LETTER in front of Jay.

JAY

What is this?

MRS. ESPOSITO

Sign it by nine.

Mrs. Esposito exits, clock hits 8:50 PM, Jay reads the offer letter.

INT MRS. ESPOSITO'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jay knocks on the door, the line above his name is unsigned.

JAY
I can't, this is amazing, but I
can't, I'm sorry.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Sit.

Jay sits.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
You think this pretty girl who
adores you, makes your dreams come
true, the first girl to give you
any attention.

JAY
You don't know that.

Beat. Mrs. Esposito stares at Jay until

JAY (cont'd)
She's also my friend, she's treats
me well.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Then if she's a true friend she
would support any decision you make
that is in your best interest.

Mrs. Esposito gives Jay a pen.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - AFTERNOON

STELLA
I know it's been a long day so if
any of you guys want to stick
around, dinner is on me.

JASON HOE
Can't, sorry, gotta pick up the
kids, wife out of town.

YVETTE
Dave's parents are coming, first
meeting, yeah I know, I know.

STELLA
Next weekend?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YVETTE

Bahamas, but keep that offer on the table, if dinner goes south and I gotta do it again, you're my out.

Everyone exits except for Jay who eyes Stella.

STELLA

Is everything alright?

JAY

Everything's cool, so yeah, it feels like yesterday that you found me, three months goes by fast.

STELLA

Yep, that it does.

JAY

So what happens next?

STELLA

What do you mean?

JAY

What happens next
(Beat)
For my career.

STELLA

Well, after we finish my stuff, which I promise will be soon, you'll release a B-side under me.
(Beat)
Didn't we just talked about this last week?

Jay gives her the contract, she reads it.

STELLA (cont'd)

Who gave you this?

JAY

Mom.

STELLA

Well is she sure it's legit? There's a lot of scammers out there.

JAY

It's legit, I visited them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA
I can match this.

Beat. No response from Jay.

STELLA (cont'd)
I, I don't get it, you've built
relationships with Jason and Yvette
and, and.

Beat. Stella tears up.

JAY
I'm sorry.

STELLA
(cuts him off)
Don't flatter yourself, it's
allergies. So this place is going
to let you grow huh?

JAY
Yes I think so. But hey Stella, Ms.
LaBelle thank you.

Jay extends his hand to Stella.

STELLA
What is this?

Stella hugs Jay.

STELLA (cont'd)
That is how you thank someone.
Anyway, I still have you for two
more weeks and you're gonna work
for that last paycheck.

Jay laughs.

STELLA (cont'd)
You think I'm joking?
(Beat)
Now go home before your mom pulls
out her gun.

Jay exits. Stella takes a swig from her liquor bottle.

INT RICHARD'S OFFICE - DAY

Stella wears a short skirt, Richard reads Jay's contract.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICHARD
No.

STELLA
Please?

Phone rings, Richard answers.

COMPANY BOARD MEMBER (O.S.)
We're here Mr. Klein.

RICHARD
Then so am I.

He hangs up the phone, Stella puts her hand on his hand.

STELLA
Hear me out.

Door opens, Naomi enters, Stella pulls her hand away.

NAOMI
(to Richard)
After your meeting.

Richard leaves, Naomi shuts the door behind her.

STELLA
We were talking about business.

Beat. Naomi eyes Stella's sexy dress, Stella covers up her bust with her arms.

STELLA (cont'd)
I'm begging you: meet his counter offer.

NAOMI
Didn't he refuse it already?

STELLA
He didn't have it in writing.

NAOMI
If I were you, I would think about why he didn't want it despite everything you did for him.

Stella goes to the door until.

NAOMI (cont'd)
One more thing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stella stops.

 NAOMI (cont'd)
Your album's one month overdue,
finish it, please, before it costs
someone their job.

Stella exits.

INT STELLA'S MANSION - AFTERNOON

Stella sits in a darkened room swigging a bottle of *Le Voyage de Delamain*.

DONG! Grandfather clocks hits 5:00 pm.

Stella puts down the bottle.

INT STELLA'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stella vomits out the alcohol.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - MORNING

Jason and his band enters and see a person hunched over the recording equipment.

 JASON HOE
Seven A.M.? Jay, you're making us
look so bad.

Person lifts up her head, it's Stella.

 STELLA
Not anymore, vocals are done and I
want this done before I get back.

Stella gives Jason sheet music.

 JASON HOE
I thought this wasn't your style?

 STELLA
Changed my mind.

Jason nods, Stella exits.

EXT ESPOSITO APARTMENT - MORNING

Jay enters the limo and sees Stella.

JAY
Stella?

STELLA
Well don't just stand there, we
have work to do.

Jay enters the limo.

EXT SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT - LATER

JAY
This is work?

STELLA
You'll see soon enough.

Limo parks outside of a men's clothing store.

INT DEPARTMENT STORE - LATER

Clerk brings Jay twenty different outfits.

JAY
Which of these do you want me to
try on first?

STELLA
Are these all the ones in his size?

Clerk nods, Stella gives the him her credit card.

STELLA (cont'd)
Then we'll take all of them.

Beat. Jay and the clerk eye each other.

STELLA (cont'd)
Ahem!

Stella gives the clerk a hundred dollar bill.

STELLA (cont'd)
Thank you for taking these to my
car.

Stella sashees out, Jay and the clerk follow.

INT MUSIC VIDEO SHOOT - DAY

Stella and Jay enter as a director films Jason's band.

STELLA
Put this on.

Stella gives Jay a yellow jacket, he puts it on, she frowns.

STELLA (cont'd)
Actually, this one.

Jay puts on a blue jacket, she looks him over and frowns at his sweat pants.

STELLA (cont'd)
Whatever, they won't see those
anyway, now get to your seat.

Jay looks at the seat by the piano in the front and center area of the stage.

JAY
You mean that one?

STELLA
Do you see any other seats up
there?

Jay sits down at the piano.

MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR
Three, two, one, action!

INT RICHARD'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Stella watches Jay's music video until Naomi shuts it off.

NAOMI
When he sees this!

STELLA
What? What's going to happen when
he sees this?

NAOMI
You violated contract, this is your
album!

Stella goes to time 1:05 on the music video and turns up the volume on her voice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA
Whose voice is that?

NAOMI
You cut out one of Jason's songs
for this, are you even aware how
much money that wasted? Of his
time, on marketing.

