

= Chuck Versus the Family Volkoff =

" Chuck Versus the Family Volkoff " is the 20th episode of the fourth season of Chuck , and the 74th overall episode of the series . The episode was directed by Robert Duncan McNeill and written by Nicholas Wootton and Amanda Kate Shuman . It originally aired April 11 , 2011 .

The episode has several unrelated sub @-@ plots . In the episode , Sarah Walker (Yvonne Strahovski) throws Chuck Bartowski (Zachary Levi) a surprising relationship curveball as the CIA orders Vivian Volkoff (Lauren Cohan) assassinated . In order to prove Vivian 's innocence , Chuck must put his trust in a dangerous ally ? Vivian 's father Alexei (Timothy Dalton) . Meanwhile , Ellie Bartowski @-@ Woodcomb (Sarah Lancaster) suspects that her mother Mary (Linda Hamilton) is interfering with the search into her father Stephen 's past .

" Chuck Versus the Family Volkoff " received positive reviews from critics . However , the episode continued Chuck 's steady decline in viewership , drawing 4 @.@ 03 million viewers , a series low . According to the Nielsen ratings system , it had a 2 @.@ 5 / 4 share among all households and 1 @.@ 3 / 4 share among those aged 18 ? 49 .

= = Plot = =

After Ellie Bartowski @-@ Woodcomb (Sarah Lancaster) unlocks files about " Agent X " on her father 's laptop , she begins reading about the Intersect . Ellie later discovers that her mother Mary (Linda Hamilton) has deleted a file . Ellie and Devon Woodcomb (Ryan McPartlin) spy on Mary and witness her deleting more files . It is then revealed that Mary has extracted the files for General Diane Beckman (Bonita Friedericy) . Mary urges Chuck to stop lying to Ellie and tell her the truth about his place in the CIA .

Meanwhile , Sarah Walker presents Chuck with a prenuptial agreement . Advised by John Casey (Adam Baldwin) and Morgan Grimes (Joshua Gomez) to " be cool " , Chuck signs the agreement , worrying Sarah , who had expected an emotional reaction .

Morgan receives an invitation to go to Alex McHugh 's (Mekenna Melvin) graduation . To hide the fact that Casey is still alive from her mother , Alex arranges to meet Casey between the ceremony and dinner with her mother .

In the episode 's main plot , the CIA orders Vivian Volkoff (Lauren Cohan) assassinated for the murders in " Chuck Versus the Muurder " , but Chuck negotiates a meet to determine if Vivian is really guilty . As a sign of good faith , Vivian gives them a weapon from the Volkoff Industries arsenal . Suddenly , a sniper shoots Vivian in the arm , causing her to flee . Chuck and Sarah meet Vivian 's father Alexei Volkoff (Timothy Dalton) in prison , and he confirms that the weapon is one of three components of the " Norseman " , a DNA tracker that could instantly kill a target . Volkoff asserts that he is a changed man . In exchange for a meeting with his daughter , Volkoff agrees to lead the team to the missing components .

The team travels to Mogadishu , Somalia , and acquires the targeting device from pirate Ellyas Abshir (Kevin Daniels) . They then travel to the Swiss Alps to obtain the killing agent , thorium . Volkoff manages to access the vault by winning a game of computer chess before a timer expires and triggers several turrets . Outside , Sarah and Casey detect Russian chatter and rush to Chuck 's aid , only to become trapped by Vivian , who is not injured . When Volkoff asks his daughter to release him , she refuses , feeling deceived and abandoned by him . She takes the thorium and leaves everyone in the vault with armed plasma bombs which Volkoff deactivates with a portable EMP generator . At Castle , Volkoff says goodbye to Mary before being returned to custody .

As Casey grows increasingly uncomfortable with Alex lying to her mother , he considers revealing himself to her mother . It is revealed that Sarah has money saved up in case her father is arrested again , and she tears the prenuptial agreement . Chuck later brings his own document , requiring that Sarah never suggest divorce , which she gladly signs . Chuck takes Mary 's advice to tell Ellie the truth about his place in the CIA . However , when he goes to confess and first mentions their father 's computer , Ellie lies to his face . At Volkoff Industries , Vivian is determined to find and kill " Agent X " , the only person her father ever feared .

