

= Tea Leaves (Mad Men) =

" Tea Leaves " is the third episode of the fifth season of the American television drama series Mad Men and overall the 55th episode of the series . It was written by series creator and executive producer Matthew Weiner and writer Erin Levy , and directed by series leading man Jon Hamm . It originally aired on the AMC channel in the United States on April 1 , 2012 .

The episode takes place on and around Independence Day 1966 and re-introduces the Betty Francis character into the narrative . Betty finds herself in a state of depression and experiences a health scare following an unsettling weight gain . Meanwhile , Don and Harry collide with Baby Boomers while trying to meet with The Rolling Stones for a client . The rivalry between old guard Roger and an ascending Pete continues as Peggy hires a new copywriter with a questionable personality but high talent .

Ratings for the episode fell from the season premiere , but were still stronger than the fourth season average . " Tea Leaves " received 2 @. @ 9 million overall viewers and a 1 @. @ 0 in the coveted 18 @- @ 49 demographic . The episode received enthusiastic response from television critics . The main theme of the episode was seen by many television writers as the growing generation gap , and the increasing irrelevance of the main characters in culture and business as a result .

= = Plot = =

Betty has gained weight over the past few months , causing her self @- @ worth to drop and her sex life with Henry to flatline . This prompts an intervention of sorts from Henry 's mother , Pauline , who suggests diet pills . When Betty goes to the doctor 's office in an attempt to obtain diet pills , the doctor refuses . After a routine examination , he finds a possibly cancerous lump in Betty 's throat . Betty returns home in a hysteric fever . She calls Don , who reassures her . Betty begins to confront the legacy of her life and the effect her death would have on her loved ones . Several days later , the doctor calls back to tell her the tumor is benign . Henry holds a despondent Betty in his arms . She ponders her life as simply a sad , fat housewife .

The Heinz executive speaks with Don about his daughters ' obsession with The Rolling Stones , and floats an idea about getting The Rolling Stones to do a commercial for Heinz . Don agrees , though he is unimpressed with the idea . Harry and Don make a Saturday night trip to a Rolling Stones concert to meet with Stones manager Allen Klein . They end up making conversation backstage with two pot @- @ smoking female fans . When Harry leaves with one of the girls to talk with Klein , Don waxes poetic with one over her love for the band . She makes an insulting comment about the older generation . Don responds that the older generation is simply worried for youth . Harry fails miserably at his attempt to meet with The Rolling Stones , but Don is indifferent .

Pete is in talks with Mohawk Airlines for their return to the agency . The arrangement calls for Roger to handle the day @- @ to @- @ day business . Roger puts Peggy in charge of hiring a new male copywriter for Mohawk . Stan advises her to hire a mediocre employee to make her competition lighter . Peggy , however , chooses to interview a talented young Jewish man named Michael Ginsberg whose work impresses her . When Peggy interviews Michael , he is over @- @ the @- @ top in his disposition . However , Roger forces her to bring Michael to Don . During his interview with Don , Michael is more upstanding and professional , which puzzles Peggy . Michael is hired . He returns home to find his domineering father reading the paper . Michael 's personality changes yet again , this time more shy and reserved . When he learns of his son 's success , Michael 's father blesses his son with a Jewish prayer .

Pete makes a puffed @- @ up speech to the SCDP employees regarding his success in landing the Mohawk account . Roger walks out of the speech in anger , loathing his apparent descent in value to the agency .

= = Production = =

" Tea Leaves " was written by Matthew Weiner and Erin Levy and directed by series star Jon Hamm

. This is the first episode of the series that Jon Hamm had directed , with Hamm saying that he owes thanks to John Slattery for paving the way . As preparation for directing the Rolling Stones concert , Hamm looked over archival photographs of the original concert . " They were kids . The Rolling Stones . It was them and The Beatles . These huge pop explosions . People were really excited about it and it was a really big deal . And , in a larger sense , gave us a sense of where advertising is going . " Reflecting on his directing job , Hamm noted that he tried not to put much distracting style into the show , explaining that " My job was not to go in there and muck it up and say , " I 'm gonna put my stamp on this . " My job was to go in there and keep the train on the tracks , basically . We have a very firmly established tone and look to our show that people respond to , and that I love . " Although the third episode of the season , it was actually the first episode produced for season , prior to the two @-@ part season premiere , " A Little Kiss " .

