

= We 're Not in Kansas Anymore =

" We 're Not in Kansas Anymore " is the pilot episode of the American teen drama 90210 , which premiered on September 2 , 2008 on The CW in the United States and Global in Canada . 90210 is a spin @-@ off to Beverly Hills , 90210 , and the fourth series in the Beverly Hills , 90210 continuity . The pilot was written by Gabe Sachs , Jeff Judah and Rob Thomas , and directed by Mark Piznarski . The episode , aired with " The Jet Set " in a two @-@ hour premiere , averaged 4 @. @ 9 million viewers on its original broadcast .

The development of a Beverly Hills , 90210 spin @-@ off by The CW was reported on March 13 , 2008 ; four days later , a detailed breakdown of the pilot written by Thomas was released . Thomas later announced that he was leaving the series , and Sachs and Judah were hired to write a new version of the script . Casting began before the script was completed , and several cast members of the original series were approached , of whom several accepted to appear . Reviews of the episode were mixed , and one critic explained , " it 's not a great show but it 's not a terrible teen drama , not by a long shot . The new 90210 turns out to be a solid sequel with plenty of shout @-@ outs to fans of the old 90210 . "

The pilot introduces the Wilson family , along with numerous other students at West Beverly Hills High , where Annie Wilson (Shenae Grimes) and Dixon Wilson (Tristan Wilds) begin attendance . Their father , Harry Wilson (Rob Estes) , returns from Kansas to his childhood home of Beverly Hills with his family to care of his mother , former television star Tabitha Wilson (Jessica Walter) , who has a drinking problem . Annie and Dixon struggle to adjust to their new lives while making new friends and adhering to their parents ' wishes .

= = Plot = =

The Wilson family ? consisting of parents Harry and Debbie (Lori Loughlin) , daughter Annie , and adopted son Dixon arrive at the mansion of Harry 's mother , Tabitha . Where they will be taking care of her . Annie and Dixon discuss what their first day of school will be like at West Beverly Hills High , where their father will be the principal . Annie hopes to hook up with a friend named Ethan Ward (Dustin Milligan) , whom she met two summers ago . When she arrives at school the next day , Annie spots Ethan in his car and makes eye contact , only to realize that he is receiving fellatio from a fellow student . Dixon goes to journalism class , where he meets Navid Shirazi (Michael Steger) , while Annie goes to her first class taught by Ryan Matthews (Ryan Eggold) . Matthews asks popular student , Naomi Clark (AnnaLynne McCord) , to show Annie around the school . After class , Naomi talks to Annie about her busy life and upcoming sixteenth birthday party . Annie discovers that she is dating Ethan , and meets her best friend , Adrianna Tate @-@ Duncan (Jessica Lowndes) , who is the lead in the school play Spring Awakening . Annie , who is also an actress , is upset that she arrived too late to audition for a role , although Adrianna says that she would be better use backstage . Later , Adrianna takes several pills from a drug dealer , and agrees to pay him two hundred dollars the next day .

Annie sees Ethan and promises not to tell Naomi what she saw . They part ways for lunch , and Annie meets Silver (Jessica Stroup) ; however , Naomi pulls Annie away , explaining that Silver makes insulting YouTube videos about people . Naomi invites Annie to her birthday party , and they decide to go shopping together . Harry and guidance counselor Kelly Taylor (Jennie Garth) and Mr. Matthews meet with Naomi 's parents , who feel that Naomi should not have to hand in her assignments on time when she is planning her party . Before she leaves , Naomi 's mother , Tracy (Christina Moore) , reminds Harry that they dated in high school . Naomi receives a text message from her mother , telling her that she must complete the assignment that night . Annie remembers that she completed a similar assignment for her old school , and offers to give Naomi a copy for inspiration .

