

= Rock Show (Parks and Recreation) =

" Rock Show " is the sixth episode and season finale of the first season of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on May 14 , 2009 . It was written by Norm Hiscock and directed by Michael Schur . In the episode , Andy gets the casts removed from his legs , and Ann starts reevaluating their relationship when she learns he kept them on longer than necessary so she would keep pampering him . An intoxicated Mark flirts with Leslie , who feels conflicted about whether she wants to move forward when he is drunk .

The episode generated positive reviews . Several commentators claimed " Rock Show " represented a turning point in the series , in which the show found its own tone and broke away from similarities to The Office . According to Nielsen Media Research , it was watched by 4 @. @ 25 million viewers in its original airing , the lowest viewership for the season . " Rock Show " , along with an " Extended Producer 's Cut " of the episode , was included on the Parks and Recreation Season One DVD , which was released in the United States on September 8 , 2009 .

= = Plot = =

The parks and recreation department have cake to celebrate Andy (Chris Pratt) having his leg casts removed , and Ann (Rashida Jones) invites everybody to a local bar to hear Andy 's first rock concert since he broke his leg . Leslie (Amy Poehler) is disappointed she cannot go , because her mother (Pamela Reed) has set up a business meeting with a local town manager . Later at the hospital , Ann learns from Dr. Harris (Cooper Thornton) that Andy could have had his casts removed two weeks earlier , but that he postponed it because he wanted Ann to keep pampering him . Angry , Ann begins reevaluating her relationship with Andy . Later that evening , Leslie realizes the dinner with 62 @- @ year @- @ old George Gernway (Ron Perkins) is actually a blind date set up by her mother . George , who tells the documentary camera crew he is getting " very positive signals " , agrees to go with Leslie to the rock show .

Mark (Paul Schneider) feels lonely because he is the only one at the concert without a date : Tom (Aziz Ansari) is with his attractive surgeon wife Wendy Haverford (Jama Williamson) , Ron (Nick Offerman) is dating his ex @- @ wife 's sister Beth (Stephanie Erb) and April (Aubrey Plaza) is with , " like the gayest person I 've ever met , but I make out with him when I 'm drunk sometimes . " Noticing Ann is angry with Andy , Mark makes a pass at her , but Ann angrily rejects him . Leslie and George show up and are mocked by Tom . After the concert ends , Andy tries to stay as long as possible to avoid a fight with Ann , but she insists they leave . George goes home because he was falling asleep and Leslie starts to leave , but an intoxicated Mark asks her to stay and have a beer with him .

When Leslie notes to the camera crew that they seem to be getting along just like when they made love five years earlier , she realizes he was drunk then too . When the bar closes , the two decide to keep drinking alongside the pit outside Ann 's house , which Leslie plans to turn into a park . When Leslie asks whether he thinks the park will ever be made , a pragmatic Mark says it will be a difficult process with a lot of red tape , but she remains optimistic . During a fight , Andy admits to Ann that he postponed having the casts removed , but explains it was because , " I really , really like it when you serve me food . " Ann throws him out , and Andy sees Mark kiss Leslie . Leslie stops his advances because she does not want to move forward when he is drunk . As Mark starts to leave , he falls into the pit . An amused Andy tells Ann , who rushes out to help him while Andy goes back inside and watches television .

= = Production = =

" Rock Show " , the first season finale of Parks and Recreation was written by Norm Hiscock and directed by series co @- @ founder Michael Schur . Schur said he felt " Rock Show " marked a change in tone for the series and struck a better balance between personal and professional stories than any of the other episodes from the season . Schur said : " We treated that whole six @- @

episode season like a pilot . If you go back and watch those episodes now , you can see us making changes . The sixth episode is different in tone than the first . And we made some character tweaks , like every show ever does " . Amy Poehler said she believed " Rock Show " would end what she described as the inevitable comparisons between Parks and Recreation and The Office , which is also produced by Parks creators Schur and Greg Daniels . Poehler said , " I think it was something we had to work through in the beginning , and I ' m kind of hoping we ' re on the other side of that and people will start to judge the show on its own , for what it is and realize it ' s just a completely different world in a similar style . " Schur made his directorial debut with " Rock Show " , and had only one day of preparation before directing the episode . While preparing to direct the episode , Schur was asked to make an appearance on The Office as Mose Schrute , the cousin of Dwight Schrute and a popular minor character , in the fifth season finale episode , " Company Picnic " . Schur regretfully declined because he needed the time to work on " Rock Show " , leading Office episode writers Paul Lieberstein and Jennifer Celotta to create the character Rolf , Dwight ' s friend played by James Urbaniak , as an alternative .