STELLA
Yes.

Richard enters.

NAOMI
Don't just stand there, say
something!

RICHARD
That was a ballsy move.

Richard shakes Stella's hand.

RICHARD (cont'd)
Honestly Stel, I'm surprised, if
the momentum on this keeps on
going.

NAOMI
Since you chose to market Mr.
Esposito without our permission, I
suppose we'll have to give him some
incentive to stay.

RICHARD
He's staying, he changed his mind.

STELLA
(interrupting)
I changed his mind, oh and my
record's done, hopefully that will
save someone's job.

Stella exits.

INT STELLA'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Stella watches TV.

TV HOST
In today's episode of 'Where are
They Now' remember Stella LaBelle?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TV HOST (cont'd)

(Beat)

Yeah, neither do I. So lets move on to the real story of the week.

Graphic of Jay Esposito's face rocketing to the top of the charts.

TV Host puts on sunglasses as the chart explodes into Silver dollar symbols.

TV HOST (cont'd)

Wow, but seriously folks. This guy came from nothing, nada, from this

Picture of Jay hunched over outside of his decrepit apartment.

TV HOST (cont'd)

To this.

Video of Jay blushing at female fans and Mrs. Esposito grinning in front of a mansion.

TV HOST (cont'd)

Unbelievable? Not as much as his claim that Mizz Stella LaBelle is his music mentor.

TV host plays one of Stella's songs, then he plays one of Jay's songs and squints his eyes in disbelief.

TV HOST (cont'd)

Hmmmmm, yes and I taught LBJ all his basketball skills. Anyway, cheers to you rising star of the week Jay Esposito, may your career last longer than your mentor's.

CLOSE UP OF CLEAR LIQUID POURING INTO A LIQUOR GLASS, PULL OUT TO REVEAL STELLA POURING WATER.

Stella gulps down the water and smiles.

I/E HIGH SCHOOL - MORNING

Mrs. Esposito drives a luxury sedan when a van with license plate RMB 146J pulls up alongside her and a photographer rolls down his windows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mrs. Esposito shows him the telephone number for 'police' on her cell phone.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Nevada RMB 146J, shoot and I dial.

Van exits, a flock of freshmen girls smiles at Jay, Jay waves back to them.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
You think they know you? That they respect you as a man for your character? They don't see you, they only see your money.

Jay looks at her diamond jewelry.

JAY
Yeah, I get it, it's crystal clear to me.

Jay gets out of the car.

INT HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Jay is surrounded by girls and walks by Jake and Todd.

JAKE
I am so hot now!

Jay ignores Jake and keeps on walking.

TODD
You should acknowledge someone when he talks to you.

Bell RINGS, the girls exit, Jay stays.

JAY
In some people's eyes, but you're smart, you're not fooled by that.
(to Todd)
And as for you, I'm acknowledging you now.

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER
Mr. Esposito, things OK here?

JAY
Perfectly fine, we were just having a discussion.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
(to Jake and Todd)
Excuse me.

Todd gets out of Jay's way but Jake stands his ground until Jay goes around him.

EXT HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Jay and Jake wait by the curb, a rusty Corolla pulls up to Jake, a limo cuts in front of the corolla.

Chauffeur opens the door for Jay, Jay gets in the limo.

JAY
Next time could you please pull up
to that corner so you don't block
the other cars.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Jay and Stella enter. Janitors clean up party leftovers and wipe the message 'Jay Esposito SuperStar' off the white board.

A portrait of record producer DANIEL THURMAN (50), a pony tailed Caucasian, hangs on the wall above ten platinum and twenty gold records.

STELLA
That's one song, we want an album.

JAY
Let's get started.

Naomi and Daniel Thurman enter.

NAOMI
We already have. Jay, this is.

Jay's looks at Daniel Thurman's portrait and then looks at him in person.

DANIEL THURMAN
Mr. Esposito, pleasure to meet you,
I've heard good things.

JAY
It is an honor!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA
(whispering)
What's going on here?

Mrs. Esposito enters.

MRS. ESPOSITO
So you started without me?

Naomi and Mrs. Esposito laugh, Stella goes silent.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
All the work you did this week.

NAOMI
None of which could have happened
without you.

MRS. ESPOSITO
I really should call you Mrs. Klein
now.

NAOMI
Thank you, so anyway Jay your mom
and I put together a great team for
you.

JAY
Will Stella and Jason be on this
team?

DANIEL THURMAN
Jason and I go way back, I wouldn't
want to work with anyone else.

NAOMI
And she can still be your manager
if that's really what you want.

JAY
It is.

STELLA
Jay, don't worry about
(Beat, stares at Naomi)
This. because no matter what, we're
all on your side, right?

NAOMI
Absolutely.

Naomi and Stella exit via opposite doors.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

SLUGLINE: Twenty Days Later

Mrs. Esposito watches Jay, Jason and Daniel working in the other room, Stella enters, sees her and backs away until.

MRS. ESPOSITO

Stella.

STELLA

Mary.

MRS. ESPOSITO

You can't avoid me forever.

STELLA

I was hoping I could.

MRS. ESPOSITO

Look at them, three little boys and their toys, you are a very kind woman, thank you again for everything.

STELLA

Kind. Thank you. How are things with Mrs. Klein?

MRS. ESPOSITO

Still haven't put that behind you?

STELLA

It's not about that, that's ancient history.

MRS. ESPOSITO

So what is it about? Why do you care so much about my son?

STELLA

Why do I?

(Beat)

Why do you ask?

MRS. ESPOSITO

Because I want to know.

STELLA

When I heard his stuff, to know that my work had this affect on someone.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

STELLA (cont'd)

(Beat)

I've accomplished nothing in my
life except for your son's career
Mrs. Esposito, that's why I care.

MRS. ESPOSITO

Thank you.

Mrs. Esposito exits.

INT CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Jay, Stella, Jason and his band watch Daniel Thurman pop
open a champagne bottle.

DANIEL THURMAN

I've worked with my fair share of
artists, household names before
they were household names and I
have to say this really is one of
the best teams I've worked with.

JASON HOE

He says that for every team he's
worked with.

Every one laughs.

DANIEL THURMAN

But seriously Jay, Mr. Esposito,
you are not only one of the most
talented I've worked with but more
than that the most humble and
grounded and when you are a
superstar, I've made sure of that,
you will also be a role model,
congratulations on completing your
album.

