

= The One with All the Thanksgivings =

" The One with All the Thanksgivings " (also known as " The One with the Thanksgiving Flashbacks ") is the eighth episode of the fifth season of Friends . It first aired on the NBC network in the United States on November 19 , 1998 . In the episode , the main characters spend Thanksgiving at Monica 's (Courteney Cox) apartment and begin telling stories about their worst Thanksgivings : Chandler (Matthew Perry) learning of his parent 's divorce , Phoebe (Lisa Kudrow) losing arms in past lives and Joey (Matt LeBlanc) having his head stuck in a turkey . Rachel (Jennifer Aniston) reveals Monica 's worst Thanksgiving ? accidentally cutting off Chandler 's toe after he called her " fat " in their first encounter . When Monica begs Chandler to forgive her , he accidentally reveals that he loves her .

The episode was directed by Kevin S. Bright and written by Gregory S. Malins . It guest stars Elliott Gould and Christina Pickles as Jack and Judy Geller , with a cameo appearance by Morgan Fairchild as Nora Tyler Bing . The idea was conceived by the writers , who suggested short stories about the " worst Thanksgivings ever " . A flashback approach was incorporated as the producers realized the audience responded well to it , despite concern the episode might be confused for a clip show .

In its original broadcast the episode reached a 16 @.@ 0 Nielsen rating and finished the week ranked second . The episode earned Debra McGuire a Primetime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Costume Design for a Series . Since airing , it frequently ranks high in polls about the series ' best episode .

= = Synopsis = =

Ross 's (David Schwimmer) complaint that his divorce and eviction means he is having the worst Thanksgiving ever prompts the others to tell their stories . Chandler (Matthew Perry) reminds everyone of when his parents told him they were divorcing . Phoebe (Lisa Kudrow) then tells of story from a past life when she was a nurse and lost an arm , though Ross objects , with the demand of only tales of present lives . Rachel (Jennifer Aniston) says she knows Monica 's (Courteney Cox) story , but Phoebe interrupts with a story about the time Joey (Matt LeBlanc) had a turkey stuck on his head . Monica tells of Thanksgiving 1987 . Monica and Rachel are eighteen years old and seniors in high school , and an overweight Monica spends time comforting Rachel , after Chip ended their relationship . When Ross learns of Rachel 's breakup , he asks Chandler to stay overnight in the hope of getting a date , but Chandler refuses , claiming that he doesn 't want to be stuck with " your fat sister " Monica . Overhearing the conversation from behind the door , Monica breaks down in tears and storms out .

Back in the present , Chandler apologizes to Monica . Rachel reveals that 's not the story she was referring to . The flashbacks continue to 1988 ; Ross and Chandler arrive for dinner to find that Monica has slimmed down , and Chandler now finds her attractive . Monica tells Rachel that she wants to humiliate Chandler for calling her fat , so Rachel suggests tricking him into taking off his clothes . Monica tries to seduce Chandler by rubbing various objects , including a knife , against her skin . She drops the knife and severs his toe . He is rushed to hospital to have it reattached but , in the commotion , Monica mixes up the digit with a carrot . In the present , Chandler becomes upset after learning that he had lost his toe because he called Monica fat , and angrily leaves . When Monica comes by his apartment seeking his forgiveness by putting a turkey on her head , he inadvertently tells her he loves her for the first time in their relationship . A tag scene shows another of Phoebe 's past life memories as she serves in a World War I field hospital and again lost an arm .

= = Production = =

" The One with All the Thanksgivings " was written by Gregory S. Malins and directed by Kevin S. Bright . It is the fifth Thanksgiving special in the Friends series . The producers knew from past recordings that the audience responded well to seeing " the Friends as they were " and decided to

incorporate a flashback episode into a Thanksgiving special . Show creator David Crane considered the Thanksgiving @-@ themed episode as the " hallmark show " in each season . Marta Kauffman added dialogue centering on six characters being together in a room made the holiday special work . When discussing story ideas , the writers decided to create " a bunch of little pieces " , until someone suggested " what if it 's the worst Thanksgivings ? " , later used as the hook . Working on a flashback meant the episode needed " to have meaning " as the story continues in the present . It was difficult to keep the characters , particularly Chandler , spontaneously mad for something that happened " years ago " . The comedic content was bigger than usual , because Phoebe 's arm was blown off and Joey 's head stuck in a turkey .

