

Down Past Passyunk

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Down Past Passyunk - As of May 11, 2013

Character

Cast Size: 7
(In Line Order)

<i>Nicky Grillo</i>	53, m. Italian American. Owner of Grillo's Steaks.
<i>Stanley Drago</i>	27, m. Italian American. A beat cop from South Philly with an Ivy League education.
<i>Sophia Grillo</i>	25, f. Italian American. Nicky's daughter and Stanley's ex.
<i>Vince Turati</i>	58, m, Italian American. Nicky's longtime friend and landlord.
<i>Ignacio (Iggy) Guerrero</i>	Early-40s, m, Mexican American. The owner of Guerrero's PhilaMex. A savvy businessman with a slight southern accent.
<i>Tambrey Walker</i>	Mid-30s, f. A TV news reporter. Ambitious.
<i>Cameraperson</i>	F. Tambrey's camera operator.
<i>Emma</i>	Late-20s, f. A spritely shop owner. Played by the actor portraying Cameraperson.

Time

2008, then 2016.

Place

Grillo's Steaks in South Philly.

Special Notes

Consider using stagehands as occasional customers in the restaurant. The place should never be full, but their presence might provide a sense of activity and be an interesting way to incorporate scene changes.

Actors & Directors: You will notice stage directions that read "Life," "Motion," and "/" :

Life: An opportunity to make a choice.

Motion: An opportunity to make a change.

//: The moment where the next line intersect.

ACT I

SCENE I

NICKY Grillo sweeps up broken bottles and trash from the patio of his family-owned sandwich shop as Officer Stanley DRAGO takes notes. In the corner, a McCain 2008 Presidential Campaign sign is kicked and bent to hell.

NICKY

I seen it coming since they opened up, Stan! Look at this! Look at it!

DRAGO

I see, Mister Grillo. I do.

NICKY

You see this napkin, these cups?

DRAGO

Yes, sir.

NICKY

Say "PhilaMex Steaks" right on 'em! You going to do something about it?

DRAGO

Did you actually witness anyone from the restaurant // littering or damaging -?

NICKY

What do you mean, "Did I see?!" You just said *you* see!

DRAGO

I see debris, yes. But you can't press charges against them for // what their customers -.

NICKY

I was here! I was here until practically midnight last night! I saw them drinking their Jarritos, eating them abomination they call cheesesteaks, then they'd drift over here and dump their garbage onto my patio!

DRAGO

That may be, but I can't hold the restaurant responsible for other people's actions.

NICKY

This kinda thing don't happen up by Pat's and Geno's. You know why?

DRAGO

I'm sure they // have their own -.

NICKY

Because the people they serve have respect for this neighborhood! They have the bare minimum amount of consideration for folks've lived here, owned businesses here, for years! It's been that way for as long as anyone can remember, and you know it, Stan!

DRAGO

PhilaMex has ample trash and recycling bins around their patio. Now I'm very sorry if their customer's aren't behaving // themselves, but you can't press -.

NICKY

You're sorry? That's all you got for me's, you're sorry?

DRAGO

It was a Friday night. People act a little more out of control. Weekend's are // always more hectic -.

NICKY

This restaurant's been on this corner longer than you been alive! Don't tell me how it is around here! Tell them!

DRAGO

I'll speak to -.

NICKY

Your father used to cook here, Stanley.

DRAGO

I know, // Mister Grillo.

NICKY

Me, him, and Vince, six summers straight! My father took the orders, yelled 'em down to me, V, and Big Stan, it'd be ready to go in six seconds tops. It was people like my dad and yours kept South Philly respectable. Now you want to stand there and tell me you're sorry while they take a shit on your home?!

DRAGO

I actually just moved into a place in Spruce Hill.

NICKY

The hell's that?

DRAGO

One of the newer neighborhood. Over by Penn.

NICKY

Of course. A newer neighborhood for Stanley. Of course.

DRAGO

A neighborhood where the people talk to the police with some respect.

NICKY

It's West Philly. That ain't respect. It's fear.

DRAGO

Maybe you're projecting onto me what certain people in South Philly feel about you.

Life.

NICKY

I know you went to college, Stan. You don't have to prove it with every sentence.

DRAGO

I'm just saying, I haven't notice any other businesses on this block complaining about Guerrero.

NICKY

That's because all the other businesses are too scared. They're moving in here by the van-load. The coyotes? Them guys get 'em past the boarder?

DRAGO

The Guerreros aren't illegal immigrants, Mister Grillo.

NICKY

I ain't saying them specifically. But not everyone living here's here on the up and up. Half of 'em can't speak English. They simply refuse to do that little bit of work. They come all this way and expect me to change while they dump SHIT on a business that's been here for FIFTY-SIX YEARS?!

DRAGO

I forgot to mention, happy anniversary.

NICKY

You wanna make me happy? Write them up!

(re: McCain Sign)

Christ, look what they did to my yard sign! They're attacking my First Amendment rights here!