JAY

Thank you.

JASON HOE

No, thank you for giving us a piece
of your pie.

JAY

Will you use that to learn to make
better jokes?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JASON HOE

Oh attitude! not so humble after
all.

Everyone laughs.

STELLA

And I'll blow this up big, huge!
because as we all know, if there is
one thing I can do, it's self
promotion.

Everyone laughs except for Jay.

JASON HOE

So what's the plan?

STELLA

Honestly, the music will sell
itself, all I have to do is get it
out to the right sites, a little
announcement here or there that
this thing is out and let the magic
happen.

Jay steps away from her.

JASON HOE

In other words, don't expect your
face to be plastered on every
billboard in L.A.

STELLA

Sorry Jay, you're not that pretty.

Again, everyone laughs except for Jay.

EXT HIGHWAY - DAY

Stella drives past a billboard of Jay's face.

INT CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Stella walks in on Naomi and Mrs. Esposito, shuts the door
and slides copies of a contract to them both.

STELLA

Help me understand something.

NAOMI

Stella.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA
 (cuts her off)
 Page one.

Stella highlights a line of the contract:

STELLA (cont'd)
 (reading contract)
 Only the artist's manager can
 dictate fund usage.

MRS. ESPOSITO
 Stella, please.

STELLA
 (cuts her off)
 I know I'm not the smartest girl in
 the world but.

JAY (O.S.)
 Stella.

Beat. Stella stops.

JAY
 Line fifty four. The artist can
 decide how his work is promoted. It
 was my decision, I should have told
 you earlier.

Beat. No response from Stella.

NAOMI
 We needed a more aggressive
 marketing strategy.

STELLA
 Am I still your manager?

JAY
 Yes.

STELLA
 But ..

JAY
 But now you're also a concert
 manager, my mom thinks ..

MRS. ESPOSITO
 (interrupting)
 I think that you deserve to be my
 deputy concert manager. Your
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
 concern for my son is genuine, you
 want him to succeed because you
 want to succeed.

Mrs. Esposito and Stella exchange knowing glances.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
 And I need that on my team, do you
 accept?

STELLA
 OK, but what exactly would I be
 doing?

EXT CONCERT STAGE - AFTERNOON

Mrs. Esposito pins a green thumbnail onto a map of
 California and addresses crew members.

MRS. ESPOSITO
 Pyrotechnics

CREW MEMBER 1 (O.S.)
 Check.

MRS. ESPOSITO
 Microphone.

CREW MEMBER 2 (O.S.)
 (over loudspeakers)
 Check.

MRS. ESPOSITO
 Food and water.

Beat. No one responds.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - MOMENTS LATER

Stella takes smiley faced cookies out of the oven and dumps
 them into sandwich bags.

MRS. ESPOSITO (O.S.)
 Food and water!

STELLA
 Yes ma'am, right away ma'am, deputy
 LaBelle at your service.

Stella wheels out the food.

EXT CONCERT STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Stella wheels in the food, everyone takes a lunch bag, clock reads 12:35 pm.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Ms. LaBelle!

STELLA
Twelve thirty I know.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Then don't be late. C'mon everyone
places now!

Crew members scatter.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
Stella.

STELLA
Yes?

MRS. ESPOSITO
There's a reason chips are
scattered rather than mottled
together in a line. The inside
isn't even cooked and the outside
is ..

Mrs. Esposito splits open a SMILEY FACED CHOCOLATE CHIP
COOKIE and shows her the burnt outer edges of the chocolate
chips.

STELLA
Thanks, I'll keep that in mind for
next time.

Stella rolls her eyes as she exits.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - EVENING

Mrs. Esposito and her posse of Hispanic women watch crew
members help Jay put on his performance costume.

JAY
Mom, could you?

Jay tries to pull the curtain shut until Mrs. Esposito walks
up and blocks the curtain from closing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ESPOSITO
You'll do fine, don't worry.

JAY
I know, you told me already.

MRS. ESPOSITO'S FRIEND ISI
My, you're growing to be such a
handsome boy.

Isi and Rosa pinch Jay's cheeks, he winces and backs away
until.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Jay Sebastian Esposito!

Jay stops.

MARIA CHEVES
It's OK, he's preoccupied with the
concert.

MRS. ESPOSITO
No!

JAY
Mrs. Cheves.

Mrs. Cheves hugs Jay.

MARIA CHEVES
(whispering)
Old women are probably the last
thing you want to see tonight. Go
out there and make those young
lasses swoon, your mom wants to be
a grandmother you know.

Maria Cheves winks at Jay.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Don't you worry, we bought out the
entire front row to root for you.

Jay frowns as his platform rises onto the concert stage.

EXT CONCERT STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jay sees Mrs. Esposito and her friends get into the front
rows then looks at the crowd and VOMITS into his microphone
and onto the piano.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Beat. Jay composes himself.

JAY
Ladies and gentleman, I'm Jay
Esposito and tonight, I'm going to
rock your world!

Deafening feedback blasts thru the speakers. Silence.

Beat. Jay stares at a vomit stained piano key and then presses it until.

MRS. ESPOSITO (O.S.)
Don't touch that!

TV Monitor broadcasts Mrs. Esposito and crew members rushing on stage to Jay.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1 (O.S.)
Mommy has to come on stage?

AUDIENCE MEMBER 2 (O.S.)
What an F-ing baby!

Mrs. Esposito pulls Jay away from the piano, crowd jeers.

JAY
What are you doing!?

MRS. ESPOSITO
Stupid boy
(to crew member)
Check the electrical.

JAY
I'm not going to get f-ing
electrocuted!

Platform sinks into the ground, crew members push Jay aside to check the piano.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - MOMENTS LATER

Crew team roll the grand piano away, a second crew team carries a synthesizer until they drop it on the ground.

JAY
That's just f-ing great.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Cancel the concert.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

No!

MRS. ESPOSITO

Watch your attitude!

Stella steps between Jay and Mrs. Esposito.

STELLA

Relax, both of you. The concert can go on.

MRS. ESPOSITO

How! That was the only piano left.

STELLA

Not necessarily.

EXT CONCERT STAGE - LATER

Jay stares at his blue and red striped PLAY-TOY BRAND SYNTHESIZER, he presses a key, an ugly sound blasts thru the speakers.

Beat. Jay looks at Stella.

STELLA

What's the name of the last song on Classic Queen?

