

= Future Husband =

" Future Husband " is the fourteenth episode of the fourth season of the American television comedy series 30 Rock . It was directed by series producer Don Scardino , and written by Jon Haller and Tracey Wigfield . The episode originally aired on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) network in the United States on March 11 , 2010 . Elizabeth Banks , James Rebhorn , and Michael Sheen guest star in the episode , and there are cameo appearances by Jack Welch and Brian Williams .

In the episode , Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) finds a mysterious number in her phone under the name " Future Husband . " At the same time , Vice President of East Coast Television and Microwave Oven Programming for General Electric (GE) , Jack Donaghy (Alec Baldwin) is informed that a cable company is rumored to buy out NBC . Elsewhere , Tracy Jordan (Tracy Morgan) stages a one @-@ man show in an attempt to win a Tony Award , as part of his EGOT quest . The episode makes reference to the real @-@ life acquisition of NBC Universal by the cable company network Comcast .

" Future Husband " received generally mixed reviews from television critics . According to the Nielsen ratings , the episode was watched by 5 @.@ 894 million households during its original broadcast , and received a 2 @.@ 9 rating / 8 share among viewers in the 18 ? 49 demographic .

= = Plot = =

Liz Lemon (Tina Fey) comes across an unrecognized contact in her cellphone listed as " future husband " , and realizes that it must be a man she met at her dental appointment with Dr. Kaplan (James Rebhorn) , while awakening from anesthesia in the recovery room after root canal surgery (seen in the previous episode) . She calls the number , pretends to be the Jamaican dental receptionist , and asks the man to come back to see Dr. Kaplan . At the appointed time , she returns to the dentist 's office , but does not recognize anyone there ; so she calls the number again . When the man (Michael Sheen) answers , she sees him and hangs up . Unbeknownst to Liz , her number is already listed in his cellphone under " future wife " . He calls her back upon seeing she called , and they arrange a date ; she learns that his name is Wesley . On their date , the two fail to hit it off : they find each other annoying and share many flaws but few interests . Later , at the 30 Rock studios , Liz discovers that Wesley was the person who retrieved NBC page Kenneth Parcell 's (Jack McBrayer) wallet , after Kenneth threw it out of a window earlier . Because of this coincidence , Liz and Wesley decide to go on another date .

At the same time , Jack Donaghy 's (Alec Baldwin) aspirations of becoming CEO of General Electric (GE) comes to a halt when his girlfriend and CNBC host , Avery Jessup (Elizabeth Banks) informs him that the Philadelphia @-@ based cable company Kabletown is rumored to be buying NBC . Jack ? who serves as Vice President of East Coast Television and Microwave Oven Programming for GE ? insists that no sale is pending , as he believes that his mentor and GE CEO Don Geiss (Rip Torn) would not agree to such a deal . As rumors persist , Jack panics , but things get worse when he learns from former GE chairman Jack Welch (as himself) that Don Geiss has been dead for weeks and that the company negotiated a takeover with Kabletown . Welch kept Geiss 's death a secret while negotiations took place . Liz comforts Jack when he admits his dream of running GE is crushed . The next day , on Avery Jessup 's program , The Hot Box , Jessup confirms that the buyout has gone forward , praising Jack Donaghy as a wise choice to lead Kabletown 's new acquisition . Jack , who is watching the program , is cheered by this .

Elsewhere , Tracy Jordan (Tracy Morgan) performs a one @-@ man show on Broadway so that he can be considered for a Tony Award as part of his EGOT quest . His show receives positive reviews , and Tracy is convinced that he will win a Tony , but Jenna Maroney (Jane Krakowski) tells him that in order for him to qualify for the award he must do his one @-@ man show eight times , which worries Tracy , as he is unable to perform anything the same way twice . Despite initial reluctance to help him , Jenna eventually agrees to coach Tracy in the principles of acting , but this leads nowhere , resulting in the two arguing and Jenna telling him he can go on his show and read

the phone book for all she cares . At the end of the episode , Tracy does read the phone book at his show , making Jenna very proud of him , and inexplicably drawing high praise from the audience .

= = Production = =

" Future Husband " was directed by series producer Don Scardino , and was written by Jon Haller and Tracey Wigfield . This was Haller 's first penned script , and was Wigfield 's second writing credit , having co -@-@ written " Jackie Jormp @-@ Jomp " for the show 's third season . " Future Husband " originally aired in the United States on March 11 , 2010 , on NBC as the fourteenth episode of the fourth season . This episode of 30 Rock was filmed on December 17 , 2009 .

