

= Traveling Salesmen =

" Traveling Salesmen " is the thirteenth episode of the third season of the US version of The Office . The episode was written by Michael Schur , Lee Eisenberg , and Gene Stupnitsky , and was directed by series creator and executive producer Greg Daniels . It first aired on January 11 , 2007 in the United States on NBC .

The series depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In this episode , the sales team goes out on sales calls , with Michael and Andy , Stanley and Ryan , Phyllis and Karen , and Dwight and Jim pairing up . Andy tries to show Dwight in a bad light to Michael , Karen learns of Jim 's previous crush on Pam , and Angela forgets to hand in some important documents to New York , so secret boyfriend Dwight does it for her .

John Krasinski believed " Traveling Salesmen " was the first episode to give a real glimpse into Dwight and Angela 's relationship , and much of the plot centered on the two . It aired to an estimated 10 @. @ 2 million viewers according to Nielsen Media Research . It was positively received by television critics . Along with " The Return " , NBC later re @- @ broadcast " Traveling Salesmen " as a combined hour @- @ long episode as part of their sweeps week . As a result , both episodes underwent editing which included the addition of four minutes of previously unseen footage .

= = Synopsis = =

Dwight Schrute arrives several hours late to work one morning , due to driving to corporate to help out Angela Martin .

Michael announces that the sales department will be pairing up for sales calls . Andy ( Ed Helms ) chooses Michael ( Steve Carell ) , Phyllis ( Phyllis Smith ) chooses Karen ( Rashida Jones ) , and Stanley ( Leslie David Baker ) grudgingly chooses Ryan ( B.J. Novak ) , leaving Dwight ( Rainn Wilson ) with Jim ( John Krasinski ) , who used to do sales calls together . Andy learns that Dwight does Michael 's laundry as punishment for meeting with Jan to take over the branch . During their sales call , Andy sabotages the meeting , setting up an opportunity to later apologize to Michael , stating that he had really " Schruted " the situation , a further attempt to deride Dwight .

While the salespeople are out , Angela ( Angela Kinsey ) tells Pam ( Jenna Fischer ) a thinly disguised story of how " Kurt " saves " Noelle " ( " Kurt " and " Noelle " being Dwight 's and Angela 's middle names , respectively ) by delivering the quarterly tax forms to New York .

At first , Jim 's and Dwight 's sales call appears to be a fiasco , but it is soon clear that the joint force of Jim 's straight @- @ and @- @ honest sales approach , along with Dwight 's aggressive , erratic tactics , is a very successful partnership . Ryan asks Stanley if he could lead on this call so Stanley can critique him , which Stanley obliges . However , Ryan freezes up and fails when he realizes that Stanley 's clients are all black . Stanley laughs at an annoyed Ryan during the entire trip back to the office . Phyllis and Karen first stop at a beauty parlor , emerging with gaudy makeovers . Their sales call is a success because , as Phyllis knew , the client obviously likes women with that kind of look , as evidenced by the photo of his wife . Returning to the office , Phyllis tells Karen that she 's pleased that Jim got over his crush on Pam . Karen confronts Jim with this information , and he reassures her that his crush has passed .

Upon returning after the sales call , Andy steals Dwight 's keys , breaks into his car , and finds the toll booth ticket to New York City . Andy gives the evidence to Michael , who then accuses Dwight of disloyalty , and Angela prevents him from clearing his name because it would expose their relationship . Dwight resigns . Andy gloats over his success , but the documentary camera catches Angela in the background glaring at him .

= = Production = =

" Traveling Salesman " was written by Michael Schur , Lee Eisenberg , and Gene Stupnitsky , while

co @-@ creator and executive producer Greg Daniels directed . Daniels shot " Traveling Salesmen " and " The Return " in mid @-@ November 2006 before the cast and crew began an eight @-@ week break .

John Krasinski enjoyed the episode because he believed it was the first real glimpse of Angela and Dwight 's relationship , with Rainn Wilson noting that the audience gets " to see how Dwight becomes her hero . " As with other Office episodes , a number of scenes in " Traveling Salesmen " were improvised and unscripted , including Angela with the jelly beans and Stanley laughing at Ryan in the car .

