

= Broke (The Office) =

" Broke " is the 25th episode of the fifth season of the television series The Office , and the 97th overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on April 23 , 2009 . In this episode , Michael learns his paper company is broke , and tries to keep this fact a secret when Dunder Mifflin offers to buy out the Michael Scott Paper Company since the company has stolen most of Dunder Mifflin Scranton 's clients .

The episode was written by Charlie Grandy and directed by Steve Carell , marking his directorial debut . " Broke " was the last of a six @-@ episode arc involving Michael quitting to start the Michael Scott Paper Company ; it was also the last of six episodes to prominently feature Idris Elba as Dunder Mifflin V.P. Charles Miner . According to Nielsen ratings , it was watched by 7 @. @ 21 million viewers , and received the season 's lowest rating in the 18 ? 49 age group during its regular timeslot to that point in the season .

= = Plot = =

Michael (Steve Carell) , Pam (Jenna Fischer) and Ryan (B. J. Novak) make early morning paper deliveries in a used van . The van has Korean writing on it which translates to " Hallelujah Church of Scranton . " This routine , in addition to their regular duties at the Michael Scott Paper Company , takes such a toll on the group that they decide to look into hiring a delivery person . They are told by their accountant that because of their low prices and fixed @-@ cost pricing model , they not only cannot afford a delivery person , but will be completely bankrupt in another month . Pam reveals to her coworkers that she has committed a great deal of money to her upcoming wedding and has had no response to the weekend part @-@ time job applications she 's submitted . Ryan responds by confessing that he never actually went to Thailand .

At Dunder Mifflin , Charles Miner (Idris Elba) announces that the Scranton branch , previously the company 's most profitable office , has lost ten major clients to Michael 's company . Chief Financial Officer David Wallace (Andy Buckley) visits Scranton to see what can be done to stem the losses . In a blatant about face from his no @-@ nonsense persona , Charles blatantly sucks up to David , which Jim notices . David calls a meeting with Charles and Jim (John Krasinski) , but Charles insists Dwight (Rainn Wilson) also be present because he had been Charles 's right @-@ hand man . However , during the meeting Dwight embarrasses Charles with outlandish suggestions , such as unleashing a hive of bees .

David decides the cheapest option is for Dunder Mifflin to buy out the Michael Scott Paper Company . Jim has learned the company 's financial situation from Pam , but feigns uncertainty when asked if Michael is likely to be interested in a buyout . At David and Charles 's orders , Jim brings the idea of a buyout to Michael . While there he also reassures Michael that Dunder Mifflin is unaware of his company 's financial situation . Dwight learns from a past client that Michael has been begging customers for more money and informs Charles , but Charles refuses to listen , having been embarrassed by Dwight 's earlier ideas .

Michael , Pam and Ryan come in to discuss the terms of the buyout . After Michael rejects an initial offer of \$ 12 @, @ 000 to buy the company , David suggests that he is bluffing , saying he knows that his company 's prices are too low to be sustainable . Michael keeps his cool and rebuts that Dunder Mifflin 's best branch is " bleeding " and David could be replaced during an upcoming major stockholder meeting as a result . David gives a second offer of \$ 60 @, @ 000 , which is strongly considered , but Michael rejects this offer at the last second and demands the company give him his old job back and hire Ryan and Pam as salespeople . David is reluctant to hire three people with full benefits , especially given Ryan 's disastrous history with the company , and likens it to " a multimillion dollar buyout " . Michael refuses to back down , and David reluctantly agrees to his demands .

As Charles leaves Scranton , returning to corporate , Michael does not allow him to have any final words , mirroring Charles 's earlier treatment of Michael when he quit .