JAY

The Show Must Go On.

Stella nods to Jay, Jay presses another piano key.

INT RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Jay watches this video:

TV HOST

In today's episode of where are they now, remember rising star Jay Esposito?

TV Host turns on clip of:

..Jay's voice cracking during his performance

..Jay hiding behind a band mate when a water bottle flies at him

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

..Jay falling down and triggering feedback thru the speakers.

TV HOST (cont'd)
 Hmm, I admit I may have jumped the gun a bit when I used the term "Rising Star"

Stella slams the door shut, Jay shuts the video.

STELLA
 How many times have I told you already.

JAY
 It'll get better, I know.

Stella stares at Jay until.

JAY (cont'd)
 Even now, I think about it, I just want to barf.

STELLA
 Piano barf bucket, check.

Jay laughs.

STELLA (cont'd)
 What? I'm serious, I am your deputy concert manager now remember?

JAY
 Which one of ten were you again?

STELLA
 Har, Har, Har, talk to me, how can we make this better next time?

JAY
 You mean besides making my mom's cheering squad disappear?

STELLA
 I thought that helped.

JAY
 Little old ladies screaming "you can do it" like I'm twelve years old, that's supposed to help me? Oh c'mon. I go up there, I want to look my biggest detractors in the eye and prove "hell yeah" I earned
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
your respect, not get mothered, err
smothered to death.

STELLA
Thank you.

JAY
For what?

STELLA
For helping me do my job.

JAY
What do you mean?

STELLA
You'll see, now go home before I
tell your mom you violated curfew
before your performance.

Stella exits.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - DAY

Crew members help Jay put on his performance costume, Mrs. Esposito and her posse of Hispanic women swarm in on Jay.

Stella enters, blocks their path to Jay with her food cart and puts a bucket next to his piano.

STELLA
Let's go, we haven't got all day.

Crew member pushes a button, Jay's platform rises, Stella winks at Jay, Jay nods back.

EXT CONCERT STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jay vomits into the bucket and then faces the crowd.

STELLA (O.S.)
Look to your right.

Jay sees Jake and Todd.

JAY
Ladies and gentleman, before I
start, I want to thank you because
it is only with your support that I
am here today and I thank you, not
just with words but by donating the
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
money I make from today's concert
to revitalize the neighborhood I
grew up in.

CUT TO:

EXT BLIGHTED BUILDING - DAY

Jake watches construction workers bulldoze a blighted house
and build a children's play ground in its place.

CUT TO:

EXT CONCERT STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1 (O.S.)
Shut up and start playing!

Jay makes eye contact with the audience member and plays the
piano.

EXT CONCERT STAGE - NIGHT

Jay's platform stage begins to sink, he bows to the crowd.

JAY
Ladies and gentlemen, thank you and
good night!

TODD
You da man Jay, whoo! That was
awesome.

Jay looks at Jake, Jake nods, Jay nods back.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - MOMENTS LATER

Jay high fives his band members.

Stella, who is standing next to a map of California pinned
with a line of red tacks, replaces one of them with a green
tack.

CUT TO:

EXT STADIUM - DAY

Jay, Mrs. Esposito and the crew eat Stella's food next to a map of California that has a line of green dots and only one red dot remaining.

STELLA
Eat up everyone, final concert,
let's go out with a bang.

A crew member sniffs his sandwich and crinkles his nose.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - LATER

Stella stands by herself, crowd roars in the background.

STELLA
(into walkie talkie)
Mrs. Esposito, where are you
gathering everyone?

Beat. No Response and then..

JAY (O.S.)
Uggghhh!

Stella follows the sound and sees Jay vomiting.

STELLA
(into walkie talkie)
Tell Funk Club to extend their set
for another thirty minutes.

CREW MEMBER 1 (O.S.)
Got it.

Mrs. Esposito enters.

STELLA
It's alright, I got it covered.

MRS. ESPOSITO
No you don't.

A crew member vomits.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
Half the crew is like that, did you
check the food?

STELLA
Yes, same as always.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jay vomits again.

MRS. ESPOSITO
There's red in it.

STELLA
(into walkie talkie)
Call the ambulance, tell them we
have many people with food
poisoning.

CREW MEMBER 1 (O.S.)
Already on their way.

STELLA
Good.

Jay vomits again, more blood this time.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Did you check the food!?

STELLA
Mary, stay calm.

MRS. ESPOSITO
I asked you a question!

STELLA
Yes, I checked the food.

Ambulance team arrives.

STELLA (cont'd)
He's vomiting blood, this is his
mom, she needs to ride with him.

Ambulance workers lay Jay onto a stretcher and carry him
away, Mrs. Esposito follows.

STELLA (cont'd)
The rest of you follow me, anyone
who looks nauseated needs to go to
the hospital.

Stella leads the ambulance workers out.

EXT PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Ten ambulance cars drive out of the parking lot. Stella is
surrounded by crew members.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA
(into headset)
There's no other choice, cancel the concert.

CREW MEMBER 1 (O.S.)
We can't.

STELLA
Why not?

EXT CONCERT ENTRANCE GATE - MOMENTS LATER

Two men pull the gates but it remains closed, a mob of disgruntled concert goers glares at them.

CREW MEMBER 1
Exit one is stuck, we're trying to fix it, we don't have teams to open up exits two and three. If we announce a cancellation now there will be a mob. We need to hold them off.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - MOMENTS LATER

STELLA
Hold them off how?

CREW MEMBER 1 (O.S.)
I, I don't know.

Stella turns off her headset.

STELLA
Get Funk Club back up there now!

CREW MEMBER 2
They already left.

Beat. Stella looks at the empty piano seat, at the guitarist, the bassist and an empty drum set.

STELLA
Who here plays drums?

CREW MEMBER 2
I played a little back in high school.

EXT CONCERT STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Stella and her adhoc band enter.

STELLA

You guys came to see a concert, am
I right!

Lukewarm agreement.

STELLA (cont'd)

Well then a concert is what you're
going to get!

Stella sits down at the piano and closes her eyes.

STELLA (cont'd)

Please remember how to do this.

Stella hits a wrong note, she sings, her voice cracks.

Crowd boos and tosses plastic bottles, one hits and drenches
her.

Stella looks at the closed stage guard nets designed to
shield performers from stuff thrown on stage.

