

## = Chair Model =

" Chair Model " is the fourteenth episode of the fourth season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's sixty @-@ seventh episode overall . Written by B. J. Novak , and directed by Jeffrey Blitz , the episode first aired in the United States on April 17 , 2008 on NBC . The episode guest @-@ stars Brooke Dillman and Robert R. Shafer as Bob Vance .

The series depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In the episode , Michael Scott ( Steve Carell ) finds himself lonely and wanting a relationship after breaking up with Jan Levinson ( Melora Hardin ) . While looking through an office @-@ supplies catalog , he falls in love with a chair model . Meanwhile , Kevin Malone ( Brian Baumgartner ) and Andy Bernard ( Ed Helms ) fight to reclaim lost parking spaces , and Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) tells Pam Beesley ( Jenna Fischer ) that he is going to propose .

The final scene was originally going to be a parody of " Candle in the Wind " by Elton John , but John refused permission . The scene was then re @-@ written to feature a parody of the song " American Pie " by Don McLean ( see below : Plot ) . " Chair Model " received mostly positive reviews from critics , although some fans were alienated due to the dark nature of the storyline . The episode received 5 @.@ 8 Nielsen rating and was watched by 9 @.@ 86 million viewers .

## = = Plot = =

While browsing an office @-@ chair catalog , Michael Scott ( Steve Carell ) , who has broken up with Jan Levenson , becomes enamored of one of the female chair models . As a result , he decides to resume dating with the help of the office employees , even going so far as threatening to fire them if they do not help . No one in the office wants to set up any of their friends with Michael , but when Michael learns that the chair model had died in a car crash some time ago , Pam Beesly ( Jenna Fischer ) takes pity and sets him up on a blind date with her landlady ( Brooke Dillman ) . The date does not go well , beginning with Michael pretending he is not who she was supposed to be meeting . After Michael admits his own blind date was a failure , Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) convinces him that he needs closure on this person he loved who is gone . The two end up in a cemetery at the grave of the chair model , where Michael " grieves " . They are both singing " American Pie " by Don McLean and dancing on her grave .

With Michael busy , Kevin Malone ( Brian Baumgartner ) and Andy Bernard ( Ed Helms ) work to reclaim parking spaces that they have lost due to construction in a neighboring office . They arrange a meeting with the bosses of the office park , and are given the parking spots back . The spaces are retrieved , Kevin feels happy to have won one , as his fiancée Stacy broke off their engagement and it 's been a hard time for him .

While flirting , Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) reveals he is ready to propose to Pam , even going as far as telling her that he is not going to do it at work ( " because that would be rather lame " ) and when he does it , it will " kick her ass " . Pam is not sure if he 's joking . Alone with the camera , Jim reveals that he was not joking and shows an engagement ring that he bought " the week after [ they ] started dating . " After work , while walking back to his car , he stops and gets down on one knee . When Pam stops and looks he says he has a question to ask her . After a second or so of hesitation , he asks her if she will wait while he ties his shoes . She laughs and they continue walking hand in hand . At the end of the episode , Michael and Dwight are seen singing " American Pie " and dancing in the same cemetery at night , presumably having never left .

## = = Production = =

" Chair Model " was the third episode of the series directed by Jeffrey Blitz . Blitz had previously directed " The Convict " and " The Negotiation " . The episode was written by B. J. Novak , who plays temporary worker turned corporate manager Ryan Howard . Novak was originally going to name the episode " Michael Dating " , but the title could have potentially been a spoiler because

fans with DVRs would have seen it before " Dinner Party " aired and deduced that Michael and Jan 's relationship had completely fallen apart . For a while , " Parking " was going to be the title , but even that was decided against because that refers to the subplot , and also because it was generic and boring even by the show 's no @-@ frills @-@ titles standard . Eventually , someone suggested " Chair Model " , which was eventually kept as the name . Originally , Novak wrote Jim putting Dwight through a " phony management training " , but NBC pointed out that it felt like the writers had done it before even though they had not . As a group , the writers tried to think of a new idea for the plot ; they considered having Pam move in with Jim , but they thought that first the two should be engaged .

