

PROUD PARTNERS

"Part 2: The Rest is Her Story"

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INT. FACTORY - DAY

VINCE DE LA CRUZ and his ex-wife/business partner, GRIZELDA DE LA CRUZ, both 30's, Latino, stand with an employee and taste-test some cereal near a conveyor belt. The three wear lab coats, goggles, and hard hats. They converse with each other, while Vince narrates offscreen [in *italics*].

VINCE

So here I am, with my no-good ex-wife, Grizelda, running the Christ Chrunch factory for my no-good father. Not to speak ill of the dead, of course. Anyway, I think it will...

Grizelda interrupts him (also offscreen).

GRIZELDA

Alright, bozo, that's enough outta you!

VINCE

Grizelda, what are you doing??

GRIZELDA

You got to tell your side of the story, now it's my turn!

VINCE

No it's not! It's my show!

GRIZELDA

Our company, our show! Now move it!

Vince *SIGHS*, STOMPS out and SHUTS the door.

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

Now then, for those of you who saw the last episode, thanks for tuning in anyway. Now let's start from the beginning...

INT. GARAGE - DAY - FLASHBACK

A YOUNGER VERSION of Grizelda approaches a car. The door is open on the driver's side.

GRIZELDA

This is me, Grizelda Vargas, doing the stuff that all 8-year-olds do.

She hops in the car, stands in the seat, and puts her hands on the wheel.

YOUNG GRIZELDA
 We have here Grizelda Vargas, about to
 compete for the Indy 500! And the crowd
 goes wild!

She mimics a crowd CHEERING, then the VROOMS of a car.

MONTAGE - YOUNG GRIZELDA PLAYS MAKE-BELIEVE

-- She races down the street and turns corners swiftly.

YOUNG GRIZELDA
 Look at her go!

-- She ZOOMS through and leaps over a bump in the road.

YOUNG GRIZELDA (CONT'D)
 She's nearing the finish line!

-- She pulls over and makes a hard stop.

YOUNG GRIZELDA (CONT'D)
 And she did it! Listen to that crowd!
 (mimics crowd chants)
 "Zelda! Zelda! Zelda!"

END OF MONTAGE

YOUNG GRIZELDA
 Well, back to reality.

She hops out the car and walks into a bar. She approaches
 MIGUEL, the bartender.

YOUNG GRIZELDA (CONT'D)
 Where is she, Miguel?

MIGUEL
 The usual place.

Grizelda walks to the counter, where her mother,
 GABRIELLE, 20's, sits with her head down.

YOUNG GRIZELDA
 Come on, Mom, let's go home.

Gabrielle lifts her head up.

GABRIELLE
 (drunkenly)
 "Mom"? Is there a Mom here, anybody?

YOUNG GRIZELDA
Come on, Mom! I can't keep missing school
for you! I do have to finish second
grade, eventually!

GABRIELLE
(hiccups)
You'd be the first in the family.

She gets up and grabs Grizelda's hand. They slowly exit.

GABRIELLE (CONT'D)
Remember to take the back streets.

YOUNG GRIZELDA
I know.
(sniffs)
No offense, Mom, but you kinda smell!

GABRIELLE
Like alcohol?

YOUNG GRIZELDA
Sadly, no.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK

Grizelda, as a TEEN, sits on the couch and watches TV.
She wears a low-cut top.

GRIZELDA
*When I became a teen, I decided to stay
with my father to get a little bit of
normalcy.*

SFX: Doorbell BUZZES!

She gets up and opens the door. A SEXY WOMAN stands
there.

SEXY WOMAN
Hi, is your daddy home?

TEEN GRIZELDA
Dad!

Her father, FELIPE, 30's, enters.

FELIPE
(to the woman)
Oh, hey. I'll meet you downstairs.

The woman exits.

FELIPE (CONT'D)
All right, Zel, I'm about to leave.

He pauses and looks at her.