Dixon is accepted into the lacrosse team after trying out , but gets into a fight with team member George Evans (Kellan Lutz) . Annie tells Dixon of her invitation to Naomi 's party , and how she saw Ethan cheating on Naomi . The next day at school , Annie finds out that Silver made a video

blog about her , depicting her as a bitchy farmer . Annie confronts Silver , who felt insulted by Annie 's decision to hang out with Naomi . When Silver is reprimanded by her half @-@ sister , Kelly , she realizes that she shouldn 't reprimand Annie for what happened between her and Naomi in the past . Elsewhere , Ethan is forced by his team members to lie that Dixon started the fight during , and he is subsequently kicked off the team . Annie argues with Ethan because of his lying , and asks what happened to the Ethan that she met two years ago . In class , Naomi reads an exact copy of Annie 's paper . Afterward , when Annie confronts Naomi , she apologizes by giving Annie an \$ 800 dress . Annie decides to watch the school play rehearsals , and Silver apologizes for the video by asking the drama teacher to let Annie sing with the chorus for the play . Much to Adrianna 's dismay , Annie is allowed to be in the play . Naomi again gets into trouble when Harry discovers that she cheated , and forces her to write the paper in his office . Ethan has a fight with George and tells the truth , resulting in Dixon being allowed to play on the team . Dixon tells Annie that he feels horrible , as he sent a text message to Naomi telling her that Ethan is cheating on her .

Harry and Debbie punish Annie by not allowing her to go to Naomi 's party . When they reconsider and decide to let her go , they discover that she has already left . Harry goes to the party to find Annie , but is instead told by Tracy that they have a son together , whom she gave up for adoption over twenty years ago . Adrianna , who had previously stolen money from Naomi 's purse , claims to have found it and gives it back . Naomi checks her phone messages and learns that Ethan is cheating on her . Naomi asks Ethan if he is really cheating on her , and leaves the party after he fails to answer . Annie leaves with Silver for another party on the beach , where she apologizes to Ethan for revealing that he was cheating on Naomi . When she asks why he told the truth about Dixon not starting the fight , he replies that he is trying to be the good guy he used to be . Annie , Silver , Dixon and Navid spend the rest of the night swimming at the beach . In the closing scenes , Kelly talks to the father of her four @-@ year @-@ old son , Adrianna pays her drug dealer with money she stole from Naomi , and Ethan visits Naomi 's house .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

On March 13 , 2008 , it was announced that The CW was developing a contemporary spin @-@ off of Beverly Hills , 90210 , which first aired on Fox from October 1990 to May 2000 . The project was put on the fast track by the network , and an order of the pilot was expected by the end of the month . The Beverly Hills , 90210 creator , Darren Star , was announced not to be involved with the project , as well as producer Aaron Spelling , who died in 2006 . The only surviving element from the original series was the Creative Artists Agency , the talent agency which masterminded the spin @-@ off idea . Veronica Mars creator Rob Thomas was in negotiations to write the pilot , and Mark Piznarski was in talks to direct .

A detailed breakdown of the pilot written by Thomas was released on March 17 , containing information on the plot and characters of the series . None of the characters were related to the original series ; however , the series ' featured a similar premise : a family with two teenagers who recently moved from the Midwest to Beverly Hills . To reflect the situation at the Beverly Hills school , where around 40 percent of the students were from Persian descent , a student named Navid Shirazi was created . Thomas intended to introduce The Peach Pit , the diner from Beverly Hills , 90210 , but noted that it would not be featured in the pilot . The writer considered giving the siblings a job at a movie theater , as he did not want them to use their parent 's credit cards . Thomas revealed that there were plans to reintroduce one of the original cast members , but had not met with any of them to discuss a role . Thomas later elaborated the producers wanted to see " as many of the original cast members as possible " , but were careful not to " parade them all out in the pilot " .

On April 14 , Thomas announced that he was leaving the series to focus on his two pilots for ABC . Gabe Sachs and Jeff Judah were hired as the new executive producer and wrote a new version of

the script in late April . Sachs said that although Thomas had a " great script " , their version of the script was " edgier " . Judah said that they were trying to ground their script in reality , with real character stories and emotional stories . The writers wanted the audience to relate to the characters ' problems , which they wanted to be truthful and emotional , but also comedic . The pair were interested in telling several stories simultaneously , featuring many characters . The pair changed the surname of the family from Mills to Wilson , and told reporters that they would be adding their " comedic impulses " to the script . Sachs and Judah found the parents to be an integral part of the series , and designed them to be contemporary parents . Since the producers were both fathers , they designed the script to include more prominent adult story lines and a strong point of view on parenting . Judah was interested in focusing on how the family kept their moral center when moving to Beverly Hills , and the way the parents dealt with their teenagers .

