

= Freddy Spaghetti =

" Freddy Spaghetti " is the second season finale of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation , and the 30th overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on May 20 , 2010 . In the episode , as Ron helps state auditors make governmental cuts amid a government shutdown , Leslie tries to save a children 's concert starring musician Freddy Spaghetti . Meanwhile , Andy asks April to be his girlfriend , while Ann tries to cope with her renewed feelings for Andy following her breakup with Mark .

The episode was written by Daniel J. Goor and directed by Jason Woliner . " Freddy Spaghetti " featured the second performances of Adam Scott and Rob Lowe as two state auditors sent to help Pawnee through its budget crisis , as well as the second appearance by Natalie Morales as Tom 's girlfriend Lucy . Jama Williamson reprised her recurring guest role as Tom 's ex @-@ wife Wendy , and comedian and writer Brian McCann portrayed Freddy Spaghetti .

" Freddy Spaghetti " marked the final performance for Paul Schneider playing Mark Brendanawicz as a regular cast member . The final scene between Mark and Leslie , sitting on a bench together at a lot Leslie hopes to turn into a park , mirrored their scenes together in the first season finale " Rock Show " . " Freddy Spaghetti " was also a turning point in the romantic subplot between Andy and April , who share their first kiss in the episode .

According to Nielsen Media Research , " Freddy Spaghetti " was seen by 4 @.@ 55 million household viewers , a five percent increase in viewership compared to the previous episode , " The Master Plan " . The episode received generally positive reviews , with many commentators calling it a strong ending to an excellent season . " Freddy Spaghetti " and the rest of the second season of Parks and Recreation was released on DVD in the United States on November 30 , 2010 , which included an extended 26 @-@ minute " producer 's cut " of the episode .

= = Plot = =

The Pawnee government has shut down due to a budget crisis . When Leslie (Amy Poehler) explains at a town meeting that a family concert featuring children 's entertainer Freddy Spaghetti (Brian McCann) must be cancelled due to the shutdown , the citizens are outraged . Leslie visits state auditors Chris (Rob Lowe) and Ben (Adam Scott) seeking a way to keep the concert , but Ben insists there is simply no money for it . When Leslie goes to city planner Mark (Paul Schneider) to vent about her situation and seek help , she is stunned to learn that he has taken a buyout and plans to join a construction company , partially in response to Ann (Rashida Jones) having broken up with him ; she angrily calls him " Mark Brendana @-@ Quits " . Meanwhile , Ann is struggling with her redeveloping feelings for her ex @-@ boyfriend Andy (Chris Pratt) . Later , Ann suggests to Leslie she should hold the concert at Lot 48 , as it is not a park and therefore not shut down . Meanwhile , April (Aubrey Plaza) and Andy finally reveal their feelings to each other , but April still rejects him , believing Andy still has feelings for Ann .

Meanwhile , Ron (Nick Offerman) has been assigned to a task force to help fix the city 's budget problem . A small government advocate , Ron is delighted at the prospect of deep municipal cuts , gloating and chanting at the cuts Chris and Ben propose , but when he learns the auditors plan to fire Leslie , Ron refuses and offers his job instead . In explaining her dedication , Ron accidentally alerts them about the Freddy Spaghetti concert . Chris and Ben arrive to the concert to shut it down , but Leslie tells them everything has been donated and nothing is on the taxpayer 's dime . However , Leslie learns Freddy Spaghetti has booked another gig . She asks Andy to play instead , but he is hit by a car while driving his new motorcycle home to retrieve his guitar , breaking his right arm . Just as the concert begins , Freddy Spaghetti surprisingly arrives , having been paid by Ben to perform at Leslie 's concert . Ben explains he is not a bad person , but the budget still has to be slashed .