STELLA (cont'd)

(into headset)

Guys, some help with those stage
guards would be nice.

CREW MEMBER 1 (O.S.)

There's no one available, we're all
working on the exits.

Stella gets hit by a tomato.

GUITARIST

Hey!

Stella grabs the guitarist's arm.

STELLA

You know better.

Guitarist steps back.

EXT CONCERT STAGE - NIGHT

Stella and her band bow to the few remaining audience
members.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA

Thank you, good evening and have a
safe trip home.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - MOMENTS LATER

Stella and her band enter.

Dead Silence, drummer slams his sticks against the wall.

DRUMMER

Fucking A!

STELLA

You did good.

DRUMMER

Yeah, OK!

STELLA

Look at me.

Beat. Drummer looks at Stella.

STELLA (cont'd)

You're not even a real drummer
right? but you held us for over an
hour. Tonight was hard, but you did
good, really.

Stella picks up a drumstick, drummer picks up the other one.

DRUMMER

I got it, I'm sorry.

STELLA

We go down in the book of world
records for worst concert
performance ever! How many people
can say that?

Laughter.

STELLA (cont'd)

Go home and sleep it off, no one's
going to remember any of this
tomorrow.

INT STELLA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Stella flips thru TV channels each playing videos of her humiliating concert.

She shuts the TV off and takes a shot of cognac.

I/E HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Stella enters, Jay lies in bed.

JAY

What took you so long? I could have
like passed away in the middle of
the night.

Stella holds a pillow up to Jay's face.

STELLA

Who says you can't pass away now?

JAY

What happened?

STELLA

The lettuce was contaminated, how
nice for them to tell me.

Stella dangles a letter in front of Jay and then tosses it
in the trash.

STELLA (cont'd)

..Afterwards.

JAY

So it wasn't your fault, that's
awesome, listen, we're heading back
on the road at the end of the
month, we're going international!
how sweet is that?

STELLA

Jay, I'm not coming.

JAY

What do you mean? Of course you're
coming.

STELLA

I'm not coming
(beat)
because I quit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

Huh?

STELLA

I didn't just decide this
yesterday, it's been on my mind for
a while.

(Beat)

Listen, my goal this entire time
was to prove that I could
accomplish something in my career,
that's you, and now that that's
done.

JAY

You're serious.

Beat. Stella maintains eye contact with Jay.

JAY (cont'd)

I guess I should have seen this
coming.

Beat. No response from Stella.

JAY (cont'd)

Does mom know?

STELLA

Not yet.

JAY

You know we'll think of something
to change your mind.

Beat. Stella nods but remains silent, then he hugs Jay.

STELLA

Take care of yourself.

Jay nods but does not look at her.

She exits, Mrs. Esposito is waiting outside the door.

MRS. ESPOSITO

Come with me.

EXT HOSPITAL - MOMENTS LATER

Mrs. Esposito faces Stella.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ESPOSITO

I heard you give your resignation
and I can't let that happen.

STELLA

Mary, I've already decided.

MRS. ESPOSITO

I promoting you to head concert
manager for Jay on his world tour.

Beat.

STELLA

Why? After everything that
happened?

MRS. ESPOSITO

Because of what happened and before
you say no again, let me tell you
your work with him isn't finished
yet. My son is still getting his
head wrapped around

Mrs. Esposito looks at a billboard of Jay's face.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)

That. I don't want things to get to
his head and you don't want your
precious prodigy to turn into a
premadonna, finish the job, help
him learn to see the media
attention for what it is.

STELLA

This is a great honor and all but.

MRS. ESPOSITO

(interrupting)

But why am I dumping this on you?

Beat. No Response from Stella.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)

Because I trust you and the twenty
twenty other agents I assigned to
keep him in line.

STELLA

Twenty?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ESPOSITO

You're in charge of ten of them,
the rest answer to me directly,
even if I am a million miles away.

STELLA

Wait, you're not coming?

MRS. ESPOSITO

No.

STELLA

Why not? I mean you can treat it
like a vacation.

MRS. ESPOSITO

A mother needs to let go sometimes
and see if her son comes back.

Nurse enters.

NURSE

Mrs. Esposito, Dr. Patel wants to
talk to you about your results.

MRS. ESPOSITO

In a moment.

Nurse exits.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)

It's nothing.

Her face says otherwise.

STELLA

Jay is in good hands, I promise.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - NIGHT

Crew members watch Stella count down five, four, three, two,
one, zero.

Pyrotechnics explode around Jay and his platform sinks
beneath the stage.

Jay bows to a group of preteen girls wearing T-shirts that
together form a picture of his face and then he sees
JASMINE (18), a curvaceous brunette standing next to them.

RUTH (17), a fetching, book wormish blonde enters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

Jay.

Jasmine blows a kiss to Jay.

RUTH (cont'd)

Jay.

Jasmine points to the backstage area, Jay nods.

RUTH (cont'd)

Jay!

Ruth pulls Jay away from the platform edge as it sinks beneath the stage floor.

JAY

Thanks Judy.

RUTH

Ruth!

JAY

Ruth, Got it, no mistaking next time.

Jay points his finger at her, winks and goes right.

RUTH

Jay.

JAY

Yes??

Ruth grabs Jay's hand and leads him left.

INT AUTOGRAPH BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Security holds back a line of girls, one of whom rushes to Jay until Ruth blocks her.

RUTH

Get them behind the door, single file.

Security pushes the girls behind the door.

Jasmine enters followed by Stella.

JASMINE

Hello.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

Hey, Hi, I'm Jay, that's me you saw out there, in front of an entire stadium playing my own songs.

JASMINE

I thought you invited me back here? or maybe I was seeing things and didn't get your attention.

JAY

No, yes, no, I mean, you got my attention.

STELLA

I'm sorry miss but there are people behind you, you'll have to move along.

Jasmine kisses a sheet of paper, slides it to Jay and exits.

STELLA (cont'd)

Can she say gold digger a little bit more loudly?

JAY

Someone's a bit jealous.

STELLA

Alright, Casanova let me step away before I'm overwhelmed by your aura of seduction.

Jay and Stella laugh.

JAY

Seriously though, how are you sure she's a gold digger? It could just be me, I am successful now.

STELLA

I've been there before, she's after your money.

RUTH

Ms. LaBelle, I sent the rest of the fans home, is there anything else you need?

