

= Christmas Scandal =

" Christmas Scandal " is the 12th episode of the second season of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation , and the eighteenth overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on December 10 , 2009 . In the episode , a meeting with a disgraced councilman puts Leslie in the middle of a sex scandal that forces her to hide from the press .

The episode was written by series co -@-@ creator Michael Schur and was directed by Randall Einhorn . " Christmas Scandal " marked the last of a string of guest appearances by stand @-@ up comedian Louis C.K. as Dave Sanderson , Leslie 's police officer boyfriend .

According to Nielsen Media Research , " Christmas Scandal " was seen by 5 @.@ 62 million households , the highest viewership of the season . The episode received generally positive reviews , although some commentators felt the central story risked becoming too busy and chaotic .

= = Plot = =

The parks department performs in the annual Pawnee City Government Follies that riffs local politics , including one sketch that skewers Councilman Bill DEXHART ( Kevin Symons ) , who was recently discovered to be involved in many bizarre sex scandals . Leslie ( Amy Poehler ) is later asked to meet DEXHART for lunch , where she learns the sketch was accidentally accurate about another bizarre sex scandal that has not been made public . After assuring DEXHART that it was merely a coincidence , Leslie discovers that the local tabloid , The Pawnee Sun , has taken pictures of their lunch and is reporting that Leslie is DEXHART 's new mistress .

The speculation about DEXHART and Leslie quickly spins out of control , upsetting Leslie because it is distracting her from overseeing the Christmas village that she set up in Lot 48 . Ron ( Nick Offerman ) decides to give Leslie the day off to lie low and distributes her daily duties among the rest of the staff . Everyone is amazed how much Leslie does by herself each day and the entire group struggles to complete their tasks . Leslie has lunch with Dave ( Louis C.K. ) , who reveals that his unit in the US Army Reserve has been called up to active duty in San Diego for a year to eighteen months , and he invites Leslie to join him since he has fallen in love with her . Leslie confides to Ann ( Rashida Jones ) that she is considering the move , as the treatment of her in the media has soured her on Pawnee .

The local show " Pawnee Today " digs up an old video of Leslie shaking hands with DEXHART and overanalyzes every aspect of the short clip . Ann brings DEXHART to her home , where Ann and Leslie demand he clear Leslie 's name . DEXHART refuses because the fake scandal is so docile compared to his real transgressions that it is actually positive press for him . Soon after , Ann is horrified to discover that a news crew secretly followed DEXHART to her home and took a photograph of the meeting , resulting in speculation that Ann is Leslie 's lesbian lover in a three @-@ way relationship with DEXHART . A furious Leslie schedules an appearance on " Pawnee Today " to clear her name once and for all . On the show , host Joan Callamezzo ( Mo Collins ) surprises Leslie by bringing out DEXHART , who tries to prove their affair by claiming that Leslie has a mole on her buttocks . To finally end the scandal , Leslie pulls down her pants on live television and moons Callamezzo . Since there is no mole , DEXHART is forced to admit that he fabricated the sex scandal .

Over dinner , Leslie tells Dave that she will not move to San Diego with him , as her life is in Pawnee . Dave , although sad , understands her choice and the two split up amicably . At Pawnee 's tree lighting ceremony , Leslie is congratulated by everyone , including Leslie 's mother Marlene , who is proud that her daughter successfully fought off the media . Leslie returns to work the next day much to Ron 's immense relief , as he could barely handle just a portion of her daily duties . Everyone is visibly glad that Leslie is back .

In a B plot , April ( Aubrey Plaza ) asks Andy ( Chris Pratt ) what to get her gay boyfriend for Christmas . All of Andy 's ideas are well @-@ meaning but dumb , although it seems that April is just happy to talk with him . To thank Andy , she gets him a Reggie Wayne jersey for Christmas . Meanwhile , Mark ( Paul Schneider ) tells Tom ( Aziz Ansari ) that he intends to get Ann a new computer bag for Christmas , but Tom tells him that he should get diamonds . In the end , he gives

her the computer bag after all while Ann gives him Pacers tickets . He then gives her a second gift , telling her she does not have to go to the game , to which Ann happily accepts .

