

= Goodbye ( Grey 's Anatomy ) =

" Goodbye " is the second episode of the sixth season of the American television medical drama Grey 's Anatomy , and the show 's 104th episode overall . It was written by Krista Vernoff and directed by Bill D 'Elia . The episode was originally broadcast on the American Broadcasting Company ( ABC ) in the United States on September 24 , 2009 . In " Goodbye " , the staff at Seattle Grace Hospital come to terms with the death of their colleague Dr. George O 'Malley ( T.R. Knight ) . Further storylines include Dr. Richard Webber ( James Pickens , Jr . ) being engaged in a vehicular collision , Dr. Callie Torres ( Sara Ramirez ) receiving a job as an attending physician at a neighboring hospital , and Dr. Alex Karev ( Justin Chambers ) ' s marriage with Dr. Izzie Stevens ( Katherine Heigl ) taking a toll after her near @-@ death experience .

The episode was the second part of the two @-@ hour season six premiere special , the first being " Good Mourning " , and was filmed in Los Angeles , California . The special was the first premiere that Knight did not appear in , following an early release from his contract , and Jessica Capshaw ( Dr. Arizona Robbins ) ' first premiere in which she received star billing , having been upgraded from a recurring star from season five . Shannon Lucio reprised her role as a guest star , in addition to Amy Madigan , Martha Plimpton , Zack Shada , Mitch Pileggi , and Zoe Boyle . " Goodbye " opened to generally positive critical reviews , with Chyler Leigh ( Dr. Lexie Grey ) ' s and Ramirez 's performances praised in particular . Upon its initial airing , the episode was viewed by 17 @.@ 03 million Americans , and garnered a 6 @.@ 7 / 17 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , ranking first for the night .

= = Plot = =

In the episode , Dr. Cristina Yang ( Sandra Oh ) and Dr. Owen Hunt ( Kevin McKidd ) are undergoing couples therapy with the hospital 's psychiatrist , Dr. Wyatt ( Amy Madigan ) . The two are instructed not to engage in sexual activity , until their emotional deficits are healed , which they find uneasy to accomplish . Clara Ferguson ( Zoe Boyle ) is no longer depressed , and urges Dr. Lexie Grey ( Chyler Leigh ) , who has given her attentive care , to return home .

Ferguson 's depression returns again , when Dr. Miranda Bailey ( Chandra Wilson ) informs her that she has an infection that requires surgery . She rejects the surgery , and is further disappointed when Dr. Cristina Yang ( Sandra Oh ) tells her that the worst @-@ case scenario is that she will need an ostomy pouching system . Dr. Arizona Robbins ( Jessica Capshaw ) ' s chronic pain patient , Andy Michaelson ( Zack Shada ) and his mother Pam ( Martha Plimpton ) enter the emergency room , so Robbins and resident Dr. Alex Karev ( Justin Chambers ) order a 3D MRI , which is denied by the chief of surgery Dr. Richard Webber ( James Pickens , Jr . ) .

On his way to a meeting , Webber goes through a red light , and collides with another vehicle , resulting in him becoming T @-@ boned . Webber is taken to the neighboring Mercy West Hospital , where he is treated by former colleague Dr. Callie Torres ( Sara Ramirez ) , and subsequently discharged . Ferguson finally agrees to the surgery , after constant pleas from Lexie , and makes a start to physical therapy . Lexie returns home to see her sister Dr. Meredith Grey ( Ellen Pompeo ) and her new husband Dr. Derek Shepherd ( Patrick Dempsey ) having sex in the kitchen . Dr. Izzie Stevens ( Katherine Heigl ) is at home , begging her husband Karev to spend time with her , but he dismisses her . At Dr. Mark Sloan ( Eric Dane ) ' s apartment , his girlfriend Lexie has moved in , and his bisexual ex @-@ girlfriend Torres walks in on Sloan in the shower . Lexie expresses her concern to Torres about doing this , and she apologizes . Robbins confronts Shepherd , the hospital 's chief of neurosurgery , and asks him to run an expensive test to see if Andy has Tethered spinal cord syndrome , which reveals that he has it , and it is reversed through surgery . Stevens notices the girl Dr. George O 'Malley ( T.R. Knight ) saved , Amanda ( Shannon Lucio ) , sitting outside the hospital , and tells her to go get a life , because O 'Malley did not save her so she could be miserable . At the conclusion of the episode , Stevens unites with Karev , and Webber announces that Seattle Grace will be merging with Mercy West .

