

= The Sting (The Office) =

" The Sting " is the fifth episode of the seventh season of the American comedy television series The Office and the shows 131st episode overall . It originally aired on NBC on October 21 , 2010 . The episode was written by co @-@ executive producer Mindy Kaling and directed by Randall Einhorn . " The Sting " guest stars Timothy Olyphant as Danny Cordray .

The series depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In the episode , a Dunder Mifflin client is stolen by a rival salesman named Danny Cordray (Olyphant) , and Michael Scott (Steve Carell) , Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) , and Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) decide to set up a sting in order to uncover his sales secret . Meanwhile , Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) starts a band when he learns that one of his old college friends has a successful music career .

" The Sting " is the first episode of the series to feature Olyphant ; he would later return for short scenes in several other episodes during the seventh season . The episode received largely positive reviews from television critics , many of whom felt that ? while the main plot was not realistic ? it was very humorous . " The Sting " was viewed by 6 @.@ 87 million viewers and received a 3 @.@ 4 rating among adults between the age of 18 and 49 , marking a slight drop in the ratings when compared to the previous week . Despite this , the episode ranked second in its timeslot was the highest @-@ rated NBC series of the night that it aired .

= = Plot = =

Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) and Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) are sent on assignment to make a sales pitch to a client , and are eager to land the sale . However , Danny Cordray (Timothy Olyphant) , a rival paper salesman from the very small Osprey company who steals more potential sales away from Dunder Mifflin than anyone , has also arrived for a sales pitch . Dwight also reveals that Danny had a romantic history with Pam Halpert (Jenna Fischer) four years previously . Jim and Dwight call in Michael Scott (Steve Carell) , who is ecstatic at getting a chance to make a sale , to come and try to save them . The company ends up taking Danny 's offer , even after Michael promises at @-@ cost paper sales and weekend delivery . The trio leaves the client 's office and head back home , defeated .

During a brainstorm session , Michael , Jim , and Dwight decide to set up a sting operation to observe Danny 's sales techniques . They set up Meredith Palmer (Kate Flannery) as the CEO of the fictional company Solartech in Dwight 's office , fitted with security cameras , and watch from another room . Danny is then sent in to try to make a sale . All starts well until Meredith attempts to seduce him . Dwight and Jim send in Oscar Martinez (Oscar Nunez) and Ryan Howard (B. J. Novak) to save the sting . When Meredith strong @-@ arms both of them , Michael rushes in to call the whole thing off . Danny becomes infuriated and walks off . Michael catches up to him and offers him a job , pointing out that with Sabre 's better pricing , he could make more sales as a traveling salesman for them . He accepts the offer , and Michael introduces him as the new salesman to the office . The rest of the sales staff act disrespectful towards him , worrying that Danny will take their clients . Michael tells them how well sales numbers will go up with Danny as a part of the branch , and that he is not going to rescind Danny 's job offer just because it makes the other salespeople uncomfortable . Before Dwight leaves for the day , he viciously insults Danny about his alleged mistreatment of Pam and client @-@ stealing past , then immediately welcomes him to the company .

Meanwhile , Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) starts a band after reading about how well one of his friends is doing in the music business . He manages to get Darryl Philbin (Craig Robinson) and Kevin Malone (Brian Baumgartner) to join him in writing a song , with Andy singing an anti @-@ war song from the perspective of a little girl in falsetto . The song is poorly received by the rest of the office , and Andy returns to the drawing board . Seeing that Andy is dejected , Kevin and Darryl offer to stay and jam with him for a little extra time , and the trio come up with a lively song called " Bullfrog In Love " .

= = Production = =

" The Sting " was directed by Randall Einhorn and written by Mindy Kaling , who also plays Kelly Kapoor in the show . It was the first episode to feature Timothy Olyphant in a guest appearance as Danny Cordray , a rival paper salesman . Olyphant would return for the season 's Halloween special , " Costume Contest " , and would appear in a deleted scene for Carell 's penultimate episode , " Michael 's Last Dundies " . Olyphant enjoyed his stint on the show , later telling IGN that filming both " The Sting " and his scenes for other episodes was " a blast " and " a kick to do " because The Office is " such a fun show , the nature of the whole thing . The way they do it is just so fun and easy . "

The Season Seven DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes include Jim and Danny discussing Danny 's success at selling his father 's restaurant for a large amount of money , Michael expressing his delight at helping Jim and Dwight despite the fact that he is " an old man " , Michael mistaking Danny for a male model , extended scenes of Andy 's band , extra footage of Meredith flirting with Danny , Michael remembering that Danny was once a backpack model , and Danny saying that the only reason he will be working at Dunder Mifflin is because " they offered [him] a stupid amount of money " .

