

= Not Pictured =

" Not Pictured " is the second season finale of the American mystery television series Veronica Mars , serving as the twenty @-@ second episode of the season and the forty @-@ fourth episode overall . Co @-@ written by series creator Rob Thomas and John Enbom and directed by John Kretchmer , the episode premiered on UPN on May 9 , 2006 .

The series depicts the adventures of Veronica Mars (Kristen Bell) as she deals with life as a high school student while moonlighting as a private detective . In this episode , Veronica learns the identity of the person responsible for the Neptune High bus crash . Meanwhile , Veronica and her classmates graduate from high school , and Neptune reacts to Aaron Echolls (Harry Hamlin) being acquitted .

" Not Pictured " reveals Cassidy " Beaver " Casablancas (Kyle Gallner) as the perpetrator behind the bus crash and Veronica 's rape . This plot twist was planned since Beaver 's introduction . The episode also features the final appearances of several characters , including Aaron Echolls , Beaver , Jackie Cook (Tessa Thompson) , Duncan Kane (Teddy Dunn) , and Woody Goodman (Steve Guttenberg) . This episode would be the final episode of the show to air on UPN before switching to The CW . The finale was critically acclaimed and is often cited as one of the best of the series .

= = Background = =

The second season revolves around a school bus that mysteriously goes off a cliff , killing nine people . Throughout the season , Veronica investigates the murder , focusing on a variety of suspects , including the Fitzpatrick family , Kendall Casablancas (Charisma Carpenter) , and Terrence Cook (Jeffrey Sams) before turning her suspicion on Woody Goodman (Steve Guttenberg) after she learns that he is a child molester . " Not Pictured " solves the mystery through a plot twist . Meanwhile , Veronica previously dated Duncan Kane (Teddy Dunn) , before he left with his baby daughter (with one of the bus crash victims) for Mexico . In addition , Aaron Echolls (Harry Hamlin) , the murderer of Lilly Kane , Duncan 's sister , was acquitted him of all charges .

= = Plot = =

After the Aaron Echolls trial , he is interviewed by press and cheering fans . Veronica tells Keith (Enrico Colantoni) that the Manning father has offered \$ 20 @,@ 000 for the capture of Woody . Veronica talks to Wallace (Percy Daggs III) about Jackie (Tessa Thompson) leaving . Keith visits Vinnie (Ken Marino) in prison , and they agree to track Woody down together . Veronica and Keith learn that Woody was treated for chlamydia . In a dream , Veronica shares a happy family breakfast before her graduation , meeting Wallace for the first time that day before meeting Lilly (Amanda Seyfried) . Veronica makes a fake call as Gia to Woody 's lawyer , and he reveals that Woody was living at the Quail Creek Lodge under the name Mr. Underhill . At Veronica 's graduation , Keith says that he 's going to chase Woody , and Mac (Tina Majorino) tells Veronica that she is going to a hotel with Beaver that night . Just before he can graduate , Weevil (Francis Capra) is arrested for the murder of Thumper (James Molina) . Veronica graduates and says goodbye to Principal Clemmons (Duane Daniels) .

Keith surprises Veronica with plane tickets to New York . Alicia Fennel (Erica Gimpel) tells Veronica that Wallace has left for Paris to track Jackie . Veronica calls Jackie and tells her that she knows she was never accepted to the Sorbonne and asks her to meet Wallace in New York . At Woody 's hiding place , Keith attacks and tases him . However , Woody denies crashing the bus . Veronica sees a little league team picture in Woody 's restaurant which suggests that Beaver was on Woody 's baseball team and thus connected to the crash . Veronica dashes to the after @-@ graduation party . Beaver and Mac are about to have sex , but while she is in the shower , Beaver reads a text from Veronica to Mac warning her , and Beaver texts Veronica to meet " her " on the roof . Aaron Echolls threatens Veronica in the elevator . Beaver meets Veronica and puts a gun on her . Veronica explains her hypothesis ? that he killed Marcos and Peter so they would not spill the

news of their molestation , that he got explosives from David " Curly " Moran , convinced the PCHers that Curly destroyed the bus before killing Curly himself , also writing Veronica Mars on his palm .

