

= The One with Ross 's Wedding =

" The One with Ross 's Wedding " is the two @-@ part fourth season finale of the American television sitcom Friends , comprising the 96th and 97th episodes of the series overall . Originally broadcast by NBC on May 7 , 1998 , the episode features Ross , Monica , Joey , Chandler and later Rachel travelling to England to attend the wedding of Ross Geller (David Schwimmer) to his fiancée Emily (Helen Baxendale) in London . Ross and Emily 's wedding vows are ruined when Ross accidentally says " I , Ross , take thee Rachel " ; as the registrar asks Emily if he should continue , the episode ends on a cliffhanger until the season 5 premiere " The One After Ross Says Rachel " .

The episode 's teleplay was written by Shana Goldberg @-@ Meehan & Scott Silveri from a story by Michael Borkow (part one) and Jill Condon & Amy Toomin (part two) . The episode 's genesis came during the break between seasons three and four , when Channel 4 , the British first @-@ run broadcaster of Friends proposed an episode set in the United Kingdom to the series producers . The proposal fitted neatly with a storyline already being planned , whereby the character of Ross would be married at the end of the fourth season . The episode was filmed in March 1998 under the direction of executive producer Kevin S. Bright on locations in London , and in front of a live studio audience at The Fountain Studios . Scenes featuring Lisa Kudrow 's character Phoebe Buffay were filmed on the show 's sets in Burbank , California , as Kudrow was too pregnant to fly to London with the rest of the cast . Kudrow gave birth to her son on the day of the episode 's original airing .

" The One with Ross 's Wedding " features supporting roles from Tom Conti , Jennifer Saunders , Elliott Gould , Christina Pickles and Olivia Williams , and cameos by Richard Branson , Sarah , Duchess of York , Hugh Laurie and June Whitfield . The episode received good critical feedback in the US on its first broadcast , and is often cited as one of the series ' best episodes ; however , when it aired in the United Kingdom it was poorly received , with criticism focused on the one @-@ dimensional portrayal of Britain and the British .

= = Plot = =

Part 1 begins as the group heads off to Ross 's wedding in London leaving behind a heavily @-@ pregnant Phoebe (Lisa Kudrow) , and Rachel (Jennifer Aniston) , who has declined the invitation . In London , Joey (Matt LeBlanc) and Chandler (Matthew Perry) go see the sights in a musical montage featuring The Clash 's song " London Calling " , with Joey filming everything on his camcorder . Chandler becomes embarrassed by his friend 's enthusiasm , and after Joey buys a large Union Flag hat from a vendor (played by guest star Richard Branson) , they part company . They reunite in their hotel room and Chandler apologizes . Joey impresses him with a video recording of Sarah , Duchess of York (who played herself) . Emily takes and Ross to the hall where the wedding will be , but they discover it is being demolished earlier than originally scheduled . Monica later suggests Emily postpone the wedding until everything is perfect . She passes the thought on to Ross , angering him ; he tells her people have flown from America to be there and that it is " now or never " ; she chooses " never " . Monica berates Ross for his insensitivity and Ross apologizes to Emily , showing her the ceremony can still take place in the half @-@ demolished hall that he has tidied up . She agrees . In New York , Rachel realizes she still loves Ross , and flies to London to tell him .

In Part 2 , Phoebe tries to contact someone by phone to warn them about Rachel , eventually getting through to Joey at the hotel and stirring up homesickness in him . At the rehearsal dinner , Ross introduces his parents , Jack and Judy (Elliott Gould and Christina Pickles) to Emily 's , Steven and Andrea (Tom Conti and Jennifer Saunders) . Jack and Judy have volunteered to pay for half of the wedding expenses but when they discover extravagant costs Ross spends much of the evening trying to bargain down his future in @-@ laws . Chandler makes a toast that is not well received by the guests and Monica is taken aback when a drunken guest mistakes her for Ross 's mother . She and Chandler console each other over alcohol and wake up in bed together the next morning . Rachel eventually boards a plane , after forgetting her passport , and annoys other

passengers (including guest star Hugh Laurie) by telling them about her relationship with Ross . At the hall , she sees how happy Ross is with Emily and just wishes him luck . Phoebe phones Joey to hear the wedding , to the annoyance of Ross . As Ross says his vows , he accidentally says Rachel 's name rather than Emily 's , registrar to ask Emily if he should continue , while the camera shoots from character to character , settling on a shocked Rachel .

= = Production = =

During the summer hiatus of 1997 the producers were contacted by Channel 4 , the British first @-@ run broadcaster of Friends , with a proposal to film an episode in London . Producer Greg Malins is quoted as saying " We had to come up with a storyline that would cause all the Friends to go to London [...] and that ended up being Ross getting married , because they would all have to go to his wedding " .

