

= Livin ' the Dream =

" Livin ' the Dream " is the twenty @-@ first episode of the ninth season of the American comedy television series The Office and the 197th episode overall . It originally aired on NBC on May 2 , 2013 . The episode guest stars Michael Imperioli as Sensei Billy , and was initially scheduled to air in its half @-@ hour timeslot , before being expanded to a full hour .

The series ? presented as if it were a real documentary ? depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania , branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In the episode , Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) decides to pursue a career as a professional actor , and quits his job at Dunder Mifflin . Meanwhile , Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) finally receives his black belt in karate from his new sensei (Imperioli) and , on the recommendation of Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) , is promoted to Regional Manager of the Scranton branch . Jim reconnects with Pam Halpert (Jenna Fischer) , and makes it clear that he will choose her over Philadelphia .

The episode was viewed by an estimated and received a 1 @. @ 8 / 5 percent share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 , ranking third in its first half @-@ hour timeslot and fourth in its second , marking a slight increase in the ratings from the previous episode . " Livin ' the Dream " received mostly positive reviews from television critics . Critical praise mainly went towards the dynamic between Jim , Pam and Dwight , particularly for the former two 's reconciliation and the latter 's promotion . Andy 's subplot , meanwhile , received more mixed reviews .

= = Plot = =

CEO David Wallace (Andy Buckley) plans on firing Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) due to his missing work for acting gigs . However , Andy tells David he is resigning to pursue his dreams of stardom full time , and David is relieved to not have to fire him . Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) receives his black belt in karate from his new sensei (Michael Imperioli) . Seeing Dwight 's tenacity and devotion , David is inspired to make Dwight Andy 's replacement .

Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) has returned to Scranton full time , saying he has realized that he can 't devote himself to both his family and his new job , and has decided to go " all in " on his family since that is what makes him most happy . David asks Jim his opinion on promoting Dwight , and Jim says that Dwight deserves the job and will be a great manager . Dwight then appoints Jim the new assistant to the regional manager . Darryl Philbin (Craig Robinson) informs Jim that Athlead has found a buyer and wants them to do a promotional tour around the country for three months . With undisguised regret , Jim says he will not do the tour because he cannot put his wife Pam (Jenna Fischer) through that , unaware that Pam is listening in .

Everyone in the office tells Andy that quitting is a foolish move and that he has no chance of achieving stardom . Andy eventually goes back on his decision , and David allows him to stay on in a sales position . However , mere hours later Andy feels that he is only sticking with his Dundler @-@ Mifflin job because it is safe and that he has to take a shot at achieving fame . Fearing his conviction will falter a second time , he decides he cannot simply quit , but get fired . This proves difficult as he is unable to make himself go through with any offense more serious than defecating on David 's car . Andy bids farewell to his coworkers with an unexpectedly moving rendition of " I Will Remember You " , prompting them to comment to the documentary crew that he may have star potential after all .

Meanwhile , Angela Martin (Angela Kinsey) is evicted from her studio apartment after her cats were taken away by Animal Control . She considers living in a tent in the woods , prompting Oscar Martinez (Oscar Nunez) to offer her to stay with him until she gets back on her feet . She finally accepts with gratitude . As they set off to take Angela 's things to Oscar 's place , Oscar mentions her marriage to Robert Lipton and she breaks down into tears , saying " I love him . " However , she denies she still has feelings for Robert and claims she was talking about Dwight .

= = Production = =

" Livin ' the Dream " was written by story editor Niki Schwartz @-@ Wright , marking her second writing credit for the series , after the earlier season episode " Lice " . It was directed by regular Office director Jeffrey Blitz , who last directed season eight 's " Gettysburg " . The episode was originally scheduled to air in its regular half @-@ hour time slot , but NBC later announced it would be expanded to fill an hour time slot beginning a half hour early , although it still counts as one official episode , similar to the earlier season episode " Moving On " . Rogers noted that " we knew the last two episodes would be hour @-@ longs , and The Finale might even end up running longer , but we still had a lot of great storytelling to do leading up to them , and ' Livin ' the Dream ' was one that ultimately deserved to be an hour long episode as well ! "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Livin ' the Dream " originally aired on May 2 , 2013 on NBC . In its original American broadcast , " Livin ' the Dream " was viewed by an estimated 3 @.@ 51 million viewers and received a 1 @.@ 8 rating / 5 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 1 @.@ 8 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 5 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . This marked a slight increase in the ratings from the previous episode , " Paper Airplane " . The episode ranked third in its first half @-@ hour timeslot , being beaten by an episode of the CBS comedy series Two and a Half Men which received a 3 @.@ 2 / 10 rating and an entry of the Fox reality series American Idol which scored a 2 @.@ 6 / 9 rating . The second half @-@ hour ranked fourth in its timeslot , being beaten by an episode of the ABC series Grey 's Anatomy which scored a 3 @.@ 0 / 9 rating , an entry of the CBS series Person of Interest which garnered a 2 @.@ 4 / 7 rating , and installment of the Fox series Glee which received a 1 @.@ 9 / 5 rating .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Livin ' the Dream " received positive reviews from television critics . Roth Cornet of IGN wrote that " it pleases me greatly that at the conclusion of this super @-@ sized episode I was left , once again , truly looking forward to seeing what these next few weeks , and that final hour of The Office , will bring . " Cornet praised the full @-@ use of the ensemble , particularly the " Phyllis and Stanley Lil ' Romeo mini @-@ debate " and Creed 's confused mimicking of Dwight 's declaration . Cornet also called the Dwight storyline " perfectly executed " , as well as the Jim @-@ Pam @-@ Dwight dynamic featured throughout the episode , calling their companionship to be " entirely earned " . She also praised Kinsey 's performance during her character 's storyline , and said her final scenes with Oscar " [tugged] at my heart @-@ string " . She gave the episode an 8 @.@ 5 out of 10 , calling it " Great " . M. Giant of Television Without Pity awarded the episode an " A ? " and wrote that " almost everybody is having their best day in a long time , in the best episode of The Office in an even longer time " .

Nick Campbell of TV.com complimented the sentimental storylines in the episode , specifically between Jim , Pam and Dwight . He was positive towards Jim and Pam 's reconciliation , but felt " something hollow about their reunion " . He also noted that the Jim @-@ Pam storyline caused the Dwight @-@ Angela relationship to go " darker " . Alan Sepinwall of HitFix gave the episode a slightly more mixed review writing that " the non @-@ Andy parts of " Livin ' the Dream " were fairly interesting " . He appreciated the drama coming from Angela 's desperation , despite disagreeing with the logic in the situation . Sepinwall praised the Jim @-@ Dwight dynamic in the episode , considering it an enjoyable payoff , and also praised Jim and Pam 's reconciliation , particularly them annoying their co @-@ workers with their flirting . Joshua Alton of The A.V. Club was more negative towards the episode , saying it felt " padded @-@ out " to fill the full hour timeslot , and that " this episode might be the nadir for the show 's hour @-@ long installments " . He was complimentary

towards the Jim @-@ Pam storyline , but felt " there wasn't much happening " beyond Pam overhearing Jim 's talk with Darryl . Alton praised the Dwight storyline and his dynamic with Jim and Pam , calling it " the true fan service " . Alton gave the episode a " C ? " .