FELIPE (CONT'D)
I know you didn't wear that top to school today!

TEEN GRIZELDA
C'mon, Dad. Mom doesn't have a problem with it.

FELIPE
And where is she now? In a wine bottle?

TEEN GRIZELDA
She always said to keep the men looking. We have to, since we're giving them fake numbers!

FELIPE
On that positive note, I'll see you later.

He walks downstairs to a dimly lit club. He speaks to some gentlemen to the side.

FELIPE (CONT'D)
Alright, men, oil me!

He RIPS OFF his clothes down to a G-string. The men SQUIRT baby oil on him and rub him down. He runs to the stage. An ANNOUNCER speaks on the mic.

ANNOUNCER
Alright, ladies, here's "Daddy"!

The audience full of women CHEER. Felipe dances and gyrates in front of them. The sexy woman approaches him.

SEXY WOMAN
Felipe, you were supposed to give me a private dance!

FELIPE
Not with my daughter there!

SEXY WOMAN
That would've really turned me on!

INT. ROOM - DAY

GRIZELDA

*So as you can see, life with my dad
wasn't a bed of roses either, especially
when I grew up.*

An older Grizelda speaks.

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

*Look, I'm grown now! You can't tell me
what to do! I deserve to go out and have
fun!*

The person that she is speaking to is her son, TOMÁS, 3,
who sits in his playpen.

TOMÁS

Okay, Mommy.

GRIZELDA

Don't wait up.

She grabs her purse and exits. Tomás SIGHS.

INT. BASKETBALL GAME - NIGHT

Grizelda sits in the front row with others. She wears a
low-cut top that exposes her cleavage.

GRIZELDA

*Anyway, one night, I was at the Crawfish
game, having a good time. And girrrrl...*

(pause)

*...or, "man", the team always give me
front row seats! That's why they called
me, "Front Row Zelda"!*

CU OF GRIZELDA'S CHEST

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

Yeah, that had to be the reason.

A forward on the Crawfish, LAWRENCE FAULKNER, 20's,
black, guards an opposing PLAYER who dribbles. He looks
at Grizelda and stares. Lawrence steals the ball,
dribbles, and dunks it. The crowd ERUPTS. Lawrence
returns to the player.

LAWRENCE

(chuckles)

Got caught double-dribbling again!

PLAYER

Shut up, man! I thought I saw somebody
talkin' to my girl!

LAWRENCE

Yeah right! My girl!

GRIZELDA

*All of a sudden, I met him, the man of my
dreams!*

Vince approaches her. They shake hands.

VINCE

How ya doin'?

GRIZELDA

Hi.

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

*As soon as I met him, I became a whole
new woman! And we wasted no time getting
married. We did it at sea, in front of
our loved ones.*

EXT. SHIP - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT OF THE SHIP

The CAPTAIN of the ship speaks.

CAPTAIN (O.C.)

(drunkenly)

Do you, Grizelda Vargas, take this man to
be your husband?

GRIZELDA (O.C.)

(drunkenly)

I do.

CAPTAIN (O.C.)

And do you, Vincent--

VINCE (O.C.)

(drunkenly)

"Vince"!

CAPTAIN (O.C.)

--take her as your wife?

VINCE (O.C.)

You bet!

INT. SHIP - CONTINUOUS

The three of them lay in bed, under covers, with other men and women.

CAPTAIN
I now pronounce you man and wife!

Everyone CHEERS.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
You may kiss the bride. After me!

VINCE
(sighs)
Fine!

The captain and Grizelda kiss. Vince kisses a lady. Vince and Grizelda kiss each other.

VINCE (CONT'D)
Hey, Cap, if you're here, who's driving the ship?

CAPTAIN
Who cares? That's why they call it, "cruise control"!

Everyone else nods in agreement.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Now then, all hands on...you know!

GRIZELDA
Now now, don't get cocky!

CAPTAIN
You want "cocky"? I'll give you "cocky"!

