

= The Stake Out (Seinfeld) =

" The Stake Out " is the second episode produced of the first season of the NBC comedy Seinfeld . It aired as the second episode of the season on May 31 , 1990 . The episode was written by Jerry Seinfeld and Larry David and directed by Tom Cherones . The narrative features Jerry Seinfeld agreeing to attend a birthday party with his ex @-@ girlfriend Elaine Benes . During the party , Jerry tries to flirt with another woman , but fails to learn anything about her except her place of work . Jerry is reluctant to ask Elaine for the woman 's number because he does not talk to her about other women . Jerry 's father , Morty , suggests that he " stake out " the woman 's workplace and pretend to meet her accidentally , which Jerry does . " The Stake Out " is the first episode to feature Elaine and Jerry 's parents . The episode was nominated for a Writers Guild Award in 1991 .

= = Plot = =

Jerry and Elaine have just ended their relationship , but have chosen to remain friends . Elaine invites Jerry to a birthday party ; he agrees to go on the condition that she accompanies him to a wedding that he and his parents have been invited to . At the party , Jerry meets an attractive woman named Vanessa . He wants to flirt with her , but is uncomfortable doing so in Elaine 's presence . The woman leaves with another man before Jerry finds out her name ; however , he learns that she works at a law firm called " Sagman , Bennett , Robbins , Oppenheim and Taft " . During the party , Elaine tries to tell Jerry about a dream she had , which featured him . Jerry tries to end the conversation but this results in an argument after the party is over .

Back at his apartment , Jerry 's parents , Morty and Helen , sleep over , with Jerry sleeping in Kramer 's apartment . He talks about the party and claims that he cannot get the phone number of the woman from Elaine because he does not talk about other women with her ; additionally , she is still angry with him . Morty suggests that Jerry " stake out " the woman by waiting outside her office , an idea which Jerry likes . The following day , Jerry and George Costanza perform the stake out , pretending that they are coming to see someone else in the building named " Art Corvelay " , but under pressure , George insists that they make it " Art Vandelay " . They meet the woman , who says the man she left the party with was her cousin . The two then decide to go out on a date .

Later that night , Jerry finds out from his mother that Elaine knows about the stake out . On the day of the wedding , Elaine tells Jerry that the reason that she was angry was because it was the first time she saw him flirt with another woman . They decide that they have to be able to talk more about their relationships if they wish to remain friends . Elaine then reveals that she has recently met a man using a stake out .

= = Production = =

" The Stake Out " is based on a real-life incident in which David was with a woman that he had dated previously named Monica Yates . They then went to a restaurant and David met another woman . However , he could not flirt as much as he wanted due to the presence of Yates . David did find out the name of the building where she worked at and staked her out . The names of the people in the title of the law firm are friends Larry David made at college .

This episode prompted running gags that were used in later episodes . These were the importer @-@ exporter , George 's ambitions of becoming an architect and Art Vandelay . The character of Vanessa (named after a woman David once went out with) also reappears in a later episode from the first season , " The Stock Tip " .

" The Stake Out " is the first episode to mention the past relationship between Jerry and Elaine . Although it was the third episode to be filmed (after " The Seinfeld Chronicles " and " Male Unbonding ") , it was the second episode to be broadcast . The episode order was changed because " The Stake Out " provided more background information about Elaine and her relationship with Jerry . Julia Louis @-@ Dreyfus commented that she liked the script for the episode because it made the character seem human . She also commented on the fact that it was racy due to the

mention of a pornographic film .

The opening scene caused some problems because it featured a woman walking off the set and taking one step down to get off it . Gleen Forbes , the set designer , thought that this made the show look cheap . The scene in which Jerry and Elaine are in a taxi was filmed in a studio using a black background and moving a fake taxi , due to budget restraints , in a method known as " Poor Man 's Process . "

This is the first episode to feature Jerry 's parents . Only one casting session was performed to find the actors for the roles . Philip Sterling was originally cast to play the role of Morty Seinfeld , but was replaced with Phil Bruns . Bruns was then replaced as well because Seinfeld and David wanted the character to be harsher . As a result , the role was recast and given to Barney Martin ? who had no idea that another actor had already established the part . In this episode Kramer greets Morty by name .

= = Reception = =

When " The Stake Out " was first broadcast on May 31 , 1990 , the episode attracted a Nielsen rating of 16 @. @ 2 / 24 , meaning that 16 @. @ 2 % of American households watched the episode , and that 24 % of all televisions in use at the time were tuned into it . When the episode was first repeated , on December 2 , 1992 , a special introductory film was made featuring Louis @-@ Dreyfus and Seinfeld , in which they stated that this episode was the first one they did together . Strictly speaking , though , it was just the first episode broadcast ? in terms of production order , " Male Unbonding " was the first episode in which the two characters both appeared .

The episode was nominated for a Writers Guild Award in 1991 . Holly E. Ordway for DVD Talk Review commented positively on not just this episode , but the whole of the first season , saying , " What 's not to like about an episode like ' The Stakeout , ' in which (among other things) we are witness to the invention of George 's alter ego , Art Vandelay (and his import / export business) ? " Mary Kay Shilling and Mike Flaherty of Entertainment Weekly also liked the episode but had some doubts , saying it was , " A painfully realistic take on the lovers @-@ to @-@ friends transition that should have been more comically fruitful . "

However , some reviews of the episode were critical , both now and at the time . When first broadcast , Matt Roush from USA Today wrote : " Lacking much in the way of attitude , the show seems obsolete and irrelevant . What it boils down to is that Seinfeld is a mayonnaise clown in the world that requires a little horseradish . "

Colin Jacobson for DVD Movie Guide criticized the writing , saying , " the show 's rather bland . It provides the occasional chuckle , but the characters aren 't formed yet , and that makes the program ring false . The ending reconciliation between Jerry and Elaine causes particular problems ; it doesn 't turn sappy , but it comes too close for Seinfeld . "

= = External Links = =

" The Stakeout " . Internet Movie Database .