

= Blind Date (30 Rock) =

" Blind Date " is the third episode of the first season of the American television comedy series 30 Rock . It was written by co @-@ executive producer John Riggi and directed by Adam Bernstein . The episode originally aired on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in the United States on October 25 , 2006 . Guest stars in this episode include Brett Baer , Katrina Bowden , Kevin Brown , Grizz Chapman , John Lutz , Stephanie March , Maulik Pancholy , Keith Powell , and Lonny Ross .

The episode focuses on Jack Donaghy (Alec Baldwin) setting up Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) on a blind date with a friend of his (March) . At the same time , Jack infiltrates the TGS with Tracy Jordan writers ' ? Pete Hornberger (Scott Adsit) , Josh Girard (Ross) , Frank Rossitano (Judah Friedlander) , James " Toofer " Spurlock (Powell) , and J. D. Lutz (Lutz) ? weekly poker game and starts winning hands until NBC page Kenneth Parcell (Jack McBrayer) joins in and proves to be a surprisingly adept player .

" Blind Date " has received generally positive reviews from television critics . According to the Nielsen ratings system , the episode was watched by 6 @. @ 01 million viewers during its original broadcast , and received a 2 @. @ 2 rating / 6 share among viewers in the 18 ? 49 demographic . " Blind Date " was nominated for Outstanding Individual Episode (in a series without a regular gay character) at the 18th GLAAD Media Awards .

= = Plot = =

Jack Donaghy (Alec Baldwin) is concerned that Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) is stressed and underperforming as the head writer of TGS with Tracy Jordan because of a lack of human contact . He suggests that she go on a date with his friend " Thomas " , which she initially refuses . When she almost chokes to death alone in her apartment that night , an action that Jack had foreshadowed as " a single woman 's biggest worry , " she changes her mind . She meets her date in a restaurant and finds that Jack has set her up with Gretchen Thomas (Stephanie March) , a lesbian . Although Liz and Gretchen have great chemistry , Gretchen is not interested in chasing after a " straight girl " . The next day , Liz chastises Jack for thinking she was a lesbian . At night , Liz gets lonely and calls Gretchen . After sharing their fears as single women , they go to dinner . There , Gretchen expresses that she feels she is starting to chase the " straight girl " and says they should stop seeing each other . Liz attempts to make a pact that they get back together after 25 years and start a relationship then if they are both still single , but Gretchen walks away .

At the same time , poker night is a Thursday night tradition among Pete Hornberger (Scott Adsit) , Josh Girard (Lonny Ross) , Frank Rossitano (Judah Friedlander) , James " Toofer " Spurlock (Keith Powell) , and J. D. Lutz (John Lutz) , the TGS staff . Jack and Tracy Jordan (Tracy Morgan) join them for the first time . Jack is able to read and defeat all of the other players , except for NBC page Kenneth Parcell (Jack McBrayer) , who wins the final hand . The next day , Jack sets up another poker night . Eventually , Jack and Kenneth come down to the final hand . Jack has more chips and goes all @-@ in . He offers to make the hand winner @-@ take @-@ all if Kenneth bets his page jacket . Kenneth agrees , and Jack 's pair of twos beats Kenneth 's king high . Liz asks why Kenneth would bet on a hand like that , and he responds that he enjoys living on the edge and was also confused about the rules . Jack stops Kenneth from leaving , explains that he only made Kenneth bet his job to prove his power over him , and returns the jacket to Kenneth with the expectation that he come in early on Monday .

= = Production = =

" Blind Date " was written by co @-@ executive producer John Riggi and directed by supervising producer Adam Bernstein . This episode originally aired on October 25 , 2006 on NBC as the third episode of the show 's first season and overall of the series . This episode featured a guest appearance from actress Stephanie March , who played Gretchen Thomas . That season 's co @-@ executive producer Brett Baer had a brief appearance in " Blind Date " , as a man who hits on Liz ,

after Gretchen leaves .

One filmed scene from " Blind Date " was cut out from the airing . Instead , the scene was featured on 30 Rock 's season 1 DVD as part of the deleted scenes in the Bonus feature . In the scene , Pete comes to Liz 's office and tells her about how Jack set @-@ up the TGS stage in which they can play poker . Liz asks him if it would be all right if she brings Gretchen to the poker game .

Towards the end of the episode Jack declares about Kenneth ; " in five years we 'll all either be working for him , or dead by his hand " . This inadvertently foreshadows the events of Season 7 when Jack personally chooses Kenneth to be his replacement as the head of NBC .

= = Reception = =

According to the Nielsen ratings system , " Blind Date " was viewed by 6 @.@ 01 million viewers upon its original broadcast in the United States . It earned a 2 @.@ 2 rating / 6 share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . This means that it was seen by 2 @.@ 2 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 6 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . This was an increase from the previous episode , " The Aftermath " , as it was watched by 5 @.@ 7 million American viewers . This episode was the 72nd most watched episode of the week . " Blind Date " was nominated at the 18th GLAAD Media Awards for Outstanding Individual Episode (in a series without a regular gay character) , but lost to the Grey 's Anatomy episode " Where the Boys Are " .

Since airing , the episode has received generally positive reviews . It is often considered to be a turning point in the series , where the show found its footing and could start living up its potential . Robert Canning of IGN praised the episode for " playing to its strengths " , and focusing on the series " most fully realized characters " , Liz and Jack . He pointed out that Tracy had " leveled off significantly from his constant high " , making him " funnier in the process " . Canning also enjoyed Kenneth 's increased screen time and the lack of the Jenna Maroney character , played by Jane Krakowski . A television reviewer for the Chicago Tribune noted that the scenes between Jack and Liz are always " a treat " and enjoyed the scene in this episode in which Liz chastises Jack for thinking she was a lesbian . The reviewer also added that Judah Friedlander , Keith Powell , and Scott Adsit , who play Frank , Toofer , and Pete , respectively , " haven 't been given enough to do " , and hoped that the show would produce funny moments from the writers ' room . Sarah Warn of AfterEllen.com felt that for a single @-@ episode lesbian sitcom character , Gretchen was " one of the best we 've seen " . Warn also enjoyed the episode itself , calling it " one of the funniest sitcom episodes I 've seen so far this season " . Kevin D. Thompson of The Palm Beach Post noted that " Blind Date " was one of the " show 's funniest episodes " . A reviewer from the Richmond Times @-@ Dispatch also praised the episode , citing that it was " one of the show 's best . "