= = = Casting = = =

On March 13 , Kristin Dos Santos of E ! confirmed that the series would be a spin @-@ off with new characters , and not a remake . In order for the project to be ready for the network 's " upfront " presentations to advertisers in May , casting began before the script was completed . The first actor to be cast was Dustin Milligan on April 1 , followed by AnnaLynne McCord on April 14 . Sachs found Milligan to be " really funny " , and changed Ethan to better represent his personality . McCord was cast because , according to Sachs , " she 's someone who is worldly , and there 's a sophistication to her that 's interesting " . Actress and singer Hilary Duff was rumored to have been offered the part of Annie , but she told reports that it was " not true " . The role was eventually given to Shenae Grimes , who says she was raised watching the original series . Sachs and Judah had seen Grimes ' work before and knew " she had the acting chops " , and she was cast after acting a dramatic scene which she " just killed " . Sachs stated , " she can act , she 's beautiful , and she can give this sweet cuteness (that lets us see) through her eyes into this world . "

Lori Loughlin auditioned for the role of Debbie and was given the part straight away . Sachs thought that Loughlin was too established to read for the part , but realized that she understood the role immediately . The producers were fans of Jessica Walter after watching her film , Play Misty for Me . Sachs found that Walter knew pieces of scenes , and suggested " stuff that works " . Sachs described Ryan Eggold , who portrayed Matthews , as " a sophisticated actor , and he 's also very funny " . Sachs believed that every time Eggold would be on screen , " people are going to go , ' Wow ! ' " .

The producers were looking for an actor who could portray Silver as a " quirky kid who moves to her own beat " . Sachs explained that Jessica Stroup " came in dressed for the part , artsy and quirky , and she had her hair up and she had a bandana . She nailed it . " The producers were fans of Tristan Wilds for his acting on The Wire , and hoped to hire him as Dixon from the start of casting . When asked about Michael Steger , who portrays Navid , Sachs said " he 's just great " . Rob Estes , the last actor to join the series , was a previous cast member of the first Beverly Hills , 90210 spin @-@ off , Melrose Place . Estes was sought by The CW to play Harry , but was contracted on the drama Women 's Murder Club . When that series was canceled , Sachs called Estes and explained the spin @-@ off to him , and he thought it was a great idea . Sachs promised that although he was playing a parent , he would not " be furniture ... as in the seldom seen or heard parents who populate many youth @-@ centric series , like the Walsh parents on the original 90210 . "

Following rumors of cast members from Beverly Hills , 90210 appearing on the spin @-@ off , The CW confirmed that Shannen Doherty , Jennie Garth , Tori Spelling and Joe E. Tata would be returning in recurring roles as their original characters . Sachs was familiar with Garth , and talked to her about a possible role in the series . Garth agreed to star on the series without reading a script after brainstorming ideas with Sachs . The producers offered Garth a role as a series regular , but she opted to sign on as a recurring character . Doherty decided to appear after talking with Sachs , but her appearance was moved to the second episode . Sachs described Tata 's casting as an accident ; a friend told Sachs that he had seen Tata in a store , which led to the offer of a recurring role in the series . Sachs said that Tata was ecstatic about the idea and agreed . After reading the

script , Spelling expressed interest in returning , and the writers decided to give her character her own fashion line . Spelling was scheduled to appear in the premiere , but due to personal reasons and the birth of her daughter , she opted to appear later in the season . On August 11 , it was reported that Spelling had pulled out of the series after discovering that she was receiving less pay than Garth and Doherty . Spelling asked for her salary of \$ 20 @, @ 000 per episode to be increased to match their salaries ? \$ 40 @, @ 000 to \$ 50 @, @ 000 per episode ? but when denied she left the show altogether .

= = = Filming = = =

On May 11 , 2008 , one day before The CW 's upfront presentations , the network officially picked up the series for the 2008 ? 2009 television season . Filming for the pilot began in early June in Los Angeles . Torrance High School , which served as the high school in the original series was also used by the spin @-@ off . Filming for the series usually took place in numerous high schools in Torrance and El Segundo , although several scenes were filmed in Torrance High School because of its large auditorium . Sachs returned to the school for the first time after graduating in 1979 . Judah announced that the Peach Pit would be back , but as a coffeehouse rather than a diner . Other filming locations included the mansions of the Bel @-@ Air neighborhood and the Hollywood night club Boulevard3 . One week prior to the pilot 's broadcast , it was confirmed that filming was still taking place , as the producers wanted to reshoot scenes and add extra ones .

