

= The Pony Remark =

" The Pony Remark " is the second episode of the second season of the NBC sitcom Seinfeld , and the seventh episode overall . The episode was written by series co @-@ creators Jerry Seinfeld and Larry David , based on a remark David made once .

In this episode , Jerry , at a relative 's 50th anniversary dinner , makes a tactless remark about hating anybody who had a pony when they were a child . His remark upsets the female guest @-@ of @-@ honor , causing her to storm out in anger . When the woman dies shortly after the dinner , Jerry and his friends wonder if the pony remark had something to do with her death .

The episode featured the first appearance of Jerry 's uncle Leo ( Len Lesser ) , who became a recurring character on the show . The episode also featured the first appearance of Barney Martin as Morty Seinfeld , replacing actor Phil Bruns , who had portrayed Morty in the season 1 episode " The Stake Out " . " The Pony Remark " aired on January 30 , 1991 , and gained a Nielsen rating of 10 @. @ 7 / 16 . It gained positive responses from critics and The New York Times considers the episode a turning point for the show .

= = Plot = =

Jerry 's parents , Helen ( Liz Sheridan ) and Morty Seinfeld , are staying at Jerry 's apartment in New York City , making themselves at home . He bursts in , wearing baseball clothes , carrying a bat and glove , and proudly tells them that during his softball game , " I made an incredible play in the field ! There was a tag @-@ up at third base and I threw the guy out from left field on a fly ! We 'll be in the championship game Wednesday because of me . It was the single greatest moment in my life . "

Morty shares the reflected glory by remembering his own greatest moment ; he is sympathetic , but Helen reminds them that they are all going to the 50th anniversary dinner of Helen 's second cousin Manya ( Rozsika Halmos ) and her husband Isaac ( David Fresco ) . Though Jerry does not want to go ? he has made plans , he doesn 't know the people ? his mother coerces him : " At least come and say hello , have a cup of coffee , then you 'll leave . " Jerry knows it won 't be that simple , so he persuades Elaine to attend , too . ( To their unspoken dismay , she is seated at the kiddie table , lower than the grown @-@ ups . )

During the dinner , he makes the tactless comment to which the title refers :

HELEN : I hear the fella owns a couple of racehorses . You know , trotters , like at Yonkers .

JERRY : Horses ? They 're like big riding dogs .

ELAINE : What about ponies ? What kind of abnormal animal is that ? And those kids who had their own ponies ...

JERRY : I know , I hated those kids . In fact , I hate anyone that ever had a pony when they were growing up .

MANYA : ( angry ) I had a pony .

( The room goes dead quiet . )

JERRY : Well , I didn 't , uh , really mean a pony , per se ...

MANYA : When I was a little girl in Poland , we all had ponies . My sister had pony , my cousin had pony ... So , what 's wrong with that ?

Jerry tries to apologize , even going as far as to compare ponies with compact cars , but Manya gets even more angry and leaves the table . Just after she leaves , Jerry tries to reason with the others that he did not know she had a pony and wonders why immigrants with ponies would leave Europe to come to America without ponies ( " Who leaves a country packed with ponies to come to a non @-@ pony country ? " ) After the dinner , when Jerry 's parents are leaving , his father soothes : " Hey , I agree with him . Nobody likes a kid with a pony . " But Jerry receives a phone call from Uncle Leo , who informs him that Manya has died . Jerry is very upset about it , but he 's also upset to learn that the funeral will be held on the same day of his softball championship .

At Monk 's Cafe , Jerry discusses the situation with George and Elaine . They speculate whether his comment may have been a factor , though both are self @-@ centered : Elaine wonders about her

own death , and George urges Jerry to play in the softball game , because he thinks Jerry needs " to play left field " , as Jerry 's replacement fielder " stinks , " and , George adds , " I just don 't see what purpose is it gonna serve your going ? I mean , you think dead people care who 's at their funeral ? They don 't even know they 're having a funeral . "

Feeling guilty , Jerry ends up going to the funeral , where he , again , apologizes for his remark . Isaac informs him that Manya had forgotten Jerry made the pony remark : " Oh , no no no . She forgot all about that . She was much more upset about the potato salad . " Elaine asks Isaac multiple times about what is going to happen with their apartment . Isaac eventually tells her that Jerry 's cousin Jeffrey is going to live in it . When it starts to rain , Jerry realizes that the game will be postponed . The following day , after the game , Jerry , George and Elaine meet at Monk 's Cafe , where they discuss the lousy way Jerry played softball . ( Jerry recalls a certain play , about which he admits , " It was the single worst moment of my life . " ) Elaine wonders if Manya 's spirit put a spell on him .

In a subplot , Jerry and Kramer bet whether or not Kramer will rebuild his apartment so that it has multiple flat wooden levels instead of needing furniture . Kramer changes his mind and decides not to build levels , but refuses to pay Jerry , arguing that since he did not attempt it , the bet was invalid .