There was an auditioning process for both the chair model and the young blond woman that Michael sees in the coffee shop . According to writer B. J. Novak , the chair model was supposed to be " pretty " and " perhaps even prettier than your average model " , but more of just an " average single girl " , because the episode is more about Michael wanting to start dating again than the model herself . In the scene with the " Five Families " , one of the actors , Paul Faust was the only first @-@ time actor . Faust is the cousin of writer Paul Lieberstein , and had been on a tour of the set and talked to many of the writers . He made a good impression and so the character of " Cool Guy Paul " was based on him . The day before they were scheduled to shoot , the show still had not cast anyone for the role , so they called Paul in New York City and had him read the lines into a camera and e @-@ mail to them . In less than an hour , Faust had landed the part and was flown out to Los Angeles .

Although Novak wrote the majority of the episode , Jennifer Celotta and Paul Lieberstein were actually the ones that came up with the graveyard scene in the end . The original song for Michael to sing was going to be a parody of " Candle in the Wind " by Elton John . Elton John however , refused to give The Office permission to use the song , because 30 Rock had requested permission for a parody of " Candle in the Wind " that offended Elton John , and he did not want to have his song parodied again . So then , the writers wrote parodies of " Legs " by ZZ Top and " Ruby Tuesday " by The Rolling Stones , but eventually " American Pie " by Don McLean cleared , so the writers went with that .

= = Cultural references = =

Michael calls Oscar Martinez ( Oscar Nunez ) an " Oscar Mayer Weiner Lover " , a reference to both the sausage of the same name , as well as Oscar 's homosexuality . Andy and Kevin hold a meeting with the head of the " Five Families " of the office building , a reference to the " Five Families " from " The Godfather " trilogy . Michael later tries to phone a " hot and juicy redhead " named Wendy , but it turns out it was the number for the Wendy 's restaurant .

= = Reception = =

" Chair Model " first aired on NBC on April 17 , 2008 . The episode received 5 @.@ 8 / 9 percent share in the households demographic in the Nielsen ratings . This means that 5 @.@ 8 percent of all households watched the episode , and nine percent had their televisions tuned to the channel at any point . The episode was watched by 9 @.@ 86 million viewers total , as well as 6 @.@ 49 million viewers in the 18 ? 49 demographic .

" Chair Model " was generally well received by critics , although some fans were alienated by the darkness of the episode . Nathan Rabin of The A.V. Club gave the episode a moderately positive review and awarded it a " B + " . He noted that the episode " fell on the wrong side of the funny / creepy divide for a lot of Office fans " , but that he enjoyed the entry , calling the grave scene " unexpectedly sweet " . He also enjoyed the maturation of Andy , describing him as " coming into his own [ and becoming ] something more than just a foil for Dwight " . M. Giant of Television Without Pity awarded the episode an " A " . BuddyTV senior writer Oscar Dahl wrote that " The Office is sharp as ever " and Jim saying he was going to propose was " a big time moment in the Jim / Pam story " . Dahl also praised the parking lot storyline , saying " what started as merely a joke ( Kevin

was dumped ) , became a feel @-@ good moment . "

IGN 's Travis Fickett said that Michael falling in love with the chair model was " a hysterical turn and highlights just how deluded Michael ? and Dwight ? can be " . Fickett was critical of the " parking " storyline , saying that it was " a bit over the top and runs a bit thin " , but he did think that the scene at the end with Kevin was " a sweet and genuine moment " . Aubry D 'Arminio of Entertainment Weekly stated that , in relation to the previous episode " Dinner Party " , " Last night 's show took another approach . Don 't get me wrong . It was a blinder ? but a totally different animal , so to speak . " D 'Arminio went on to praise the dual plots of the episode .