

= Road Trip ( Parks and Recreation ) =

" Road Trip " is the fourteenth episode of the third season of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation , and the 44th overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on May 12 , 2011 . In the episode , Leslie and Ben are sent on a road trip together and struggle to keep their romantic feelings for each other at bay due to a policy that forbids office romances . Meanwhile , a Newlywed Game @-@ style game show hosted by Tom leads to a fight between Andy and April .

Written by Harris Wittels and directed by Troy Miller , " Road Trip " originally aired back @-@ to @-@ back along with " The Fight " . The two are stand @-@ alone episodes not originally meant to run together , but because the third season premiered late , they had to be shown together so the series ' season would conclude by the end of the television season . " Road Trip " marked the beginning of a romantic relationship between Leslie and Ben , which culminated a growing development between the two characters that began when Ben was first introduced at the end of the second season .

The episode featured several appearances by recurring guest stars , including Jay Jackson as Perd Hapley , Kirk Fox as Joe and Mark Rivers , Andrew Burlinson and Alan Yang as the members of Andy 's band , Mouse Rat . " Road Trip " received generally positive reviews and , according to Nielsen Media Research , was seen by an estimated 3 @.@ 5 million household viewers , a drop from both " The Fight " and the previous original episode , " Eagleton " .

= = Plot = =

Leslie ( Amy Poehler ) still harbors strong romantic feelings for Ben ( Adam Scott ) but cannot date him due to Chris ' ( Rob Lowe ) strict policy against workplace dating . Just as Ann ( Rashida Jones ) suggests to Leslie that she should avoid being alone with Ben , Chris asks Leslie and Ben to drive to Indianapolis to pitch Pawnee as the next host of the Indiana Little League Baseball tournament . Leslie and Ann devise numerous boring conversation topics for the trip to prevent it from becoming romantic . After an awkward drive to Indianapolis , Leslie and Ben speak before the little league commission , which seems reluctant to choose Pawnee for the tournament . Ben delivers a heartfelt speech about the town , but also appears to be secretly speaking about his feelings for Leslie .

The speech clearly impresses both the judges and Leslie , and Pawnee is ultimately selected for the tournament . Leslie reluctantly accepts Ben 's invitation to a celebratory dinner that night , where Ben brings up his feelings for Leslie . She slips away to call Ann for advice , and she urges Leslie to act on her feelings . Just as Leslie decides to do so , she is surprised to find Chris has arrived at the dinner to congratulate the two personally . He insists they sleep at his home in Indianapolis , ruining their night . The next day , Leslie and Ben run into each other alone and Ben reveals Chris is out for the day . Ben then immediately kisses her , leaving Leslie simultaneously delighted and nervous about their future .

Meanwhile , Tom ( Aziz Ansari ) asks Andy ( Chris Pratt ) , April ( Aubrey Plaza ) , Jerry ( Jim O 'Heir ) and Donna ( Retta ) to participate in a new game show called Know Ya Boo , that he is hoping to pitch to networks ; he admits that it is a rip @-@ off of The Newlywed Game . It quickly becomes clear that Jerry and Donna know much more about each other than the recently married Andy and April . When April reveals her favorite band is Neutral Milk Hotel and not Andy 's band Mouse Rat , Andy angrily leaves the game and they later have a big fight which causes him to quit his music . April seeks advice from Ann because , although she dislikes her , Ann previously dated Andy for several years . Ann tells April she has to be supportive of Andy no matter how she feels . The next day , April brings the other members of Mouse Rat to city hall and surprises Andy by singing one of his songs . A thrilled Andy reconciles with April .

In a separate subplot , a young girl named Lauren ( Alyssa Shafer ) asks to interview Ron ( Nick Offerman ) for her school 's field trip assignment to city hall . Ron initially resists , but soon espouses his libertarian beliefs to her . He illustrates the concept of taxes by eating 40 percent of Lauren 's lunch , to compare his actions to those of the government . She eagerly accepts his anti @-@

government views . The next day , Lauren 's furious mother reveals her daughter 's assignment was " Why Government Matters " , and that Lauren simply wrote " It doesn 't " . Ron apologizes , and later tells Lauren she should keep her views on government to herself until she gets older .

= = Production = =

" Road Trip " was written by Harris Wittels and directed by Troy Miller . It was originally broadcast on May 12 , 2011 , and ran back @-@ to @-@ back with the Parks and Recreation episode " The Fight " , which aired immediately before . The two are stand @-@ alone episodes that were not originally designed to be shown together . However , because the show premiered late as a mid @-@ season replacement in January , the two episodes aired together so the third season could conclude at the end of the television season . " Road Trip " marks the first time Ben and Leslie kiss and the beginning of their romantic relationship , which culminated a developing relationship between the two characters that began when Ben was first introduced at the end of the second season .

