

= Goodbye Mr. Fish =

" Goodbye Mr. Fish " or sometimes " Good @-@ bye Mr. Fish " , " Goodbye , Mr. Fish " or just " Mr. Fish " is the second episode of the first season of the American sitcom The Cosby Show . The episode was directed by Jay Sandrich and written by Earl Pomerantz . " Goodbye Mr. Fish " originally aired in the United States on NBC on Thursday September 27 , 1984 , at 8 : 00 PM Eastern time .

The episode focuses on the death of Rudy 's pet goldfish , which was difficult to explain to her and difficult for her to deal with . The episode was a critical and commercial success , achieving both high ratings and positive critical feedback . Its viewer ratings placed it third for the opening week of the 1984 - 85 United States network television season and it earned Primetime Emmy Award and Writers Guild Award nominations for its writing .

Several critics either describe this as the most memorable episode of the series or mention it first when describing the series ' memorable episodes . Other critics as well as Bill Cosby include it on short lists of series highlights . Clips of this episode are included in the season 4 two @-@ part " Looking Back " episode .

= = Plot = =

Cliff ( Bill Cosby ) comes home from a long day at work and tries to take a nap . Vanessa ( Tempestt Bledsoe ) disturbs him to say that Rudy 's ( Keshia Knight Pulliam ) goldfish , Lamont , has died , but she does not realize it yet . They have a hard time explaining to Rudy what has happened . Once they do , Rudy becomes depressed . Later that day , the older kids start making fun of Lamont 's death , Theo saying they should hold a memorial service for the fish around the family toilet . When Cliff feels that the rest of the family is insensitive to Rudy 's loss , he requires the entire family to participate in a memorial service for Lamont in the bathroom in proper funeral attire . Rudy loses interest in the funeral and leaves to watch television , ending the ceremony abruptly . She later returns to the bathroom and asks for privacy , not because she wants to say goodbye to Lamont as Cliff thinks , but because she needs to use the toilet .

= = Cast = =

Bill Cosby as Cliff Huxtable  
Phylicia Ayers @-@ Allen as Clair Huxtable  
Malcolm @-@ Jamal Warner as Theo Huxtable  
Keshia Knight Pulliam as Rudy Huxtable  
Tempestt Bledsoe as Vanessa Huxtable  
Lisa Bonet as Denise Huxtable

= = Production = =

This was first episode taped and produced for the show , on August 1 , 1984 , following the " Pilot " taped much earlier in May 1984 . The show originated at the NBC studio in Brooklyn before a live studio audience with six different sets : a living room , a master bedroom , a kitchen , a child 's bedroom , a hallway , and a bathroom . The taping endured so many retakes that it took three times as long as was scheduled . The set used was notably different from the one used during the pilot . In the first episode , the first floor has extra rooms that it does not have in the rest of the series , beginning with this episode . As of 1987 , this was one of the few sitcom episodes that showed the bathroom , according to Patricia Leigh Brown of The New York Times .

= = Reception = =

In 2009 , TV Guide created TV Guide 's 100 Greatest Episodes of All @-@ Time , with this episode

ranked number 15 . Earl Pomerantz was nominated for the Writers Guild of America Award for Best Screenplay - Episodic Comedy and the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series for this episode . The episode was also nominated for an Emmy in the category of Outstanding Live and Tape Sound Mixing and Sound Effects for a Series . The episode finished third in the Nielsen Media Research ratings for the week with a 19 @. @ 1 million person viewership and a 22 @. @ 5 share for the week ending September 30 behind Dallas ( 22 @. @ 4 million ) and Falcon Crest ( 19 @. @ 8 million ) . This followed a first @-@ place ranking for the " Pilot " the week before . This was the first episode of the series to air after the September 24 date that marked the official beginning of the 1984 ? 85 United States network television season .

David Hinckley of the Daily News describes Rudy as " impossibly cute " in this episode . Producer Marcy Carsey considered the episode to be an example of how the series dealt with the " reactions to small @-@ scale events " . According to Lisa Schwarzbaum of Entertainment Weekly , this is considered by many to be the most memorable episode of the series . Other critics consider it to be among the highlights of the series including Allison Samuels of Newsweek who remembered Cosby for two performances in the series in which he " hid his potato @-@ chip habit from his wife and delivered a deadpan eulogy as he flushed his daughter 's goldfish down the toilet " . William Raspberry of The Washington Post and Graham Jefferson of USA Today considered the episode to be a highlight of the series . Cosby was quoted in Ebony as counting the episode on the short list of highlights from the series . This was the first episode mentioned by several writers discussing the series , including Renee Graham of the Boston Globe , Matt Roush of USA Today ( in 1987 after the first 81 episodes ) , and Candace Murphy of the Oakland Tribune . In the fourth season two @-@ part November 12 , 1987 " Looking Back " episode , the family tries to help the newlywed Sondra Huxtable and Elvin reconcile after their first fight . The episode recounts highlights of the first 81 episodes to help Elvin understand Sondra and her family and this episode is highlighted . According to TBS , the following lines in the funeral part of the script were among the most memorable in the entire series :

Cliff : " We 're here to say goodbye to a cherished friend : Lamont , the goldfish . "

Vanessa : " I always felt safe with him around . "