

= Of Vice and Men =

" Of Vice and Men " is the seventh episode of the third season of the American mystery television series Veronica Mars , and the fifty @-@ first episode overall . Written by Phil Klemmer and directed by Harry Winer , the episode premiered on The CW on November 14 , 2006 . The series depicts the adventures of Veronica Mars ( Kristen Bell ) as she deals with life as a college student while moonlighting as a private detective .

In this episode , Veronica helps a student , Meryl ( Amanda Walsh ) locate her missing boyfriend . Meanwhile , with Mercer ( Ryan Devlin ) imprisoned for the campus rapes , Veronica tries to find the truth . This investigation leads to an instance in which Veronica is drugged and a part of her hair is removed by a mysterious figure . In addition , Keith ( Enrico Colantoni ) questions the morality of his relationship with Harmony ( Laura San Giacomo ) , leading to their breakup .

" Of Vice and Men " was one of Rob Thomas 's favorite episodes from the season . It features the final appearance of San Giacomo and the reappearance of Ken Marino 's character , rival detective Vinnie Van Lowe . The episode received 2 @.@ 69 million viewers in its original broadcast and was given mixed reviews from television critics , with critics being divided on Veronica 's increasing sarcastic behavior and the final scene involving a drugged Veronica . Eric Goldman of IGN wrote that there were some " very strong scenes in the second half " , while Rowan Kaiser of The A.V. Club called the final scene " slightly manipulative . "

= = Plot synopsis = =

Veronica and Keith ( Enrico Colantoni ) have a minor fight over Keith ? s relationship with Harmony . Veronica is staying in Wallace ( Percy Daggs III ) and Piz ? s ( Chris Lowell ) dorm room . Piz comes in unexpectedly , and the two end up hanging out . However , a girl shows up and tells them that her boyfriend , Sully , has gone missing . They look in Sully ? s room , but the girlfriend is hesitant to help . In criminology class , Mr. Landry ( Patrick Fabian ) tells Veronica that he ? s applied her for an internship at the FBI . Veronica talks to Logan ( Jason Dohring ) about Mercer , but he still refuses to give her an alibi . Veronica and the girlfriend , Meryl , find that Sully has contacted another girl , Scarlett , but Scarlett knows that Sully has a girlfriend . Veronica visits Mercer in prison , and he tells her that there are many people who would want to frame him . Sully ? s roommate comes back to their room , and Veronica uncovers that Meryl and Sully had a fight the previous weekend .

Harmony ( Laura San Giacomo ) succeeds in convincing Keith that their relationship is not immoral . Vinnie Van Lowe ( Ken Marino ) enters Mars Investigations and tells Keith that he needs to know the whereabouts of Kendall Casablancas . Afterwards , he blackmails Keith by showing him pictures of him and Harmony , saying that Keith must pay \$ 4 @,@ 000 to prevent the information from being shown to Harmony ? s husband . Veronica gets exasperated with Meryl when she feels that Meryl refuses to see the truth about Sully cheating on her . Veronica talks to the professor about his affair with Mindy O ? Dell , but he says that he ? ll give her the scholarship no matter what . After seeing Meryl and Scarlett hug , Veronica tries to frame Mercer to no avail . After showing Logan the evidence that Mercer is innocent , he tells Veronica what he was doing : they were in Tijuana , and Mercer set a room on fire . There were girls in Mercer ? s room , but Logan ran away when the fire spread .

Meryl gets a voicemail from Sully , and Veronica agrees to track her . Veronica and Keith have another fight , with Veronica insulting his character for having a relationship with Harmony . Veronica and Meryl track the cell phone in the Fitzpatricks ? bar . Liam Fitzpatrick drunkenly picks up Veronica and carries her around , but Vinnie supposedly takes a picture of it to get him off her . Veronica and Meryl go to the police station and find that Sully washed up on shore after surfing with a bump on his head and had mild amnesia . While cleared , Mercer is still being held in custody . Keith rejects Harmony , and Logan nervously calls Keith for the whereabouts of Veronica . At the food court , Veronica is listening to voicemails from Logan and Keith when she notices an issue with her food . She returns to the counter with her plate , leaving her drink unattended . She returns to

her seat but , after eating and drinking , soon feels disoriented . She recognizes this feelings as identical to her experience after ingesting GHB previously . Veronica attempts to get into her car and collapses just outside of it but she manages to set off the alarm . A mysterious figure appears and stops the alarm . There is a buzzing sound the scene cuts to a nearby Logan hearing the alarm . Logan finds Veronica 's car with her unconscious on the ground next to it . He picks her up to reveal some locks of Veronica 's hair on the ground and a bald spot on the back of her head .

= = Production = =

" Of Vice and Men " was written by Phil Klemmer and directed by Harry Winer , marking Klemmer 's twelfth writing credit for the series and Winer 's fourth directing credit ( after " Meet John Smith " , " Blast from the Past " , and " Wichita Linebacker " ) . The episode features a reappearance by the character of Vinnie Van Lowe , played by Ken Marino , who did not appear for several episodes previously . Thomas complimented Marino 's performance in the scene in which he hands pictures of Harmony to Keith , saying that near the end of the scene , Marino turns a " cartoonish " character into something " real and menacing . " In addition , he thought that Marino 's performance in the scene effectively blurred the lines of comedy and drama on the show .

" Of Vice and Men " was one of the highlights of season three for Thomas . He was especially proud of the scene in which Veronica is drugged , which was created to give the show an interesting visual sequence , an aspect of production which Thomas thought was too often neglected on Veronica Mars . The episode also marks the final appearance in the series by Laura San Giacomo , who appeared on three episodes of Veronica Mars in total . Promos for the episode included much of the final sequence in which Veronica is drugged and approached by the rapist , a choice which several critics considered a major spoiler .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Of Vice and Men " received 2 @.@ 69 million viewers , marking a slight decrease from " Hi , Infidelity " and ranking 97th of 99 in the weekly rankings .

The episode received mixed reviews from television critics . Eric Goldman of IGN gave the episode an 8 out of 10 , indicating that it was " great " . While calling Veronica " not likable at all " in the episode , he praised the second half of the episode , particularly the final sequence involving a drugged Veronica . He wrote , " Veronica Mars seems to slowly be getting back on track . There are still some problems to be sure , but this week 's episode was a good one , and most notably , built towards some very strong scenes in the second half . " Price Peterson , writing for TV.com , was also positive towards the episode , writing " This was good ! I liked all of the scenes of Piz sleeping on the floor . And as much as it freaks me out to see Veronica in harm 's way ( I shouldn 't be watching TV , apparently ) , I appreciated the forward momentum in this plotline . " Television Without Pity gave the episode an " A " .

Alan Sepinwall , on his blog What 's Alan Watching , was mixed towards " Of Vice and Men " , writing that the episode 's focus on the mystery of the week did not work thematically , as Veronica did not have a stake in its solving . " The better we get to know the supporting characters and the closer each arc gets to its conclusion , the harder it gets to care about stories that don 't have a really personal connection for Veronica . " Rowan Kaiser , writing for The A.V. Club , was very critical of the episode , naming five ways in which he thought Veronica was unlikable in the episode . " Simply put , Veronica spends most of " Of Vice and Men " acting like she 's better and smarter than everyone else . Of course , she is smarter than everyone , so that 's okay . But better ? Sometimes that 's justified , sometimes it 's not , " elaborating that Veronica became increasingly unlikeable in the episode . He was also negative towards the final sequence , writing " it feels slightly manipulative , " commenting that the show was not ready to tackle scenes of attempted rape .