

= Winter Madness =

" Winter Madness " is the eleventh episode of the fourth season of the American television comedy series 30 Rock , and the 69th overall episode of the series . The episode was written by Tom Ceraulo and Vali Chandrasekaran , and directed by Beth McCarthy @-@ Miller . It originally aired on the National Broadcasting Company ( NBC ) in the United States on January 21 , 2010 . Guest stars in this episode include Ray Bokhour , Cheyenne Jackson , Kevin Meaney , and Julianne Moore .

In the episode , when head writer Liz Lemon ( Tina Fey ) decides to take the fictitious show The Girlie Show with Tracy Jordan ( TGS ) on the road to cure the staff 's case of the winter madness , the anticipated trip does not exactly go as planned . Her boss , Jack Donaghy ( Alec Baldwin ) , chooses Boston as the destination and travels with the show in order to visit Nancy Donovan ( Moore ) , and while away from New York , the TGS crew blames Liz for all of their misfortunes . This episode also continued a story arc involving Nancy as a love interest for Jack , which began in the episode " Secret Santa " that aired in December 2009 .

" Winter Madness " received generally mixed reception from television critics . According to the Nielsen Media Research , it was watched by 5 @.@ 585 million households during its original broadcast , and received a 2 @.@ 8 rating / 7 share among viewers in the 18 ? 49 demographic .

= = Plot = =

TGS head writer Liz Lemon ( Tina Fey ) , along with producer Pete Hornberger ( Scott Adsit ) , decides to take the show 's staff to Miami for a week , due to Liz 's hate of the cold weather and the staff 's case of " winter madness " . Her boss , Jack Donaghy ( Alec Baldwin ) , decides to take them to Boston instead , so he can see Nancy Donovan ( Julianne Moore ) , a woman Jack ponders having a possible romance with . He learns that Nancy 's husband has left her as a way of getting her to ask for a divorce , but Nancy refuses to do so , fearing what others might think . Jack admits his true feelings to Nancy and insists that the two talk . She suggests that they should say four words to each other as a way of putting their relationship on hold ; Jack says to her " I 'll wait . Not forever " , while Nancy tells him " I 'll try . Wicked hard . "

Meanwhile , the TGS staff ? Jenna Maroney ( Jane Krakowski ) , Frank Rossitano ( Judah Friedlander ) , James " Toofer " Spurlock ( Keith Powell ) , J. D. Lutz ( John Lutz ) , Sue Laroche @-@ Van der Hout ( Sue Galloway ) , Kenneth Parcell ( Jack McBrayer ) , Cerie Xerox ( Katrina Bowden ) , and Danny Baker ( Cheyenne Jackson ) ? vent their anger at Liz ; they complain that Boston is colder than New York , and they do not like sharing an office with the all @-@ male staff of Boston Bruins fans who write for the Bruins Beat . Liz gets a tip from Jack to find a common enemy in the Boston affiliate of NBC . Liz comes up with the name " Dale Snitterman " , and tells the staff that Snitterman is causing all of their problems , not realizing until later that she had seen the name somewhere and did not make it up . At that point , the staff finds Snitterman ( Ray Bokhour ) and harass him .

At the same time , Tracy Jordan ( Tracy Morgan ) goes on Boston 's Freedom Trail . He accuses the actor playing John Hancock ( Kevin Meaney ) that his character did not actually set all Americans free . When he tells him " Patriots suck ! " , he inadvertently says it near a group of New England Patriots fans . At the end of the episode , Hancock brings in the Crispus Attucks character and tells Tracy he does have black friends . When Hancock says he met Attucks in 1775 , Tracy is able to one up him as he knows that Attucks was killed in the Boston Massacre in 1770 .

= = Production = =

" Winter Madness " was written by script co @-@ coordinator Tom Ceraulo and co @-@ producer Vali Chandrasekaran , and directed by Beth McCarthy @-@ Miller . This episode was Ceraulo 's second writing credit , having co @-@ written season three episode " The Funcooker , and the first written episode by Chandrasekaran . This was McCarthy @-@ Miller 's tenth directed episode . "

Winter Madness " originally aired in the United States on January 21 , 2010 , on NBC as the eleventh episode of the show 's fourth season and the 69th overall episode of the series .

In November 2009 , it was announced that actress Julianne Moore would guest star on 30 Rock as a love interest for Jack Donaghy , Alec Baldwin 's character . She made her debut as the character Nancy Donovan in the December 10 , 2009 , episode " Secret Santa " . This episode was Moore 's second appearance on the show . " Winter Madness " was filmed on November 17 , 2009 . Comedian Kevin Meaney guest starred as the actor portraying John Hancock . This was actor Cheyenne Jackson 's fourth appearance as Danny Baker in the series . He made his debut in the November 12 , 2009 , episode " The Problem Solvers " , and would later guest star on the episodes " Secret Santa " , " Black Light Attack ! " , " Floyd " , and " The Moms " . In " Winter Madness " , while venting their anger towards Liz , Danny admits his refusal to hit on Jenna .

