

= The Convention (The Office) =

" The Convention " is the second episode of the third season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's thirtieth episode overall . Written by the writing team of Gene Stupnitsky and Lee Eisenberg , and directed by Ken Whittingham , the episode originally aired in the United States on September 28 , 2006 on NBC .

In the episode , Josh and Jim from Dunder Mifflin Stamford , as well as Michael and Dwight from Dunder Mifflin Scranton leave for Philadelphia for the annual office supply convention . Michael , angry at both Jim for leaving the Scranton branch , as well as Josh for being superior to him , tries to one @-@ up both Jim and Josh at every opportunity . Meanwhile , Kelly sets up Pam on a double date with one of her friends which goes nowhere . Toby 's interest in Pam is piqued , beginning an unrequited crush on his part .

= = Plot = =

Michael Scott (Steve Carell) and Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) from the Scranton branch of Dunder Mifflin , Josh Porter (Charles Esten) and Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) from the Stamford branch , and Jan Levenson (Melora Hardin) from the corporate headquarters all descend upon Philadelphia for an office supply convention . Michael is bitter that Jim left Scranton for Stamford and tries to one @-@ up Josh at every opportunity . Michael also spreads the word that he is throwing a party in his hotel room that night . Later in the evening , Michael surprises everyone with the news that he has broken Staples 's exclusive hold on Hammermill products .

In Scranton , Kelly Kapoor (Mindy Kaling) sets up Pam Beesly (Jenna Fischer) on a double date with her neighbor Alan , a cartoonist for the local newspaper . Kelly is quietly disappointed that Pam intends to wear just her normal work clothes to the date . On the double date , Kelly appears to be the only one having a good time with Ryan Howard (B.J. Novak) . Pam chats awkwardly with the cartoonist , who at one point sneaks a peek down Pam 's shirt , and they fail to hit it off . At Michael 's party , Jim attends as the only guest , and explains that he did not leave Scranton because of Michael (whom Jim claims is a great boss) , but rather because Pam rejected him , twice . The two mend their friendship just as other guests arrive , and Michael promises he would take care of the situation .

= = Production = =

" The Convention " was the fourth episode of the series written by the writing team of Gene Stupnitsky and Lee Eisenberg , and the third episode of the series directed by Ken Whittingham . This episode originally had a scene with Angela and Dwight in the office kitchen . Producer Greg Daniels stated : " They had a couple lines , there was a pause , and then Angela said , ' I 'm late ' , turned around , and left . " This would imply that she may be pregnant . The scene was cut because Daniels ultimately concluded , " It was a big move , but we had it in a show that had a lot of other big moves You don 't introduce a C plot line of an illicit office romance and then all of a sudden have one of the characters get knocked up ! " Executive producer and show runner Greg Daniels had hoped to get Mackenzie Crook , Martin Freeman , and Lucy Davis from the original British Office series to appear in the episode as their respective characters (Gareth Keenan , Tim Canterbury , and Dawn Tinsley) but was unsuccessful due to scheduling conflicts .

The third season DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from the episode , including Michael unsuccessfully inviting Ryan to attend the convention , Michael reminiscing on being abandoned by Todd Packer at a club and being attacked by bouncers , Michael telling Dwight he almost worked at a local factory , Dwight asking Josh if he has ever been convicted of a felony , Dwight asking Josh about his experiences in the coast guard and in Israel , and Dwight leaving Michael to go see Angela .

= = Reception = =

" The Convention " received a 3 @. @ 8 / 10 in the Nielsen ratings among persons aged 18 ? 49 , meaning that 3 @. @ 8 percent of all people aged 18 ? 49 watched the episode , and ten percent of all people in the age group watching TV at the time watched the episode . It received an estimated audience of 7 @. @ 8 million viewers overall , and ranked # 1 in its time period among men 18 ? 34 .

The episode was received generally well by critics . Brian Zoromski of IGN stated that : " Any episode that places Michael and Dwight outside of their normal office environment is set up for some very funny (and usually awkward) situations and ' The Convention ' is no exception . Some of the episode 's best uncomfortable moments centered on Michael believing he 's the life of the party and that he 's Jim 's friend . Michael and Dwight pretending to laugh along to an inside joke made by Jim 's new boss , Josh , is a prime example . Michael 's comment , ' I love inside jokes . Love to be part of one someday , ' creates the kind of uncomfortable silence that The Office excels at . " Also on IGN , the show received a 9 @. @ 8 out of 10 " incredible " rating from the site 's editorial staff .

Abby West , of Entertainment Weekly , praised the interactions between characters as some of the highlights of the episode , stating " Jim is the show 's salt ? he makes everyone else seem just a little better . He 's the perfect straight man to showcase Michael 's insanity ... " West also commented on the awkwardness of the relationship between Ryan and Kelly , stating that " Speaking of weird love connections , I 'm really starting to worry about Ryan , who 's now letting crazy Kelly force @-@ feed him . What happened to him ? " Mat Brewster , of BlogCritics Magazine , felt that the episode didn 't live up to the status set by the previous episode " Gay Witch Hunt " , stating " this week 's episode , ? The Convention , ? failed to live up to my expectations . "