

= A Benihana Christmas =

" A Benihana Christmas " is the tenth and eleventh episode of the third season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the thirty @-@ eighth and thirty @-@ ninth episode overall . It was written by Jennifer Celotta and directed by Harold Ramis . The episode originally aired in the United States on December 14 , 2006 , on NBC .

In the episode , Christmas time at the office leads to depression for Michael , when his girlfriend Carol ( Steve Carell 's wife , Nancy Walls ) breaks up with him . Michael , Andy , Dwight , and Jim then go to a local Benihana restaurant , where Michael and Andy find dates with two of the restaurant 's waitresses . Back at the office , after a conflict with a bossy Angela , Karen and Pam decide to create their own Christmas party . When the majority of the office decide to go to Karen and Pam 's party , Angela becomes upset , and seeing this , Karen and Pam decide to combine the parties . Soon after , Michael and Andy 's dates leave them , but Michael nevertheless finds someone to go to Jamaica with him .

= = Synopsis = =

Carol Stills ( Nancy Walls ) confronts Michael Scott ( Steve Carell ) about the Christmas card he sent her , in which he superimposed his head on the body of Carol 's former husband in a family photo . She breaks off the relationship , leaving Michael heartbroken and stuck with a pair of tickets to Jamaica . For the past several months , Pam Beesly ( Jenna Fischer ) has led Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) to believe that he is being recruited by the CIA , and her gift to Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) is that he can choose Dwight 's first assignment . Jim declines the gift and claims that as the new office " Number Two " he shouldn 't be engaging in such activities , leaving Pam discouraged by a changed Jim .

Andy Bernard ( Ed Helms ) takes Michael to Benihana ( an " Asian Hooters " according to Michael ) to help him forget his recent troubles ; Michael drags Dwight and Jim along . The group stumbles upon an unexpected couple ( Anne Sertich / Stephen Saux ) at the table and Dwight fails when attempting to impress the chef with his knowledge of Japanese knives . Andy successfully isolates Dwight from the rest of the party and convinces Michael to ask out their waitress , Cindy ( Brittany Ishibashi ) . Meanwhile , Jim plays pranks on Dwight and realizes that his excuse for declining Pam 's gift doesn 't hold water .

Angela Martin ( Angela Kinsey ) kicks Karen Filippelli ( Rashida Jones ) off the Party Planning Committee . In response , Pam reaches out to Karen , and the two plan a rival party . The rival Christmas parties begin , and the office staff members are forced to choose sides . Pam and Karen 's party is a hit , while Angela 's is a dreary affair . Michael and Andy each return with a waitress as their " new girlfriend " ( though neither is the one who waited on them at the restaurant ) . Angela accepts Pam 's offer to merge the parties . Oscar enters the office with his partner Gil just as Angela is singing The Little Drummer Boy , pauses for a moment , says , " Too soon " and leaves .

Meanwhile , Michael is unable to tell the two waitresses apart . To remedy this , he surreptitiously marks his date 's arm with a Sharpie . When he offers to take her to Jamaica , she declines and says that she has to attend school , and the two waitresses leave the party because it " blows " .

Jim consoles Michael by explaining that he just had a " rebound " relationship . Jim mentions that they 're fun for a while , but then you keep on thinking about the girl that broke your heart , implying he still thinks about Pam ( the girl who " broke his heart " ) . From his office , Michael makes a phone call and asks an unknown person to go to Jamaica with him . The offer is accepted . Pam is crushed when she sees Jim and Karen exchange gifts . Jim is crushed when he sees Roy give a gift to Pam .

At the end of the day , Jim tells Pam that a helicopter will be arriving to take Dwight to a welcoming party at CIA headquarters in Langley , Virginia . As Dwight waits on the roof , he receives the text message : " You have been compromised . Abort mission . Destroy phone . " Dwight throws his phone off the roof and walks away .

### = = Production = =

" A Benihana Christmas " was directed by Harold Ramis and written by Jennifer Celotta . It was produced by Stephen Merchant , Ricky Gervais , Greg Daniels , Howard Klein , and Ben Silverman . The episode was shot in a real Benihana restaurant . According to the show 's prop master , different actresses were used because Andy and Michael failed to pick up the original waitresses , and settled for " less attractive ones " . At Paley Fest 2007 , Greg Daniels admitted that the joke failed due to poor casting . The waitresses that come to the office were supposed to be unattractive . Daniels stated that the actresses they hired for the role were " too good @-@ looking " . During filming , John Krasinski threw a shrimp across the table at Rainn Wilson . It bounced off Dwight 's glasses and landed in the glass of water he was about to drink . The producers chose not to use the footage because it looked so improbable as to be unbelievable .

### = = Reception = =

" A Benihana Christmas " was first broadcast on December 14 , 2006 in the United States . According to estimates by the Nielsen Media Research 's the episode was watched by an estimated 8 @. @ 44 million viewers . The episode earned a 3 @. @ 9 / 11 ratings share among adults aged 18 to 49 , meaning that it was seen by 3 @. @ 9 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 11 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of broadcast . Among that demographic , The Office finished in twenty @-@ first place for the week among all of the major networks . On the day that the episode first aired , it was the second most watched show of the night , behind only CBS 's Survivor : Cook Islands .

" A Benihana Christmas " was generally well received by critics . The episode was also given a 9 @. @ 2 out of 10 rating by IGN . An IGN review stated :