

= The Baby Shower (Seinfeld) =

" The Baby Shower " is the tenth episode of the second season of the NBC sitcom Seinfeld , and the show 's 15th episode overall . In the episode , Elaine Benes (Julia Louis @-@ Dreyfus) throws a baby shower for her friend Leslie (Christine Dunford) at Jerry 's (Jerry Seinfeld) apartment , while he is out of town . Jerry 's friend George Costanza (Jason Alexander) once had a terrible date with Leslie and intends to confront her at the shower . Meanwhile , Jerry is convinced by his neighbour Kramer (Michael Richards) to install illegal cable television .

Larry Charles wrote the episode , which was directed by Tom Cherones , and was partly based on a friend of his who was pregnant but did not want to experience childbirth . The episode also contained a dream sequence in which the title character was killed , as Charles was interested in " the Quentin Tarantino version of a sitcom " . All of the characters ' storylines intersect in the final scenes , an element that the writing staff would continue to use in later episodes . The episode 's first broadcast in the United States on May 16 , 1991 gained a Nielsen rating of 12 @.@ 4 / 21 and was negatively received by critics .

= = Plot = =

Elaine holds a baby shower for her friend Leslie at Jerry 's apartment , while Jerry is performing in Buffalo . George is excited , as he expects the baby shower to be the perfect opportunity to confront the woman who gave him the worst date of his life by pouring Bosco chocolate sauce on his red collared shirt while doing performance art . Jerry is frustrated by his television 's bad reception , and is convinced by Kramer to have cable illegally installed by two Russians (Vic Polizos and James Lashly) .

As Jerry is sleeping on the plane he dreams of returning to his apartment only to find several FBI agents there interrogating Kramer , who apparently has ratted out Jerry . When Jerry protests that he had nothing to do with it , they reveal that the Russian was an undercover FBI agent . Jerry tries to flee only to be gunned down by the agents . This jolts him awake . He finds his show is canceled due to bad weather , and George picks up Jerry at the airport . Jerry is initially amazed that George is perfectly willing , even anxious to drive Jerry home . When he informs George they cannot go back to his apartment because of the baby shower , George insists and Jerry discovers that George is wearing the red shirt and is just using the favor as a chance to encounter Leslie at the baby shower . Meanwhile , Kramer and the two Russians crash the shower to install cable television , start to eat all the food and get into a heated argument . When George and Jerry arrive , George 's plan proves unsuccessful , as he cannot muster the courage confront Leslie and instead awkwardly tries to curry her favor . He is interrupted when one of the other party guests suddenly confronts Jerry because he never called her back after a date . This unpleasant scene is the final straw and the guests leave hurriedly . On the way out of the bathroom the angry woman bumps Leslie and her dessert into George , adding a chocolate cake stain to the Bosco stain already on the shirt . Jerry changes his mind about the cable hook @-@ up , but is still charged with a large amount of money . When he refuses to pay , the Russians break the picture tube of his television set .

= = Production = =

" The Baby Shower " was written by Larry Charles and directed by Tom Cherones , who directed all of season two 's episodes . The episode was the first episode written by Charles , who would remain with the show through the fifth season . Charles had met Seinfeld co @-@ creator Larry David and Richards , when he was part of the writing staff of the ABC sketch show Fridays , David and Richards were part of the show 's ensemble cast . He had been unable to write for the show 's first season , as Charles had been writing for The Arsenio Hall Show during its production . Charles frequently had difficulty with writing Jerry 's stand @-@ up material , therefore , in " The Baby Shower " , Seinfeld used some of his own material . The episode was a combination of loose storylines that had been brought to the writers table . Charles explained that the writing staff of the

show considered it a challenge to weave together loose ideas into one episode . The episode was partly based on a friend of Charles , who was pregnant but did not want to experience childbirth and therefore asked the doctor to anesthetize her . Charles thought this was very ironic . The Leslie character was largely based on Karen Finley and Johanna Went , two performance artists who both used foods in their acts , Charles considered them " a ripe target for satire " .

