

= Believe in the Stars =

" Believe in the Stars " is the second episode of the third season of the American television comedy series 30 Rock , and the 38th overall episode of the series . It was written by executive producer Robert Carlock and directed by series producer Don Scardino . The episode originally aired on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) network in the United States on November 6 , 2008 . Guest stars in this episode include Remy Auberjonois , Todd Buonopane , Raven Goodwin , and Oprah Winfrey .

The episode 's plot concerns a feud between Tracy Jordan (Tracy Morgan) and Jenna Maroney (Jane Krakowski) over royalties from Tracy 's pornographic video game Gorgasm : The Legend of Dong Slayer . Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) attempts to settle the fight with the help of Oprah Winfrey , whom she meets on a return flight from Chicago . Meanwhile , NBC page Kenneth Parcell (Jack McBrayer) is stung by the revelation that most events from the 2008 Summer Olympics were staged to boost America 's image and NBC 's ratings . Jack Donaghy (Alec Baldwin) attempts to break Kenneth of his moral absolutism .

" Believe in the Stars " received generally positive reception from television critics , with Neal Justin of the Star Tribune concluding it was " the most brilliant episode in the series ' history " . According to the Nielsen ratings system , the episode was watched by 8 @. @ 0 million households during its original broadcast , and received a 3 @. @ 9 rating / 9 share among viewers in the 18 ? 49 demographic .

= = Plot = =

The episode starts with Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) announcing to her boss , Jack Donaghy (Alec Baldwin) , that she needs to go to Chicago for jury duty because she is still registered to vote there . Jack gives Liz a powerful sedative for the trip . Later , NBC page Kenneth Parcell (Jack McBrayer) walks in on a meeting between Jack and the American silver medalist in tetherball , Tyler Brody (Remy Auberjonois) . Tyler is angry at Jack for not selecting him as the gold medalist , and is threatening to go public with the revelation that there was no Olympic tetherball competition during the 2008 Summer Olympics , as it was staged to boost NBC 's ratings . To keep him quiet , Jack tells him that he can " be the voice of Knight Rider " in a film adaptation , which Tyler considers . Afterwards , Kenneth tells Jack that he " lost two heroes today " , as he looked up to both Jack and Tyler . As a result , Jack wants to be in Kenneth 's good side , but wants to break his moral absolutism , after Kenneth did not hesitate to attempt to kill himself when he believed the air in a stalled elevator was about to run out . Jack finally succeeds when he supplies Kenneth with a big screen television , but no cable hookup . Kenneth steals cable and later confesses to Jack , asking if SpongeBob SquarePants " is supposed to be terrifying " .

Meanwhile , Jenna Maroney (Jane Krakowski) demands compensation for her voice work in Tracy Jordan 's (Tracy Morgan) pornographic video game , Gorgasm : The Legend of Dong Slayer . The argument escalates and Liz orders them to stop their bickering . After Liz leaves for Chicago , Jenna and Tracy decide to conduct a social experiment to see whether Tracy can survive better as a white woman than Jenna can as a black man , after arguing respectively that black men and white women have it harder in society . Later , while on her flight , Liz takes Jack 's sedative . Liz realizes that the woman sitting next to her is Oprah Winfrey . When Liz arrives back at the 30 Rock studios , Tracy is dressed in female drag with his body covered in white makeup and soon after , Jenna enters in blackface and male drag . Jack worries that the situation has gone out of control , but Liz assures him that Oprah , who is coming to the studios , will be able to make them come to terms . As it turns out , her inflight conversation with Oprah was a hallucination . The person who Liz thought was Oprah is actually a 12 @- @ year @- @ old girl named Pam (Raven Goodwin) . Even so , Pam engages Tracy and Jenna in a heart @- @ to @- @ heart , and manages to settle their differences .

= = Production = =

" Believe in the Stars " was written by executive producer Robert Carlock and directed by series producer Don Scardino . This episode was Carlock 's ninth writing credit , and was Scardino 's fifteenth directed episode . " Believe in the Stars " originally aired in the United States on November 6 , 2008 on NBC as the second episode of the show 's third season and the 38th overall episode of the series .