= = Cultural references = =

In the beginning of the episode , Liz complains about the cold weather saying that she has been stuck inside her apartment playing online Boggle , a word game designed by using a plastic grid of lettered dice , in which players attempt to find words in sequences of adjacent letters . Later , Jack tells Liz that she is the female version of former Boston Celtics basketball player Kevin McHale . Jack 's Boston office is a duplication of his New York one . When Liz enters , Jack asks her if she can tell which seven items are different , prompting the two to look into the camera and smile and thus breaking the fourth wall , a term used when a character in a television show , film or on stage directly addresses the audience . In one scene , Jack says that many Boston residents have named their daughters " Belichick " , after New England Patriots head coach Bill Belichick .

During one scene of " Winter Madness " , Toofer tells the writing staff that he went to college in Boston , " Well , not in Boston , but nearby " , mocking a common stereotype of Harvard students that they will not mention that they attend the University , for fear of intimidating anyone , but will still strongly hint to it . Later , Jack and Nancy imitate former Boston newscasters Chet Curtis and Natalie Jacobson , who were the most @-@ watched news team in Boston for twenty years . Nancy tells Jack that her husband moved to New Orleans to rebuild houses that were affected by Hurricane Katrina as part of actor Brad Pitt 's Make It Right Foundation , an organization building affordable housing to help those families most in need following the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Winter Madness " was watched by 5 @.@ 585 million households , according to the Nielsen Media Research . It received a 2 @.@ 8 rating / 7 share among viewers in the 18 ? 49 demographic , meaning that 2 @.@ 8 percent of all people in that group , and 7 percent of all people from that group watching television at the time , watched the episode . This was an increase from the previous episode , " Black Light Attack ! " , which was watched by 5 @.@ 014 million American viewers . " Winter Madness " ranked third in the timeslot and was the only episode getting more viewers , going up 22 percent from the previous week 's episode rating .

The episode received generally mixed reviews from television critics . Robert Canning of IGN said the episode was great and gave it an 8 @.@ 8 out 10 rating , saying that he was " impressed " with how the ending handled Jack and Nancy 's " not @-@ quite romance . " Canning enjoyed the " platonic romance " between them saying , " A lesser series could have simply had the pair hook up , break up and move on , but 30 Rock has drawn out the relationship with flirtation , what @-@ ifs and possible future ex @-@ husbands . " Meredith Blake , writing for the Los Angeles Times , found the episode " perfectly " and " well @-@ timed " . Leonard Pierce for The A.V. Club said that the episode started " out wicked strong , with everyone in the cast getting great lines " . In regards to the two plots , Pierce said that the Liz , TGS , and Dale Snitterman story was " stuffed with great comedic moments " , while the Jack and Nancy angle just sat there and flopped " around like a dying fish . " Bob Sassone of AOL 's TV Squad enjoyed the Boston theme in " Winter Madness " ;

his only complaint was that the episode had nothing to do with TGS , the fictional show on 30 Rock . " I 'm getting a little tired of that . I want more sketches and NBC network shenanigans . "

Entertainment Weekly ' s Margaret Lyons reported that " Winter Madness " was " something of a letdown . " She commented that Julianne Moore 's Nancy was not " funny enough " as a " romantic foil for Jack " , and that taking the show to Boston seemed off the mark . Television columnist Alan Sepinwall for The Star @-@ Ledger reported that " Winter Madness " fell into the category of an episode that featured " a lot of funny gags but aren 't wholly satisfying " and added that it " just stopped , rather than building to a real conclusion " . Sean Gandert of Paste rated unfavorably the pairing of Alec Baldwin and Julianne Moore 's characters , citing that they do not have " much rapport , so the scenes with the two of them together are a bit dead , as much as I usually enjoy seeing Julianne Moore in pretty much anything . " Amos Barshad for New York magazine criticized Moore 's Boston accent , citing that it was " atrocious " , while TV Guide Magazine ' s Bruce Fretts opined that the accent was " wicked bad " . Regarding the episode itself , Fretts said that it was " weak " .

Despite the criticism towards Moore 's Boston accent in the series , executive producer Robert Carlock , who is from Boston , defended Moore . In an interview with New York magazine , Carlock said , " I grew up with people like that . Not everyone talks like that in Boston , but I think she 's enough of an actress to pull it off . " When asked if her accent " sounded realistic " , he noted , " I 'm going to go with that . I know people who sound like that . " In response to the accent , Moore explained " I went to school in Boston and worked with a lot of guys from Dorchester , so that 's where [ the accent ] came from . We made it thick ... for humor 's sake , but then again , not really . There are folks with seriously heavy accents there , and they are proud of it . "