

= Sister City ( Parks and Recreation ) =

" Sister City " is the fifth episode of the second season of Parks and Recreation , and the eleventh overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on October 15 , 2009 . In the episode , Leslie welcomes a delegation from Venezuela , who act disrespectfully toward Pawnee and the United States .

The episode was written by Alan Yang and directed by series co @-@ creator Michael Schur . It featured Saturday Night Live performer Fred Armisen in a guest appearance as Raul , the head of the Venezuelan delegation . According to Nielsen Media Research , the episode was seen by 4 @.@ 69 million household viewers , a drop from the previous week . The episode received generally positive reviews .

= = Plot = =

Leslie ( Amy Poehler ) and the Pawnee parks department prepares for a visit by park department officials from Boraqua , Pawnee 's Sister City in Venezuela . Leslie warns her co @-@ workers the Venezuelan government officials will likely be poor , simple people . Later , the Venezuelan delegation arrives , headed by their parks department vice director Raul Alejandro Bastilla Pedro de Veloso de Morana , the Vice @-@ director Ejecutivo del Diputado del Departamento de Parques , L.G.V. ( Fred Armisen ) . There are cultural clashes right away , like when they mistake Tom ( Aziz Ansari ) for a servant and order him to get their bags . They also mistakenly believe they can choose any woman to have sex with ; they all favor Donna ( Retta ) . Raul and Leslie exchange gifts during a meet @-@ and @-@ greet party , where Raul and the Venezuelans act condescending toward the Pawnee residents , making offensive remarks about the town and mocking the gifts Leslie gives them . They continue to give orders to Tom , who follows along because they give him large cash tips .

The Venezuelan intern Johnny ( JC Gonzalez ) falls in love with April ( Aubrey Plaza ) , who convinces him she is feared and very powerful . Meanwhile , Leslie tells the Venezuelans that she is seeking to raise \$ 35 @,@ 000 to fill in a pit to make a park . Raul and his colleagues start to laugh , telling her they have so much money from oil , they can build whatever they want . Leslie , who is growing increasingly annoyed with the Venezuelans , decides to take them to Pawnee 's nicest park with hopes of impressing them . Instead , they are disgusted , and Raul mistakes the park for the aforementioned pit . Leslie later takes them to a public meeting to show them democracy in action , but all of the citizens shout angry and annoyed questions at Leslie . An unimpressed Raul wonders where are the armed guards to take the protestors to jail . When Raul tells Leslie they live like kings in Venezuela and answer to nobody , she explodes in anger , insulting their uniforms and Hugo Chavez . The Venezuelans storm out .

Leslie calls a meeting and apologizes to Raul , who in turn apologizes as well and offers Leslie a check for \$ 35 @,@ 000 to fill in the pit . Leslie fears it may be " dirty money " , but accepts . During a photo opportunity later , Raul sets up a video camera and asks Leslie say " Viva Venezuela " and " Viva Chavez " to it . Against her wishes , Leslie reluctantly does so . When Raul starts speaking Spanish to the camera , Leslie asks April to translate , and learns Raul is discussing his " Committee to Humiliate and Shame America " . A furious Leslie tears up the \$ 35 @,@ 000 check and shouts " Viva America " , prompting Raul to declare Pawnee is no longer their sister city and storm out . Leslie insists she will raise the money to build the park without them and Tom , inspired by her example , secretly puts all the tip money he made from the Venezuelans into the park donation jar . The episode ends with Leslie and Tom later receiving an online video from April , who tells them she and Donna are vacationing with Johnny ( JC Gonzalez ) in his Venezuelan palace , which is watched over by armed guards .

= = Production = =

" Sister City " was written by Alan Yang and directed by series co @-@ creator Michael Schur . The

episode featured comedian Fred Armisen in a guest appearance as Raul , the vice director of a Venezuelan parks department . Armisen was a cast member of NBC 's sketch comedy show Saturday Night Live , where he previously worked with performer Poehler and writer Schur . Armisen has played Venezuelan characters before , and previously imitated President of Venezuela Hugo Chavez on Saturday Night Live . Armisen said he got into character by thinking about his uncle , who is from Venezuela . But he said it was not a difficult performance because " most of the joke is the uniform " , which included a tan military @-@ style jacket with medals , a red beret and a sash with the colors of the Venezuela flag . The uniform also included a fictional seal designed by Schur , which included an image of Chavez , machine guns , an oil tower , a lion and a parrot .