GRIZELDA
What did I just say?

Everyone sticks their heads under the covers.

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)
Go head and judge. It's not something I'm proud of, but me and Vince did say that if we gonna be bad, we'll be bad together.

INT. DE LA CRUZ HOME - DAY

GRIZELDA

He must've forgotten about the second part!

Grizelda enters the house. Her best friend, ROSE, 30's, Puerto Rican, exits from Grizelda and Vince's room.

ROSE

(rapidly)

Hey, Zel!

(to Vince)

Thanks for the tour!

She runs out of the house.

GRIZELDA

(calls out)

Tour? We lived here for years!

(to Vince)

What the hell? With my best friend?

VINCE

I just proved that wrong! So, you're welcome!

Grizelda storms away.

VINCE (CONT'D)

(calls out)

Hey, I thought about you the whole time! You know, "why doesn't Grizelda ever wanna join us?"

GRIZELDA

So me and my friend had a couple things in common, like screwing my husband. However, I was not to be, ahem, outdone.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

In the living room, crowds of people dance and CHATTER. Music BLASTS. Vince's father, VINCENT, 50's, sits on the edge of his bed, sipping on a drink. Grizelda stands in the doorway with a drink in hand.

GRIZELDA

(drunkenly)

I don't know what to do about your son, Vincent!

VINCENT

(drunkenly)

Aw, he's a good kid. Whatever he does wrong, blame it on me.

GRIZELDA

I already do.

VINCENT

I need some sober food before I finish drinking.

He pulls out a box of his cereal and eats from it.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Some Christ Chrunch?

GRIZELDA

No thanks.

VINCENT

Why not? You need to sober up, too.

GRIZELDA

Well, it's just that, I can't eat...I'm allergic to...oh, hell. The cereal's nasty!

VINCENT

Really? We never should've changed the formula. I need to stop giving in to them protesters. They claimed that the grains were grown on a farm owned by racists.

GRIZELDA

Never mind my opinion! Everybody else likes it! I'd just rather eat dirt.

Vincent approaches her.

VINCENT

Y'know, it's not every day that I get to talk to a non-fan.

GRIZELDA

And I've never had much of a father figure.

VINCENT

Don't worry. I can be yo daddy.

GRIZELDA

I would be keeping it in the family.

VINCENT

No, I would be keeping it in.

He holds her hand and closes the door. Downstairs, a drunken Vince stumbles up the staircase.

VINCE

Where is that Zel? I hope she ain't doin' nothin' I would do.

He goes upstairs and GASPS off-screen.

VINCE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

What the...??

GRIZELDA

Again, something I'm not proud of. And I felt really bad about it. I shouldn't have done it to a guy like Vince. He did have his nice qualities. He even showed my son love. Except for that one time...

INT. DE LA CRUZ HOME - DAY

Vince, looking crabby, heads for the front door.

GRIZELDA (O.C.)

I'm almost ready, dear! We'll make it to Tomás' chess match on time!

VINCE

Fine! I'm just going out to fill the car up!

He exits.

MOMENTS LATER

Grizelda and Tomás sit on the couch.

TOMÁS

Mom, it's been an hour. Where's Vince?

GRIZELDA

And he didn't answer his phone!

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

And that was the last time we saw him.

Grizelda, with her head down, heads for the exit.

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

(sighs)

I need a drink. If you need me, I'll be at Miguel's.

TOMÁS

But I still need a ride to my--

GRIZELDA

Yep, that's where I'll be.

She exits.

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

Yep, folks, that's why Tomás has problems trusting other men. And why he's no good in any sports. And why he can't fight a lick. But this ain't about Vince. This is about me.

(pause)

And wasn't good in English class.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Grizelda, pushing a shopping cart with groceries, and an adult Tomás exit the store.

GRIZELDA

You better pass that exam tomorrow, Tomás. You're this close to getting your degree!

TOMÁS

Isn't it too late to play "mommy"?