= = Production = =

" Chuck Versus the Family Volkoff " was directed by producer Robert Duncan McNeill , and was written by Nicholas Wootton and Amanda Kate Shuman . The episode is Shuman 's first writing credit , as she had previously been only a writer 's assistant . It originally aired in the United States on April 11 , 2011 , on NBC as the twentieth episode of Chuck 's fourth season and the 74th episode overall . In the episode , guest stars Linda Hamilton , Timothy Dalton , Lauren Cohan , and Mekenna Melvin reprise their recurring roles of Alexei Volkoff , Mary Elizabeth Bartowski , Vivian Volkoff , and Alex McHugh , respectively . The episode also features Kevin Daniels as Ellyas Abshir .

In their respective reviews of the episode , HitFix Senior Editor Alan Sepinwall and Ryan McGee of The A.V. Club wrote of various ideas the episode 's writers introduced . Sepinwall noted several developments in the relationships between characters of the series . Sepinwall wrote that after becoming roommates , Casey and Morgan have become " an old married couple " , drinking orange juice in unison and bickering with mouths full of cereal . In an " emotional role reversal " from previous points in their relationship , Chuck tries to be " cool " about Sarah 's prenuptial agreement , while Sarah panics at Chuck 's lack of an emotional reaction . Casey 's relationship with his daughter also develops to the point that he considers revealing himself to her mother . Both Sepinwall and McGee wrote that Vivian was designed to be Chuck 's counterpart . The episode also marks the beginning of Alexei 's path to redemption . IGN writer Eric Goldman criticized the scene where Chuck and Sarah meet with Vivian for its frequent use of quick zooms to increase tension , writing that it " just didn 't feel like it was natural to this show 's style . "

= = Cultural references = =

This episodes maintains the series ' tendency to reference popular culture . While reading a volume of A Song of Ice and Fire , Chuck notes , " Eddard , you don 't let your kids keep a direwolf . That 's a terrible idea . " This episode aired the same week as Game of Thrones first premiered on HBO . Chuck and Ellyas later play Uno for the thorium . Volkoff jokes that to mine said thorium , he had to wage war with natives and destroy their Hometree , only to reveal that he and the other prisoners had recently watched Avatar .

= = Reception = =

" Chuck Versus the Family Volkoff " continued Chuck 's steady decline in viewership , drawing 4 @. @ 028 million viewers , a series low . It also had a 2 @. @ 5 / 4 share among all households and 1 @. @ 3 / 4 share among those aged 18 ? 49 .

The episode received generally positive reviews from critics . HitFix Senior Editor Alan Sepinwall wrote that " Timothy Dalton was everything we had come to expect from him in the part : scary and dangerous and then so much the funnier for the way he kept trying to work the steps and turn over a new leaf . The episode left [Alexei] ' s sincerity up in the air for most of the hour - was he really serious about making amends , or just trying to distract Chuck from his latest evil plan ? - but Volkoff is such a well @-@ drawn character , and Dalton so talented and versatile , that the comedy worked either way ... Vivian , on the other hand ? I 'd been iffy on her in her most recent appearance , and putting her on camera with [Alexei] , even briefly , was just a reminder of how much less she brings to the table . " Ryan McGee of The A.V. Club gave the episode a A- . Though he praised Dalton 's performance , McGee wrote , " The direct parallels between Chuck and Vivian haven 't really panned out in the way the show initially envisioned it . Let 's face it : These two aren 't exactly Buffy and Faith in terms of being foils for one another . The show has never painted Chuck as ever potentially going to the dark side . It has used Casey and occasionally Sarah to serve that function at times , but never Chuck . At this point , he 's as set in his moral code as possible . Had the Vivian storyline happened at the outset of his Intersect 2 @. @ 0 days , perhaps the taste of power could have gone to his head , with Vivian as an example of the road not taken . As such , Vivian 's

existence largely serves to connect her to the larger spy world of the show , not draw a direct parallel to the support system that helped Chuck overcome any potential temptations . " Eric Goldman of IGN gave this episode a score of 8 out of 10 , writing , " This Chuck got off to a shaky start . I don 't know how to put my finger on it exactly , but the pacing felt off in the first third or so of the episode ... Thankfully , things picked up considerably as the episode went along ? I 'd say the turning point was the scene in which Chuck was sent in to meet with the pirates . The way Chuck 's big announcement that he worked for Alexei Volkoff immediately led to a bunch of guns pulled on him was funny , as was not only Chuck asking to play Uno (for his life) , but that the pirate did indeed have the game . " Carl Cortez of Assignment X , however , gave the episode a negative review , calling it " a painfully nonsense driven episode that 's now grasping at straws in an attempt to round out the last part of the season with an adequate storyline . "