= = Production = =

" Broke " was written by Charlie Grandy and directed by Steve Carell , who made his directorial debut with the episode . It was the last of a six @-@ episode story arc involving Idris Elba 's character Charles Miner , although Elba has indicated the character would return in future episodes : " Mr. Charles doesn 't leave the picture . [...] My storyline has come to an end , but there is a good indication that the writers see my character coming back . " Elba made an appearance in " Company Picnic " , the fifth season finale . Elba said he did not watch " Broke " after it aired because " I 'm hypercritical about my work , so I try not to torture myself . "

The official website for The Office included three cut scenes from " Broke " . In the first 90 @-@ second clip , Michael is running late because he overslept , and he instinctively runs into the Dunder Mifflin office by accident instead of his Michael Scott Paper Company office . In the second one @-@ minute clip , Andy is angry that he cannot find his personalized coffee mug with his face on it , and he and the others around the office complain about losing their clients to Michael 's new company . In the final 80 @-@ second clip , stress drives Ryan to the breaking point and he begins trashing the Michael Scott Paper Company Office , for which he quickly recovers and apologizes .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on April 23 , 2009 , " Broke " was watched by 7 @.@ 21 million viewers , according to Nielsen ratings . The episode received a 3 @.@ 7 rating / 10 share among viewers aged 18 ? 49 , the lowest rating in that age group for the season during its regular timeslot . It received a 4 @.@ 0 rating / 12 share among viewers 18 @-@ 34 .

The episode received highly positive reviews . Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger called " Broke " a " great , great " episode , although he said he wished the Michael Scott Paper Company arc could have lasted longer . Sepinwall praised touches such as the Korean women who were constantly getting into the sales van , and Michael 's moment of nervousness on the elevator , and said the ending when Michael came through was particularly satisfying . Will Leitch of New York magazine described " Broke " as " a rousing , exuberant episode that continues one of The Office 's best runs in history " . Leitch said the negotiations during the latter half of the episode had genuine tension , and that all the storylines of the Michael Scott Paper Company arc were wrapped up perfectly . Travis Fickett of IGN said the episode was strong enough that it could have served as the season finale . He said the episode had lots of good throw @-@ away moments , like Charles brown @-@ nosing to David and realizing Dwight is eccentric , as well as several clever twists , like Jim 's actions in tricking Dwight and helping the Michael Scott Paper Company get bought out . Eric Rezsnyak of the City Newspaper said the episode was a strong finale to the Michael Scott Paper Company arc , which was " probably the best thing to happen to the show in the last two seasons " . Rezsnyak praised Michael 's impressive actions in the episode and said he was curious to see how Michael 's relationship with several of the supporting characters would be recast as a result of this episode .

Margaret Lyons of Entertainment Weekly said , " ' Broke ' was an incredibly brisk episode that covered a lot of ground , so it worked as a good capstone on the whole Michael @-@ leaving @-@ the @-@ company plot . " She also said although the plot arc was a good one , she looked forward to future episodes focusing more on the Dunder Mifflin supporting cast . Rick Porter of Zap2it praised the episode , but expressed concern that the show would grow more stale now that Michael , Pam and Ryan were back to their old jobs at Dunder Mifflin ; Porter particularly complimented the new aspects of the Charles Miner character presented in " Broke " , including his interaction with David and his exasperation with Dwight . Dan Hopper of Best Week Ever praised the episode and Michael 's shrewdness , but also expressed worry that the quality of future episodes would dip now that Dunder Mifflin was back to normal . Nathan Rabin of The A.V. Club said of the episode , " Elba 's stint on The Office went out on a high note . I 'll miss his joyless scold of a middle manager but it 's nice to have the gang reunited . " Rabin also said the moment when Charles fails to listen when Dwight learns Michael 's company is broke " rang a little false " , but praised the episode as a whole

. Meghan Carlson of BuddyTV said she enjoyed seeing Michael so victorious at the end , and said , " as far as ends getting tied off cleanly , ' Broke ' was an inspired episode , full of tension , suspense , and yes , humor . "

" Broke " was voted the highest @-@ rated episode out of 26 from the fifth season , according to an episode poll at the fansite OfficeTally ; the episode was rated 9 @.@ 17 out of 10 . For his work on this episode , Charlie Grandy was nominated for a Writers Guild of America Award for Best Screenplay ? Episodic Comedy . Steve Carell submitted this episode when he was nominated for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series , which he lost to Alec Baldwin .