Visiting Andy in the hospital , Ann suddenly kisses him , but immediately stops and guiltily walks out . Later , April , also relieved to see Andy is fine , finally agrees to go out with him . After they kiss , Andy decides to be honest and tells her about the earlier kiss with Ann . April angrily storms out ,

taking back her decision to go out with him . That night , Leslie sits on a bench in the empty Lot 48 and Mark joins her , with both appearing happy to be able to talk to each other . Mark tells her that if more people like her worked in local government , he wouldn 't be leaving , and gives her plans he drew up for a park at Lot 48 before giving her a goodbye kiss on the cheek and walking away forever . The next day , Ron withdraws from the budget task force and appoints Leslie in his place . As Tom (Aziz Ansari) and his new girlfriend Lucy (Natalie Morales) are clearing out his office , he notices Ron is wearing a red shirt and black pants , the " Tiger Woods " outfit he always wears the day after having sex . Tom 's ex @-@ wife Wendy (Jama Williamson) then appears and kisses Ron and the two leave together , shocking Tom .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

" Freddy Spaghetti " was written by Daniel J. Goor , who previously penned the episodes " The Reporter " , " Hunting Trip " and " Leslie 's House " . The idea of state auditors visiting Pawnee , and the subsequent government shutdown there , was conceived from news reports at the time of a number of states considering shutting down schools , parks and other services due to the global recession . During an interview with the Los Angeles Times , Parks and Recreation co @-@ creator Michael Schur cited stories about Kansas City closing down a great number of their public schools , and Idaho threatening to shut down the state parks department . In that interview , he said , " The entire state of Idaho was threatening to shut down the Parks department , and Idaho is essentially just one large park . " That line , almost verbatim , was used in the script when Ben explained to Leslie the seriousness of the economic recession around the nation .

Schur said the writing staff had difficulty scripting the scene where Ann kisses Andy : " We had a lot of discussions about this because we didn 't want Ann to be too much of a jerk and kiss a guy who likes another girl , and we didn 't want Andy to be too much of a jerk because he likes April . It was very delicate . " The episode marked a turning point for the romantic subplot between April and Andy , who shared their first kiss of the series in " Freddy Spaghetti " . Goor said filming of that scene , " They nailed the kiss immediately . " While trying to get April to talk to him , Andy pretends he doesn 't want to talk to her at all , which he incorrectly calls " reverse psychiatry " instead of reverse psychology . This line was improvised by Chris Pratt .

= = = Casting = = =

" Freddy Spaghetti " was the final episode to feature Paul Schneider as a regular cast member as Mark Brendanawicz . Schneider left the series , and though Schur claimed that both the producers and Schneider were interested in having him return for guest appearances in future episodes , Schneider stated that he was not interested in returning and had never been contacted about it . The final scene between Leslie and Mark in " Freddy Spaghetti " , in which the two sit together at Lot 48 , mirrors their scenes together in the first season finale , " Rock Show " , in which the two shared a kiss while overlooking the lot while it was still a construction pit . 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 . " The bench they sit in during that scene is the same one they sat on during their kiss scene in " Rock Show " . Throughout the second season , that bench was in Leslie 's office . Schur said , " We decided that in the reality of the show she brought it to the lot for this moment . It 's a little bit of a stretch , but , you know . "

" Freddy Spaghetti " marked the second appearances by Adam Scott and Rob Lowe as state auditors sent to solve Pawnee 's budget problems . Lowe 's Chris Traeger character is energetic ,

eccentric and overly cheerful , whereas Scott 's Ben Wyatt is more pragmatic and realistic . Scott was always intended to become a regular cast member starting in the third season , while Lowe was originally expected to appear only in a few more episodes in a guest role . However , after those episodes were filmed , Lowe later joined the show as a regular cast member . Lowe improvised many aspects of his character , including when he handed Ben a water bottle and said , " You should hydrate , " and when he clapped after Leslie sang at the concert , " If you 're happy and you know it , clap your hands . " Additionally , the episode was the second appearance of Natalie Morales as Lucy , a Pawnee bartender and romantic interest for Tom . " Freddy Spaghetti " also included appearances by recurring guest stars Jama Williamson , who plays Tom Haverford 's ex @-@ wife Wendy , and Cooper Thornton , who plays the sarcastic and deadpan Dr. Harris , who tended to Andy 's broken arm . Comedian and writer Brian McCann portrayed Freddy Spaghetti himself in the episode . While singing at the concert , McCann improvised a great deal of non @-@ child @-@ friendly dialogue that could not be used in the final episode . Among them were a song about how he pays too much alimony to his wife , and another about meeting all the children 's mothers backstage after the show . Guy Stevenson , a MADtv writer and friend of Parks and Recreation cast member Retta , played the man who shouted during a municipal meeting , " With the government shut down , who 's going to stop Al @-@ Qaeda ? "