GRIZELDA

It's never too late! Come on, I believe in you! You're so smart! When you were a baby, you even changed your own diaper!

TOMÁS

Reluctantly!

GRIZELDA

Well, I had to wear a bra in the first grade. We both grew up fast!

Lawrence, pushing a cart, walks past them.

TOMÁS

Mom, isn't that Lawrence Faulkner?

GRIZELDA
 (scoffs)
 Please, I see him almost every day! Hey,
 "Larry"!

Lawrence approaches them.

LAWRENCE
 Front Row Zelda! How are you?

They hug.

GRIZELDA
 Good! Where you goin'? Heading to the
 studio to lay down some raps?

LAWRENCE
 Nah, I think I'm gonna stick to ball.

GRIZELDA
 Don't be modest. I bought your album.

LAWRENCE
 Oh, that was you?

They both CHUCKLE.

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)
 And who's this?

GRIZELDA
 My son, Tomás!

LAWRENCE
 What up, man?

He extends his hand.

TOMÁS
 (thinks)
 Oh my God, oh my God, Lawrence Faulkner
 is talking to me!!
 (to Lawrence, calmly)
 'Sup?

They shake hands.

GRIZELDA
 Whatchu doin' shopping here by yourself,
 anyway? Where's your agent?

LAWRENCE
 I gave him the day off! I'm capable of
 doing my own shopping! See?
 (MORE)

LAWRENCE (CONT'D)

I can't go without my health foods
like...

(pulls out items)

...gluten-free water and zero-sugar
sugar!

GRIZELDA

Alright, see you later!

She and Tomás exit. Lawrence continues walking.

LAWRENCE

Now where's the car? Oh, there it is. I
wonder if I can get through these cars.

He pushes the cart through two parked cars. He taps a
side mirror that bends forward, then back. MELODY, 30's,
Puerto Rican, lowers her window of that car.

MELODY

(calls out)

Hey! I know you didn't just hit my car
and keep walking!

Lawrence approaches her.

LAWRENCE

Sorry, ma'am, it was just the side
mirror.

MELODY

I don't care! I just got this thing!

LAWRENCE

Look at it! Not a scratch!

Melody's friend, BERTHA, black, sits in the passenger's
seat.

BERTHA

Melody, don't you know who that is?

MELODY

Should I?

BERTHA

Hey, you're Lawrence Faulkner! You play
for the Crawfish! My baby daddies watch
you all the time!

LAWRENCE

How ya doin'?

BERTHA

My fourth one has your autographed jersey!

MELODY

Alright!

(to Lawrence)

You just be careful!

Lawrence loads his car and gets in.

LAWRENCE

(sighs)

Where's my agent at? I guess I should stop messing around with his wife.

(pause)

Hmm, I wonder she's up to, anyway.

He STARTS the motor.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

Grizelda, wearing a business-type outfit and reading glasses, walks down the street.

GRIZELDA

It took some time, but I got back on the right track. Don't I look good and respectable? However, while I was leaving my interview at the adoption agency, I noticed a lot of cameramen around the courthouse.

A limo pulls to the side of people FLASHING cameras.

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

I know that ain't Melody in that limo. Hmmph. Always gotta be the center of attention.

Melody is escorted out the car by Bertha. Melody wears bandages, dark sunglasses, walks with a cane, and has a cast on her left leg. The cameramen follow them inside.

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

What the...?

Grizelda goes in after the cameramen.

INT. COURTHOUSE - LATER

GRIZELDA

*I followed them inside, and apparently,
it was a huge media circus! My buddy,
Lawrence Faulkner, was getting sued by
that heifer for hitting her car!*

Lawrence, wearing a suit and tie, sits. Melody takes the stand. Lawrence's LAWYER addresses Melody.

LAWYER

So all of this happened from my client
hitting your car?

MELODY

(with a lisp)

Yes. He knocked out two of my teeth,
broke my leg, and made me lose my sight
in my right eye.