= = Release = =

= = = Broadcast = = =

Prior to the season premieres of most television series in September , a common practice by television networks would be to send screeners of pilots of new shows to critics . On August 18 , The CW notified critics that they would not be releasing the premiere episodes , saying , " [we] have made the strategic marketing decision not to screen 90210 for any media in advance of its premiere . We 're not hiding anything ... simply keeping a lid on 90210 until 9 @. @ 02 , riding the curiosity and anticipation into premiere night , and letting all our constituents see it at the same time . " Oscar Dahl of BuddyTV speculated that the decision was an indication of the low quality of the episodes , but pointed out that the pilot may not have been finished in time for a screener release , which was later confirmed to be the case . Despite not having watched the episode , the Parents Television Council said in a statement that " if Gossip Girl is any indication of what 90210 will look like , advertisers have plenty of reason to steer clear of the show ... No reputable advertiser should even consider sponsoring the show without viewing the content in advance . " " We 're Not in Kansas Anymore " , along with the following episode , averaged 4 @. @ 9 million viewers throughout the two @-@ hour broadcast on September 2 . This gave The CW its highest @-@ rated premiere ever in the adults 18 @-@ 49 demographic with a 2 @. @ 6 . By comparison , the series finale of the original series was watched by 25 million viewers on its original broadcast in May 2000 .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Most reviews of the pilot were average , claiming that while it was not bad , it was not great either . Metacritic gave the episode a Metascore ? a weighted average based on the impressions of a select 12 critical reviews ? of 46 , signifying mixed or average reviews . When compared to the original series , Rob Owen of the Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette felt that the spin @-@ off covered the same themes ? family , friends , teen melodrama , relationships ? but with more humor . Owen praised the compelling characters and the acting , and found the dialogue to be more clever than painful . Adam Buckman of the New York Post commented on the crude language used by the characters , and found there was nothing new that could have surprised him with watching the episode . Ray

Richmond of The Hollywood Reporter found that despite The CW 's decision not to send out screeners to critics , the pilot was " [not] so horrible after all " . Richmond praised the actors and writers , especially returning actor Garth , whom he found looked " terrific " and acted well .

Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger found that while 90210 was neither " trainwreck nor masterpiece " , it remained remarkably faithful in tone and spirit to the original series . The reviewer realized that " the dialogue was at times intentionally funny " , and pointed out that although the actors looked to old for high school , they acted " a lot more natural " than the actors on the original series . Sepinwall questioned The CW 's intended audience , saying that while the music and styles were reminiscent of Gossip Girl , those who had not seen the original series would not have cared for the returning characters . Verne Gay of Newsday described 90210 as a " perfectly competent and reasonably seamless revival " , with enough contemporary touchstones to attract new viewers . The reviewer commended the spin @-@ off for integrating the new characters with the originals , while also including adults . Gay found that while the pilot featured too many story lines , the " vibe felt right " and it was not the disaster it was expected to be .

Among the reviews were several negative ones , which compared the series negatively to the original . Matthew Gilbert of The Boston Globe felt that like the original , 90210 was " pretty bad " . Gilbert said that the episode " seemed to take forever to set up some remarkably bland plotlines " , which he found had been executed with more finesse by other teen soaps . The reviewer criticized the writers for their " unimaginative material " , exemplified by the risqué anal sex scene which he opined would no longer be considered outrageous for a series targeted at teenagers . Gilbert claimed that the characters lacked depth and distinction , especially Naomi , whom he compared negatively to Gossip Girl 's Blair Waldorf . By contrast , Tom Gliatto of People magazine gave Naomi Clark a favorable review , but stated that he felt the cast as a whole had yet to gel . Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly described the pilot as " corny but trying to be hip , crammed with subplots until the producers figure out which ones the audience responds to . " Tucker praised Walters acting as a " slashing panache that no one else on screen approaches " , and found the only time he laughed with pleasure throughout the pilot was when her character exclaimed , " I 'm gonna call Dan Tana 's for some takeout ! " . Hal Boedeker of the Orlando Sentinel described the pilot as " a blah variation on Beverly Hills , 90210 " , and being too " extravagant and less believable " . Boedeker expressed disappointment in the series , and predicted that it would be canceled within a year .