The episode featured numerous supporting roles from British actors . For her role as Andrea Waltham , Saunders " heard Joan Collins ' voice in [her] head " . Her Absolutely Fabulous co @-@ star June Whitfield appeared in cameo as the housekeeper . Felicity , the bridesmaid who Joey entices , is played by Olivia Williams . Further cameos were made by Sarah Ferguson as herself , Richard Branson as the vendor who sells Joey a hat , and Hugh Laurie as the man sitting next to Rachel on the plane . Lisa Kudrow did not join the others in London as she was too heavily pregnant to fly , like her character Phoebe . Elliott Gould inadvertently revealed to the public that Rachel was to turn up at the wedding , upsetting Marta Kauffman .

Scenes not involving the main apartments were all filmed in London during the week beginning March 30 , 1998 . Location shooting was done mostly for scenes featuring Joey and Chandler ; outside the London Marriott , Grosvenor Square , and the top of an open @-@ top London bus as it crosses Tower Bridge (this scene was excised from the final cut but features in the opening titles of the next episode) . Interiors , such as the restaurant , the Waltham 's hallway and the hotel rooms , were all filmed on purpose @-@ built sets at The Fountain Studios , Wembley . The reaction from the audience when Monica came out from under Chandler 's bed covers meant the actors had to hold their position for 27 seconds . When filming ran late one evening , the production team ordered pizzas for the audience .

The episode was a coup for Channel 4 , who erected crush barriers outside their building to hold back fans when the cast arrived for a press conference (though no fans actually turned up) . The broadcaster also commissioned a behind @-@ the @-@ scenes program from Princess Productions . Hosted by British television personality Johnny Vaughan , The One Where Johnny Makes Friends features comedic tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek interviews with all six main cast (Vaughan contacted Kudrow by payphone , claiming that he couldn 't make international calls from his dressing room) and was broadcast on Channel 4 on May 6 , 1998 .

Two brief behind @-@ the @-@ scenes featurettes were filmed , titled Friends Goes to London and Friends on Location in London , which were included on the DVD releases of seasons four and five . A tie @-@ in book , Making Friends in the UK (ISBN 0752221949) was published by Channel 4 Books in November 1998 . Said book was bundled into a gift pack entitled " The One with the Whole London Wedding " , which featured an extended cut of this episode merged with the next episode .

Ross and Emily 's marriage was originally planned to last , but Helen Baxendale did not wish to remain in America while pregnant . The writers could not script a convincing story for why Emily would not be seen , despite being married to Ross , so Baxendale was written out in the next season , making only three cameo appearances after the season premiere .

= = Reception = =

In its original airing , " The One with Ross 's Wedding " finished third in ratings for the week of May 4 ? 10 , 1998 , with a Nielsen rating of 21 @.@ 2 , equivalent to approximately 20 @.@ 6 million viewing households . It was the third highest @-@ rated show on NBC that week , following Seinfeld and ER ? all of which aired on the network 's Thursday night Must See TV lineup . The episode

aired in the Republic of Ireland on RTÉ on May 25 , 1998 , six days earlier than in the United Kingdom on Sky1 . It also aired on Channel 4 on December 11 , 1998 and was watched by 6 @. @ 49 million viewers , making Friends the highest rated show on the channel for the week ending December 13 , 1998 .

Entertainment Weekly gives the episode an A rating , calling it a " near @-@ perfect finale that finds everyone at the top of their game " with a " tantalizing cliff @-@ hanger , and , in Chandler and Monica , a relationship that will have reverberations for seasons to come " . The authors of Friends Like Us : The Unofficial Guide to Friends state there are " too many ' best moments ' to list in detail " , but single out Rachel describing the perfect wedding to Ross , and Sarah Ferguson 's cameo (though they call Branson 's " embarrassing ") . Following the broadcast of the episode in the UK , The Independent was critical , saying " Twice the length of a normal episode , last night 's offering was approximately half as funny " and suggested the cast were behaving out of character . Many British viewers regarded the episode as an ill @-@ informed and patronising caricature of the UK and its people , causing the episode to be labelled " The One Where They Insult the English " .

David Schwimmer has expressed dissatisfaction that Ross was married again , saying it was " a mistake " and that Ross was not given " enough credit " . He says that Ross 's " taking on the world would just be shattered " following the character 's and that he wouldn 't have risked another . David Crane has said that filming in front of a different audience " energized the actors and writers " . The hall where the wedding ceremony took place would inspire the location for the wedding of David and Victoria Beckham . The events of this episode are revisited in the seventh season episode " The One with the Truth About London " , where flashbacks reveal how Monica and Chandler ended up in bed together . The hotel room set was recreated for those scenes .

In 2013 , TV Guide ranked the beginning of the Monica @-@ Chandler affair as the third greatest twist of all time .