Veronica asks Beaver how she got chlamydia ? Woody had it , and Beaver transmitted it to her the night she was raped (revealing that he , not Duncan , raped her) . Beaver is about to blow up the plane that has both Woody and Keith on it . Beaver pushes a button , and there is a flash in midair . Beaver tases Veronica before Logan appears , having read the text to Mac . The two steal Beaver 's gun , and he ends up committing suicide instead of facing the consequences of his actions . Aaron and Kendall (Charisma Carpenter) are in bed , and while she is in the shower , Clarence Weidman (Christopher B. Duncan) appears and shoots him in the head . The scene moves to Australia , where we learn that Duncan organized the murder . Jackie meets Wallace and tells him that she had to go back to New York , where she is actually from , in order to care for her two @-@ year @-@ old son , whom she left with her mother , when she came to Neptune to reconnect with Terrence . Veronica learns that Keith is alive ? he was not ever on the plane , but Woody was . Kendall receives \$ 8 million , as Cassidy basically gave her the money as part of her plan . Veronica and Logan (Jason Dohring) rekindle their relationship . Kendall makes Keith a business proposal , and as a result , he misses their plane flight to New York .

= = Arc significance = =

The episode finalizes several important plot strands of the second season . Together , Keith and Vinnie Van Lowe track down Woody Goodman and arrest him . Veronica imagines graduation if Lilly had not been murdered , and then actually graduates . Jackie reveals her true past to Wallace before leaving him finally . Veronica learns that Beaver was responsible for the bus crash and gave her chlamydia after he raped her . Beaver explodes the plane with Woody Goodman on it . Logan comes up to the roof and attacks Beaver . Afterwards , Beaver commits suicide by jumping off the top of the building . Aaron is murdered by Clarence Wiedman , and Duncan was the person responsible for the attack . Veronica and Keith plan to go to New York , but due to a business offer from Kendall , Keith misses their flight .

= = Production = =

The episode was co @-@ written by Rob Thomas and John Enbom and directed by John T. Kretchmer , marking Thomas ' sixth writing credit for Veronica Mars , Enbom 's tenth writing credit for the series , and Kretchmer 's ninth directing credit for the show . " Not Pictured " reveals Cassidy " Beaver " Casablancas as the perpetrator behind Veronica 's rape and the bus crash . Thomas and the crew had planned for Beaver to be the second season antagonist since the character 's first appearance in " M.A.D. " . Thomas said , " We knew that Beaver was the killer of Season 2 when we introduced him in Season 1 . We knew his motivation , so playing him as the picked @-@ upon , less @-@ manly Casablancas boy was all by design . " An episode earlier in the series , titled " A Trip to the Dentist " , supposedly revealed that Duncan had had sex with Veronica when they were both under the influence of drugs , a fact which is potentially negated by this episode . When writing the episode , Thomas and Diane Ruggiero did not plan for Beaver to be the actual rapist , with Thomas saying that " I wish I could claim that we were that clever . "

Lead actress Kristen Bell , who deduced that Aaron Echolls was the killer in Season 1 , was unable to figure out the identity of the murderer in Season 2 . " You never , ever see the show keep the killer in the main titles , " adding that the writers " think they 're so smart ? and they are ! " Actor Michael Muhney , who plays Don Lamb , expressed some anxiety over the course of the season that he would be the killer . However , Bell played a prank on Muhney , telling him that she knew the killer was going to be Loretta Cancun , a minor character from the pilot . Bell said , " [Muhney] only believed me for like a day . " Kyle Gallner , who plays Beaver , did not know that his character was going to be the murderer until just before the shooting of " Not Pictured " , when one of the costume designers told him about the reveal :

I had no idea up until right before we shot the episode . They wouldn 't tell me . The only reason I found out was the wardrobe guy had gotten the script and he was like " Do you wanna know ? " and I was like " What ? " and he kinda spilled the beans actually . So I had no idea . I thought it was more along the lines of I was younger than everybody so I wasn 't going off to college . That 's why I was only in one season , I didn 't know it was because that whole thing was gonna happen . So I literally didn 't know until probably about a week before .