Andy ' s bandmates during the rock show scene were played by Mark Rivers (drums) , Andrew Burlinson (guitar) and Alan Yang (bass) . All four actors performed their own instruments live during the filming . Originally , they planned to pre - record the songs and pantomime them for the episode , but after practicing a few times around the extras , they decided to shoot it live . The band performed each song twice , and Schur said he tried to shoot and direct it as if it were a music video . Yang is a writer with Parks and Recreation , and wrote the previous first season episode , " Boys ' Club " . Rivers is a composer who has worked on the sketch comedy show Human Giant , which starred Parks star Aziz Ansari . Rivers wrote the songs performed in " Rock Show " , which Pratt said took him only " about fifteen minutes " . Hiscock wrote the lyrics for " The Pit " in the initial outline for the episode and they were handed to Rivers who then fleshed them out . The songs were designed to resemble the music of the American rock band Hootie & the Blowfish . The only song not written by Rivers was " Ann " , a romantic ballad Andy played for Ann , which was written by Pratt himself . " Ann " first appeared in " Boys ' Club " .

Like most episodes of Parks and Recreation , a great deal of the scenes in " Rock Show " were improvised by the actors . Paul Schneider made up his own dialogue during the scene in which he and Poehler sit next to the pit and he talks about it as if it is already a park . Poehler ' s laughter at his jokes in this scene is her genuine reaction . Pratt also improvised much of his own dialogue , including his rationale to Ann for why he lied about his leg casts : " I really , really like it when you serve me food . " Pratt also changed the reaction his character had to Mark falling into the pit . The script originally called for Andy to be serious and concerned , but Pratt changed it so his character thought the fall was funny . Pratt also improvised the songs he sang during an early scene in the episode , in which Andy makes up songs about random items in Ann ' s living room out of boredom from wearing the casts for so long . One of the songs he sings is about a lamp , and included the lyrics , " I wish you were a lamp that would light up when you get touched . " Pratt thought of the song because he had recently gotten such a lamp as a gift from a friend .

During a scene when Andy describes his style of music , April responds that she completely understands him , although the other characters seemingly do not . That line was improvised by Aubrey Plaza , and later helped inspire the writing staff to place the April and Andy characters into a romantic relationship . Schur said of this , " At the time , it was this little nothing , throwaway thing , but when we watched it , we thought there might be something there . " The scene with Mark making a pass at Ann at the rock show , and Ann ' s angry reaction to the attempt , were a last - minute addition to the episode . Although Mark and Ann would develop a romantic relationship in the second season , the Parks and Recreation writers had not decided what would happen between the developing romantic plotlines between Leslie and Mark , or Leslie and Ann , at time " Rock Show " aired . In the original pilot script , Mark helped Leslie solely because he was attracted to Ann and felt that green - lighting Leslie ' s project would give him an excuse to spend more time with her ; the shooting version was retooled to make Leslie less pathetic and Mark less unlikable , by having him won over by Leslie ' s determination to fight against the odds . Immediately after " Rock Show " was originally broadcast , NBC set up an official website for " Scarecrow Boat " , Andy ' s band featured in

the episode . The site , at scarecrowboat.com , included ringtones , band posters , songs for download and photos .

George Gernway was played by Ron Perkins , the husband of Parks and Recreation casting director Nancy Perkins . Aubrey Plaza conceived the idea of her character dating a gay man who she occasionally makes out with . Her " gay boyfriend " would become a major part of April 's character in the second season . The scenes about Mark 's efforts to have a speed bump lowered were inspired by Scott Albright , a California city planner who works as a consultant on the show . Albright said it would only be realistic for a city planner to lower a speed bump if a large number of residents complained about it . The hospital scenes in " Rock Show " were filmed on @-@ location in an actual California hospital .

= = Cultural references = =

Andy describes the style of his band 's music as a mix between Matchbox Twenty and The Fray . George says his favorite rock band is The Everly Brothers , a country @-@ influenced rock band from the 1950s and 60s . Andy finds Ann 's lost iPod , a portable music player by Apple Inc . , inside his leg cast after it is removed . When Andy starts watching television while Ann rushes off to help Mark at the end of the episode , he is watching the reality series The Real Housewives of Atlanta .