= = Production = =

" Goodbye " was written by Krista Vernoff and directed by Bill D 'Elia . Joe Mitacek edited the episode and Donald Lee Harris served as production designer . Featured music includes Fanfarlo 's " Ghosts " , Katie Herzig 's " Hologram " , Lucy Schwartz 's " Gravity " , and Emiliana Torrini 's " Today Has Been OK " . " Today Has Been OK " played while Shepherd ( Dempsey ) was consoling Bailey ( Wilson ) about O 'Malley ( Knight ) ' s death , in the elevator . This song was originally played in the season two episode " Into You Like a Train " , when Bailey was consoling Shepherd . This is the only time the series has reused a song . " Goodbye " is the second hour of the season six premiere . It was the first premiere not to feature Knight 's character , O 'Malley . Knight was released from his contract at the conclusion of season five , following a disagreement with series creator Shonda Rhimes over lack of screen time for his character . When asked to make a ' flashback ' appearance in season six , Knight declined .

The scene in which Yang ( Oh ) and Hunt ( McKidd ) were partaking in couples therapy , was originally planned to be a comical moment . Vernoff commented on this : " I handed them that scene 20 MINUTES BEFORE CAMERAS ROLLED . It was actually a funny scene right up until the last minute . Sandra and Kevin had smart questions ? and what became crystal clear to me instantly is that this storyline could not be resolved in a humorous way . It had earned weight . Indeed , it required weight . " In the episode , Meredith ( Pompeo ) grieves her pain through constant sex with Shepherd . Vernoff explained she loves the fact that Meredith is healthy enough to realize what she is doing . At the conclusion of " Goodbye " , Yang finally came to terms with the death of O 'Malley . Vernoff offered her insight :

" Cristina , who as a young child , held her father ' s heart in her hands as it stopped beating , is perhaps the least " processed " of our core group , the least " healthy , " the least able to handle the impact of George ' s sudden death . Mer is using sex , Cristina is using her frustration around her lack of sex . So when she finally gets in bed with Owen and she finally has the tension release that comes with that kind of , um ? tension release ? She can ' t hold the truth off anymore . That ' s the thing about the five stages of grief . They truly are different for everyone . Cristina clung to the Denial stage for 40 days . And then she let in the fact that George died . And as much as Mer ' s tears got to me , that intake of breath from Cristina got to me even more . The sudden realization that George really did ? die .

= = Reception = =

= = = Broadcasting = = =

" Goodbye " was originally broadcast on September 24 , 2009 , on the American Broadcasting Company ( ABC ) in the United States , following the first part of the season six premiere " Good Mourning " . It was viewed by a total of 17 @. @ 04 million Americans , across its two @- @ hour 9 : 00 Eastern time @- @ slot . The episode was the series ' second least @- @ viewed season premiere , up to that point , just ahead of the season one premiere ? " A Hard Day 's Night " . In comparison to the previous episode , " Goodbye " made a 0 @. @ 08 % decrease in terms of viewership . However , the episode 's viewership ranked first in both its time @- @ slot and the entire night , beating out CBS 's CSI . In addition to being a success in viewership , the episode also did well in ratings . " Goodbye " ' s 6 @. @ 7 / 17 Nielsen rating ranked first in its time @- @ slot and the entire night , for both the rating and share percentages of the 18 ? 49 demographic . The episode also received a rating of 10 @. @ 9 / 18 in the 18 @- @ 34 demographic , beating out CBS 's The Mentalist , and ranking first in the ratings and shares for the demographic .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The episode opened to mixed feedback , and aired back @- @ to @- @ back with " Good Mourning

" , as a two @-@ hour season premiere special . Alan Sepinwall of NJ.com commented on the two episodes being conjoined into one week : " I keep going back and forth on whether it was a good idea to do that , or if we 'd have been better off spacing out the tearful speeches over two weeks . That isn 't to say that there shouldn 't have been tears , or speeches . George 's death , no matter how marginal he had become last season , is and should be a huge event in the lives of these characters . Had the show raced through Elizabeth Kubler @-@ Ross 's famous five stages of grief , it would have rang false , as if everyone making the show was in a hurry to move past the events of the wildly uneven fifth season . My problem is , when you put two episodes back @-@ to @-@ back , those rhythms - the pace at which the acts build to emotional crescendos and then briefly recede - start to become too predictable , and it sucks some of the life and emotion away . " Sepinwall also praised Wilson 's , Ramirez 's , and Chamber 's performances .

The Huffington Post 's Michael Pascua praised Dempsey 's character , in comparison to his performance in " Good Mourning " , writing : " Derek was set up as a real character in the second half , not just a one @-@ sided McDreamy . First , Arizona and Derek finally fix the problem with Andy , then the two had some genuine interaction . Derek confronted Alex about his problems with Izzie . He took a moment to talk to Mark about the hospital 's situation and ended the episode by confronting a very edgy Bailey . Miraculously , he had the time to have a lot of sex with Meredith . " Pascua also enjoyed Leigh 's performance , commenting : " Lexie continued to evolve . I loved the anxiety that Lexie had with Callie . She wasn 't really a doctor in any sense in this episode , just a friend to lean on . " Though he was impressed with the majority of the episode , Pascua had mixed feelings on the character of Stevens , attributing it to his dislike of Heigl .