The episode also features the final appearance of Harry Hamlin as Season 1 antagonist Aaron Echolls after the character is murdered by Clarence Wiedman (Christopher B. Duncan) . Later , we learn that the murder was ordered by Duncan Kane (Teddy Dunn) , who appears briefly in a small cameo . Dunn had made his final regular appearance in " Donut Run " and had left the show partly due to fan dislike of the character . Dunn later stated that he thought that the purpose of the cameo was to garner sympathy for the character before his final departure . " I think Rob 's goal was to leave the character on a high note . I certainly think he did so in a heroic way . "

" Not Pictured " would mark the final appearance by series regular Jackie Cook (Tessa Thompson) . When asked whether Jackie was done with the show , Thomas replied , " She is . I would not hesitate for a second to have her come in to do an arc , but she will not be a series regular . " One notable recurring character absence in the finale is that of Gia Goodman (Krysten Ritter) . Ritter wanted to appear in the episode , but she was unable to do so because of scheduling conflicts . " It was unfortunate for me that I couldn 't be in the finale episode (I booked a pilot) because I was looking forward to showing how everything that went down affected her . On a side note , I did start to think that I was responsible for the crash . I really wanted her to be a bad guy . " She would later appear in the Veronica Mars movie .

" Not Pictured " was the final episode of Veronica Mars to air on UPN before the show switched to The CW as part of the 2006 United States broadcast TV realignment . Due to low ratings , there was considerable doubt that Veronica Mars would be renewed . Meanwhile , The CW had developed several new pilots . However , The CW did not pick up the majority of their pilots , making room on the schedule for other shows . In order to express their support for the show 's renewal , fans flew a banner outside the offices of UPN and The CW .

Renewal was uncertain until after the finale aired . In April , actor Enrico Colantoni , who plays Keith , stated regarding renewal ,

Unofficially , everyone at CBS and Warner Bros is saying , " Yeah , no worries ! " But you know , those are always famous last words . And then last year they told us two days after we wrapped , and they got a lot of criticism over that . So I know they 're not gonna make that mistake again . They 're gonna wait until May .

Colantoni also expressed optimism towards the show 's future on The CW , believing that it would be a chance for the show to get more exposure . On May 15 , before the official press release was announced , it was believed that The CW had ordered 13 episodes of Veronica Mars . Later , it was revealed that the series had been renewed for a 22 @-@ episode season , but that the season could be shortened if ratings were poor .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

In its original broadcast , " Not Pictured " received 2 @.@ 42 million viewers , ranking 98th of 109 in the weekly rankings . This marked a decrease in viewers from the second season premiere , " Normal Is the Watchword " , which received 3 @.@ 29 million viewers and the first season finale , " Leave It to Beaver " , which received 2 @.@ 99 million viewers .

= = = Reviews = = =

The episode was critically acclaimed . Jesse Hassenger of PopMatters wrote that " the season

finale showcased the series at its surprising and funny best , not its rushed and convoluted worst . " He called the reversal of the rape plot line a " gimmicky reversal " but that " thematically it worked . " The reviewer commented positively on the reveal of Beaver as the murderer as well as the cliffhanger . " The season 's low @-@ key but effective cliffhanger ? suggested again that her life , however charmed and TV @-@ ish it can seem , remains in youthful flux . "

