

= Beauty Pageant ( Parks and Recreation ) =

" Beauty Pageant " is the third episode of the second season of the American comedy television series Parks and Recreation , and the ninth overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on October 1 , 2009 . In the episode , Leslie serves as a judge in the Miss Pawnee beauty pageant and becomes determined to prevent an attractive , but talentless and unintelligent , contestant from winning .

The episode was written by Katie Dippold and directed by Jason Woliner . It featured stand @-@ up comedian Louis C.K. in his second guest appearance as Dave Sanderson , a Pawnee police officer who develops a romantic interest in Leslie . According to Nielsen Media Research , the episode was seen by 4 @. @ 63 million households , a slight improvement over the previous week . " Beauty Pageant " received generally positive reviews , with several commentators claiming the season continued a trend of funnier episodes than in the first season .

It is the only episode of the series in which Nick Offerman does not appear as Ron Swanson .

= = Plot = =

At the beginning of the episode , Leslie ( Amy Poehler ) proudly announces to the parks and recreation staff that she will be judging the Miss Pawnee beauty pageant , a job she takes very seriously . Tom ( Aziz Ansari ) , excited at the prospective of judging women on the basis of their looks , pulls some strings to get a spot on the judging panel along with Leslie . April ( Aubrey Plaza ) enters the contest in order to win the \$ 600 prize , despite being disgusted with the concept of a beauty contest . She tries , unsuccessfully , to gain an advantage by sucking up to Leslie . Later , Pawnee police officer Dave Sanderson ( Louis C.K. ) visits Leslie at work to ask her out on a date . She initially accepts , but when Dave mistakes a photo of Madeleine Albright for Leslie 's grandmother , Leslie becomes reluctant .

Meanwhile , Ann ( Rashida Jones ) offers to cook Mark ( Paul Schneider ) a cheap meal if he will fix her broken shower ; Mark accepts what he calls " the weirdest second date ever " . That night , the date goes well , until Ann takes her trash outside and finds her ex @-@ boyfriend Andy ( Chris Pratt ) is spying on her from the construction pit near her house , where he is now living . Back inside , Ann complains about Andy to Mark , who thinks they should invite Andy inside when it starts to rain . Ann reluctantly agrees , and Andy spends the rest of the night interrupting their conversations and spoiling romantic moments . After dinner , Ann kicks him out , but Andy remains convinced the night went very well for him .

Leslie and Tom arrive at the pageant . Leslie , who wants the Miss Pawnee winner to be dignified and graceful , favors Susan ( Anne Elizabeth Gregory ) , a student and children 's hospital volunteer . But the other judges favor Trish ( April Marie Eden ) , an attractive but untalented and unintelligent woman . Tom is particularly impressed with Trish , even when she answers Leslie 's question about how " we as citizens can improve on the great experiment ? " by making fluffy remarks about America and expressing a distaste for immigrants . April puts on an act by pretending to be a shallow beauty contestant , but instantly quits when she learns the \$ 600 prize actually consists of gift certificates for a fence company .

After the contest , the judges deliberate . Tom and the other judges ( Susan Yeagley , Frank Medrano , Worth Howe ) all immediately agree Trish should win , but Leslie insists on further discussion . She pushes for Susan to win , but the judges eventually settle on Trish . After the pageant ends , Leslie makes a speech congratulating Susan anyway , and claiming the " Susans " of the world will carry on , even when they lose to the " Trishes " of the world . Dave approaches Leslie at the pageant and asks her again on a date . When she hesitates , he tells her she should call him if she changes her mind . As Dave leaves , he bumps into Trish , who he pushes past without much notice , impressing Leslie . They set up a date the next day and Dave tries to impress Leslie by showing he has memorized the names of all the female politicians in her photographs . Meanwhile , Tom has tried to pick up girls at the pageant by giving him his house keys with none of them showing up , but he reveals that he has been robbed twice .