Many scenes were shot in advance . The producers disliked filming beforehand as they preferred " the audience to tell us what 's good and what 's bad . " They also were concerned that a flashback episode would be mistaken for a clip show , but felt it would be believable because they were " flashing so far back into the past . " According to Kauffman , certain scenes filmed in the apartment were shot in advance because " it was all over the place " ; the cast were tired and full and their energy levels were low . Special effects and costume changes meant " three or four scenes " were also pre @-@ shot to ensure the dialogue was happening in front of the audience . This was completed in two days .

Elliott Gould and Christina Pickles reprised their roles as Jack and Judy Geller . The set for the Geller house was used previously in " The One Where Joey Moves Out " , for Jack 's birthday party and in the season seven episode " The One Where Rosita Dies " , when Ross and Monica visit their parent 's garage . The flashback in Thanksgiving 1987 was Monica and Chandler 's first meeting along with Rachel and Chandler . Bright commented that the show tries not to contradict itself ; " once we establish something , we try not to undo it . " In " The Pilot " it appears Rachel meets Chandler for the first time . She also meets him in a later flashback episode , " The One Where The Stripper Cries " . To excuse the continuity error , Bright adds they do not remember each other meeting because they look different .

A special rubber and foam turkey was created for Joey and Monica to place on their heads for sanitary and insurance reasons . A weaving , invisible to the audience , was placed in the middle of the turkey to allow the character to see . Chandler 's " flock of seagulls " hairstyle , mentioned in a previous episode , was based on the 1980s time period . For safety , the scene where Monica severed Chandler 's toe was pre @-@ shot . Originally the sound of a knife slashing through Chandler 's shoe was placed , but according to Crane it " got a little too graphic " . Dramatic music was dubbed over instead .

= = Cultural references = =

The inspiration for Phoebe 's character spurting blood was Dan Aykroyd 's Bass @-@ O @-@ Matic commercial on Saturday Night Live . In the sketch , Aykroyd plays a pitchman who sells a blender specifically designed to liquefy fish . He accidentally gets his hand stuck in the funnel , which causes it to be chopped off while blood sprays everywhere . The turkey stuck on Joey 's head is a reference to Act 4 in " Merry Christmas Mr. Bean " from Mr. Bean . Ross and Chandler 's costumes in 1988 were inspired by Miami Vice , which was popular at the time . The music used in Chandler 's accident was " The Murder " from Alfred Hitchcock 's Psycho .

= = Reception = =

In its original airing , the show finished second in ratings for the week of November 16 ? 22 , 1998 , with a Nielsen rating of 16 @.@ 0 , equivalent to approximately 15 @.@ 5 million households . It was the network 's second highest @-@ rated show that week , after ER , which aired on the same night . The episode premiered in the United Kingdom on Sky1 on February 25 , 1999 and reached 1 @.@ 88 million viewers which made it the most watched show that week . It aired on Channel 4 on August 27 , 1999 and was watched by 4 @.@ 40 million viewers making Friends the channel 's third @-@ highest rated program for the week ending August 29 , 1999 .

Entertainment Weekly rated the episode " B + " and called the " pre @-@ nose job " Rachel and " Fat Monica " great sight gags . It cited Joey 's line " It 's not so much an underpant as it is a feat of engineering " (in reference to a thong) as the best of the episode . The authors of Friends Like Us : The Unofficial Guide to Friends wrote " This unusual episode is one of the series ' best ever , with the non @-@ stop comedy roller @-@ coaster suddenly throwing a brilliant surprise ending at you " .

Debra McGuire was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Costume Design for a Series , while the mixers were nominated for Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Comedy Series or a Special . The popularity of this episode placed it on one of the first Region 1 " best of " DVD releases . It was also released as part of Friends : The Complete Fifth Season in Regions 1 , 2 , and 4 .

In 2004 , " The One with All the Thanksgivings " was ranked fifth in a list of the top 10 Friends episodes by the Daily Herald and in 2010 , was identified as one of the five best Thanksgiving @-@ themed episodes by Contra Costa Times .