

= The One with the Rumor =

" The One with the Rumor " is the ninth episode of the eighth season of the American television situation comedy Friends , which aired on NBC on November 22 , 2001 . It continues the series ' annual Thanksgiving @-@ themed episode tradition , and guest @-@ stars cast member Jennifer Aniston 's then @-@ husband Brad Pitt in the uncredited role of Will Colbert , who reveals that he and Ross (David Schwimmer) were part of an " I hate Rachel " club . The two of them hated Rachel Green (Aniston) and got the exchange student from Thailand to join their club . Will revealed that they spread a rumor in high school that Rachel (Aniston) was a hermaphrodite .

The episode was directed by Gary Halvorson and written by Shana Goldberg @-@ Meehan . It was nominated for multiple Primetime Emmy Awards , but was criticized as " insulting " by a national intersex education group . Pitt admitted his appearance was mainly to promote his upcoming film , Spy Game .

= = Plot = =

Monica (Courteney Cox) tells her friends that she will not be cooking a turkey for Thanksgiving because of the large amount of leftovers it will create . Chandler does not eat turkey as a result of his dislike of all Thanksgiving foods (a result of childhood trauma) , Phoebe (Lisa Kudrow 's character) is a vegetarian and Rachel was having an aversion to poultry from her pregnancy . This left only Monica , Ross and Joey to eat the enormous turkey . Joey (Matt LeBlanc) protests , and announces that he will eat the entire turkey himself if necessary . Monica agrees , and Joey finishes the nineteen @-@ pound turkey by the end of the episode . Monica tells Rachel that she has invited over an old high @-@ school friend of hers and Ross 's called Will Colbert (Brad Pitt) . Rachel does not remember him , and he reacts with total disgust when he finds out Rachel will be joining them for dinner .

Throughout dinner , Will is hostile to Rachel . Will , like Monica , has lost a great deal of weight since high school and looks great . When Will keeps ignoring her advances and is continuously hostile , he reveals that she was horrible to him in high school . Will also eventually reveals that during high school , he and Ross initiated the episode 's titular rumor : that Rachel is a hermaphrodite , which was spread throughout their entire high school , and even went so far as to reach Chandler 's high school . Rachel reacts tearfully , claiming she never hurt Ross in high school , until Monica reminds her that she started a rumor of her own that Ross made out with the school 's 50 @-@ year @-@ old librarian , though Ross shockingly reveals that this is in fact true , much to everyone 's amusement and disgust . Monica comforts Rachel , saying that despite the rumor , she was still the most popular girl in their high school , and reminds Ross and Rachel that they are having a baby together and that some things are more important than high school . Will feels betrayed that Ross had a relationship with Rachel but then that turns to a high five when he discovers that Ross " knocked her up but did not marry her . " Ultimately the characters settle their differences . The episode culminates in Joey finishing off the turkey wearing Phoebe 's @-@ turned @-@ Rachel 's maternity pants and getting the meat sweats . After being extremely full , Joey still had room for pie .

= = Production = =

It was reported by Entertainment Weekly that Pitt would don a fat suit for flashback scenes to his fat childhood , though this was unfounded as Will 's weight was merely referred to on screen . Pitt frequently visited Aniston at the studios before and after his appearance , though he did not go onto the set for fear of distracting the audience . When questioned about his appearance in the show , Pitt said it was to promote his upcoming film Spy Game , though added that he liked the series anyway . The episode was taped on November 2 , following four days of rehearsals .

= = Reception = =

As the series finale drew close in 2004 , Eric Deggans of St. Petersburg Times ranked Pitt as one of the worst guest stars in Friends : " Stilted reactions , overly exaggerated comedy , near @-@ palpable self @-@ consciousness - despite his cred as a film actor , Pitt knew he was out of his depth on a sitcom stage . After five minutes ' viewing , the audience did , too . " His work on set is admired by the main stars ; Schwimmer recalls Pitt was " definitely [...] going against type " and LeBlanc called him " really great on the show " . USA Today rates Will 's line " Look at her standing there with those yams . My two greatest enemies , Ross . Rachel Green and complex carbohydrates " one of the best of the episode .

The eponymous rumor drew criticism from the intersex community , a member of which wrote a strongly worded letter of complaint to NBC , calling the episode " ignorant , insulting , degrading , and absolutely unprofessional " . The member urged the network to learn about intersex individuals via the Society 's website and read an on @-@ air apology before future episodes .

= = = Primetime Emmy Award nominations = = =

Pitt was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Comedy Series for his appearance in the episode . Additionally , Nick McLean was nominated for Outstanding Cinematography for a Multi @-@ Camera Series , while Stephen Prime was nominated for Outstanding Multi @-@ Camera Picture Editing for a Series , for their work on the episode .