

= The Reporter ( Parks and Recreation ) =

" The Reporter " is the third episode of the first season of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on April 23 , 2009 . The episode was written by Daniel J. Goor and directed by Jeffrey Blitz . In the episode , Leslie enlists a local reporter to write an article about the park , but the interviews go poorly , and the problem escalates after Mark gets romantically involved with the journalist .

The episode featured actress and comedian Alison Becker in a guest appearance as Pawnee Journal reporter Shauna Malwae @-@ Tweep . " The Reporter " received generally mixed reviews , with some commentators still comparing it unfavorably to The Office , another comedy series created by the Parks and Recreations co @-@ creators .

According to Nielsen Media Research , it was watched by 5 @.@ 23 million households in its original airing , continuing a downward trend in ratings since the pilot episode . " The Reporter " and the rest of the first season of Parks and Recreation was released on DVD in the United States on September 8 , 2009 .

= = Plot = =

Leslie ( Amy Poehler ) announces she has invited a reporter from the local Pawnee Journal newspaper to write a story about the construction pit that she plans to turn into a park . Leslie meticulously prepares for the interview , instructing the members of her subcommittee to " stay on message . " Over lunch with Mark Brendanawicz ( Paul Schneider ) , Leslie seeks advice on how to deal with the press . Leslie once again tells the documentary crew like she did in the pilot that she previously had sex with Mark and seems to still harbor feelings for him . The reporter , Shauna Malwae @-@ Tweep ( Alison Becker ) arrives the next day to interview Leslie , along with Ann ( Rashida Jones ) and Andy ( Chris Pratt ) . During the interview , Andy reveals he was drunk when he fell in the pit , much to the horror of Leslie and Ann , who were not previously aware of it .

Leslie calls Mark for assistance in dealing with the reporter and Mark , seemingly attracted to Shauna , ends up leaving the parks department office with her . The next morning , Leslie waits at the pit for an interview with Shauna . Leslie is surprised when Mark drops Shauna off at the site and , when she sees Shauna is wearing the same dress as the previous day , she realizes Mark and Shauna have had sex . Leslie is standoffish and irritable during the interview , and she later confronts Mark , who says that it is a private matter and tells Leslie she is acting like a " huge dork . " When Leslie says she cannot have this type of behavior from members of her subcommittee , Mark resigns from the committee . Leslie asks for another interview with Shauna , attributing her behavior during their last interview due to food poisoning from a burrito . During the interview , Shauna reads a number of quotes claiming the park will never be built , and that the existence of unicorns , leprechauns and talking monkeys are more likely . Leslie is disappointed to learn Mark provided the quotes .

Later , Ann tells Mark about the upcoming story and the negative quotes , which Mark thought was off the record . The two confront Shauna and ask her not to use the quotes . Shauna says that she will not use the quotes since the two are " romantically involved , " but when Mark disputes the idea that they are romantically involved , Shauna appears visibly annoyed . Later , Mark apologizes to Leslie and asks to be reinstated to the committee , to which Leslie happily agrees . Later , Leslie reads the story , which is not entirely positive , but her enthusiasm remains strong . In a B story , Tom ( Aziz Ansari ) deliberately loses at online Scrabble against his boss Ron ( Nick Offerman ) , and is horrified when intern April ( Aubrey Plaza ) plays on his account and beats Ron . Tom insists to Ron that he is the " Scrabble king . " Ron later reveals he knows Tom loses on purpose , but doesn 't mind because Tom is his idea of a model employee : unproductive , lacking initiative and a poor team player .