As Charles was always trying to find elements that were unusual in sitcoms , the episode had a scene in which Jerry dreams he is interrogated by the FBI for his illegal cable hookup , and is killed when he tries to escape . Charles recalled the dream sequence as " one of the most ambiguous scenes we did [in season two] " and felt it was very Tarantino @-@ like . At the end of the dream Kramer holds Jerry in his arm , stating " what have you done to my little cable boy ? " ; this scene had to be filmed multiple times , as it was hard for Seinfeld not to laugh when Richards stated the line . In audio commentary he recorded for the Seinfeld : Volume 1 DVD set , Charles noted how he established three of the episode 's four storylines in one scene , in which the characters eat and talk at Monk 's Cafe . " The Baby Shower " also is one of the few episodes of season two in which the primary storylines of all four characters come together in the final scene . In " The Busboy " , which had been filmed earlier , the four storylines also intersected in the final scene , but the episode aired as the final episode of season two . Charles also felt the episode defined the Kramer character more , as it is the first episode in which Kramer speaks out against the system . In addition , the episode also establishes Elaine 's interest in the Kennedys , a plot element that would return later in the season four episode " The Virgin " .

" The Baby Shower " was first read by the show 's cast on November 14 , 1990 . It was filmed in front of a live audience on November 20 . A technique called " Poor Man 's Process " was used during the car scene with George and Jerry ; one or two crew members would shake the car to give the impression that it was moving , though it never actually was . Other crew members would move lights around the set to simulate street lights or headlights of other cars . Behind the car , two lights on a wheeled stand were placed to give the impression that there was a car behind it . A cheap plastic sticker was put on Jerry 's television screen to give the impression that it was broken . A number of scenes were changed or cut during production of the episode . In early drafts of the script , the episode opened with Kramer telling Jerry about the Russian cable installers . In the first draft of the script Elaine and Jerry would realize ahead of time that the baby shower and the cable installation would take place at the same time . This was changed as the writers felt it would be better left as a surprise . Some dialogue was removed from the scene , as Kramer initially told Jerry Benjamin Franklin would have wanted free cable . Additional dialogue between the baby shower guests regarding turning off men was also cut . The scene in which Mary Cantardi , a woman Jerry went out with once but never called afterwards , makes a scene at the baby shower was not in the original script , but was added during rehearsals to give Seinfeld more involvement in the final scene .

Don Perry guest starred as an airplane passenger next to Jerry , when he wakes up from his nightmare . Perry states that he might be the last person Jerry will see alive . This line was not in the original script , but was added because Perry , as Charles explained , " just had the right look " . Christine Dunford was cast as Leslie , Charles commented " she just came in ; gave a great reading " . At this point in our show business history , I don 't think we knew anybody " . Dunford would return later as a saleswoman in the season five episode " The Pie " . Margaret Reed , best known for her role on the soap opera As the World Turns , appeared as Mary Cantardi , a woman who screams at Jerry for not calling her back after a date . Vic Polizos and James Lashly guest @-@ starred as the Russian cable installers . Norman Brenner , who worked as Richards ' stand @-@ in on the show for all its nine seasons , appears as an extra in the first scene of the episode , standing at the counter at Monk 's Cafe .

= = Reception = =

" The Baby Shower " was first broadcast in the United States on NBC on May 16 , 1991 . It received a Nielsen rating of 12 @.@ 4 and an audience share of 21 , indicating that 12 @.@ 4 % of

American households watched the episode , and that 21 % of all televisions in use at the time were tuned into it .

" The Baby Shower " met with negative responses from critics . Mike Flaherty and Mary Kaye Schilling of Entertainment Weekly graded the episode with a D , stating " After a promising opening , this baby quickly degenerates into heavy @-@ handed farce " . The episode was ranked third on a list of Seinfeld 's " Not @-@ so @-@ top episodes " , compiled by the New York Daily News .