

= Signal 30 (Mad Men) =

" Signal 30 " is the fifth episode of the fifth season of the American television drama series Mad Men and the 57th episode of the series overall . It was written by series creator and executive producer Matthew Weiner and writer Frank Pierson , and directed by main cast member John Slattery . It originally aired on the AMC channel in the United States on April 15 , 2012 .

The episode takes place between July 1966 and August 1966 , with references to the 1966 World Cup Final , the Charles Whitman shooting rampage , and the crash of Braniff Flight 250 . Business and pleasure converge on each other at both a dinner party thrown by the Campbells and a misguided whorehouse visit intended to woo a client . Pete discovers that Ken is writing science fiction under a pseudonym , which angers Roger Sterling . Pete 's emasculation continues after a routine office meeting ends in fisticuffs .

The episode 's title is derived from the infamous 1959 driving safety film of the same name , which Pete Campbell is required to watch as part of his driver 's education class . The film , shown widely to high school students across the country during the 1960s , was produced by the Ohio State Highway Patrol and takes its name from the radio code used by that agency for a fatal traffic accident .

" Signal 30 " received 2 @. @ 69 million viewers and a 1 @. @ 0 in the coveted 18 @- @ 49 demographic . It was met with rave reviews , with many commentators calling it the best episode of the season so far . Critics commended John Slattery for his directing work . Matthew Weiner and his Academy Award @- @ winning co @- @ writer Frank Pierson were also praised for the symbolism of the leaking faucet and the character study of Pete Campbell .

= = Plot = =

Pete is being kept awake by a leaking faucet in the kitchen . He eventually goes to fix it , doing so effectively and with self @- @ satisfaction . He is later shown attending a driver 's education class , where he flirts with a teenage girl about to go off to college .

Ken Cosgrove has continued his writing and runs into Peggy while meeting with a publisher over lunch . He is secretive about his work and attempts to politely get rid of her . Peggy is unsettled by this , until Ken later explains his actions in the office . Following a drunken celebration at a bar with other expatriates over England 's 1966 World Cup victory , Lane excitedly tells the other SCDP partners that he has arranged a lunch meeting with a fellow Englishman he met at the bar , Edwin Baker , over possible representation for Jaguar Cars in America .

The Campbells throw a dinner party for the Cosgroves and the Drapers at their home . As the night progresses , Ken 's writing career is accidentally brought up in conversation by his wife , leading to a retelling of one of his stories . The guests are unsure of how to react to the science fiction plot , apart from Don , who asks questions about the character . When Don learns of Ken 's writing success he is supportive of it ; in contrast , Pete denigrates it . Afterwards , the wives retreat to the kitchen , where the faucet Pete previously " fixed " bursts , spraying water everywhere . Pete rushes away to get his toolbox , but by the time he returns , Don has already fixed it , explaining that Pete 's previous fix was merely a coincidence .

Pete returns to his driver 's ed class to find that a new student , Hanson (nicknamed " handsome ") , has the attention of the girl Pete previously flirted with .

Roger advises Lane about how to ensnare a client at dinner . Roger informs Lane to find the man 's source of regret , and make it relatable to himself , forming a " conspiracy " of feeling between the pair . Pryce 's dinner does not go smoothly ; the Jaguar representative appears to have no regrets in his life , and Lane is forced to plan another lunch to try again at confirming the new business . Upon hearing of this failure , Pete tactfully tells Lane to maintain a friendly relationship with the target , and to let Accounts take the business from there . Roger compliments Pete 's letting Lane down softly and taking the task off his hands , forming a renewed alliance with Pete . At the dinner meeting , Edwin , the Jaguar representative , assures Don , Roger , and Pete they have his business , but he wants to have some fun . The executives quickly learn what kind of fun Edwin has in mind and they

visit a local brothel , where Edwin , Roger , and Pete all cheat on their wives , leaving Don at the bar . Don later shares a cab with Pete on the way home in which the latter , drunk , criticizes Don as hypocritical for judging Pete 's adulterous actions . Don explains he is not judging ; he merely didn 't know Pete was miserable . Pete replies sarcastically that he has everything , and Don warns him not to throw it away .

The next day , Roger calls Ken into his office and bluntly tells Ken to stop writing in his spare time , as he should not be diverting any attention from his job . Roger attempts to create a bond between them , stating they are both " unappreciated authors " (referencing the autobiography Roger was dictating in Season 4) , but Ken has none of it .

