

## = The Deal ( Seinfeld ) =

" The Deal " is the ninth episode of the second season of NBC 's Seinfeld , and the show 's 14th episode overall . The episode centers on protagonists Jerry ( Jerry Seinfeld ) and Elaine Benes ( Julia Louis @-@ Dreyfus ) who decide to have a purely physical relationship , with a set of ground rules . However , as their " relationship " progresses , they experience difficulties maintaining their original friendship .

Series co @-@ creator Larry David wrote the episode in a response to NBC 's continued efforts to get the two characters back together . The main inspiration behind the episode was a similar agreement David once made with a woman . The episode , which introduced the character of Tina , Elaine 's roommate , first aired on May 2 , 1991 and was watched by approximately 22 @.@ 6 million viewers . Critics reacted positively to the episode , and David received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series .

## = = Plot = =

As they are watching TV in Jerry 's apartment , Jerry and Elaine flip through the channels , stumbling upon the soft @-@ core pornography channel . Upon the realization that neither of them has had sexual relations in a while , they start toying with the idea of sleeping together . They refer to their friendship as " this " and sexual intercourse as " that " . However , as they do not wish to ruin their friendship , they establish a set of ground rules . Happy with their agreement , they make their way to the bedroom . The next day Jerry has lunch with his friend George Costanza ( Jason Alexander ) , and makes him aware of his situation with Elaine . George remains skeptical , even after Jerry explains the rules system to him . He is proven right when Jerry and Elaine get into an argument over the second rule : " Spending the night is optional " . Jerry eventually does not spend the night , leaving their agreement on shaky terms .

With Elaine 's birthday coming up Jerry has to decide on what to get her . Since they are not in a relationship but they are still having sex he feels that the symbolism of the gift needs to be carefully thought out . He looks for a gift with George but is unable to think of anything , though he vaguely remembers her saying " something about a bench " . Elaine is unhappy with the eventual gift : \$ 182 cash . When Jerry 's neighbor Kramer ( Michael Richards ) gives Elaine the bench she was looking for , for which she is much more grateful , she and Jerry talk over their agreement . They decide to start dating . When Kramer sees them again and asks what they are up to , Jerry notes that they now do " this , that and the other , " " the other " being their romantic relationship as a couple .

## = = Production = =

Series co @-@ creator Larry David wrote the episode , which was directed by Tom Cherones . Since the start of the show , NBC executives , especially Warren Littlefield , had been pressuring the writing staff to get Jerry and Elaine back together . Larry David had been against this idea from the start . However , brainstorming for an episode idea , he remembered he had once made a deal with a woman to have a purely physical relationship , which he thought " would make a really funny show , even if they had never [ told us to get Jerry and Elaine back together ] " . Though Jerry and Elaine are still in a relationship at the end of the episode , they are no longer together by the end of the season . Seinfeld and David decided that they had satisfied the NBC executives and went back to the original format . Seinfeld and David have also noted that " The Deal " is the only Seinfeld episode ever to contain sincere emotions , during the scene in which Jerry and Elaine discuss the ending of their physical relationship .

On February 25 , 1991 , the table @-@ read of the episode was held , subsequent filming occurred at CBS Studio Center in Studio City , Los Angeles , California three days later . " The Deal " is the first episode in which Elaine 's apartment is shown . During rehearsals controversy arose over how Jerry and Elaine would sit during their " this and that " conversation . Several producers believed that , as the scene was intimate , the two should sit close together . David , however , believed the

discussion was more of a transaction than an intimate scene and felt that Jerry and Elaine should sit further apart . On audio commentary recorded for the Seinfeld : Volume 1 DVD set , David commented that when he showed his idea of the scene , " I remember everybody saying ' there 's no heat , there 's no heat ' , and I said , that 's the point , there 's not supposed to be any " . David and producer Andrew Scheinman got into a big argument over the issue , which David eventually won .

Aside from showing Elaine 's apartment for the first time , " The Deal " also marks the first appearance of Elaine 's roommate Tina , who had been mentioned in earlier episodes . Siobhan Fallon was cast in the role ; she would reprise the character two more times , in season three 's " The Truth " and in the season five finale " The Opposite " . Norman Brenner , who worked as Richards ' stand @-@ in on the show for all its nine seasons , appears as an extra , working in the store George and Jerry visit to look for a gift for Elaine .

= = Reception = =

" The Deal " was first broadcast on May 2 , 1991 on NBC and received a Nielsen rating of 15 @.@ 5 and an audience share of 25 , indicating that 15 @.@ 5 percent of American households watched the episode , and that 25 percent of all televisions in use at the time were tuned into it . With averagely 22 @.@ 6 million homes watching the episode , the series was the eleventh most @-@ watched show in the week it was broadcast , tied with NBC 's The Golden Girls . David received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series , but lost the award to Gary Dontzig and Steven Peterman , writers of the Murphy Brown episode " Jingle Hell , Jingle Hell , Jingle All the Way " .

Critics reacted positively to the episode . Eric Kohanik of The Hamilton Spectator called " The Deal " a " hilarious episode " . Entertainment Weekly critics Mike Flaherty and Mary Kaye Schilling commented " Jerry and Elaine 's circuitous verbal dance pondering the relative worth of that [ sex ] versus this [ the friendship ] is sublime . The show 's ability to be both explicit and vague will become a hallmark . "