STELLA

No, thank you Ruth and you can call me Stella.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUTH

Jay, I'm going to eat with the crew, anyway, if you're interested.

Ruth exits.

STELLA

I think you should be.

I/E HOTEL - LATER

Jay, whose face is hidden underneath a hood and dark sunglasses goes past Ruth and the crew into a taxi cab.

Jay opens Jasmine's sheet of paper.

JAY

One hundred fifty, east Anderson Street.

TAXICAB DRIVER

Babylon night club.

INT BABYLON NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Jasmine and her girl friends sit at a table.

JASMINE

Jay, I'm so glad you made it, this is Mischa, Christina and Isabelle.

Jasmine's girls smile at Jay.

JASMINE (cont'd)

They know who you are.

Waiter brings two bottles of vodka to Jasmine's table.

JAY

Whoa, how much is all this?

JASMINE

I have a deal with the promoter. Why, do you ask?

JAY

Nothing, just, let's drink up shall we.

Jay fills Jasmine's wine glass with vodka.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JASMINE

Whoa, we're not that easy.

JAY

Oh no! Sorry, that's not what I meant, I mean, I have a strong liver you know from all the experience I have drinking, not that I'm an alcoholic or anything like that.

Jasmine pours vodka into Jay's shot glass.

INT DANCE FLOOR - LATER

Jay and Jasmine make out on the dance floor, he touches her ass and moves his hand away, she moves his hand back.

INT BATHROOM - LATER

Jay finishes vomiting, Jasmine brushes his hair back in place and straightens his clothes.

JASMINE

Breathe.

He exhales into her face, she sprays mint into his mouth.

JASMINE (cont'd)

Again.

He exhales again, she grabs his hand and leads him away.

I/E TAXI CAB - MORNING

Taxi stops in front of Jay's hotel.

JAY

That was the most awesome thing, ever!

Jasmine puts her finger on Jay's mouth to shut him up.

JASMINE

Get some rest.

Jay hands cash to the cab driver until.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JASMINE (cont'd)
 No, no, no, I invited you out, I
 gave you a hangover, it's on me.

Jasmine pays, Jay exits.

INT HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jay tiptoes inside, his phone buzzes.

JASMINE
 (text message)
 Remember, two aspirin and one glass
 of water then sleep for another
 hour.

Jay takes three aspirin out of his pocket.

JAY
 (text message)
 You gave me three, haha.

JASMINE
 (text message)
 Haha, we'll see each other again?

JAY
 (text message)
 You bet.

Jay swallows three aspirin with a glass of water.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - NIGHT

Stella and Ruth walk in on Jay partying with Jasmine and her
 friends.

JAY
 Word up laayyy-deez.

RUTH
 Are you drunk!?

STELLA
 That's what it looks like.

RUTH
 Jay, you have an autograph signing!

Ruth takes Jay's hand, Jasmine tries to hand her a drink,
 she refuses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Jay sits down, Ruth goes to his side.

STELLA
Pardon her, she works for me, my
name is Stella.

JASMINE
Jasmine.

STELLA
Take care of him, alright?

JASMINE
Of course.

Ruth tries to pull Jay to his feet.

JAY
Screw the signing man.

RUTH
You have to do this!

JAY
I ain't gotta do shit.

Jay puts his hoodie and sunglasses on JAYCEE (17), his body
double.

JAY (cont'd)
What's your name buddy.

JAYCEE
Jaycee.

JAY
He even has my name. Jaycee, how
would you like to be moi in front
of all my fans, now.

STELLA
Actually I think that's a great
idea. C'mon you two.

Ruth gives Jay one last beckoning look before exiting with
Stella and Jaycee.

Jay goes to Ruth until Jasmine pulls him back.

JAY
That guy Jaycee man, he's never
done a signing before, he's got no
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
idea what he's getting himself
into.

JASMINE
I'm sure your co-workers will give
him the protection he needs.

Jasmine gets close to Jay.

JASMINE (cont'd)
After that, who knows, he may even
enjoy it.

Jasmine and Jay kiss, Jasmine unbuttons her top.

JAY
Wait.

JASMINE
What?

Jay sets the alarm clock for 10:00 am.

JAY
Early performance tomorrow.

Jasmine puts her finger over Jay's lips.

JASMINE
Now, where were we?

Jasmine takes off her top.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - MORNING

BANG on door.

STELLA (O.S.)
Eleven, let's go!

Jay gets up and sees the unplugged alarm clock wire wrapped
around Jasmine's leg. He covers her up and goes to Stella.

JAY
Dude, why didn't you wake me up
earlier?

STELLA
Dude, I'm not your mom.

EXT CONCERT STAGE - LATER

Crowd boos Jay as he enters.

AUDIENCE MEMBER 1 (O.S.)
Way to start on time kid!

Jay sings, his voice cracks and he gets pummeled by water bottles and rotten vegetables.

Ruth tries to go on stage, Stella stops her.

STELLA
Not unless something dangerous
flies on stage.

Jay continues performing.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - EVENING

Jay, drenched in vegetable juice, enters and sees Jasmine with an entourage of twenty people.

Jasmine's friend Mischa sneers at Jay.

JAY
Who are you?

JASMINE
Mischa from the club remember?
Mischa, you remember Jay?

Jasmine GLARES at Mischa.

MISCHA
Oh hi!

JAY
Funny, I thought you all knew who I
am, remember?

Silence, then.

JAY (cont'd)
Security.

Security enters.

JAY (cont'd)
I'm not sure how these fans
wandered into here but they need to
be shown the way out, except for
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
her, she can decide whether she'll
stay or not.

Everyone exits except Jay and Jasmine.

JASMINE
You're angry.

JAY
What gave that away?

JASMINE
I invited people, they invited
people, it got out of hand, I'm
sorry.

Jay lets Jasmine take off his jacket but when she touches
it, she gets a handful of slime.

JASMINE (cont'd)
Ehh, what the fu ..!
(Beat, she stops herself)
What is this?

JAY
Tomatoes, cabbage and some stuff in
a bottle that I don't even wanna
begin to know.

Jasmine grimaces but removes his jacket.

JASMINE
Well, at least it didn't get on the
inside.

Jasmine rubs Jay's chest.

JAY
No more partying man, I came here
to do music.

JASMINE
OK.

Jay plays the synthesizer and sings.

JAY
C'mon, check this out.
(sings)
Jasmine, Jasmine, oh Jasmine.