= = = Filming = = =

The episode was directed by Jason Woliner , who previously directed the Parks and Recreation episodes " Beauty Pageant " and " Woman of the Year " . The idea of Andy injuring himself in a motorcycle accident was conceived early in the filming of the second season by Chris Pratt . Pratt 's stunt double , Joe Bucaro III , is considered one of the leading motorcycle stuntmen in the United States , and Pratt suggested that a stunt involving Andy crashing a motorcycle would be very funny . Bucaro filmed two takes of the crash in " Freddy Spaghetti " , and the first take was used in the final episode . At the beginning of the episode , while roller @-@ skating through the corridors of city hall , Andy unsuccessfully tries to jump over a desk and falls violently to the ground . Unlike the motorcycle crash , Pratt performed that stunt himself , and had to film about six takes of it .

During one scene , Ron slips and falls on the grass while running to warn Leslie about Ben 's plan to shut down the Freddy Spaghetti concert . That fall was neither scripted nor accidental , but rather planned and improvised by Nick Offerman . Aziz Ansari described the physical comedy as " one of my favorite shots in the series " . In a different scene , April is chewing on a hay @-@ straw while raking hay before the concert , and angrily spits the straw out when Andy tries to talk to her . That moment was improvised by actress Aubrey Plaza . Woliner asked her not to do it , but she insisted , correctly predicting it would make the final cut if she did it . In a different scene , Ron eats a turkey leg wrapped in bacon . The original script called simply for a large turkey leg , but a props employee suggested wrapping it in bacon based on Ron 's well @-@ known affinity for the food . It was Woliner who suggested that Ron say the snack was nicknamed " the Swanson " .

= = Cultural references = =

During one scene , Leslie visits Tom at home , only to find him wearing a robe and entertaining Lucy . Tom insists he is about to have sex , explaining , " Why else would Boyz II Men 's " On Bended Knee " be playing right now ? " , referring to a song in the background . The line was improvised by Aziz Ansari and , originally , the song was not playing , but Michael Schur said the line was so funny that he successfully sought permission to use the song and added it to the background in post @-@ production . At the Freddy Spaghetti concert , Leslie asks a little girl which song was her favorite , to which she replies " Penne and the Jets " , a pasta @-@ inspired version of the Elton John song " Benny and the Jets " . This line was thought of by Amy Poehler .

While packing his office at the end of the episode , Tom frantically looks for his autographed photo of actor Jamie Foxx . Ansari said he had been trying to work a reference to Foxx into the show for months . Tom 's observation that Ron always dresses like golf pro Tiger Woods after having sex

was a joke previously used in the episode " Ron and Tammy " . The original joke was written before the story of Woods ' extramarital affairs scandal broke in the news in November 2009 . " Freddy Spaghetti " included a reference to the previous episode " Galentine 's Day " , in which Andy discussed a song he wrote called " Sex Hair " , about how one could tell someone had sex based on how matted their hair is . In the season finale , Andy rewrites the song to be called " Pickle Hair " so it can be played at the kid @-@ friendly concert .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Freddy Spaghetti " was seen by an estimated 4 @.@ 55 million household viewers , according to Nielsen Media Research , with a 2 @.@ 1 rating / 7 share among viewers between ages 18 and 49 . It marked a five percent increase in viewership compared to the previous episode , " The Master Plan " , which itself had increased in the ratings compared to the previous week . " Freddy Spaghetti " also had a higher rating than the first season finale , " Rock Show " . Parks and Recreation ranked second in its timeslot with " Freddy Spaghetti " , behind the fifth season finale of the Fox crime drama Bones , but higher than the tenth season finale of the CBS crime drama CSI : Crime Scene Investigation and an episode of the ABC science @-@ fiction drama FlashForward .