The scene between Mark and Leslie at the pit was mirrored in the second season finale " Freddy Spaghetti " , which aired in May 2010 and was Mark 's final appearance as a regular cast member . During that scene , the two overlook what was once the pit , but was now a filled @-@ in lot , and Mark gives her construction plans for a park before kissing her goodbye on the cheek and leaving . Schur said of the scene , " It 's great because Leslie and Mark , it was such a disastrous moment last time (at the pit) and he didn 't really respect her , and a lot 's happened in a year . " Goor said of using that setting , " I liked the symmetry of having it play a critical , and opposite role in this finale . Last year , they sat on the bench and kissed , and it seemed like they might be getting back together . This year , they sat on the bench and Mark kissed Leslie goodbye . "

During one scene , Andy goes through a list of previous names his band has had . Pratt said about half the band names featured in the episode came directly from the script , but after he made up one on the spot , the directors encouraged him to keep improvising . Pratt said he went through about 200 fake band names during the take . The various names of Andy 's rock band include :

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on May 14 , 2009 , " Rock Show " was watched by 4 @.@ 25 million viewers , according to Nielsen Media Research , marking the lowest viewership for the season . Although the rating was almost the same as the previous week 's episode , " The Banquet " , Bill Gorman of TV By the Numbers still called the rating " pitiful . " The episode received a 1 @.@ 9 rating / 7 share among viewers aged between 18 and 34 , and a 2 @.@ 0 rating / 6 share among viewers between 18 and 49 .

" Rock Show " received generally positive reviews , with many critics claiming it to be the best episode of the series up to that point . The scene in which Leslie rejects Mark 's kiss in the pit was considered by some reviewers to be a critical turning point both for the show and for the development of Leslie Knope 's character . Kona Gallagher of TV Squad wrote in a 2010 article , " Leslie finally realized that she can move on from Mark and the show realized that it could actually make her a real character " .

Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger said after six episodes , he felt " Rock Show " was the episode where the Parks and Recreation found the right tone for the series and Leslie Knope character . Sepinwall said all the characters were very likable , the jokes seemed natural and the awkwardness of the show was turned down enough to work properly . The Hollywood Reporter writer Tim Goodman said while the first five episodes of the season had been disappointing , " Rock Show " marked an improvement in which " the characters were more defined , their quirks and rhythms understood " . Matt Fowler of IGN said he did not find the episode especially funny but that

it did a good job of fleshing out the characters . He said Chris Pratt was especially funny , and that his band 's song " The Pit " was stuck in his head after the episode . The A.V. Club writer Keith Phipps , who had mixed feelings about Parks and Recreation throughout the season , said " Rock Show " was very funny and restored his faith in the potential of the series . Phipps said he believed the show would become very popular in the second season , and that people would later claim to like the first season more than they did the first time they saw it . In October 2009 , while reviewing the second season episode " Sister City " , A.V. Club writer Leonard Pierce said he believed Parks and Recreation showed a streak of vast improvement that started with " Rock Show " and continued into the second season .

Jeremy Medina of Entertainment Weekly said the episode was " solid all @-@ around " and especially liked Leslie 's blind date with the elderly man and Chris Pratt , especially his listing of all his previous band names . Medina said , " Parks and Recreation is only six episodes in , and it 's already better than I anticipated . It has its own tone , a talented cast , and a plot that 's advancing toward something , at least as fast as governmental red tape will allow it to . " Richard Lawson of Gawker said the episode was the best of the season and that he liked the wistful pacing and Poehler 's performance . Lawson said , " Anyone who dismissed this show after its first sorta underwhelming episode made a mistake . The show has only gotten tighter and sharper , culminating in last night 's funny / sad finale . " Time television reviewer James Poniewozik said the episode was the best yet for developing Poehler into a " more multi @-@ facted , less risible character " . He also said the supporting staff played " flawlessly " off each other in the rock show scene , and thinks there is " huge potential " in the dynamic between Leslie and her undermining mother . Not all reviews of the episode were positive . Maureen Ryan of the Chicago Tribune said the Leslie Knope character was unappealing in " Rock Show " and throughout the first season , which she said surpassed the Friends spin @-@ off Joey as " the worst example of NBC 's tendency to extend its franchises well beyond what is desirable or logical . "

= = DVD release = =

" Rock Show " , along with the five other first season episodes of Parks and Recreation , was released on a one @-@ disc DVD set in the United States on September 8 , 2009 . The DVD included cast and crew commentary tracks for each episode , as well as about 30 minutes of deleted scenes . The disc also included an " Producer 's Extended Cut " of " Rock Show " , which incorporated scenes that were cut from the originally broadcast episode . Many of the deleted scenes were improvised dialogue from the actors in brief extensions of episodes already included in the originally broadcast episode . In one of the cut scenes , Marlene Knope tells the audience that Leslie 's business meeting is actually a date . The producers decided to cut the moment , so the audience would find out at the same time Leslie learns it . In another cut scene , Andy tries to convince Ann that the doctor lied to her about Andy requesting more time with the leg casts because the doctor wanted more money . One of the longest cut scenes from the extended edition was a conversation between Leslie and Mark at the bar , in which Mark explains his ideals about city planning when he attended college are much different than the practical , technical aspects of his job . Although the scene was cut , Michael Schur said the monologue did a great deal to help develop Mark 's character .