

= Fagel Attraction =

" Fagel Attraction " is the twenty @-@ third episode of the fourth season of the American television series Will & Grace . It was written by Jenji Kohan and directed by series producer James Burrows . The episode originally aired on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) in the United States on April 25 , 2002 . Michael Douglas , Molly Shannon , and Barry Livingston guest starred in " Fagel Attraction " .

In the episode , Will (Eric McCormack) files a police report after his laptop computer is stolen . He then meets a police detective (Douglas) who takes a special interest in his case as they go undercover ? however , Will does not know that the detective participates in Jack 's (Sean Hayes) therapy group for gays . Meanwhile , Grace (Debra Messing) is once again hassled by her kleptomaniac neighbor Val (Shannon) who opens a rival design business and prospers by stealing Grace 's ideas .

Since airing , " Fagel Attraction " has received positive reviews from television critics . According to Nielsen ratings , the episode was watched by 14 @.@ 3 million households during its original broadcast . Douglas was mostly praised from critics for his performance and received an Emmy Award nomination in the " Outstanding Guest Actor in a Comedy Series " category .

= = Plot = =

Following the theft of Will 's (Eric McCormack) laptop computer , detective Gavin Hatch (Michael Douglas) assures Will he will do everything he can to get his laptop back . Upon meeting Will , Gavin becomes attracted to him . Instead of asking him out on a date , due to fear of rejection , Gavin makes up an elaborate story that Will 's laptop theft was part of a " gay laptop @-@ theft ring " . Meanwhile , at Grace Adler Designs , Grace (Debra Messing) is showing some designs to a potential client , Vince (Barry Livingston) . He is fond of her work and would like to become her client , but reveals that he promised another designer he would listen to her ideas too . Grace becomes horrified when she learns that her kleptomaniac neighbor and nemesis , Val (Molly Shannon) , is the other designer .

Meanwhile , Will and Gavin go undercover at a gay nightclub . Will believes they are doing police business for the " gay laptop @-@ theft ring " , but it is actually a date planned by Gavin . Jack (Sean Hayes) , a friend of Will 's , sees the two dancing and is dumbfounded . Jack and Gavin attend the same gay therapy group , and the two dislike one another , which leads Jack to tell Will all he knows about Gavin . At Will 's apartment , Gavin reveals to Will that he is gay , after Will admits to having a liking to him , but that he is " barking up the wrong tree . " Will , however , identifies Gavin 's problem with asking men out and his knack of making stories up to spend time with them . Before Gavin leaves , Will tells him to face his fears .

At Grace Adler Designs , Val suggests she and Grace integrate their presentations in the same meeting with Vince , to which Grace agrees . In the middle of Grace 's presentation , Val begins repeating the same thing Grace says . This leads to the two bickering , which prompts Karen (Megan Mullally) , Grace 's friend and socialite assistant , to pull them apart . She tells them that violence is never the answer , " but sometimes it is , " then chops Val behind the neck , rendering Val unconscious . Karen tells Grace to go get Vince , who was out of the room , while she gets " rid " of Val 's body .

= = Production = =

" Fagel Attraction " was written by Jenji Kohan and directed by series producer James Burrows . The episode 's title is a reference to the 1987 film Fatal Attraction which starred actor Michael Douglas . In March 2002 , it was announced that Michael Douglas would guest star on the show , playing a gay detective who becomes attracted to Will . His role on the show was his first television acting role in almost 30 years , since his role in the police drama The Streets of San Francisco . It was also confirmed that actress Molly Shannon would reprise her role as Val , Grace 's nemesis .

This was Shannon 's fourth appearance on the show .

While in negotiations , Douglas ' staff approached the show 's producers about a guest spot for Douglas and the sitcom 's executives sought to work against Douglas ' image . His management team wanted him to stretch beyond his usual roles , and believed a successful comedy show like Will & Grace would be a good way to do so . The show 's producers said that Douglas was willing to go with any story line the writers could come up with . Executive producer and co @-@ creator of the show , David Kohan said : " There 's something great about playing on a person 's iconic status . [...] Michael Douglas often plays these virile men , and the idea of making him a gay cop too shy to ask Will out was funny . "

However , in another interview , it was revealed that Douglas himself called the show 's producers to ask them about a guest appearance . " I am a big fan of the show , so when the opportunity to guest @-@ star came along , I had to grab it " , Douglas said on his official website . " It 's been awhile since I 've performed in front of a live audience , and it was great to flex that old theater acting muscle . It was also my first experience with a television sitcom . "

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Fagel Attraction " was watched by 14 @.@ 3 million households , according to Nielsen ratings . It received a 10 @.@ 3 rating / 15 share among viewers in the 18 ? 49 demographic , and was the seventh highest @-@ rated show on the NBC network that week . " Fagel Attraction " has received mostly positive reviews from television critics since airing , and several reviewers praised Douglas for his appearance . Debra Messing , who plays Grace , commented that it was " hilarious how easily " Douglas played his character in the episode . In 2002 , he was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award in the " Outstanding Guest Actor in a Comedy Series " category for this episode , but lost to Anthony LaPaglia of Frasier . In March 2006 , Entertainment Weekly named Douglas ' guest spot the fourth most memorable guest appearance on Will & Grace .

Kevin McDonough of Charleston Daily Mail called Douglas ' appearance an " unforgettable performance " , and Adam Buckman of the New York Post commented that Douglas is " such a commanding presence on screen " that he " steals every scene " . Renée Peck of The Times @-@ Picayune reported that she enjoyed watching Douglas have fun with an " off @-@ the @-@ wall " role combining an alternate lifestyle with altered consciousness . TV Guide contributor Matt Roush , in review of season four , said that without guest appearances from actors such as Douglas , the season " would be an awfully sad misfire . " Mark A. Perigard of the Boston Herald wrote that the " biggest laughs " in the episode come when Douglas holds hands with Will and then dances with him . Alan Pergament of The Buffalo News also praised this sequence , calling it " priceless " .

The episode received less positive reviews as well . Allan Johnson of the Chicago Tribune wrote that the episode is good , but not great : " It proves stunt @-@ casting doesn 't necessarily work unless the actor is up to the script and lead performers . And Douglas , an otherwise fine actor , basically does a caricature of a macho gay man . " Ted Cox of the Daily Herald wrote that the idea of Douglas being cast as a neurotic gay man " isn 't a whole lot to this episode . " A television reviewer from Deseret News thought that because of his role on Will & Grace , Douglas should give the Oscar he won earlier in his career back . The reviewer concluded : " He 's embarrassingly bad , as is this episode . "

Johnson was complimentary towards Molly Shannon : " Far funnier is a subplot with Molly Shannon of Saturday Night Live back as Will and Grace 's (Messing) whacked @-@ out neighbor Val [...] Shannon , always funny and fun to watch , isn 't a mere stunt ... Shannon shows a guest actor can shine when paired with the right character . " The Palm Beach Post 's Kevin D. Thompson wrote that Shannon 's performance " displays why she should have her own sitcom " , while Cox wrote that she has a " quality in which a tightly bound surface normalcy seems to barely contain a bundle of tics and impulses , and the writers make excellent use of it by having Val try to first steal Grace 's flair for design , then cop one of her clients . " Perigard noted that Grace and Val 's storyline made it " clear that the producers just like the sight of the two women flailing their arms in a mock catfight . "

