

Feature: The Episode of '30 Rock' That Predicted the Future

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CHICAGO – Like many of you, I have been perusing the digital platforms, looking for the appropriate binge shows that will provide a temporary bit of sanity. Amazon Prime, for example, offers the entire series of “30 Rock” (2006-13), the seminal NBC-TV series created by and featuring Tina Fey. The show is about the adventures of Liz Lemon (Fey), the head writer of a “Saturday Night Live” style TV show.

Coming upon Season Three (2008-09), which is considered one of best in the series, episode eight – entitled “Flu Shot” – projected into the queue and began with dialogue between Jack Donaghy (Alec Baldwin) and his latest girlfriend Elisa (Salma Hayek). It was an innocuous set-up, but what really intrigued me was a photo on the mantel behind her. Was that Jack with Donald Trump? Doing a freeze frame, it was confirmed. Donald Trump was a piece of set design in a photo with Jack Donaghy.



'30 Rock' Season 3, Episode 8: Salma Hayek, Alec Baldwin and Donald Trump

Photo credit: Universal Pictures Home Entertainment

Liz gets another attempt to go on an elitist luxury vacation, and now must isolate herself from the rest of the sick working class staff (shutting in). The scenario plays out like a very funny spoof of a horror film as she tries to flee.

Because of her desire to go on the expensive tropical vacation, Liz foregoes her everybody-then-nobody crusade, and begs for the last flu shot. Again, shades of the lack of healthcare equipment/testing to quell the pandemic.

The stars of the “show within a show” Tracy (Tracy Morgan) and Jenna (Jane Krakowski) want to do something for their sick working class colleagues. Instead of something comforting or healing (like medicine or soup) they put on a crass comedy act in clown face, which feels like the Trump administration’s daily press conferences that offer no real information or comfort.

In the concluding scene, Jack remarks, “Come on Lemon, embrace your elitism. What do us elites do when we screw up? We pretend it never happened and give ourselves a giant bonus.” No further commentary necessary.

Finally, both Liz Lemon and Jack Donaghy end up sick, because the virus doesn’t know who is rich or poor. Just like Prince Charles, Tom Hanks and all the rest of the world who thought it wouldn’t be them.

And it all started because I saw a picture of Jack Donaghy and Donald Trump. You can’t make this stuff up, even in the midst of our surreal world. Blergh. Stay healthy.

“30 Rock” is currently available on the Amazon Prime streaming service, or on DVD through Universal Pictures Home Entertainment. Featuring Tina Fey, Tracy Morgan, Jane Krakowski, Jack McBayer, Scott Adsit and Alec Baldwin. Created by Tina Fey.



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