

= Spit & Eggs =

" Spit & Eggs " is the ninth episode of the third season of the American mystery television series Veronica Mars , and the fifty @-@ third episode overall . Written and directed by series creator Rob Thomas , the episode premiered on November 28 , 2006 , on The CW . The series depicts the adventures of Veronica Mars ( Kristen Bell ) as she deals with life as a college student while moonlighting as a private detective .

In this episode , when the Greek system at Hearst College is suddenly reinstated , Veronica enlists the help of her friends in patrolling a party to look for date rape drugs . Eventually , she learns the identity of the Hearst serial rapist and puts herself in danger to catch him . In addition , Dean O 'Dell ( Ed Begley , Jr . ) acts increasingly erratically before he mysteriously appears dead in his office with a gunshot wound to the head . Meanwhile , Veronica and Logan ( Jason Dohring ) both deal with the emotional aftereffects of O 'Dell 's death .

" Spit & Eggs " was the second episode to be both written and directed by Thomas , who included several camera and prop changes that were not originally in the script . Series regular Tina Majorino returns to the series beginning in this episode after an absence since " My Big Fat Greek Rush Week " , a hiatus which was due to her filming Big Love . In addition , during production , the crew decided to change their narrative plan for the season , maintaining two of the shorter story arcs but removing the planned third .

The episode was viewed by 3 @.@ 44 million viewers in its initial airing , a series high . The episode received critical acclaim , with many critics praising the return of Mac and the increased role of peripheral characters , the resolution to the rape mystery , and the setup of the next major story arc . Eric Goldman of IGN praised the various plotlines converging , while Rowan Kaiser of The A.V. Club wrote that the plot twist " plays on everyone 's expectations . "

= = Plot synopsis = =

Beginning in medias res , while Piz ( Chris Lowell ) and Mac ( Tina Majorino ) are at a party , a bloodied Veronica stumbles to Piz 's door and collapses . The episode flashes back to two days earlier . As the Liliith House celebrates the end of the Greek system , Logan ( Jason Dohring ) abruptly breaks up with Veronica . Weevil helps Dean O 'Dell ( Ed Begley , Jr . ) fix his TV . A man comes into the Dean 's office and implicitly threatens to remove his funding if the Greek system stays closed . The Dean tells Keith ( Enrico Colantoni ) to track his wife , and Veronica sobs in the shower due to her breakup with Logan . The Dean unexpectedly reinstates the Greek system , to the delight of Dick ( Ryan Hansen ) . The Dean and Veronica spot a classified ad that states that a mysterious person will find his next victim at a party . After receiving an A on her paper , she visits Tim Foyle ( James Jordan ) and sees an investigation board . Veronica enlists Wallace ( Percy Daggs III ) , Piz , and Mac for help in investigating an upcoming Pi Sig party .

At the party , Veronica notices that the ' rape coasters ' which test for date rape drugs do not actually work . Veronica , Mac , and Piz test various peoples ' cups and find nothing . After Keith tells Dean O 'Dell that his wife is cheating on him with Veronica 's criminology professor , he pulls out a gun . Wallace and Piz find a drink that was tested positive for GHB , and Wallace and Piz dash to her dorm . Dean O 'Dell finds and enters into the room in which his wife and the criminology professor are carrying on their affair as Veronica learns that they have tracked the wrong girl . Just as Mercer ( Ryan Devlin ) ( the actual rapist ) is about to rape his next victim , he abruptly learns that Veronica has changed places with his victim . Veronica tases Mercer , and they have a quick fight before Veronica escapes . She is let into Moe 's ( Andrew McClain ) room .

Moe hands Veronica a drink . Immediately after discovering a picture of Mercer and Moe , Veronica experiences the effects of a date rape drug . She hides in the closet and struggles to remain conscious . Mercer and Moe enter the room and are about to miss her , but Veronica 's cell phone rings and they knock her out . Parker ( Julie Gonzalo ) calls attention to Mercer . In addition to a bomb threat against Hearst , Dean O 'Dell notices his window being egged before a mysterious man enters and the Dean asks ' What are you doing here ? ' Keith arrests Mercer and Moe .

Logan intentionally gets himself arrested so he can go into the cell with Mercer and Moe .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The episode was written and directed by series creator Rob Thomas , marking his seventh writing credit and second and final directing credit for the series ( after " Donut Run " ) . Starting with this episode , Thomas and the crew 's plan for the season changed ? while they had initially scheduled three major story arcs for the season , this number was now bumped down to two , while the last few episodes would be standalone . The creative team decided that their choices for major mysteries had not worked since season one ; Thomas elaborated , " One feeling is that the big mysteries keep away the casual TV viewers , and the other is the thing that has been the least successful since season one [ ? ] the big mysteries . " Thomas also recalled that his major design for the first season that was because Lilly had been murdered , everyone had a stake in the solving of the mystery and that the crew were finding it impossible to keep the same amount of emotional involvement since the first season ; Thomas thought that the new format would be a way of trying to return to a more emotionally driven format .

In addition , Thomas turned what was scheduled to be the third major mystery into a two @-@ episode storyline , with the last five episodes of the season being stand @-@ alone . He stated , " It seems like a good time to do it ? a good fun test balloon . " Nevertheless , he confirmed that there would be ongoing stories in Veronica 's personal life . A week prior to the episode 's airing , Michael Ausiello received an advance screening of the episode , revealing several details that the network allowed him to divulge .