DRAGO

I will talk to the Guerreros and ask them to monitor their customers. But unless you have video or witnesses to corroborate your claim that they're responsible, that's all I can do. And legally, it's more than I should.

SOPHIA rides in and quickly locks her bike to a poll on the patio.

SOPHIA

I know, I know.

NICKY

We're supposed to open in twenty.

SOPHIA

Asshole on Broad clipped me with his passenger-side mirror.

DRAGO

Oh my God, Soph. You alright?

SOPHIA

Yeah, I'm good. Better then the mirror.

SOPHIA tosses a passenger-side mirror into a trash can.

NICKY

You don't believe me, ask her.

DRAGO

I didn't say I // didn't believe you.

SOPHIA

This about the trash?

NICKY

Spruce Hill here says there's nothing he can do. Says that people tearing up his neighborhood ain't his problem no more.

DRAGO

If you can tell me who's // been leaving their -.

SOPHIA

The fuck'd you move to Spruce Hill?

DRAGO

Sara and I found a place out there.

SOPHIA

What, Passyunk ain't gentrified enough for you? You gotta cross the Schuylkill?

DRAGO

The university set her up with faculty housing. Place is real nice. You should come check it out sometime.

SOPHIA

Sara'd be alright wit that?

NICKY

I'm sorry, I thought yous had jobs. I didn't realize your house-warming committee was meeting today.

(to SOPHIA)

Get the grill going. We're gonna have customers soon.

SOPHIA

Yeah, they're really pounding down the door.

NICKY

Now!

SOPHIA

Aye-aye, Cap'n.

DRAGO

See you, Sophia. And hey, the offer's open.

SOPHIA enters the restaurant and prepares ingredients.

NICKY

(to SOPHIA)

And call Bobby, find out his excuse.

(to DRAGO)

I got enough problems wit'out having to deal with rudeness.

DRAGO

Again, have you considered the fact that you're the only business on the block having a problem with the customers of Guerrero's PhilaMex?

Life.

Motion.

NICKY

You shrinking me, Stan?

DRAGO

I'm looking for effective solu-.

NICKY

You don't get to use that Ivy League brain enough on real criminals? You gotta try and shrink the victims, too?

DRAGO

There's talk about you, Mister Grillo.

Life.

NICKY

Yeah? Kinda talk?

DRAGO

Some of the Hispanics in the neighborhood seem to think you treat them differently when they come in here.

NICKY

I treat them like I treat everybody else.

DRAGO

So you tell everyone that comes into Grillo's to, "Learn how to speak?"

Life.

NICKY

So that's what this is? You're taking their side?

DRAGO

I'm not taking anyone's side. But you should know the kid didn't appreciate -.

NICKY

That kid was holding up the line! I'm running a business here. I'm supposed to make people wait and decode a foreign language?

DRAGO

Did you refuse to serve him?

NICKY

I couldn't understand what he was saying.

DRAGO

Did you laugh at him?

NICKY

Did I laugh at him?

SOPHIA dials on the restaurant's phone. As Nicky and Drago talk, she has a sharp discussion and eventually hangs up.

DRAGO

The talk is that you laughed him out of the restaurant.

NICKY

So that's against the law, but vandalism's fine?

DRAGO

The community's taking it -.

NICKY

The community needs to learn English! That ain't wrong to say! My grandfather - our grandfathers - didn't expect the Micks and Protestants over here to suddenly grow a desire to speak Italian, did they?

DRAGO

No, but I imagine they didn't feel great about being reminded they were different every time they opened their mouths.

NICKY

You're busting my chops over hurt feelings?

DRAGO

I'm looking for solutions // to your problem.

NICKY

It's a good thing Big Stan ain't around to see this.

DRAGO

You're upset, I know, but don't talk -.

NICKY

Stanley Drago would want to die, seeing the day his kid was standing here, calling me a racist.

DRAGO

I never said you were a racist?!

NICKY

You did. You called me racist in college speak. All this crap about "the community." Oh no, I offended the community! They're Mexicans, Stan. They come from Mexico, ergo, they are Mexicans. What's racist about saying Mexican?

DRAGO

The kid's Columbian.

NICKY

You get my point.

DRAGO

Yeah, I do. And it's probably the reason you're sweeping instead slicing steaks.

SOPHIA

(yelling)

Eh Pop?

DRAGO

Just try and be a little nicer, okay?

NICKY

Yeah, sure. I'm the one's gotta change.

DRAGO

Or? Get some proof of who's vandalizing you. But until then, don't bother the Guerreros.

NICKY

Who said anything about bothering them?

DRAGO

I'm just saying -.

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NICKY

Hey! I *do* speak English! I know what you're sayin!

SOPHIA

(yelling)

Pop!

NICKY

(yelling)

WHAT!

SOPHIA

(yelling)

Bobby quit!

NICKY

Jesus Christ -!

NICKY goes in and heads for the phone.
DRAGO exits.