(clears throat, proper voice)

And moreover, with regards to the day in
question, I might add, I could not go
back to my place of employment and be a
team player, henceforth.

GRIZELDA

(scoffs)

Please.

SFX: Gavel BANGS!

The JUDGE speaks.

JUDGE

Order!

Melody looks in Grizelda's direction.

MELODY

(gasps)

Grizelda? What are you doing here?

She turns away and looks around.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Rather, who said that?

Bertha stands up.

BERTHA

Don't listen to her, Melody! You're
innocent!

JUDGE

Order!

MELODY

I'm not on trial, Bertha!

BERTHA

Your Honor, my friend has been brutally hurt! Why would I lie? I'm under oath!

JUDGE

No you're not! You're not even on the stand!

BERTHA

Well, can I take the stand? I wanna clear her name.

JUDGE

That's not how this works!

MELODY

What's all this racket? Who's talking?

GRIZELDA

(scoffs)

Bitch, please!

MELODY

Who you callin', "bitch"?!

She shoots out of her seat, begins to charge towards Grizelda, then stops. She looks at her leg. The people GASP.

MELODY (CONT'D)

Uh, it's a miracle?

JUDGE

Yeah, that I'm not holding you in contempt! Everybody get outta here!

He BANGS the gavel. People file out. Lawrence approaches Grizelda.

LAWRENCE

Thanks, Zel. I can't afford another lawsuit. Anything you need, I got you.

He kisses her on the cheek and exits.

GRIZELDA

I was so happy with the good deed I did that I went out and celebrated!

(MORE)

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

(pause)

At an all-night bible study, of course.

INT. GRIZELDA'S HOUSE - DAY

GRIZELDA

*So after sleeping all morning, I got up
and heard sobbing outside my door.*

SFX: Faint SOBBING.

She opens the front door and sees Vince's wife, MARISOL DE LA CRUZ, 30's, Puerto Rican, stand there in tears. She advances towards Grizelda.

MARISOL

You home-wrecker!

She throws a punch. Grizelda stands out the way. Marisol PLOPS to the ground.

GRIZELDA

You must be Vince's wife.

Marisol lies with her face down.

MARISOL

(muffled)

How did you guess?

GRIZELDA

Let's just say, "Past experiences."

MARISOL

Don't help me! I'm fine!

She tries to pull herself up.

MARISOL (CONT'D)

You don't know modesty when you hear it?
Help a sista out!

She extends her hand. Grizelda grabs it and lifts her up.

GRIZELDA

Why don't you have a seat, and we can
discuss this woman to woman?

MARISOL

(sniffles)

I guess.

They both sit on the couch.

MARISOL (CONT'D)

I love that man with all my heart! But you must have some hold on him! That's why you're in his father's will!

GRIZELDA

Yeah, I'm sorry for your loss. I heard about that unfortunate accident. It's so sad.

Tomás enters from the kitchen, with his hands behind his back and his head down.

MARISOL

That's your son? He must be shaken up about it, too!

TOMÁS

No, I'm trying to open a can of peas. I'm stepping away from it. Who are you?

MARISOL

Marisol, your father's next ex!

GRIZELDA

Don't say that! And Vince was never his father! We did everything under the sun except make a baby!

MARISOL

Hmmph.

GRIZELDA

I've seen you guys on Facebook many times. You and Vince are made for each other! You joke about the same things! You even talk about stuff that no one cares about, like the "No One Cares" meme!

MARISOL

Who would take the time to make that? It's ironic and moronic.

GRIZELDA

There you go! So why don't you go back to Vince? I'm happy with my life! The only man who has my heart is my son here!

TOMÁS

Doesn't help my profile, but okay.

MARISOL

But what about Christ Chrunch? Vincent left it to you and his son!

GRIZELDA

Hmmph. Well, if the company needs to be ran, I guess I can swing it. I'll just have to fit it in between my shifts at the soup kitchen.

