

= Local Ad =

" Local Ad " is the ninth episode of the fourth season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's sixty @-@ second episode overall . The episode was written by B. J. Novak , who also acts in the show as Ryan Howard , and directed by Jason Reitman . It originally aired in the United States on October 25 , 2007 on NBC .

After a video team is brought to the office to create a commercial for the company , Michael decides that the employees of the Scranton branch of Dunder Mifflin can create a better commercial . While the majority of the staff work on the commercial , Dwight , still depressed from his break @-@ up with Angela , instead chooses to play a computer game .

= = Plot = =

When Michael Scott ( Steve Carell ) learns that the Scranton branch 's participation in a Dunder Mifflin television commercial is limited to five seconds of the staff waving at the camera , he dismisses the advertising consultants sent to the branch , and convinces the company 's corporate headquarters to consider an alternative version that he will produce himself .

Michael asks Pam Beesly ( Jenna Fischer ) to design an animated logo , and she works all night on it . Phyllis Vance 's ( Phyllis Smith ) mission to enlist visiting author Sue Grafton to appear in the ad is unsuccessful . Headed by Darryl Philbin ( Craig Robinson ) , a group of employees write and perform a jingle for the commercial , which Michael ultimately rejects . Andy Bernard ( Ed Helms ) , meanwhile , struggles throughout the day to recall the product name from an advertising jingle that contains the lyrics " Gimme a break . Gimme a break . Break me off a piece of that ... "

Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) has largely removed himself to the online virtual world of Second Life . Dwight has created an avatar named Dwight Shelford , also a paper salesman , patterned after his once @-@ perfect real life . He now uses Second Life as an escape from his real @-@ life troubles , even going as far as creating a virtual Second Life , called Second Second Life . Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) , on the other hand , has created an avatar named Jim Samtanko , a guitar @-@ playing Philadelphia sportswriter , and enters Second Life in order to spy on Dwight .

Dwight has also reluctantly become Andy 's confidante regarding his relationship with Angela Martin ( Angela Kinsey ) , Dwight 's former girlfriend . Dwight 's spirits are lifted when he learns that , during a makeout session with Andy , Angela cried , " Oh , D ! " . Though , Andy is oblivious to the fact that Angela was referring to Dwight .

After the corporate headquarters rejects Michael 's ad , the office employees gather at Poor Richard 's Pub to watch the professionally filmed commercial , which Michael refers to as " the world premiere of corporate crapfest . " After the commercial , Jim plays Michael 's version of the ad on the bar 's television set . Over the theme from Chariots of Fire , as Michael narrates " trite catchphrases " , a sheet of paper is depicted making a journey around the world , carrying a variety of messages meaningful to the recipients ; as Pam 's animated whirling sheets of paper coalesce into the company logo to end the ad , the employees as well as the other patrons of the bar show their approval .

The episode ends with Andy doing an interview , still trying to recall the product name from the jingle . On the basis that it has to rhyme , he incorrectly concludes that it promotes Fancy Feast cat food .

= = Production = =

" Local Ad " was the seventh episode of the series written by B. J. Novak , who also acts in the show as Ryan Howard , and the first episode of the series directed by Jason Reitman , who directed the films Juno and Thank You for Smoking . When speaking about his directorial experience with The Office , Reitman stated that " Anyhow , the whole experience was awesome . They ? re all geniuses over there . I didn ? t have to contribute much at the end of the day because they ? re all so on their game . " He also stated that " Weird moment of production design surprise - There 's a

three ring binder on Creed 's desk with the logo from the Academy of Tobacco Studies that we created for [ Thank You For ] Smoking . I have no idea how it got there and neither does he . " B.J. Novak 's brother Jesse , a musician , contributed in writing the song that some of the characters sing in the episode .

The Second Life scenes in " Local Ad " were produced by Clear Ink of Berkeley , CA , using existing locations within Second Life as well as virtual sets created for the episode . In a study made by IAG Research , the appearance of Second Life in " Local Ad " was rated eighth in the top ten most effective product placements of 2007 . The Office was the only non @-@ reality show to make the list , and Second Life was the only product on the list that did not pay for its placement . In a deleted scene , Toby has an idea for the ad : film it in slow @-@ motion so that it will stand out when the viewer uses his TiVo or other DVR to speed past it . The staff loves the idea , but Michael hates it and won 't consider it , even though Toby reveals he formerly worked in advertising for three years .

= = Reception = =

" Local Ad " received a 5 @. @ 2 Nielsen rating and an 8 % Share . The episode was watched by an estimate audience of 8 @. @ 98 million viewers and achieved a 4 @. @ 7 / 11 in the key adults 18 ? 49 demographic . This means that 4 @. @ 1 percent of all people aged 18 ? 49 viewed the episode , and eleven percent of all people watching television at the time viewed the episode .

" Local Ad " received generally favorable reviews from critics . Travis Fickett of IGN gave the episode a favorable review , saying " This episode is a prime example of how The Office is able to do broad comedy while at the same time treating its characters as real people . " Fickett went on to praise the acting of Rainn Wilson as a depressed Dwight , as well as the story 's twist . Fickett stated that " A great twist here is that we think we 're watching Michael pilot a sinking ship as usual , but in fact - the ad is quite good . There 's some clever stuff in there , albeit some of it not exactly professional in its production , but Michael doesn 't do such a bad job . " Like Fickett , Christine Fenno of Entertainment Weekly gave the episode a favorable review . Fenno said that " The premise of this episode , ' Local Ad ' ? the Scranton staffers shoot a commercial ? was strong , and allowed almost every ensemble member to shine . " Fenno also praised the acting work of Ed Helms as Andy , as well as Steve Carell as Michael . Oscar Dahl , a Senior Writer for BuddyTV , praised the episode , but also felt that the episode 's thirty @-@ minute length created a stark contrast to the previous four episodes ' hour @-@ long run , saying " tonight 's episode felt short . Really short . "

For his work on this episode , B. J. Novak was nominated for a Writers Guild of America Award for Best Screenplay ? Episodic Comedy , but ultimately failed to win , losing to another episode of The Office , " The Job . "