= = Cultural references = =

In the cold opening , Oscar shows the office his new bicycle , which Dwight notes is a Lance Armstrong model . Kelly is offended , because she is " team Sheryl Crow " , a reference to the two 's engagement and break up . The potential customer that Jim and Dwight are trying to woo shares the same name with famous athlete Steve Nash , and Jim has to explain to Dwight that the famous Nash is a point guard for the Phoenix Suns basketball team . Michael compares the plot to learn Danny 's secret to the 1973 film The Sting , which starred Paul Newman and Robert Redford . Kelly notes that Danny reminds her of actor Josh Duhamel . The reason for Andy forming a band is that he discovers that his friend and rival Broccoli Rob (later played in the series by Stephen Colbert) collaborated with Trey Anastasio , the lead singer and songwriter from the jam band Phish , and wrote a song together . This plot device would later be mentioned in the ninth season episode " Here Comes Treble " . Andy 's band would become a minor story arc , and would reappear in the eight season episode " Pam 's Replacement " .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on October 21 , 2010 , " The Sting " was viewed by an estimated 6 @. @ 87 million viewers and received a 3 @. @ 4 rating / 9 percent share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 3 @. @ 4 percent of all 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ olds , and 9 percent of all 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . The episode 's rating dropped 11 percent from the previous episode to its lowest ever fall telecast at the time . The episode ranked second in its timeslot , after an episode of the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) series Grey 's Anatomy , and was the highest @- @ rated NBC series of the night .

Myles McNutt of The A.V. Club rated the episode with an " A " grade . He felt the episode was the " highlight " of the season . McNutt applauded the fact that Michael was portrayed in a way that was neither " too dumb or too ignorant " and that he was able to have the final moment where he showed that he was a skilled salesman . Despite noting that the sting was not realistic , he further enjoyed that Michael , Dwight , and Jim were allowed to react to the situation rather than becoming part of it . Jason Hughes of AOL 's TV Squad gave the episode a positive review and praised the use of Meredith , calling her " hilarious and so spot @- @ on " . Furthermore , he , like McNutt , enjoyed that Michael was portrayed as competent in the end . Hughes also enjoyed the B @- @ story and wrote that " it was a sweet moment when Darryl told Andy he didn 't have to pay him any more to jam with

them " .

Entertainment Weekly 's Margaret Lyons wrote that , while " its out @-@ and @-@ out silliness wasn 't in the supertraditional Office style " , she " totally dug it " . Furthermore , she praised Kaling 's writing , saying " Leave it to Mindy Kaling to deliver the best episode of The Office in a long , long time . " Alan Sepinwall of HitFix gave the episode a mixed review . He felt the episode " was a complete cartoon " and also stated " It bore very little resemblance to what the show once was " . Despite this he also stated , that " on its own completely absurd level , it worked " because it was very humorous ; Sepinwall noted that he " found [himself] laughing a surprising amount of the time , even more than at previous episodes this season that felt more Office @-@ like " .

Bonnie Stiernberg of Paste magazine awarded the episode an 8 @.@ 2 rating out of 10 , noting that " The Office is at its best when it has one foot planted in reality and the other drifting off into the absurd . " She also enjoyed that the show illustrated Michael 's actual talents as a salesmen . Furthermore , Stiernberg felt that Andy 's subplot helped balance the " silliness " of Michael 's main plot . Dan Forcella of TV Fanatic awarded the episode four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five and praised Olyphant 's acting , writing that he " just killed it " during his appearance . He also called the entry " a big step up from last week " , largely due to its entertaining main plot and its " pleasant " B @-@ story .