

= Pilot (The Drew Carey Show) =

" Pilot " is the first episode and the series premiere of the American sitcom The Drew Carey Show . It first aired on September 13 , 1995 on the ABC network in the United States . The premise of the show revolves around the life Drew Carey would have lived if he had not become a stand @-@ up comedian . The pilot introduces the main characters of Drew (Carey) , Kate (Christa Miller) , Lewis (Ryan Stiles) and Oswald (Diedrich Bader) , as well as Drew 's workplace , the fictional Winfred @-@ Louder department store , and enemy Mimi Bobeck (Kathy Kinney) .

The pilot was written by series co @-@ creators Carey and Bruce Helford , while Michael Lessac directed . It was shot in April 1995 at the Warner Bros. Television studios in Burbank , California . The episode ranked joint 29th in television programs with the most viewers for the week of September 11 ? 17 , 1995 . Critical response was mixed , with many comparing the show to the NBC sitcom Friends . Ray Richmond from the Los Angeles Daily News praised Carey 's performance , but thought the episode did not click , while Variety 's Tony Scott liked the opening sequence and Lessac 's " inventive " direction .

= = Plot = =

The episode opens with Drew (Drew Carey) and his friends Lewis Kiniski (Ryan Stiles) and Oswald Lee Harvey (Diedrich Bader) in their local bar , the Warsaw Tavern , discussing Brad Pitt . The following day , Drew 's best friend Kate O 'Brien (Christa Miller) tells him that she has broken up with her boyfriend , who then fired her from her job as a receptionist at his body shop . Desperate for a job , Kate asks Drew to hire her at the Winfred @-@ Louder department store where he is the assistant director of personnel . Drew insists that he cannot hire his friends . At Winfred @-@ Louder , Drew 's boss Mr. Bell (Kevin Pollak) asks him to hire someone for a position at the cosmetics counter . While conducting interviews , Drew meets Mimi Bobeck (Kathy Kinney) , a hostile woman who wears too much eye shadow . Drew tries to be polite , but Mimi soon realises he is not going to give her the job and accuses Drew of being sexist . Mimi complains to Mr. Bell about Drew , getting him into trouble .

Later at the Warsaw Tavern , Drew is hanging out with his friends when Mimi walks in and confronts him . Drew talks to her honestly about why she did not get the job , telling her that her attitude is the problem and she has to deal with the fact that her looks might stop her from getting some jobs . Mimi does not like Drew 's advice and leaves the bar . Needing to fill the cosmetics position quickly , Drew believes he has found an ideal candidate in Natalie (Natasha Silver) until Kate turns up to apply for the job . Drew admits that he is worried that Kate will hate him if he has to fire her . However , Mr. Bell insists Drew hire Kate , having seen her in the lobby and Drew agrees . Kate later comes to Drew 's house to ask him , Lewis and Oswald which perfume samples to promote . The episode ends with Drew playing pool in his garden in the rain , while the others watch through the window .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception and writing = = =

Drew Carey and Bruce Helford co @-@ created The Drew Carey Show . Having worked together twice before on The Good Life and Someone Like Me , Carey joined up with Helford and told him he wanted to develop his own show . They each came up with various ideas and created The Drew Carey Show . Carey later told a group of television critics at the network launch that the series was originally going to be called The Drew F ... ing Carey Show , saying " We were going to call it The Drew F. Carey Show and see if anybody at home could figure it out ! "

The show revolved around the life Carey would have lived if he had not become a stand @-@ up comedian . Carey told Helford that he thought he would have been employed in a mid @-@ level

management job , which was a relatable job for most Americans at the time . Carey wanted a show that was about regular people . He also wanted to set the show in Cleveland as it was his home town and it was not getting a lot of attention . Carey and Helford drove to the city together in January 1995 to do some research . They toured the local bars to try to get the right look for the show 's bar the Warsaw Tavern . Carey and Helford also heard the song " Moon Over Parma " in one of the bars and it was used during the title sequence .

Carey and Helford co @-@ wrote the pilot episode together . Helford had expected The Drew Carey Show to air at 8 : 30pm . When ABC placed the show in the 7 : 30pm slot , Helford agreed to soften the language in the pilot . An executive from Standards and Practices had asked for nine words deemed offensive to be removed from the script , as well as a mention of Jack Daniel 's and a line that implied one of the characters was going to buy and use drugs .

= = = Casting = = =

Carey plays a fictionalized version of himself . Drew is an assistant director of personnel at the Winfred @-@ Lauder department store . Carey explained " I wanted a white @-@ collar job with no authority and a bad boss . Someone to do all the work and get no credit . He could 've worked in a bank , in insurance . " Carey said it was " a no @-@ brainer " on settling on the character , saying " It 's just me . " While Christa Miller was trying out for the role of Drew 's close friend Kate O 'Brien , ABC thought she might be too inexperienced for the role and they asked to see her appearance in the Seinfeld episode " The Doodle " . The episode had yet to be aired and Miller had to beg the show 's co @-@ creator Larry David for a rough cut to show to ABC . Miller went on to secure the role of Kate and Helford considered her to be the only person right for the role .