Weiner said that the episode is " about the children . It 's about who is going to take care of the children . Youth is a big part of our lives in general . Now and then . But when you think of the sixties and the youth culture and the way it sort of takes over . What you 're looking at is Don 's fear of the children being cut loose . At the same time , the children come back and eat you . " Weiner commented that the Michael Ginsberg character was " of the next wave " as a youthful employee who is " unfamiliar with social rules " , with Weiner also declaring that " there is no reason that the concerns of older people are different than younger people " .

Of the storyline with Betty , Weiner said , " I don 't think there 's any mystery as to how that could happen . She is happy with Henry but on some level it 's not enough . " Jon Hamm and Matthew Weiner both commented that the episode showcases the strong connection between Betty and Don that still exists despite the divorce .

= = = George Romney controversy = = =

" Tea Leaves " features a scene in which the Henry Francis character , a Republican political aide , insults George Romney , who was a political figure during the time the episode was set in . The Francis character characterized George Romney as a " clown " during the episode . Tagg Romney , eldest son of 2012 Presidential hopeful Mitt Romney , tweeted disgust for the mention , calling Mad Men the " lib media " , and accused the series of mocking his grandfather . The Hollywood Reporter noted that the dig at Romney was based in historical fact , with the Francis character working for John Lindsay , who had actual disdain for Romney . The Reporter also noted that , " Mad Men 's formula for success comes from its careful duality : it revels in pinpoint accurate details from its 1960s setting , while playing with themes that are timeless . Sometimes that means a fortuitous opportunity to use news and names that have reappeared in the cycle of American history . "

= = = January Jones ' pregnancy = = =

January Jones became pregnant in between the fourth and fifth season of the series . Instead of writing in a pregnancy for the Betty Francis character , the writers opted to write in a weight gain . January Jones wore a fat suit during the filming of this episode , the same technique used by Elizabeth Moss during the first season when her character encountered a similar weight gain (though in that instance , the character was actually pregnant) . Make @-@ up tricks and clever camera angles were also used to create the dramatic impression of Betty 's weight gain . A body double was used for the scene in which Betty rises from the bathtub .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

The ratings for " Tea Leaves " were down slightly from the premiere 's record @-@ making number . It pulled in 2 @.@ 9 million viewers , which was still stronger than all of the fourth season episodes

except for the fourth season premiere , " Public Relations " . " Tea Leaves " also received a 1 @. @ 0 rating in the 18 @-@ 49 demographic . It built on its lead @-@ in , the second season premiere of The Killing .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Critics were complimentary towards the episode , praising the acting talent of January Jones and the ensemble cast as well as Jon Hamm 's debut in the director 's chair . Some , however , were not as impressed by the fat suit techniques used on January Jones to both hide her pregnancy and convey the character 's weight gain . Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club gave the episode a B + . He felt that some of the scenes were too on @-@ the @-@ nose and that some of the symbolism was a little overt . VanDerWerff specifically cited the scenes where Don talks with the young girl at the concert as on @-@ the @-@ nose , comparing Don in this scene to Joe Friday . He did , however , praise the subplot involving Betty 's weight gain as well as the final scene . Alan Sepinwall of HitFix said that all of the stories were linked by the threat of replacement and liked the interaction between Roger and Peggy , which he felt was a rare occurrence . He said that it was too soon to judge the Ginsberg character and that the Betty storyline was the weakest of the main plots . Writer Myles McNutt found January Jones " highly compelling " and the storyline offering a " decidedly human turn for the character , with her lunch with Joyce offering insight that we are robbed of without Betty having any friends to confide in normally . "

Maureen Ryan of The Huffington Post praised Jon Hamm 's direction and his " adherence to the Mad Men style " of " subtlety and economy " . She said that it was not " one of the more profound episodes the show has ever done " , but that it was full of " Mad Men @-@ esque meditations on mortality and feeling left behind by changing times . " Bonnie Stiernberg , writing for Paste Magazine , said that based on this episode and the premiere , season five will be about how " characters must learn to adapt to their changing surroundings or find themselves becoming irrelevant , relics of a bygone era " . She praised the creative solution to January Jones ' pregnancy and the new African @-@ American secretary , who she saw as an extension of Don , who was " also hired by the agency as a way to save face " . Tim Goodman , writing for The Hollywood Reporter , focused on the " key part " Roger Sterling plays in the season , saying that " since change is the ongoing issue of Mad Men , what has Roger been but unchanged for too long now " . He also called the introduction of the Ginsberg character a " breath of fresh air . "