= = Production = =

" Beauty Pageant " was written by Katie Dippold and directed by Jason Woliner . Woliner directed and co @-@ created the MTV sketch comedy show Human Giant , which also featured Parks co @-@ star Aziz Ansari . " Beauty Pageant " featured stand @-@ up comedian Louis C.K. in his second guest performance as Dave Sanderson , a Pawnee police officer romantically interested in Leslie . The Miss Pawnee Pageant is modeled after the long @-@ standing Miss America competition , which awards scholarships to young women from all 50 states . Several commentators compared Trish , who is attractive but unintelligent and untalented , to Caitlin Upton , the 2007 Miss South Carolina Teen USA who made an incoherent response during the Miss Teen USA 2007 pageant . Series co @-@ creator Michael Schur also indicated the episode was inspired partially by Carrie Prejean , the former Miss California USA who received nationwide attention over her answer to a question about same @-@ sex marriage during the Miss USA 2009 contest . Immediately after " Beauty Pageant " was originally broadcast , NBC set up an official Miss Pawnee Beauty Pageant website . According to the Parks and Recreation official Twitter feed , the site was established at [http : / / www.misspawnee.com](http://www.misspawnee.com) and included biographies for the judges and competitors , as well as a downloadable PDF of Leslie 's custom scorecard from the episode , ringtones , band posters , songs for download and photos .

Within a week of the episode 's original broadcast , three deleted scenes from " Beauty Pageant " were made available on the official Parks and Recreation website . In the first 90 @-@ second clip , April seeks beauty contestant advice from Leslie , who tells her to act differently from her usual behavior . While awaiting the talent contest , April lists a number of her unusual talents , including inventing emoticons , convincing her mother she is adopted , instantly making security guards suspicious and determining if someone is fat or pregnant " with 60 percent accuracy " . In the second 1 minute and 15 second clip , Ann tries to explain to Mark she is not hinting at sex when she asks him to " fix her shower " , and Sanderson talks about his insecurities , including that Leslie might be too smart for him . In the final 90 @-@ second clip , Tom expresses anger that the swimsuit competition has been removed from the contest , and tries to convince the judges to reinstate it during their deliberations .

= = Cultural references = =

" Beauty Pageant " included several cultural and pop culture references . During her introduction at the pageant , Trish said , " I 've been on YouTube " , a reference to the video sharing website on which users can upload and share videos . Susan is said to have attended Indiana State University , which helps solidify her standing as the smartest beauty pageant contestant . Leslie said one of her criteria categories as a judge is the " Naomi Wolf factor " , a reference to the American third @-@ wave feminist author and political consultant . Sanderson , who has demonstrated a lack of pop culture familiarity in the show , was unfamiliar with a reference Tom made to the 1988 police action film Die Hard and its famous protagonist , John McClane .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on October 1 , 2009 , " Beauty Pageant " was seen by 4 @.@ 63 million households , according to Nielsen Media Research . Although one of the poorer major network ratings of the night , it constituted a slight increase over the previous week 's episode , " The Stakeout " . The episode received a 1 @.@ 9 rating / 5 share among viewers aged between 18 and 49 . The episode received generally positive reviews , with several commentators claiming the season continued a trend of funnier episodes than in the first season . Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger said the show seemed to be more confident . He praised the silliness of Andy , the deadpan humor of April and " the sweetness of Leslie realizing how much she likes Dave the cop " . H.T. " Hercules " Strong , a regular columnist with Ain 't it Cool News , said " Beauty Pageant " was

" as funny as one of the funniest episodes of The Office , which is saying something . " He particularly praised Louis C.K. Steve Heisler of The A.V. Club called " Beauty Pageant " a great episode , and said Leslie is becoming less of a caricature than in previous episodes . He gave it an A- grade particularly praised Plaza , who he said " embodied pure apathy " and Pratt , who he said livened up the Ann and Mark subplot . Entertainment Weekly writer Henning Fog said Parks and Recreation has continued to improve each week , and " Beauty Pageant " showed Leslie Knope at " her most human " . Fog also said he liked the Ann , Andy and Mark characters , but felt the show was straining to find ways to include them in the story each week . Matt Fowler of IGN said he was glad Parks and Recreation was exploring subplots outside of the pit , but felt a beauty pageant was too cliched and predictable an episode plot . Fowler praised the performances of Plaza , Pratt and Louis C.K. Slate magazine writer Jonah Weiner praised " Beauty Pageant " , and called the hypocrisy of beauty contests demonstrated in the episode " a turkey shoot no less enjoyable for its familiarity " .

= = DVD release = =

" Beauty Pageant " , 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 .