The episode featured several appearances by actors who had appeared in previous Parks episodes , including Jay Jackson as Pawnee reporter Perd Hapley and stand @-@ up comedian Kirk Fox as sewage department employee Joe . Andy 's band Mouse Rat , which has appeared in previous episodes starting with the first season finale " Rock Show " , also appeared in " Andy and April 's Fancy Party " . Mark Rivers played the drums , Andrew Burlinson played guitar and Parks and Recreation screenwriter Alan Yang played bass guitar . In " Road Trip " , the band performs " The Pit " , a song first featured in " Rock Show " , which was about Andy falling into a construction pit and breaking his legs .

= = Cultural references = =

April reveals her favorite band is Neutral Milk Hotel after she responds that Jeff Mangum , the band 's vocalist and guitarist , is the rock star she was most attracted to . While going through Ann 's wardrobe , Leslie finds the outfit Julia Roberts wears in the 1990 romantic comedy Pretty Woman , in which she plays a prostitute ; Ann claims to look really good in it . While explaining that everybody steals ideas from other people , Tom points out the 2003 comedy film Love Don 't Cost a Thing is based on the 1987 comedy film Can 't Buy Me Love . He then falsely claims that film was based on the 1979 drama film Kramer vs. Kramer , which he incorrectly believes was written by the English poet and playwright William Shakespeare . One of the boring conversation topics Leslie brings up to reduce the sexual tension with Ben is the dormitory buildings at Johns Hopkins University , a university in Baltimore , Maryland . Acting against this Ann also " Snuck in an Al Green song " , which starts similarly to his song " Let 's Stay Together . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

While " The Fight " aired in the show 's regular 9 : 30 p.m. timeslot , " Road Trip " immediately followed it at 10 p.m. In its original American broadcast , " Road Trip " was seen by an estimated 3 @.@ 5 million household viewers , according to Nielsen Media Research , with a 2 @.@ 4 rating / 6 share among viewers between ages 18 and 49 . A rating point represents one percent of the total number of television sets in American households , and a share means the percentage of television sets in use tuned to the program . This rating constituted a drop from " The Fight " before it , which was seen by an estimated 4 @.@ 55 million households . The viewership for both was lower than that of the previous episode , " Eagleton " , which was seen by an estimated 5 @.@ 06 million household viewers . In its 10 p.m. timeslot , " Road Trip " was outperformed by the CBS police procedural drama The Mentalist , which was seen by 14 @.@ 07 million households , and the ABC

medical drama series Private Practice , which was seen by 7 @.@ 27 million household viewers .

#### = = = Reviews = = =

" Road Trip " received generally positive reviews . Alan Sepinwall of HitFix said the episode was a good payoff to the romance between Leslie and Ben all season , a story arc he initially had problems with . Sepinwall also called the Ron Swanson subplot " simply fantastic in both concept and execution " . Scott Meslow of The Atlantic called " Road Trip " a very funny episode and strong pay @-@ off to the romance between Leslie and Ben that had been building all season . Joel Keller of TV Squad said the Know Ya Boo story felt simply like an excuse to include Andy and April in the show , but that Ron 's subplot with the little girl was " classic Ron Swanson " . Eric Sundermann of Hollywood.com said the plot felt " admittedly , a little more sitcom @-@ y than I like " but was very funny and progressed the Leslie and Ben story arc without letting the show " jump the shark " .

Zap2it writer Rick Porter said he was glad to see Ben and Leslie come together the way they did , particularly because he feared the no @-@ dating rule would become an " artificial barrier " that dragged out the romance subplot . Porter also praised Rob Lowe 's performance , and said it made the character likeable even as he kept Leslie and Ben apart . Steve Heisler of The A.V. Club called it a " stellar " episode that was " loose , silly , rich with details and heart " . While he said the episode included good " outrageous comedy " , he said the script strives on the more subtle scenes about Leslie and Ben coming together , along with Chris ' constant interruptions . Nick McHatton of TV Fanatic was underwhelmed by the Know Ya Boo story , but strongly praised Leslie and Ben 's scenes , which he said were both touching and very funny . He particularly praised the way scene when Ben describes his feelings for Leslie through his description to the baseball tournament panel about why he loves Pawnee .

Steve Kandell of New York magazine praised the episode , and said the kiss between Leslie and Ben was emotionally effective . He said Chris ' obliviousness to the sexual tension between Leslie and Ben seemed unusual , but wrote , " Maybe this is just another case of a show hitting so many perfect notes that the slightest deviation seems off @-@ key . " Matt Fowler of IGN said " Road Trip " was less funny than " The Fight " , and that the Know Ya Boo subplot " fizzled a bit " . But he called it a " sweet episode " for its developments with Leslie and Ben , and said Ron and Chris were especially funny in their scenes . Entertainment Weekly writer Hillary Busis said " Road Trip " was " pretty great " but less funny than the previous episode , " The Fight " . She praised the Ron subplot , but said Tom 's game show was " much more predictable and rote " .