

= The Bubble ( 30 Rock ) =

" The Bubble " is the fifteenth episode of the third season of the American television series 30 Rock . It was written by series ' creator Tina Fey and directed by Tricia Brock . The episode originally aired on the National Broadcasting Company ( NBC ) in the United States on March 19 , 2009 . Jon Hamm and Bobb 'e J. Thompson guest star in this episode , and there are cameo appearances by Calvin Klein and Meredith Vieira .

In the episode , Liz Lemon ( Fey ) discovers that her boyfriend Drew ( Hamm ) lives in a " bubble " because of his good looks , and has never experienced many of the unpleasant phenomena in life . At the same time , Tracy Jordan ( Tracy Morgan ) decides to leave the fictitious sketch comedy show The Girlie Show with Tracy Jordan ( TGS ) because he no longer needs the money , and Jenna Maroney ( Jane Krakowski ) decides to cut her hair as a publicity stunt .

" The Bubble " received generally positive reviews . According to the Nielsen ratings system , it was watched by 7 million households during its original broadcast . For their performances in this episode , Hamm and Jack McBrayer ? the latter playing Kenneth Parcell ? received Primetime Emmy Award nominations in the categories for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Comedy Series and Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series , respectively .

= = Plot = =

The episode begins with Liz Lemon ( Tina Fey ) noticing that people treat her boyfriend , Drew Baird ( Jon Hamm ) , differently because of his good looks . After watching a traffic cop , ( Frank Ridley ) rip up a ticket for Drew , and fashion designer Calvin Klein offering him a job as an underwear model , Liz brings the matter up with her boss , Jack Donaghy ( Alec Baldwin ) , who tells her that Drew is in " the bubble " . Jack tells Liz that she should stay with Drew and enjoy the perks of the bubble , but Liz begins to realize that living in the bubble has left Drew without some essential skills . After discovering that Drew cannot perform the Heimlich maneuver , even though he is a doctor , and cannot play tennis , despite the fact that he worked as a tennis coach , Liz decides that she has to leave Drew , and ends their relationship .

Meanwhile , at TGS , it is time to renew Tracy Jordan 's ( Tracy Morgan ) contract , and Jack decides to approach the matter carefully as Tracy does not need the money he makes on the show . While negotiating Tracy 's new contract , Jack mentions this fact , which comes as a shock to Tracy , who had never realized that he could survive financially without the income . After realizing that Tracy has quit the show , Jack must find a way to bring him back , after Tracy 's son , Tracy Jr . ( Bobb 'e J. Thompson ) , complains to Jack about how unbearable his father is to have around the house . Meanwhile , in order to get attention for herself , Jenna Maroney ( Jane Krakowski ) decides to cut her hair for charity as a publicity stunt . Jenna makes an appearance on NBC 's Today Show , where her haircut will be broadcast . Meredith Vieira asks Jenna 's opinion on the news that Tracy has left TGS . At learning this , Jenna bails out on her haircut .

After discovering that Tracy is still in contact with NBC page Kenneth Parcell ( Jack McBrayer ) , Jack realizes that their relationship is the key to bringing Tracy back to TGS . Jack , therefore , orders Kenneth to break off all contact with Tracy , although this fails because of Kenneth 's relationship with Tracy . Seeing an opportunity , Jack states that since Kenneth 's duties were primarily taking care of Tracy , and Tracy no longer works at NBC , Kenneth is no longer needed . Not wanting Kenneth to lose his job , Tracy agrees to return on the stipulation that Kenneth keeps his job .

= = Production = =

" The Bubble " was written by series creator , executive producer and lead actress Tina Fey . The director of this episode was Tricia Brock . This was Fey 's sixteenth writing credit , and Brock 's first directed episode . " The Bubble " originally aired on NBC in the United States on March 19 , 2009 .

When actor Jon Hamm hosted the sketch comedy show Saturday Night Live ( SNL ) in October

2008 , negotiations took place with the show 's producers for him to guest star on 30 Rock . In December 2008 , it was confirmed Hamm would appear as a love interest for Fey 's character , Liz Lemon . It was also announced by NBC that Hamm would star in a three @-@ episode arc ; he made his debut in the February 5 , 2009 , episode " Generalissimo " , and made a second appearance in " St. Valentine 's Day " . " The Bubble " was the completion of Hamm 's three episode arc , though Hamm made appearances on the show 's fourth season episodes " Anna Howard Shaw Day " and " Emanuelle Goes to Dinosaur Land " .