Eric Goldman of IGN gave a glowing review , giving the episode a 9 out of 10 , indicating that it was " amazing . " He wrote that " most of the major mysteries established this season are given a satisfying and proper conclusion . " He praised how the episode combined all the second season storylines , including the mysteries and the Neptune High portion of Veronica 's life . " The final scenes do a very nice job of closing the high school chapter of the Veronica Mars story , while also leaving plenty of questions about the future of some characters in particular . " Goldman also lauded the performances of Kristen Bell and Enrico Colantoni , writing that " As always , Kristen Bell and Enrico Colantoni knock it out of the park , with Bell especially having to go through a rather stunning amount of emotional transitions , all of which she does spectacularly . "

In a review of the whole second season , Goldman wrote that " Their was [sic] some complaints that the season finale was a bit too rushed , with a lot of information offered all at once . Yet while that 's a bit valid , it 's also an exciting and surprising finale , that actually offers some bigger shocks than season 1 . " Rowan Kaiser of The A.V. Club gave a mostly positive review , praising the reveal of Beaver as the murderer while being slightly critical of his reveal as Veronica 's rapist . He wrote that " as twists go , this was a good one " and that " Kyle Gallner makes the transition from goofy , kind of pathetic little brother to insane mastermind quite well ? the circles under his eyes , specifically , which seemed to indicate anxiety before suddenly indicated darkness and insanity when seen in a new light . " Regarding the rape reveal , the reviewers wrote that " On a narrative level , I was fine with it ... it 's still a big problem in an emotional sense . In general , rape is a difficult subject , and to see it used as a plot device creates problems on its own . " Kaiser summed up his review by writing , " ' Not Pictured ' acts as an effective capstone for a chaotic season . Sure , it doesn 't entirely work , but overall , it gets the job done with emotion and flair . "

Price Peterson , writing for TV.com , gave a glowing review , calling it " the best @-@ yet episode of Veronica Mars " . He elaborated by stating ,

This episode was just a total triumph for how it brought together SO MUCH from the past 22 episodes and beyond . I loved the Aaron Echolls assassination . I loved that last image of Duncan enjoying his victory in a perpetual magic hour on some Australian beach . I especially loved the It 's a Wonderful Life @-@ esque dream sequence . This episode was so good that even though I knew Beaver was the bad guy , I still came away shocked by many of the reveals . That 's just good writing right there .

Conversely , Television Without Pity gave the episode a " B + " .

Amy Ratcliffe , writing for IGN , ranked the episode as the fifth best episode of Veronica Mars , writing , " the Season 2 finale had head @-@ twisting reveals , heartbreaking moments ? tragedy , and so many jumps in crime @-@ solving that Sherlock might not have been able to keep up . " BuzzFeed called the episode the best episode of the series , stating , " It 's extremely violent , extremely scary , and extremely moving . If you don 't cry watching this episode , there 's a tiny little rock where your heart should be . " On a similar list , TV Line ranked the episode third , only behind " A Trip to the Dentist " and " Pilot " . Give Me My Remote also ranked the episode as the best of the series , writing , " If I had to pick a single episode to represent the show , this would be it . The actual plot of this episode was compelling , fast @-@ paced , and the twist at the end was shocking . " The reviewer went on to praise Kristen Bell 's performance and the less action @-@ heavy parts of the episode .

Digital Spy listed the episode on an unranked list of the five best Veronica Mars episodes , writing that it " has its issues " but that " the rooftop sequence with Veronica , Cassidy (Kyle Gallner) and Logan is pure , gorgeous melodrama , and Keith 's fake @-@ out death feels devastating instead of cheap thanks to Kristen Bell 's gut @-@ wrenching performance . " In a list of the 50 greatest TV shows of all time , Empire noted " Not Pictured " as the best episode of the series . Reviewer Alan Sepinwall wrote that he was " very pleased with how things turned out " and that the twist fit with the

evidence . However , he was more critical of Keith 's near @-@ death , writing , " What did feel like piling on , however , was Beaver ' killing ' Keith . Kristen Bell tried her best to sell it , but I wasn 't buying . " Entertainment Weekly called the episode one of the " 10 Essential Episodes " of Veronica Mars .