Jasmine claps her hands for Jay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
Did you like it?

JASMINE
Yeah!

JAY
Did you like it, really?

Beat. No response from Jasmine.

JAY (cont'd)
I guess it's the best I can do
given the time I've spent composing
recently.

JASMINE
Don't be so hard on yourself,
you've made it, good music, bad
music, no music, you can just
chill, live your life, travel the
world, we'll be nomads.

JAY
Nomads? Like what? Herd sheep?

JASMINE
Lounge in a summer home on the
Aegean Sea.

JAY
Yeah, you know how much that costs?

JASMINE
But it'll feel so good.

JAY
Like mom would let that happen.

JASMINE
You're a man Jay, a mature one, you
can convince your mom to do what
you want.

JAY
You're right, I've more than proved
that I can handle this, there's no
reason I can't ask for access to at
least a bit of my own money before
thirty five.

Jasmine frowns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
Are you alright?

JASMINE
Yeah, I'm fine, I'm smiling see.

JAY
Your face just a moment ago.

Jasmine gets up and puts on her shoes.

JAY (cont'd)
What's wrong?

JASMINE
What you just said, reminded me of
my own mom, I gotta go, I'll be
back though.

JAY
Tomorrow night?

JASMINE
Yes.

He tries to kiss her, she avoids it and leaves.

Clock reads Monday, 8 pm.

INT HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

Clock reads: Friday, 8 am.

STELLA
Tomorrow night, eh?

JAY
Yeah, yeah, yeah, why don't you run
along and manage my concert.

STELLA
I think I'll start that at eleven.

Jay glares at Stella.

STELLA (cont'd)
Alright, alright, seriously I'm
surprised you had it in you, that
BS about your mom withholding your
money.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

There's more to me than you think.

STELLA

There, there, there will be others.

JAY

All gold diggers like her?

Ruth enters.

JAY (cont'd)

Maybe not.

Jay goes to Ruth until Jaycee enters and holds Ruth's hand.

Jay returns, Stella laughs until water squirts out of her nose.

STELLA

You know there is a bright side.

JAY

What?

STELLA

If the fame and money thing doesn't work out, some girls will still like the way you look.

A crew member enters.

CREW MEMBER 1

Hi Ms. LaBelle, do you want me to hold off on putting up the stage guards like last time?

STELLA

No, put them on.

Crew Member exits.

JAY

You had the stage guards taken down?

STELLA

Can't deny it.

JAY

What's going on? First you let me get up on stage freakin three hours late and now this? And with

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
everything that happened
afterwards?

STELLA
(cuts him off)
Yes, what did happen afterwards?
What did you learn?

Beat. Jay understands.

STELLA (cont'd)
It makes my job a whole lot easier
if you learned for yourself. C'mon
let's get going, we have work to
do.

Jay and Stella exit together.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - DAY

Jay drinks bottled water.

JAY
Guys c'mon, sound check and
practice run now.

CREW MEMBER 1
Mr. Esposito sir.

JAY
Jay, anyone calls me sir has to
have dinner with me guy or girl.

CREW MEMBER 1
Jay, it's two pm.

JAY
Exactly.

Jay's BACKUP VOCALIST (35) smokes a cigarette.

JAY (cont'd)
What are you doing? I need your
vocals at top notch, my mom's
tuning in.

The backup vocalist puts out his cigarette.

JAY (cont'd)
Thank you. Now everyone, c'mon.

Everyone lays their hands on Jay's hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY (cont'd)
 Now are we going to rock their
 worlds or what!

Everyone yells out a collective 'Yeah'.

INT ESPOSITO MANSION - DAY

Mrs. Esposito carries food to Maria, Isi and Rosa who watch
 Jay perform on TV.

MARIA CHEVES
 He's growing up.

Mrs. Esposito wipes away a tear and nods.

MARIA CHEVES (cont'd)
 But still needs you.

Beat. No response from Mrs. Esposito.

MARIA CHEVES (cont'd)
 Look at you, still trying to
 impress us with your cooking, you
 are rich, your maid should do it.

MRS. ESPOSITO
 Well, I still have some vanities.

Everyone laughs. Mrs. Esposito goes to the kitchen and
 collapses.

EXT BACKSTAGE OF CONCERT - LATER

Stella answers her cellphone.

STELLA
 Hello.

Beat. Stella listens and then shuts the phone.

STELLA (cont'd)
 Everyone, come here, now!

Crew members gather around her.

EXT CONCERT STAGE - LATER

Stella rushes to Jay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY
Easy, you alright there?

STELLA
There's a cab waiting in back, get
in it.

Stella shoves a folder into Jay's hand.

STELLA (cont'd)
Tickets, passport, limo will be
waiting for you as soon you land in
LAX.

JAY
What's going on? I'm getting a
billion dollar offer or something?

STELLA
Your mom had a heart attack.

Beat. Jay exits.

STELLA (cont'd)
I don't care if it's three am in
the morning, call me as soon as he
lands in LAX.

CREW MEMBER 1
Yes.

Stella faces the band.

STELLA
Ready?

GUITARIST
Behind you all the way.

STELLA
Good to know in case crap flies
onto the stage again.

Beat. No one laughs at Stella's joke.

STELLA (cont'd)
Joke, Joke, we're ready this time.

Stella nods to Yvette and her ladies.

STELLA (cont'd)
Let's kill it out there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Stella leads everyone on stage.

INT EMERGENCY ROOM LOBBY - DAY

Maria Cheves sleeps on a chair, Jay enters.

MARIA CHEVES

Jay.

JAY

Mrs. Cheves.

A doctor enters.

JAY (cont'd)

How is she?

DOCTOR

Stable for now.

JAY

What do mean 'for now'?

DOCTOR

She had a heart attack, she's stabilized but she needs triple bypass surgery, now if you'll excuse me.

Doctor exits.

JAY

She's not even fifty!

MARIA CHEVES

Calm down, you can't let her see you like this.

JAY

Mrs. Cheves, you've been here all night, go home, get some rest, I'll take it from here. I'll call you as soon as she's out.

Maria Cheves clasps his hands, looks into his eyes, nods and exits.

Jay goes to the reception desk.

JAY (cont'd)

Who's operating on Mrs. Esposito?

CONTINUED:

ER RECEPTIONIST
I don't know sir.

JAY
I want the best surgeon money can
buy, understand?