In an interview with Entertainment Weekly , Fey said that when the writing staff is developing a script , " We 'll have an actor in mind and we 'll keep referring to them . Like for this we said , ' Then Hamm comes in , blah blah blah . ' " She believed that there was no possibility of getting Hamm though : " we were lucky with the timing because Mad Men was on hiatus and he was hosting SNL . So I called over there and asked them [ whispering ] , ' Hey , is that guy funny ? Tell me the truth . ' And they were like , ' Yes , he 's really funny . ' By Saturday I knew they were right . "

All of Liz and Drew 's scenes were filmed on January 15 , 2009 , in the Upper West Side . Fashion designer Calvin Klein , playing himself , made a cameo in this episode . Klein is the father of Marci Klein , an executive producer on 30 Rock . This episode was actor Bobb 'e J. Thompson 's second appearance as Tracy 's son , Tracy Jr . , on the show . Thompson first guest starred in the episode " Gavin Volure " . " The Bubble " was Today show co @-@ host Meredith Vieira 's third guest appearance as herself , having appeared in the episodes " Greenzo " and " Larry King " .

= = Cultural references = =

After Kenneth buys Tracy 's food , Tracy calls Kenneth his Radar O 'Reilly , a character from M \* A \* S \* H. He also tells him , " Now get in here and rub my feet until you hear a chopper coming . " Drew tells Liz that Prince Eric was based on pictures of him in his younger days , a reference to the animated character from the movie The Little Mermaid ( 1989 ) . Jenna talks about the Rachel haircut , made famous by actress Jennifer Aniston , as the character Rachel Green on the show Friends . Later , Jenna says she does not want to make the wrong choice with her hair explaining she does not want to end up like actress Keri Russell from Felicity season two .

Kenneth tells Jack that when he and Tracy watch the show Lost he always holds Tracy 's hand , due to the show 's mysterious plots . After learning that Tracy has quit the show , Liz mocks Jack , in a deep voice , saying " Be a manager . Control your people . Buy better clothes . " Jack explains his plans to her on how he will get Tracy to return , with Liz once again mocking Jack , this time in a deep raspy voice , " Just get it done . Nope . I lost it . That was Batman " , a reference to actor Christian Bale 's voice as the superhero in the Batman films .

During the scenes where Liz and Drew are together , the music piece " Theme from A Summer Place " is played .

The fifteenth episode of the third season of Parks and Recreation is also entitled " The Bubble " .

= = Reception = =

According to the Nielsen ratings system , an average of 7 million viewers watched " The Bubble " during its original United States broadcast , placing it in fourth place for its timeslot . The show also claimed a share of 3 @. @ 2 / 8 among viewers aged 18 to 49 , meaning that 3 @. @ 2 % of all people in that group , and 8 % of all people from that group watching television at the time , watched the episode . For their performances in this episode , Jon Hamm and Jack McBrayer received Primetime Emmy Award nominations for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Comedy Series and Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series , respectively .

The episode received generally positive reviews , although most reviewers found some of the storylines more effective than others . Robert Canning of IGN wrote that " the main portion of this episode was quite funny , even if the ending lacked bite . " Similarly , Margaret Lyons of Entertainment Weekly found that the episode was " another strong showing for 30 Rock ... although Jenna 's plotline was pretty tired . " TV Squad 's Bob Sassone was similarly positive about " The

Bubble " , calling it " another good episode . " James Poniewozik of Time , also responded favorably to the episode with the exception of the Jenna storyline , writing that it " was the first one in a long time that I enjoyed almost completely without reservation ( Jenna 's subplot was off , but it was barely a blip ) . " Television columnist Alan Sepinwall for The Star @-@ Ledger disliked the bubble concept , reporting , " [ t ] he idea that attractive people get away with things that the more average @-@ looking can 't is an old joke , even on 30 Rock ( with Cerie ) " , but nonetheless enjoyed the " variations " of the joke saying they were " well @-@ conceived " . Sepinwall concluded , " this was one of the funniest 30 Rock 's of the season . Zap2it 's Rick Porter was also favorable to " The Bubble " in his recap , opining that 30 Rock " gave us a very well @-@ done episode " . As with Lyons and Poniewozik , Porter felt Jenna 's story " didn 't really click " , but liked the scene with Jenna and her stylist team firing off words to describe Jenna 's beauty as " scathingly funny . "

The A.V. Club 's Nathan Rabin enjoyed Hamm 's role as Drew , reporting that his character " initially seemed too good to be true but the show gradually revealed him to be imperfect and even fucked up enough to be plausible . [ ... ] The Hamm subplot was very funny and well @-@ executed " . Sepinwall also praised Hamm , writing , " Finally ! It took three episodes ... but Tina Fey ( who wrote this one ) let Jon Hamm be funny on his way out the door . "

Not all reviews were positive . Matt Mitovich of TV Guide wrote , " I must be honest ... This A @-@ story was ridiculous , and not in the hysterical way . When I first read the logline about Drew ' getting by on his good looks , ' I thought we 'd witness the occasional favoritism . But horrid doctor skills and flailing at the very public sport of tennis , and his obliviousness to it all ? Hamm got a turkey of an exit story , sorry . "