Later that day , Lane storms into a partners ' meeting , shouting at Pete about how Edwin 's wife has found out about Edwin 's adultery and is devastated ; Edwin has withdrawn his business as a result . Lane blames Pete 's methods for losing the account , and Pete responds by citing Lane 's redundant role at the firm and challenging his sexuality . To the surprise and shock of the other partners , Lane responds by challenging Pete to a fistfight . Pete and Lane exchange blows until Lane wins , leaving a bloodied Pete on the office floor . Bruised , shaken , and humiliated , Pete retreats to his office . Joan goes to comfort Lane , only Lane misinterprets her affection as romantic and kisses her . Joan , startled , stands and opens the door , but does not leave . She instead stays with Lane and forgives his blunder , claiming that he 'd done to Pete what everyone in the office had wanted to do for some time .

Peggy , excitedly , tells Ken about Lane 's beating up Pete . Ken takes pleasure in this , and then tells Peggy about his conversation with Roger . Ken suspects Pete informed Roger , after learning about his publishing deal during the dinner party .

Later , Pete talks about his despair at the day 's events with Don in the elevator , wondering how the fight occurred , when he thought they were all friends . Close to tears , he blurts out that he has nothing . Don doesn 't respond .

The episode ends with Ken writing in bed under a new pen name . Pete is shown back in his driver 's ed class , watching helplessly as Hanson sits with the girl Pete had his eyes on , and the dripping sound of the leaky faucet replaying in his mind .

= = Production = =

Creator Matthew Weiner co @-@ wrote the episode with 86 @-@ year @-@ old veteran screenwriter and Academy Award winner (for Dog Day Afternoon) Frank Pierson . Pierson offered Weiner his writing services back in 2009 , leading him to serve as a consulting producer on the third season . About Pierson , Weiner said , " He 's now in the writer 's room . Arguably one of the greatest living writers . It means you 're doing something right . " Cast member John Slattery , who portrays Roger Sterling on the series , directed the episode , the third time he has directed for the series .

Weiner stated that the episode was about the question -- " What do you want ? " and " Do you ever get a chance to have it ? " , as well as the " tentative nature of business friendships " . He used Lane 's friendship with the Jaguar executive and the dinner at Pete Campbell 's house as examples . Vincent Kartheiser reasoned that Pete invited them over to show off his wife , home , and success . Jon Hamm elaborated on Don 's reluctance to go as his desire to keep his relationship separate from the poisonous influence of Sterling Cooper Draper Pryce .

Jon Hamm pointed to Don 's bad history with whorehouses as to his reluctance to take part in the festivities , while noting that " Pete has no such problem . " Of Pete 's scene with the prostitute , Weiner said , " You see what his fantasy is . You see his powerlessness " and that Pete is " trying to keep his life exciting " . Due to the desperation and unhappiness inherent in Pete Campbell 's character as demonstrated in this episode , Weiner called it " probably the saddest episode we 've ever had . "

The fight scene , according to Jared Harris , was Lane discovering what Pete really thought of him . Harris saw the boxing match as " a mix of so many different styles " with Lane carrying an " old school and traditional " stance . Harris saw it as Lane getting a chance to " fight for his dignity " .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Signal 30 " was watched by 2 @. @ 69 million viewers and obtained a 1 @. @ 0 adults 18 @-@ 49 rating , a slight drop from the previous episode .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The episode opened to laudatory reviews from the television critic community , with much praise reserved for John Slattery 's direction and the acting work of Vincent Kartheiser . Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club gave the episode an A , his highest grade for the season so far , calling it " transfixing and incredible " and " season five 's first instant classic " . He praised the symbol of the dripping faucet as well as the editing choices that suggested " the way that time passes , so that it almost seems as if you ? ve lost yourself in the mists of your own life " . Alan Sepinwall , writing for HitFix , exalted Slattery 's " strong command of the comedic moments " , and recognized that " most of the carnage " of the episode " comes out of failed attempts by Pete , Lane and Ken to be more than they are by building bridges from one world to another . "

Meredith Blake , reviewer for the Los Angeles Times , said that the episode was a sort of masculine companion piece to the fourth season episode " The Beautiful Girls " , as " Signal 30 " focuses on " collective identity crisis of the agency 's male population " . Paste magazine writer Bonnie Stiernberg called Pete Campbell " one of the most complex , underrated characters on TV today " and called the dripping sink " more like a fucking geyser in reality , and if he doesn ? t do something to plug it up soon , he ? s going to drown . " Jordan Bartel of the Chicago Tribune called the episode " a classic " and saw a possible Emmy nomination for Vincent Kartheiser , but felt the kitchen sink symbolism and ending voiceover was a little heavyhanded . Maureen Ryan of The Huffington Post praised Lane 's character and Slattery 's direction during the fight sequence , singling out Don , Bert , and Roger 's reactions as " absolute comedy gold " . She also compared the Pete character to former U.S. President Richard Nixon because : " there 's a sense with Pete that there 's always a chip on his shoulder and he 'll eternally feel misunderstood and undervalued . He 'll always inspire a mixture of pity and exasperation , because he 's smart and insightful , but he can be a piece of work . "