= = Production = =

" Christmas Scandal " was written by series co @-@ founder Michael Schur and directed by Randall Einhorn . The episode featured the last of a string of guest performances by stand @-@ up comedian Louis C.K. , who reprised his recurring role as Dave Sanderson , Leslie 's police officer boyfriend . Louis C.K. left the show to devote more time to his own upcoming series , Louie , which was to air in early 2010 . Louis C.K. was widely praised for his brief stint on the show , where he adopts a deadpan , technical tone of voice far different from his usual comedy persona . Matt Fowler of IGN said , " Louis C.K. , known for being a raucous , raunchy comic , is almost frightening in his ability to play against his stage persona and give us a wonderfully caring , and deadpan , character "

" Christmas Scandal " also featured Kevin Symons as Pawnee Councilman Bill DEXHART . DEXHART was previously introduced in " Practice Date " , where his sex scandals served as a parody of the real @-@ life 2009 scandal of South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford , who publicly admitted to a long @-@ time extramarital affair with an Argentinian woman . Jay Jackson also reprised his prior role as Perd Hapley , a Pawnee television news reporter . " Christmas Scandal " is the first episode to feature the former Pawnee pit location serving a legitimate town purpose . Filling a giant construction pit and turning it into a park had been a central plot @-@ point of Parks and Recreation throughout the first season and the first half of the second season . The pit was filled in the episode " Kaboom " , and the space is turned into the town 's Winter Wonderland Christmas village in " Christmas Scandal " . The Christmas village scenes were filmed in the same location as the past pit scenes in Van Nuys , a district of Los Angeles , California . During one scene , Ron expresses concern about dangerous raccoons at the Christmas village . This is a reference to a running gag , established from the series , that Pawnee has a terrible raccoon infestation problem .

= = Cultural references = =

When April seeks gift ideas for her " gay boyfriend " , Andy suggests a DVD of Brokeback Mountain , a 2005 film about a romance between two men in the American West . As a gift , Andy receives a jersey for Reggie Wayne , the wide receiver of the Indianapolis Colts . While discussing gifts , Tom tells Mark all women love diamonds , " even the super left @-@ wing chicks who saw Blood Diamond " , a 2006 film about diamonds mined in African war zones .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on December 10 , 2009 , " Christmas Scandal " was seen by 5 @.@ 62 million households , according to Nielsen Media Research . It was the highest rating of the season , and a 10 percent increase in viewership from the previous episode , " Tom 's Divorce " . " Christmas Scandal " drew a 2 @.@ 3 rating / 6 share among viewers aged between 18 and 49 . Commentators said NBC may have been received a boost in the ratings due to the lack of competition from repeats on ABC on December 10 ; NBC shows The Office , Community , 30 Rock and The Jay Leno Show also saw rating jumps that night .

The episode received generally positive reviews . The A.V. Club writer Leonard Pierce said the story in " Christmas Scandal " was so busy that it risked running awry , but was kept together by a number of strong comedic moments and subplots . Pierce particularly enjoyed watching the parks department scrambling to do Leslie 's work , and the chemistry between both April and Andy , and Leslie and Dave . Alan Sepinwall , television columnist with The Star @-@ Ledger , said he " thoroughly enjoyed " the episode , especially the subplot of the parks department employees realizing how much work Leslie does due to her absence . However , he said way the sex scandal consumed the entire town and local media countered the central conceit of the series , " that Leslie

treats her mundane , small @-@ town civil service job as if it were a high @-@ stakes national politics job , while everyone else sees their world for what it is " . Matt Fowler of IGN said the episode was " a sweet and clever way to celebrate the holiday season " , but that the media frenzy in " Christmas Scandal " was " a little out of place in an episode filled with a ton of subtler , character @-@ building moments " . Fowler said the parks department employees splitting up to do Leslie 's work was " a great element " that helped develop Leslie 's character .

= = DVD release = =

" Christmas Scandal " , along with the other 23 second season episodes of Parks and Recreation , was released on a four @-@ disc DVD set in the United States on November 30 , 2010 . The DVD included deleted scenes for each episode .