Schur said of the episode 's plot , " They 're very confused because in Venezuela the government is so powerful ; their parks department travels with military escorts and motorcades and stuff . They have all the money in the world because of their oil and they ( don 't understand ) why Pawnee 's parks department is so rinky @-@ dink . " A fan of Parks and Recreation since its inception , Armisen said he laughed as soon as he read the script , and found it even funnier during the table read with the cast . After working with Armisen , Rashida Jones described him as " one of the funniest people on the planet " .

Within a week of the episode 's original broadcast , three deleted scenes from " Sister City " were made available on the official Parks and Recreation website . In the first 100 @-@ second clip , Ron talks about his hatred for socialism , and Raul says he fears Ron because of his mustache , which he said makes him " cower in fear " ( repeatedly saying the word ' mustache ' ) . In the second minute @-@ long clip , Raul discusses the medals he received for his parks @-@ related accomplishments , including " doing away with people making speeches in the parks " , " organizing the garbage so it 's not all over the place " and " looking at the leaves " . In the third 100 @-@ second clip , Raul and the Venezuelans question why Leslie does not have a giant oil painting of herself in her office . After his final argument with Leslie , Tom refuses to follow Raul 's orders to open the door for him , and Raul has trouble opening it because " it 's been a while since I 've done this " .

= = Cultural references = =

" Sister City " largely portrayed Chavez and his socialist ideology in a negative light . The script portrays the Venezuelans as belittling and contemptuous toward Americans . They repeatedly claim Pawnee and the United States are inferior compared to the power and splendor they are accustomed to in Venezuela . Their negative attitude toward Americans is particularly demonstrated by the name of their delegation , the Committee to Humiliate and Shame America , as well as the line from one of the delegates , " This is not personal . We just think you are weak and your city is disgusting . "

While discussing how many television channels he gets in Venezuela , Raul said he already knows who wins Project Runway , a fashion design reality television show on the Bravo network . In trying to maintain composure in the face of insults from the Venezuelans , Leslie said she was following the example of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton , of whom she said , " Nobody takes a punch like her . She 's the strongest , smartest punching bag in the world . " Raul says his city is also a sister city to Kaesong , North Korea , which he said is " far nicer " than Pawnee .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on October 15 , 2009 , " Sister City " was seen by 4 @.@ 69 million household viewers , according to Nielsen Media Research . It was a drop from the previous week 's episode , " Practice Date " . " Sister City " received a 2 @.@ 0 rating / 6 share among viewers aged between 18 and 49 . The episode received generally positive reviews . Entertainment Weekly writer Henning Fog said " Sister City " continued a trend of excellence in the second season that has established Parks and Recreation as NBC 's best comedy . Fog said the episode also further expanded its characters , by showing Leslie is not a complete pushover and Tom is a kind

person .

Salon.com writer Heather Havrilesky called the episode an " instant classic " , and particularly praised the guest performance of Fred Armisen . She said the episode " benefits from the show 's writers ' increasing habit of giving everything from political scandals to lame local events the Onion treatment " . Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger said it was " another strong one " , and said the Leslie character is growing less clueless and more three @-@ dimensional . Robert Philpot of the Fort Worth Star @-@ Telegram said he believed the show still too closely resembled The Office , but that " Sister City " " showed that Parks and Recreation can equal The Office for comic discomfort " . Fowler of IGN said the anti @-@ American sentiment demonstrated by the Venezuelan delegation " was a funny twist that didn 't completely wear itself out , although it came close " . Fowler particularly praised Armisen , who he said risked overshadowing the regular cast , and the sardonic comedy of Plaza . Not all reviews were positive . The A.V. Club writer Leonard Pierce , who said he felt the second season had been excellent so far , described " Sister City " as " easily the weakest episode of the season , maybe the series " . Pierce called the political overtones " ham @-@ handed " , the humor was too over @-@ the @-@ top , and the episode suffered from the absence of most of the supporting cast .

= = DVD release = =

" Sister City " , along with the other 23 second season episodes of Parks and Recreation , was released on a four @-@ disc DVD set in the United States on November 30 , 2010 . The DVD included deleted scenes for each episode . It also included a commentary track for " Sister City " featuring Amy Poehler , Fred Armisen , Alan Yang and Michael Schur .