In September 2008 , it was announced that television host Oprah Winfrey would guest star on the show . She filmed her appearance on September 13 , 2008 . When Winfrey interviewed series creator Tina Fey on her show in November , Fey revealed that they shot their scene together on a Saturday , a day that the show normally does not film on . Actress Raven Goodwin played Pam , a 12 @-@ year @-@ old girl that , while hallucinating , Liz Lemon believed was Oprah . Actor Remy Auberjonois played Olympic medalist Tyler Brody in this episode . This was actor Todd Buonopane 's debut as the character Jeffrey Weinerslav , an NBC Human Resource mediator . In " Believe in the Stars " , Jeffrey tries to mediate the disagreement that Jenna and Tracy are having over the video game . Buonopane later guest starred in the episodes " Cutbacks " and " Jackie Jommp @-@ Jommp " .

Star Wars is frequently referenced in 30 Rock , beginning with the pilot episode in 2006 where Tracy Jordan is seen shouting that he is a Jedi . Liz admits to being a huge fan of Star Wars , saying that she had watched it many times with Pete Hornberger (Scott Adsit) , and dressed up as the Star Wars character Princess Leia during four recent Halloweens , and in this episode while trying to get out of jury duty in Chicago . Star Wars is also referenced when Tracy takes on the identity of the character Chewbacca . Fey , a fan of Star Wars herself , said that the weekly Star Wars joke or reference " started happening organically " when the crew realized that they had a Star Wars reference " in almost every show " . She said that from then on " it became a thing where [they] tried to keep it going " , and that even though they could not include one in every episode , they still had a " pretty high batting average " . She attributed most of the references to Carlock , whom she described as " the resident expert " .

= = Reception = =

According to the Nielsen ratings system , " Believe in the Stars " was watched by 8 @. @ 0 million households in its original American broadcast . It earned a 3 @. @ 9 rating / 9 share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . This means that it was seen by 3 @. @ 9 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 9 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . This was a decrease from the season premiere episode , " Do @-@ Over " , which was watched by 8 @. @ 7 million American viewers . Nonetheless , this episode was the eighth highest @-@ rated show on the NBC network during the week of November 3 ? 9 , 2008 . Since airing , " Believe in the Stars " has received positive reception from television critics .

IGN contributor Robert Canning praised the episode , saying that it was " an absolutely perfect episode with not a moment wasted [and] equally hilarious were the storylines between Jack and Kenneth , and Tracy and Jenna . The episode had everything that makes 30 Rock great . " Canning opined that Liz 's admissions to Oprah Winfrey were " painfully funny " , and that Tracy " was on fire " following his actions in this episode . In conclusion , Canning gave it a 10 out of 10 rating . Jeremy Medina of Paste was complimentary towards the episode , reporting that it had " madcap humor tirelessly delivered one joke after another at a lightning fast speed , adding up to one of the funniest episodes in the series . " Medina enjoyed the social experiment between Jenna and Tracy , noting that it was " hilarious " . TV Guide 's Matt Mitovich commented that the episode was " Rock @-@ solid " , while Neal Justin of the Star Tribune believed it was " the most brilliant episode in the series ' history " . Television columnist Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger wrote that " Believe in the Stars " belonged to Tina Fey " who has grown by leaps and bounds as an actress over the past few years . The Princess Leia voice , her drunken panic on the plane [...] and the religious fervor at the knowledge that Oprah would be coming to the studio were all hilarious , and played with the sort of confidence I don 't know that she would have had at the start of the series . "

The A.V. Club 's Nathan Rabin said that the Jenna and Tracy subplot was not the most inspired

idea , but admitted it introduced one of his " favorite gags in 30 Rock history " regarding two make @-@ up artists giving Tracy a monster claw to use as a white hand when they ran out of white powder . Rabin called it a " brilliant gag . " He was less enthusiastic with Winfrey in the episode , noting that her appearance " was treated as such a seismic cultural event that tonight 's episode couldn 't help but feel like a letdown . " Bob Sassone of AOL 's TV Squad wrote that " the least effective plot " in this episode was Jenna and Tracy 's .