MARISOL

Hey, what's that on TV?

The three turn to it. PROTESTERS chant from the TV.

PROTESTERS (O.C.)

Cruz must go! Cruz must go!

Grizelda rises up.

GRIZELDA

Guys, we know what we have to do.

TOMÁS

Yeah! Lemme at those peas!

He heads to the kitchen. Grizelda pulls him back.

GRIZELDA

No! To the cereal factory!

(to Marisol)

Can you drive us?

MARISOL

You don't have your license?

GRIZELDA

I did.

MARISOL

(groans)

After the way I left Vince, he'll chew my black ass out!

GRIZELDA

Your black ass will be fine! Let's hit it!

They exit.

INT. FACTORY - ROOM - LATER

Grizelda, Tomás, and Marisol speak with Vince.

GRIZELDA

*Despite seeing that creep, Vince, again,
it was my duty to reunite those
lovebirds, especially if he wanted
anything to do with my company.*

GRIZELDA (CONT'D)

Look, you two, it's time to stop all this
fighting and work it out!

VINCE

I don't know, Zel. I feel so lost and
unsure of love ever since I left you and
your kid.

MARISOL

And him being unsure makes me unsure.

GRIZELDA

Would it make both of you feel better if
I told you that I moved on and am okay?

MARISOL

I guess so. It's damn hard to follow you,
Grizelda, but I'll do my best.

VINCE

(to Grizelda)

Now wait a minute! You weren't exactly a
saint, you know!

TOMÁS

Vince, she did stuff, you did stuff. The
important thing now is to come together
and save this cereal company for your
father.

VINCE

(pause)

You got a point, man. I guess I can swing
it.

He approaches Grizelda and takes her hand.

VINCE (CONT'D)

Oh, if I had to do it all over again, I'd
do you all over again.

He CHUCKLES. Marisol SMACKS the back of his head. He lets
go of Grizelda's hand.

VINCE (CONT'D)

(to Marisol)

Too soon?

EXT. FACTORY - SAME

The protesters continue to march and CHANT.

PROTESTERS
Cruz must go! Cruz must go!

Lawrence walks up to the front.

LAWRENCE
Hey, guys, quiet down!

PROTESTER #1
Whoa! It's Lawrence Faulkner!

The protesters CLAMOR in excitement.

LAWRENCE
My good friend, Grizelda De La Cruz, is part-owner of this company, and she wouldn't steer it wrong. It is as rich in Christian values as its cereal is in flavor. I wake up with it every morning.

He holds up a bowl of cereal, eats from it, and poses for the cameras, which FLASH.

PROTESTER #2
Well, that's good enough for us! Fall out!

The crowd exits. Lawrence frowns and talks to a person off-screen.

LAWRENCE
Blecch! Hey, my man, get me some coffee!

He exits. The De La Cruz family enters the scene.

VINCE
Hey, the protestors are leaving!

GRIZELDA
My speech must've moved them!

VINCE
With your big mouth and my big brain, maybe we can run this company together.

GRIZELDA
For your information, I did get a degree in accounting.

VINCE

Fine. You can figure out the expenses. I have enough trouble doing that at home. Put it there, partner.

They shake hands.

INT. FACTORY - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Vince and Grizelda walk down the floor. Marisol follows them. Tomás walks with Vince and Marisol's son, HECTOR, while they follow the other three.

GRIZELDA

And so begins our partnership, this time, not in marriage, but in business only. It's not good for the boss to stick his pen in company ink, anyway. No matter how good the ink is.

TOMÁS

So you're Hector.

HECTOR

Uh huh.

TOMÁS

Did my mom and your dad tell you how they got together, too?

HECTOR

Yeah, but I don't get it. Who do I believe? Her or him?

PAUSE.

TOMÁS

Yes!

GRIZELDA

That's right, son. "Yes".

They continue to walk.

THE END