Jay shows the receptionist his BLACK PLATINUM CREDIT CARD.

ER RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry sir, doctors are
assigned, no one can change that.

Jay kicks the chair, nurse enters.

NURSE
Mr. Jay Esposito?

JAY
Yes.

NURSE
Your mom wants to see you.

Jay's cellphone rings with a call from Stella, he ignores
it.

EXT INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - MOMENTS LATER

Jay's cellphone rings again, he picks it up.

JAY
Now is not a good time!

STELLA (O.S.)
When will it be? After you upset
her before surgery?

Beat. No response from Jay.

STELLA (O.S.) (cont'd)
Now listen.

JAY
Yeah, I am.

STELLA (O.S.)
You're upset I can hear it.

JAY
I'm listening, I'm listening.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STELLA (O.S.)

Go in there and calm her down, if you can't do, get out and let my doctors do their work.

JAY

What do you mean my doctors?

STELLA

Don't think about that now. Think about how you're going to make her feel better, got it?

JAY

Got it.

STELLA

And Jay?

JAY

Yes?

STELLA

She's going to be alright.

INT BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jay combs his hair and straightens his tie.

Beat. Jay un-straightens his tie.

INT INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - LATER

Jay enters, Mrs. Esposito sits up.

JAY

It's OK, sit back, you look good.

MRS. ESPOSITO

How are you, my baby?

JAY

Good!, They shield me too much, trying to protect their million dollar asset. And the food, blehh..

Mrs. Esposito smiles.

MRS. ESPOSITO

Sounds like they need me back to whip them into shape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY

You bet!

MRS. ESPOSITO

Who has a heart attack at forty-two?

JAY

Martin Sheen had a heart attack at thirty-eight on the set of Apocalypse Now no less.

MRS. ESPOSITO

Don't lie to your mother.

JAY

No really, he's old now way older than you but still ticking.

Jay and Mrs. Esposito laugh.

MRS. ESPOSITO

Look at you, a spitting image of your father now, a grown man.

Jay sticks out his neck at her.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)

Who taught you to make a tie?

JAY

I uggh, isn't this right?

Mrs. Esposito fixes Jay's tie.

MRS. ESPOSITO

Still a child. Don't try to make dinner with out me, I don't want you to burn the mansion down.

JAY

I take care of my own, at least I'll try but I'll still need your help.

MRS. ESPOSITO

Your own? Not everything that's mine is yours my dear.

JAY

Well, you were the inspiration for some of songs, so yeah, it definitely belongs to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ESPOSITO
Jay, how do you think they
convinced me let you sign? You
don't think it was just their charm
do you?

Beat. Jay understands.

JAY
That much?

MRS. ESPOSITO
More.

Beat. No response from Jay.

MRS. ESPOSITO (cont'd)
Why are you staring at me like
that?

JAY
I was just thinking of how foolish
I've been.

Nurse enters.

MRS. ESPOSITO
I want that house spotless when I
get back, no excuses.

JAY
Yes ma'am.

Nurse wheels Mrs. Esposito away, HEART SURGEON WANG (52)
enters.

HEART SURGEON WANG
You're Jay Esposito aren't you?

JAY
Yes.

HEART SURGEON WANG
I'm Doctor Wang.

JAY
Sir, you're Naomi Wang's father
aren't you?

HEART SURGEON WANG
Yes, did my daughter tell you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAY
No, just a hunch.

INT HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - LATER

Jay sits, clock reads three pm.

A nurse wheels equipment into the operating room.

Jay stands up and remains there, motionless.

CUT TO:

INT HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - EVENING

Clock reads six pm, Doctor Wang enters with a smile and shakes Jay's hand, Jay hugs him and then sends a text message.

INT HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Stella is on a video conference call with Naomi when they both receive a text message from Jay: Thank You.

STELLA
Thank you.

NAOMI
You know this is coming straight out of his salary right? My dad's services do not run cheap.

STELLA
Still charming as ever. Oh and Naomi?

NAOMI
What?

STELLA
Congratulations.

Naomi stands up and reveals her pregnant waist.

Stella closes her laptop.

I/E ESPOSITO MANSION - AFTERNOON

Limo pulls up and honks. A thinner, fitter Mrs. Esposito stands in the drive way with Maria Cheves.

MRS. ESPOSITO
Don't make her wait!

Jay gets into the limo, Mrs. Esposito and Maria jog away.

INT LIMO - MOMENTS LATER

Jay sits with Stella.

JAY
Two months?

STELLA
Three.

JAY
I don't know, I may change my mind by then.

STELLA
Maybe I will too.
(Beat)
It's something I've been thinking about for a while now.

JAY
No worries, just let me know when you're sure.

STELLA
Of course.

JAY
What might you do instead?

STELLA
I don't know, not exactly at least but I'll think of something.

Jay unmutes the TV.

TV HOST
In today's episode of 'Where are They Now', 'Thank You Stella LaBelle' by the once again red hot Jay Esposito has Ms. LaBelle's old albums selling like hotcakes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TV Host grabs an armful of vinyl records.

TV HOST (cont'd)
I know I got my fair share.

Jay turns off the TV.

JAY
That something?

STELLA
Oh no, today is the swan song.

Fans swarm the limo as it pulls into the concert parking lot.

JAY
The swan song?

THIRTEEN YEAR OLD BOY chases after the limo.

THIRTEEN YEAR OLD BOY
Stella I love you, I'm your biggest fan!

Security stops the thirteen year old boy.

STELLA
Definitely not for me.

JAY
You sure because last I remember.

Stella gives Jay a playful evil eye.

They get out of the limo, crew members help them put on concert performance costumes.

JAY (cont'd)
What do you think will happen after today?

Stella takes Jay's hand.

STELLA
I don't know, but if after all of that

Stella nods to hot teenage girls screaming for Jay.

STELLA (cont'd)
And depending on where I go ..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

M.C. (O.S.)
(interrupting)
And now the moment you've been
waiting for.

STELLA
One thing's certain though.

Stage rises beneath Jay and Stella.

JAY
Oh yeah, what's that?

STELLA
We're gonna kick some ass up there
tonight.

JAY
So you're saying Yvette sounds
pretty good tonight?

Stella hits Jay.

JAY (cont'd)
You set yourself up on that one
woman.

STELLA
Excuse me? who was it that found
you again.

Drum beats, fans scream.

FADE TO BACK.