= = Production = =

This episode was written by series creators Larry David and Jerry Seinfeld , in their second episode for this season , and directed by Tom Cherones , also his second episode this season , during the course of the second production season . This episode was based on a remark David once made during a conversation . Cherones deliberately made Elaine sit at a smaller table while directing the dinner scene . " The Pony Remark " was the first episode in which Kramer wants to gamble , it is later established that he has a gambling addiction . The idea of Elaine asking Isaac what is going to happen with his old apartment was added during rehearsals . The first table reading of the episode was held on October 24 , 1990 , and a run through was held two days later . " The Pony Remark " was filmed in front of a live audience on October 30 , 1990 , while Seinfeld 's stand @-@ up routine was filmed one day earlier , along with the performances used in " The Ex @-@ Girlfriend " and " The Busboy " ; Seinfeld would change wardrobe between takes .

" The Pony Remark " featured the second appearance of Helen and Morty Seinfeld , who had previously appeared in the season 1 episode " The Stake Out " . In " The Stake Out " , Morty was portrayed by Phil Bruns ; however , David and Seinfeld decided they wanted the character to be harsher , and re @-@ cast him with Barney Martin , who auditioned for the part on October 15 , 1990 at 12 @.@ 45 PM . Martin was unaware that another actor had already established the part . Helen was portrayed by Liz Sheridan ; in an early draft of the episode , her name was Adele , though this did not match her name from " The Stake Out " . It was later changed back to Helen . The episode also introduced Jerry 's uncle Leo , portrayed by Len Lesser , who was known for his acting in gangster films , and also The Outlaw Josey Wales and Kelly 's Heroes . When Lesser auditioned for the part on October 22 , 1990 , he got a lot of laughs from David , Seinfeld and casting director Marc Herschfield , but did not understand why , because he did not think his lines were funny . Herschfield stated that Lesser was the right actor for the part when Lesser had auditioned . David Fresco guest starred in the episode as Isaac . Fresco had some difficulty with his lines in the episode , and would sometimes burst into laughter during filming . Other actors who guest @-@ starred in the episode were Rozsika Halmos , who portrayed Manya , and Milt Oberman , who played the funeral director .

= = Reception = =

On January 30 , 1991 , " The Pony Remark " was first broadcast on American television . It gained a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 7 and an audience share of 16 . This means that 10 @.@ 7 % of American households watched the episode , and that 16 % of all televisions in use at the time were

tuned into it . The episode gained two Primetime Emmy Award nominations ; Seinfeld and David were nominated for Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series and Cheronos was nominated for Outstanding Directing in a Comedy Series . Though the episode did not win either of its Emmy nominations , Seinfeld was praised for co @-@ hosting the Emmy telecast .

Dave Kehr of The New York Times felt that " The Pony Remark " was a turning point for the show , stating that , after the first few episodes , the show " turn [ ed ] into something sharp and distinctive [ ... ] Here , suddenly , is the tight knot of guilt and denial , of hypersensitivity and sarcastic contempt that Seinfeld would explore for the next eight years . " Holly Ordway of DVD Talk considered the episode the best episode of Seinfeld 's second season . " The Pony Remark " is considered one of Seinfeld 's " classic episodes " . Writing for Entertainment Weekly , critics Mike Flaherty and Mary Kaye Schilling called the episode " Seinfeld at its mordant best " and graded it with an A- .

In the book Something Ain 't Kosher Here : The Rise of the " Jewish " Sitcom , Vincent Brook analysed the episode , saying , " Jerry is made to feel guilty for his ' lethal ' pony remark , whence the episode 's macabre humor ; yet the moral in terms of ethno @-@ spatial identity is clear . In its violent rejection of Manya , Seinfeld has driven descent @-@ based ethnicities ( and their legacy of privation and self @-@ sacrifice ) off the face of the earth , and literally off the air . There is no place for traditional Jewishness in the hedonistic Seinfeld world , " The Pony Remark " vociferously proclaims . "

David Sims of The A.V. Club gave the episode an A , calling it a " classic " and writing that it " is so damn clever in how it bonds Jerry 's fears about social niceties with larger fears about mortality " ; he also praised Louis @-@ Dreyfus 's acting , saying that Elaine " has an amusingly stark little bit of dialogue about death midway through the episode : " You know , funerals always make me think about my own mortality and how I 'm actually going to die someday . Me , dead . Imagine that ! " I think it 's probably Louis @-@ Dreyfus ' best moment of the show so far , because she 's really starting to nail Elaine 's declarative , vaguely imperious , self @-@ centered tone . " He also admired " the estimable Barney Martin in his first appearance as Jerry 's irascible dad . "