In December 2009 , it was confirmed that actress Elizabeth Banks would guest star on the show , and in this episode , she played right @-@ wing CNBC anchor Avery Jessup , and love interest to the Jack Donaghy character , played by Alec Baldwin . In an interview with Entertainment Weekly , Banks revealed that she approached the 30 Rock staff about making an appearance as she is a fan of the show . " I definitely put feelers out , like , ' I would love to be on your show . ' And they did it . They made it happen ! I 'm a huge fan , so this is a dream come true . " She also revealed that she had no intention on becoming a series regular , explaining that she has been having " too much fun " making movies to commit to a television show full @-@ time . Banks made her debut as Avery Jessup in the previous episode " Anna Howard Shaw Day " . In January 2010 , it was announced that actor Michael Sheen would guest star as a love interest for Liz Lemon , played by series creator Tina Fey . In this episode , he made his debut as the character Wesley . Liz and Wesley 's story arc continued in the episodes " Don Geiss , America and Hope " , " Emanuelle Goes to Dinosaur Land " , and " I Do Do " .

In " Future Husband " , Jack learns from former GE chairman Jack Welch that current GE CEO Don Geiss , played by Rip Torn , has died . Torn did not make any appearances in this season , marking his last role as Don Geiss in the episode " Larry King " that aired on February 26 , 2009 , during the third season . Television writer Bob Sassone of TV Squad wondered if Torn was written out of the series due to an alcohol @-@ related incident that occurred to Torn in January 2010 . Welch appeared as himself here and was chairman and CEO of GE from 1981 until 2001 . Actor James Rebhorn , best known for his current role as a special agent in the USA Network crime comedy @-@ drama White Collar , made his debut as the character Dr. Kaplan , Liz and Wesley 's dentist . This was news anchor Brian Williams ' third guest appearance as himself . In the scene in which he appears , Williams engages in smack talk in the CNBC offices , telling Avery and her colleagues that his news program NBC Nightly News " rules " .

The storyline in " Future Husband " involving the fictitious Philadelphia @-@ based cable company Kabletown purchasing NBC is based on the acquisition of NBC Universal by Comcast in November 2009 . After winning her fourth Screen Actors Guild Award as her television character at the 16th Screen Actors Guild Awards in January 2010 , Fey was asked whether or not 30 Rock would make reference to the Comcast acquisition to which she said that it would be dealt with . " The sale of NBC to another company is integral to our show and it will be hard for Jack . " In April 2010 , the NBC network created a website for Kabletown . When asked by a contributor from The Philadelphia Inquirer why the characters on 30 Rock refer to the network 's new owner as " Kabletown , with a K " , co @-@ showrunner and executive producer Robert Carlock revealed that the reason for this was that the staff writers came up with the name " Cabletown " , however , they later learned that there was a real company with a similar name , so NBC 's legal team department " wanted to emphasize the difference , and after a while , everyone just liked the sound of it . "

This was the second time the series referenced the Tracy Jordan character trying to get his EGOT . This plot first began in the December 3 , 2009 , episode " Dealbreakers Talk Show " in which Tracy finds a diamond encrusted " EGOT " necklace and sets a new life goal to achieve EGOT status by winning four major awards : an Emmy , a Grammy , an Oscar , and a Tony . In the episode , Tracy performs a one @-@ man show so that he can get a Tony Award .

= = Cultural references = =

In the beginning of this episode , Liz asks where Frank Rossitano (Judah Friedlander) is , as he is one of her staff writers and she wants him to write some Winter Olympics sketches . This results in Liz breaking the fourth wall ? a term used when a character in a television show , film or on stage directly addresses the audience ? where she mouths speech that is unintelligible , while her voice is heard saying " Lindsey Vonn ! " who won the " gold medal for skiing ! " .

Kenneth references the 1987 thriller film *Fatal Attraction* after encouraging Liz to meet with her " future husband " and deeming it a romantic situation , saying " Just like that movie I only saw the first 10 minutes of , *Fatal Attraction* ! " . The movie is about a married man who has a weekend affair with a woman who refuses to end the affair as she becomes obsessed with him . In addition , Jane Krakowski appeared in *Fatal Attraction* . Kenneth later has a dream that seems to be influenced by the movie *The Shining* , telling Jenna , " Late at night these two little twin girls told me they wanted to play with me forever . " He also references the story of Lot and his daughters from the Bible , and a vignette from *Saved by the Bell* involving characters Samuel " Screech " Powers and Lisa Turtle .