= = = Writing and directing = = =

On the Season Three DVD Commentary , Thomas remarks on his experience directing " Spit & Eggs " and shares his thoughts on several scenes of the episode . He called the scene in which Mercer attacks Veronica the one he was " happiest with for any number of reasons . " The scene was shot with 27 camera angles , the most for any Veronica Mars episode , and it took 10 or 11 hours to film . The scene also features a number of fake unicorns in various forms ; unicorns were an in @-@ joke among the cast and crew after one season 2 script involved Veronica calling a store " Unicornicopia . " While directing the scene , Thomas wanted to find an unusual weapon to be used , and " a unicorn struck [ him ] as funny . " The scene in which Moe removes the unicorn horn from Mercer 's leg was initially intended to be Moe bandaging Mercer , but Thomas thought that the final product would be more " interesting " while preparing for the scene .

Thomas included Piz dancing humorously at the fraternity party because he " could watch it over and over " , and there were roughly fifteen minutes of footage of him dancing . The band that plays at the party , the Diamond Smugglers , is from Thomas 's hometown of Austin , Texas , and they played at Thomas 's wedding and 40th birthday party . The scene near the end with Logan smashing a police car to get intentionally thrown in prison confused the crew , who doubted its artistic and technical plausibility . However , Thomas was pleased with the final output , and producer Dan Etheridge called it " one of the most compact and interesting visual storytelling pieces in the episode . " The episode went over budget . In this episode , Mac wears a shirt that says " Ask Me About My STD " , something which several critics commended for its comedic value . Thomas came up with the idea for the shirt and hired one of the other guest actors in the scene for another episode , commenting " It 's funny , I actually made that up , and I now have one , too . " In addition , because Thomas was so pleased with the acting in the scene from the boy who hands Mac a whiskey , he hired the actor for a role in a subsequent episode as an important witness to Dean O 'Dell 's death .

== Acting ==

" Spit & Eggs " features the return of series regular Tina Majorino , who plays Mac on the show , after an absence of six episodes . Majorino had not appeared since the second episode of the season , " My Big Fat Greek Rush Week " . At the time , Majorino was also a series regular on the HBO series Big Love , so her schedule was difficult to determine . She stated : " It 's a little tough , but Big Love and Veronica Mars have both been really great about juggling the schedule so I could do both shows . " On October 24 , 2006 , the cast and crew were filming the episode . Because of this other commitment , Majorino appeared in eleven episodes of the season instead of the scheduled twelve . On that same date , Majorino revealed that she would be returning in " Spit & Eggs " , that it resolved the Hearst rapist storyline , and that it would introduce the show 's next major story arc . On her role in the episode and in the season as a whole in light of the events in the second season finale , Majorino commented , " It 's not like all of the sudden she 's over everything that happened . "

" Spit & Eggs " features the reveal that Mercer Hayes , played by Ryan Devlin , is the Hearst serial rapist . Devlin was unaware that he would be the perpetrator until reading the episode 's script ; he stated , " To tell you the truth , I 'm not even sure the writers knew where my story was headed . But I was happy to do it ? it 's way more fun being bad than good ! " The episode also marks the final appearance by Ed Begley , Jr . , after his character is killed . The mystery surrounding his murder would be the next major story arc .

== Reception ==

In its original broadcast , the episode received 3 @.@ 44 million viewers , marking a series high and ranking 88th of 97 in the weekly rankings . Thomas was very pleased by the ratings .

The episode received critical acclaim , with many critics praising the return of Mac and the increased role of peripheral characters , the resolution to the rape mystery , and the setup of the next major story arc . Eric Goldman of IGN gave the episode an 8 out of 10 , indicating that it was " great " . He wrote that " Spit & Eggs " was a welcome episode for longtime fans , as it involved several plots converging in a way that he found satisfactory . He praised the final few scenes , writing that the episode transitions well into the next mystery of Dean O 'Dell 's death by developing it slowly over the course of the season 's prior episodes , but he was more mixed towards the reveal of Mercer as the rapist , commenting " the ultimate revelation can 't help but be a little underwhelming , since not enough time has been spent on any of the credible suspects to really have a good handle on them or be invested in them one way or another . " Rowan Kaiser , writing for The A.V. Club , who was quite critical of the rape storyline in earlier episodes , said that the conclusion made the storyline slightly better overall . He praised the double reveal of Mercer and Moe as accomplices , stating , " That twist overall is effective because it plays on everyone 's expectations . The characters all believe there is a single culprit here . [ ? ] It makes the revelations more plausible , while also making the need for those revelations less intense ( the two are related ) . "

Television Without Pity gave the episode a " B + " . Alan Sepinwall , on his blog What 's Alan Watching ? , was also relatively positive towards the episode . While calling the reveal of the rapist " out of left field " , he noted that there was some material in " My Big Fat Greek Rush Week " that pointed to this conclusion . In addition , he praised Parker rescuing Veronica and the start of the Dean O 'Dell mystery , writing " Rob quite cleverly threw the start of the new mystery into the tail end of the first one . " However , there were several plot issues that he found as well as that the nine @-@ episode storyline didn 't fully do the reveal justice , opining that Thomas and the crew had to rush to give the audience important information in this format . Cortney Martin of the Houston Chronicle enjoyed the major roles played by Wallace , Mac , Weevil , Piz , and Parker in the episode , writing " the show belongs to Veronica 's sidekicks this week . " Maureen Ryan of the Chicago Tribune gave praise as well . While being lukewarm regarding the season as a whole , she thought that " Spit & Eggs " was " appropriately suspenseful . " In addition , she enjoyed that Veronica was

less sarcastic and contemptuous in the episode , in contrast to previous episodes of the season .

Film.com praised the episode as well , lauding the in medias res opening scene , suspenseful tone , and Mac 's reappearance , and the setup for the next mystery arc , among other aspects of the episode . Conversely , Keith McDuffee , writing for AOL TV , was more critical , calling it " way too fast for a partial season @-@ ender " , arguing that there were too many unanswered questions left after the episode 's conclusion .