= = Production = =

" The Reporter " was written by Daniel J. Goor and directed by Jeffrey Blitz . Blitz previously directed episodes of The Office , a comedy series created by Parks and Recreation co -@-@ creator Greg Daniels . Michael Schur , who created Parks along with Daniels , said of Blitz , " He 's such a great director , and it made us feel , launching this new show , safe and happy to have him . " It was originally supposed to be the second episode shown in the series , but the broadcast schedule was changed and " Canvassing , " the original third episode , was shown second instead . Goor was very upset with the switch so , as a prank , the Parks and Recreation producers sent him an e @-@ mail message claiming NBC was going to be further held until the second season because it was preempted by " a sports thing . "

The episode was filmed only two weeks after filming wrapped on the pilot episode , which Schur said he regretted because , " Normally , you 'd like to have the usual three months or so to sit back , look at what you made , draw conclusions , tinker , and rewrite . " During " The Reporter , " Parks and Recreation editor Dean Holland developed an editing technique that would be used throughout the rest of the series . During the scene in which Leslie reacts to quotes read to her by the reporter , Amy Poehler improvised a number of jokes , many of which were not going to be used . Holland thought they were all funny , so he created a brief montage inter @-@ cutting several of the lines into the same scene .

Like most episodes of Parks and Recreation , many of the scenes in " The Reporter " were improvised by the actors . For example , Chris Pratt changed the original line about Mark , " He 's thinking with his wiener instead of his brain , " to " He 's thinking with the head of his wiener , instead of the head of his brain . " Aziz Ansari also improvised the line about Mark , " That dude has stuck it in some crazy chicks . " Schur was surprised NBC censors allowed either of the lines to stay in the episode . The clip of Leslie trying to confront a raccoon loose in the city hall building was originally filmed for a Parks and Recreation commercial , but was later included into this episode . The scene was filmed to establish a running gag that Pawnee has a terrible raccoon infestation problem . The J.J. ' s Diner eatery featured in the episode was named after Goor 's wife . Poehler speedily eats tremendous amounts of whipped cream on her waffles . This was inspired by Parks and Recreation story editor Rachel Axler , who producer Morgan Sackett said is " a tiny , bird @-@ like woman " who eats enormous amounts of whipped cream .

" The Reporter " featured actress and comedian Alison Becker in a guest appearance as Pawnee Journal reporter Shauna Malwae @-@ Tweep . Leslie calls the local Pawnee Journal newspaper " our town 's Washington Post , one of the largest circulation newspaper in the country . A PDF copy of the Pawnee Journal newspaper page from the episode was posted on NBC 's official Parks and Recreation website about Pawnee , Indiana ; it included an article written by Shauna Malwae @-@ Tweep with a photo of Leslie in front of the pit , and references to portions of the article mentioned by Leslie in the episode .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on April 23 , 2009 , " The Reporter " was watched by 5 @.@ 23 million households , according to Nielsen Media Research , continuing a downward trend in ratings since the pilot episode . " The Reporter " received a 2 @.@ 4 rating / 8 share among viewers aged between 18 and 34 , and a 2 @.@ 3 rating / 7 share among viewers between 18 and 49 .

The episode received mixed reviews . The London Free Press listed it as one of the " best bets " to watch the evening it originally aired . Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger said the small @-@ town government setting and story lines of the show were working , but felt the writing for the Leslie character has been uneven and that individual situations involving her in " The Reporter " were not funny or effective . Matt Fowler of IGN said the Leslie character was funny , particularly when she talks about her failure to remove graffiti penises from a city wall . ( " To this day , I am haunted by those remaining penises . " ) But Fowler said the Scrabble subplot between Tom and Ron was " silly , " and said the Ron character is too one @-@ note and unfunny .

Scott Tobias of The A.V. Club said the faux @-@ documentary style of the show , and Leslie 's naive faith about her project and department in this episode , draw unflattering comparisons to The

Office , which was also made by the Park and Recreation creators . Tobias said the Scrabble subplot brought " the few good laughs " in the episode . Jason Hughes of TV Squad said he was having trouble connecting to the Leslie character , but felt " The Reporter " allowed for further development of supporting characters like Ron , Tom and Mark , who is portrayed as self @-@ absorbed and " a bit of a douche . " Brigid Brown of Cinema Blend said he believes Rashida Jones is being underutilized by the show .

= = DVD release = =

" The Reporter , " along with the five other first season episode 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 episodes , as well as about 30 minutes of deleted scenes . The deleted scenes included on the DVD were originally featured on the official Parks and Recreation website after the episode aired . They included clips of Ann voicing excitement about the pit committee , Leslie asking everyone to " stay on message " with the reporter , and Mark expressing shock about Shauna Malwae @-@ Tweep quoting him .