Wondering why he has not seen any of his GE colleagues , Jack 's office assistant Jonathan (Maulik Pancholy) suggests that maybe they are the last people on Earth , as he references the 2007 film *I Am Legend* , " You 're Will Smith and I 'm the dog ! " In *I Am Legend* , Will Smith 's character is the last healthy human in New York City and lives with his dog . In order to figure out what is going on , Jonathan does investigative work and downloads Don Geiss 's schedule while self @-@ narrating to the theme music of *Mission Impossible* (1996) . After Kenneth convinces her to call her " future husband " , Liz , who speaks in a Jamaican accent as Dr. Kaplan 's dental assistants are Jamaican women , tells the man he needs to come into Dr. Kaplan 's office for some work , and Liz ends the call with " Cool Runnings , man ! Bobsled ! " This is a reference to the comedy movie *Cool Runnings* (1993) in which the Jamaica national bobsled team 's made their debut the 1988 Winter Olympics . In another scene , Liz 's ringtone is the song " Fuck the Pain Away " by Canadian electronic musician Peaches .

While giving elocution lessons to Tracy , Jenna quotes the song " I Am So Proud " from Gilbert and Sullivan 's *The Mikado* when she asks him to repeat the phrase , " To sit in solemn silence in a dull dark dock / Awaiting the sensation of a short , sharp , shock . "

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Future Husband " was watched by 5 @.@ 894 million households , according to the Nielsen ratings system . It received a 2 @.@ 9 rating / 8 share among viewers in the 18 ? 49 demographic , meaning that 2 @.@ 9 percent of all people in that group , and 8 percent of all people from that group watching television at the time , watched the episode . During its original broadcast , " Future Husband " ranked fourth in its 9 : 30 p.m. slot , behind CBS 's crime drama *CSI : Crime Scene Investigation* , ABC 's medical series *Grey 's Anatomy* , and Fox 's reality show *Kitchen Nightmares* .

Leonard Pierce of *The A.V. Club* was not positive in his review , describing " Future Husband " as the " laziest " episode of the fourth season . Nonetheless , Pierce responded favorably to Tracy 's one @-@ man show , calling it the " shortest and best of the plots " and " even manages to get a laugh out of that old ' I 'd watch him reading the phone book ' chestnut . " Sean Gandert for *Paste* magazine said in his recap that part of this episode was disappointing , writing that the main plot was not " too awful , [it was] just comparatively dull . " Though , he was positive towards the show 's interpretation of the NBC and Kabletown storyline , saying it was a nice " little riff " on the actual merger between NBC and Comcast . Gandert was appreciative to Elizabeth Banks ' small part , and hoped to see her in future episodes . *Entertainment Weekly* contributor Margaret Lyons opined it was a " strange " episode of *30 Rock* , and concluded " It 's not that ' Future Husband ' was radically terrible or anything , but wow , that episode just did not click into place . " Bob Sassone of *TV Squad* did not enjoy Jenna 's involvement in Tracy 's story , and that overall he did not find their antics " too funny " . Nonetheless , Sassone enjoyed Brian Williams ' cameo .

IGN contributor Robert Canning wrote that the NBC / Comcast reference here " wasn 't exactly a

well of laughs , but Baldwin 's Donaghy kept the story entertaining enough to want to follow it . " He enjoyed Banks ' appearance , noting that her standout moment came when Avery and Jack argued over the direction of NBC " and for that brief moment Banks stole the show from Baldwin . " In conclusion , Canning gave it an 8 out of 10 rating . James Poniewozik of Time magazine said that the main story " played more like a subplot even though it gave the episode its title " . He added that there were some fine moments , and that overall Liz and Jack 's plots " have the potential to give the show some interesting forward movement " . Los Angeles Times contributor Meredith Blake felt that Michael Sheen was " underused " in his role , and observed that Jack and Avery 's relationship showcased here seemed " remarkably convincing . " Television columnist Alan Sepinwall for The Star @-@ Ledger wrote that the episode 's storytelling was " better than it 's been in recent weeks " , however , was not complimentary towards Liz meeting Sheen 's Wesley , as he felt that their plot fell flat .