Ryan Stiles won the role of " hapless janitor " Lewis Kiniski . Despite being well known for his role on the British improve show Whose Line Is It Anyway ? , Stiles still had to go through the audition process along with everybody else . He said , " I don 't even think Drew was really even aware of Whose Line at that time because it hadn 't been on the air (in the U.S.) that many years . I think it was only on Comedy Central at that time . " Stiles admitted that he liked to have fun with his character and not psychoanalyze him . Following his appearance in The Beverly Hillbillies , Diedrich Bader realised he needed a regular income and decided to return to television . He tested out for The Drew Carey Show , but did not initially want to be cast in it . He told Kevin Smith that he wanted to drive up his price for the pilot of Partners . Bader lost out on the role of Bob to Jon Cryer and then learned The Drew Carey Show wanted to hire him to play Oswald Lee Harvey .

The role of Mimi Bobeck went to Kathy Kinney . The actress was originally intended to be a one episode guest star , but became a series regular when Helford noticed during editing of the pilot that the funniest scenes were those featuring Mimi . Kinney was hired for a further seven episodes , but eventually appeared in every episode . Robin Rauzi , writing for The Sun @-@ Herald , branded Mimi " a moving visual assault with a personality to match " because of her painted @-@ on eyebrows , bright eyeshadow and gaudy clothes . After relocating from Chicago , Ian Gomez spent a year auditioning for various shows , before being cast in the recurring role of Larry Almada in 1995 . Other actors who appear in the pilot are Alaina Reed Hall , David St. James , Lauren Katz , Vic Helford and Natasha Silver .

= = = Filming = = =

The pilot was shot in April 1995 and directed by Michael Lessac . Although set in Cleveland , the show was actually filmed at the Warner Bros. Television studios in Burbank , California . Helford had noticed that the cast did not look at each other while saying their lines and he tried to encourage them to look at one another , so they would laugh . Helford told Lessac to bring the cast in on a weekend , where there was no pressure , so they could " goof around " and relax . Drew 's job required him to work from a cubicle and Helford stated that no one had really done a show dealing with that situation , as producers and networks felt it was too confined . Helford disagreed and had a set where an accessible cubicle was the center piece designed and built . The Memphis Plaza

Lounge in Old Brooklyn was the inspiration for the show's bar The Warsaw Tavern . The owner of the Lounge refused to sell the naming rights to Warner Bros , but he did agree that they could film the front of the building . The crew shot the building in 1995 and temporarily replaced The Memphis Plaza Lounge sign with their own Warsaw Tavern one . The sign was hung in the front window for two years before Warner Bros. took it down .

= = Reception = =

The episode finished joint 29th among 108 prime @-@ time shows in the Nielsen ratings for the week of September 11 ? 17 , 1995 . It came second both in households and among adults 18 ? 49 with a 10 @.@ 8 / 18 and 7 @.@ 2 rating / share , respectively .

" Pilot " received mixed reviews from television critics . Ray Richmond from the Los Angeles Daily News branded the show a " Friends clone " , but praised Carey , calling him " the season 's quirkiest , most uproarious talent " . He also thought that he was " immensely lovable " . Richmond added " The pilot never quite clicks , but you can feel the potential . And spread inside an Ellen / Grace Under Fire sandwich , it 'll be difficult for it to miss . " Lon Grahne from the Chicago Sun @-@ Times thought the show would be a " probable hit " based on the " Pilot " . He also observed that the show is " a Cleveland variation of Friends , and thought the early time slot was a turn off , as it required the language to be toned @-@ down . David Zurawik from The Baltimore Sun awarded the episode a C + and branded it " a blue @-@ collar Friends .

The Boston Globe 's Frederic M. Biddle gave the episode one and a half stars and commented " Carey always keeps you watching , although he 's always threatening to be funnier than he is . But more than any other Friends ripoff , this show 's supporting actors slow down the central character ? they 're set decoration . Comic scenes involving the full cast build , then trip over themselves . " Alan Pergament , writing for The Buffalo News , included The Drew Carey Show in his Top 10 new shows , noting " Carey is a lovable goof and his male buddy show has the chance of becoming the male version of Designing Women . " Pergament cited the lack of prominent female characters and " a reliance on too many risqué @-@ language jokes " as the weaknesses of the show . The Washington Post 's Tom Shales found the episode funny , adding " The Drew Carey Show bucks all the prevailing sitcom trends and does it endearingly . "

Tony Scott , a critic for Variety , thought the characters were " amiable enough " , but they needed " sharper dialogue and fresher observations . " Scott did not think the car pool segment worked , but he liked the opening sequence in the bar . He also praised Lessac 's direction , calling it " inventive " . Peter Weiniger from The Age was prepared to give the series a chance based on the episode , saying " Like most American sitcoms , The Drew Carey Show has its share of snappy one @-@ liners but it gives the impression of trying a little too hard . To be fair , this is the first of a series , and we have yet to see the characters develop . Even Seinfeld took a little time to become essential viewing . "