To create the old picture of Jim and Dwight , an actual high school photograph of Krasinski was photoshopped along with a 1991 image of Wilson while Wilson was on tour with an acting company . While standing in the parking lot , the cast had to pretend to shiver in 85 @-@ degree weather . Krasinski actually slapped Wilson at Wilson 's request , which Krasinski considered " one of the craziest acting experiences I 've ever had . " Before deciding on singing to a melody from Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory , Ed Helms and Daniels shot 50 different versions . Another Willy Wonka reference includes Andy 's mention of a chocolate factory and not wishing " to fall into any chocolate river " .

" Traveling Salesmen " was later rebroadcast with " The Return " as a combined hour @-@ long episode on March 15 , 2007 , with four minutes of previously unseen footage added . Greg Daniels explained that it was both an attempt to attract a larger audience and " it 's about giving something extra to our wonderful fans ? their loyalty must be rewarded somehow , and we don 't have the budget for 10 million muffin baskets . " As part of the editing process , Pam is seen winning an art contest , four scenes of Andy searching through Dwight 's things were condensed , and an Angela ? Pam storyline as well as an extended scene of Andy going to anger management were added . The third season DVD contains a number of deleted scenes , such as Michael using his computer , " Harvey " , to hit on Pam ( this scene was the cold open for " Traveling Salesman " on its original broadcast ; the combined hour @-@ long version of " Traveling Salesman " and " The Return " has no cold open ) . Notable cut scenes included Andy dramatically illustrating to Karen that they are the only two Stamford employees remaining , Jim and Dwight surreptitiously planning their sales tactic , Pam offering to get coffee for her co @-@ workers , and Dwight emotionally giving away selected items to others in the office .

= = Reception = =

" Traveling Salesmen " was first broadcast on January 11 , 2007 in the United States on NBC . According to Nielsen Media Research , an estimated 10 @.@ 2 million viewers tuned in , making it only a handful of other episodes of The Office to reach over 10 million viewers , the others being the show 's pilot episode , " The Injury " , " The Return " , " Ben Franklin " and " Stress Relief , " of which the latter reached over 20 million viewers .

Buddy TV senior writer Oscar Dahl remarked , " It didn 't make me laugh out loud and , yet , I still loved it . " He shed a negative light on Andy 's behavior towards Dwight , calling it " annoying and not that funny . " Dahl hoped Dwight would be reappearing soon , and concluded " Overall , a crucial story episode with a nice cliffhanger . Even if wasn 't as funny as last week or even most episodes this season , The Office still entertains . " AOL TV 's Michael Sciannamea lauded the episode , writing " I cannot remember ever guffawing over every single line in a single sitcom episode as I did watching this one . If the performances in this particular one don 't garner the actors in this show a plethora of Emmys , there ought to be an investigation . " Sciannamea continued that he believed it was Steve Carell 's best series performance thus far because he " displayed the full range of his personality--jokester , arrogant jerk , charming salesman , sensitive soul , and added a new one--anger . "

Entertainment Weekly writer Abby West commented of Dwight 's ouster , " There 's no way Rainn Wilson is off the show , but it was a bold move to let him appear to be bested by the ( slightly ) more Machiavellian Andy . I can 't wait to see how they play out this storyline . " West referred to " Phyllis ' expert psychological move " with the makeovers as her favorite subplot of the night , and

appreciated the spotlight on the sales pairings ; she expanded on this latter point , " The trip out of the office was also a great reminder of what these Dunder Mifflin @-@ ers actually do and how good most of them are . Isn 't it interesting that as much as they normally clash , Dwight and Jim make a very effective sales team , while the seeming bond that Michael and Andy share did nothing to keep Andy from punting their pitch ? When Dwight started using the client 's phone , Jim didn 't skip a beat . They 'd either used the ploy ( of dialing the competition 's customer service number and showing how long the wait time was ) before , or Jim is comfortable going with Dwight 's flow , at least in that kind of setting . They essentially played good cop / bad cop ... or good cop / weird cop . " Other television critics also praised the various sales call pairings .