

= Jack @-@ Tor =

" Jack @-@ Tor " is the fifth episode of the first season of the American situation comedy 30 Rock , which aired on November 16 , 2006 on the NBC network in the United States , and on November 8 , 2007 in the United Kingdom . The episode was written by Robert Carlock and was directed by Don Scardino . Guest stars in this episode include Katrina Bowden , Lonny Ross , Keith Powell , Maulik Pancholy , Teddy Coluca , James Murtaugh , Donald Glover , Doug Moe , Joey La Varco and Matthew Stocke .

The episode focuses on Jack Donaghy 's (Alec Baldwin) pressure on the writers of TGS with Tracy Jordan to integrate General Electric products into the show , which forces Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) to integrate Jack himself into a self @-@ referential sketch about product placement . Frank Rossitano (Judah Friedlander) and James " Toofer " Spurlock (Keith Powell) trick Jenna Maroney (Jane Krakowski) into thinking that her job is in danger , and Liz wonders if Tracy Jordan (Tracy Morgan) might be illiterate when he refuses to read cue cards .

= = Plot = =

Jack tells Liz and the writers of TGS Tracy Jordan that he wants them to insert General Electric (GE) products into the show . The writers express their reluctance in doing product placements for GE (even though during the scene the cast talk about how great Snapple 's White Green Tea tastes) , but Liz agrees on the condition that Jack appears in the sketch . The next day , Liz watches a video containing outtakes from Jack 's product placement video , where she discovers that he repeatedly forgot his lines after 142 takes . After realizing that he needs help , Liz encourages Jack to go through with the sketch , which he ultimately is able to shoot .

Tracy decides that he is going to take a break from rehearsals after he is called back on stage to read his cue cards . When Tracy appears to be ignoring his cue cards , Jenna informs Liz of the situation , and realizes that Tracy might be illiterate , citing an earlier promo cue card mishap (" The Aftermath ") as an example . Liz confronts Tracy about the problem ; he admits that he is illiterate and agrees to get help . Liz later notices Tracy reading a newspaper , and learns that he was using the ploy to get out of work . Liz tells Tracy that she is not going to take it anymore , and forces him to go through with the sketch .

Jenna tells Pete that she wishes to insert a music number called " Muffin Top " into the show , which she claims is a big hit overseas . As a prank , Frank and Toofer tell her that several people are going to be fired . Believing them , Jenna tries to seduce a NBC executive whom she sees talking to Jack . Liz later notifies Jenna that no one is going to be fired , and that the executive is actually an extra on the show . Jenna aims to get back at the pair , and although Toofer admits that he was too smart for Jenna 's tactics , Frank is seen running around naked outside Jack 's balcony . Jenna finally gets her chance to perform " Muffin Top " , unaware that the show has already ended and the number was scratched at the last moment , thanks to Liz .

= = Production = =

In an effort to improve ratings , " Jack @-@ Tor " was the first episode of 30 Rock to air on a Thursday night , which is advertised by NBC as " Comedy Night Done Right " . 30 Rock was also one of several sitcoms to have a " super @-@ sized " episode , which NBC employed as a sweeps stunt , and to initiate a mostly comedy lineup . Instead of the usual 30 @-@ minute episodes , " Jack @-@ Tor " was increased to 40 minutes . Despite the increased length of the episode , Jack McBrayer , who plays Kenneth Parcell , received credits but did not appear in the show , except for a brief non @-@ speaking cameo at the very end when Jenna is singing " Muffin Top " . Fey said that there was " such a big ensemble " in the episode that he was crowded out . Fey said that she thought " McBrayer is fantastic " , and that she is " planning to use him lots and lots " . Executive producer Lorne Michaels also praised McBrayer , saying " we 're very high on him . He 's obviously the breakout performer on the series . We like him , the network likes him , viewers like him ,

everybody likes him . "

Star Wars is frequently referenced in 30 Rock , beginning with the pilot episode where Tracy Jordan is seen shouting that he is a Jedi . Liz Lemon admits to being a huge fan of Star Wars , saying that she had watched it many times with Pete Hornberger , and saying she dressed up as the Star Wars character Princess Leia during four Halloweens . 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 " . Fey 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 " . Fey attributed most of the references to Robert Carlock , who she described as " the resident expert " . In this episode , Star Wars is referenced when Frank mentions a " friend in accounting " named Lando Calrissian , a prominent Star Wars character .

= = Reception = =

" Jack @-@ Tor " brought in an average of 5 @.@ 2 million American viewers upon its original broadcast in the United States , achieving a 2 @.@ 4 / 6 in the key 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ old demographic . The 2 @.@ 4 refers to 2 @.@ 4 % of all people of ages 18 ? 49 years old , and the 6 refers to 6 % of all people of ages 18 ? 49 years old watching television at the time of the broadcast . 30 Rock 's timeslot change , from Wednesday to Thursday , which was aimed at improving ratings , was a success compared to the previous episode , " Jack the Writer " ; it was watched by approximately 4 @.@ 61 million American viewers , and only received a rating of 1 @.@ 7 / 5 in the key adults 18 ? 49 demographic . Overall , however , the move was thought to be a failure . Joal Ryan of E ! reported that the " sparse crowd " of 5 @.@ 2 million viewers was a large decrease from the ratings 30 Rock achieved on Wednesdays , where it averaged 6 @.@ 3 million viewers per episode .

Matt Webb Mitovich of TV Guide said that while the storyline of Liz being forced to integrate GE products into the show was a " good idea " , it " missed the bull 's @-@ eye " . He also felt that the storyline of putting Jack on TGS with Tracy Jordan was " fun " , but thought " that for some reason fell a bit flat " . Tom Shales of The Washington Post felt that " 30 Rock had " consistently and considerably improved since its premiere " . He praised Alec Baldwin , whose performance he described as " rare and rich [...] perilously close to perfect , beyond improving " . Shales said that it was " painful to report " that Jack McBrayer was absent in the episode , saying he was " the show 's brightest discovery " , and his " performance has been a bittersweet beauty " . Rob Canning of IGN said that 30 Rock 's was " one new comedy we do not want to see taken off the air " . He said that " Jack @-@ Tor " had him " laughing from every angle " , and may have " begun a debate as to which character is more fun to watch ? Jack Donaghy or Tracy Jordan ? " . He said that the outtakes of Jack 's sketch were " one of the best parts of the episode " , and that Tracy was evolving into his own " uniquely hilarious character " . Overall , he felt that Jack was winning the " comedy showdown " .

Robert Carlock , the writer of the episode , was nominated for his work for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series .