" Freddy Spaghetti " received generally positive reviews . Leonard Pierce of The A.V. Club felt the script balanced all the character subplots extremely well , writing , " It 's this ability to hold down the ' situation ' part of situation comedy , while never scrimping on the comedy , that makes it the class of the NBC lineup ? the purest , if not the best , sitcom on the air . " Pierce also complimented the final scene between Leslie and Mark , which he said brought the season to " a touching full circle " . IGN writer Matt Fowler ranked the episode as " outstanding " and claimed it highlighted the strengths of Leslie , by emphasizing the passion with which she views her job , and Ron , by showing how much he cares for his employees even though he hates his job . Fowler said Schneider 's departure was handled well , even though he described Mark as the show 's least interesting character . HitFix writer Alan Sepinwall said " Freddy Spaghetti " did a good job of bringing closure to the season and starting new storylines regarding Pawnee 's budget problems . Sepinwall praised the chemistry between Poehler and Scott , as well as Lowe 's comedic performance , but said the April and Andy romantic subplot was less consistently effective than the similar pairing between Jim and Pam Halpert on the NBC comedy , The Office .

New York magazine writer Steve Kandell said , " The finale was as on point as any episode this year ? smart , funny , crisply written , and poignant . " Kandell said Mark accepting a buyout felt like a " perfectly sensible and organic to the story " way to remove the character from the series , and described the ending scene with Ron and Wendy as an effective cliffhanger building up to the third season . Eric Hochberger of TV Fanatic said , " We can sum up the episode in one word : perfection . " Hochberger praised the characterization in the script , and particularly enjoyed that the former pit , a long @-@ time device for the series , was used for the concert and Mark 's departure . CraveOnline writer Blair Marnell described " Freddy Spaghetti " as one of the best episodes of the series . He praised the writing , particularly the jokes involving Andy and Ron 's love of budget cuts , but said Leslie 's character ultimately carried the story and had the best jokes . Kona Gallagher of TV Squad said the episode " end [ed] an already phenomenal season on a high note " and said she loved the symmetry of the finale . Gallagher particularly praised Scott 's new character , claiming " his bruised idealism is a nice match for Leslie 's blind idealism " , but said Lowe 's character continued to lack depth , and described the April and Andy subplot as predictable .

" Freddy Spaghetti " was the last new episode of Parks and Recreation to air for eight months (until " Go Big or Go Home ") because , after the season finale aired , NBC announced the show was being moved to an undisclosed midseason premiere date to allow the network 's new comedy , Outsourced , to run in the Thursday two @-@ hour comedy schedule block . New York magazine writer Steve Kandell noted this move by NBC against the show bore some " thematic similarities " between the government shutdown plot of " Freddy Spaghetti " . It was eventually announced the Parks and Recreation third season would premiere on January 20 , 2011 .

= = DVD release = =

After " Freddy Spaghetti " aired , a producer 's cut of the episode was featured on the official NBC website . It included four extra minutes of deleted scenes , plus additional footage with Lowe , Scott and the regular cast members . This version of the episode , along with the 22 @-@ minute television version and the other 23 second season episodes of Parks and Recreation , was later released on a four @-@ disc DVD set in the United States on November 30 , 2010 . The DVD included deleted scenes for each episode .

Among the deleted scenes in the producer 's cut were a scene of Tom and Lucy running off to Ann 's house to have sex , where they are interrupted by a nonchalant and seemingly unfazed Chris Traeger . Another cut scene included Tom and Ann in which the two share a pleasant moment and Tom cheers her up over her conflicting romantic feelings , only for Tom to ruin it by proposing three @-@ way sex between them and Lucy . The DVD also included a commentary track for " Freddy Spaghetti " featuring Amy Poehler , Aziz Ansari , Nick Offerman , Rashida Jones , Adam Scott , Aubrey Plaza , Chris Pratt , Jim O 'Heir , Retta and Michael Schur .