

= Michael Scott Paper Company =

" Michael Scott Paper Company " is the twenty @-@ third episode of the fifth season of the television series The Office , and the 95th overall episode of the series . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on April 9 , 2009 .

In the episode , Michael , Pam and Ryan try to get their new paper company off the ground , but end up bickering among themselves due to the stress and cramped office space . Meanwhile , Jim tries to do a " rundown " for new boss Charles Miner without admitting he does not know what a rundown is , while Dwight and Andy compete for the affections of the new receptionist , Erin , played by Ellie Kemper .

The episode was written by Justin Spitzer and directed by Gene Stupnitsky . It included a guest appearance by Idris Elba , who played new Dunder Mifflin vice president Charles Miner . The episode aired the same day as the Office episode " Dream Team " ; the debut episode of the new NBC show Parks and Recreation was shown between the two episodes . " Michael Scott Paper Company " included a new title sequence with footage of the series characters in the new Michael Scott Paper Company office setting , rather than the Dunder Mifflin setting from previous episodes . The episode received mostly positive reviews . According to Nielsen ratings , it was watched by 8 million viewers and captured the most viewers in its time slot for adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . " Michael Scott Paper Company " received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Comedy or Drama Series ( Half @-@ Hour ) and Animation .

= = Synopsis = =

Michael ( Steve Carell ) , Pam ( Jenna Fischer ) , and Ryan ( B. J. Novak ) are struggling to adjust to the work environment of the new Michael Scott Paper Company . The office space used to be a closet ; water pipes run through the room , so they can hear the toilets flush from the Dunder Mifflin bathrooms above them . Ryan openly goofs off in front of Pam and Michael and insults both of them in their presence during phone conversations . Pam and Ryan bicker over who is responsible for making copies until Michael separates them into corners . Pam , who joined the company as a saleswoman , is given the corner where the photocopier sits . She is concerned that Michael will force her to be the receptionist , which is why she quit Dunder Mifflin in the first place . She goes upstairs and asks Charles Miner ( Idris Elba ) for her job back , but Charles has already given the job to a new employee , Kelly " Erin " Hannon ( Ellie Kemper ) .

Michael hosts a pancake luncheon to introduce the company to potential clients , but only one person and the Dunder Mifflin employees show up . When Michael , Pam , and Ryan come close to giving up , the potential client from the luncheon calls asking for paper . Pam closes the sale and the three cheer in celebration .

In the Dunder Mifflin office , Charles asks Jim ( John Krasinski ) for a " rundown " of his client information . Jim does not know what a rundown is , but is too embarrassed to ask because he has been making such a poor impression with Charles . Jim spends much of the day trying to figure out what a rundown is , making several failed attempts to figure it out by chatting vaguely about it with Charles and other coworkers . When he finally finishes what he believes is a rundown , Charles does not look at it and simply asks Jim to fax it to everyone on the distribution list . Jim does not know what the distribution list is either , but rather than asking Charles , he simply faxes the rundown to his father .

Meanwhile , Dwight ( Rainn Wilson ) and Andy ( Ed Helms ) plan a hunting trip , but their new friendship is tested by their mutual romantic interest in Erin . Both make passes at her , but eventually agree their friendship is more valuable than a romantic interest . However , they end up trying simultaneously to impress Erin during a competitive duet of John Denver 's " Take Me Home , Country Roads " , with Andy on a banjo and Dwight playing guitar ; both sing , and Dwight sings part of the song in German . Erin is initially impressed with both of them , but winds up awkwardly sneaking out of the room as they play . The loud duet is finally stopped by a frustrated Toby ( Paul Lieberstein ) . Angela ( Angela Kinsey ) is visibly annoyed by Dwight and Andy 's budding friendship

= = Production = =

" Michael Scott Paper Company " was written by Justin Spitzer and directed by Gene Stupnitsky . It originally aired April 9 , 2009 , the same day as the episode " Dream Team " ; the debut episode of the new NBC show Parks and Recreation was shown between the two episodes . " Michael Scott Paper Company " was the fourth of six episodes guest starring Idris Elba , best known as Stringer Bell from The Wire . Elba said he did not watch the episode after it aired because " I 'm hypercritical about my work , so I try not to torture myself . " According to the Season 5 DVD episode commentary , B.J. Novak came up with the story idea involving Jim and the " run @-@ down " and worked it into Spitzer 's final script . The episode included a new title sequence with footage of the series characters in the new Michael Scott Paper Company office setting , rather than the Dunder Mifflin setting from the previous episodes . Rainn Wilson and Ed Helms practiced the guitar competition in Ed Helms ' trailer during lunch the day of the filming ; Helms , a proficient bluegrass banjo player , coached Wilson , who is proficient at guitar and drums . Wilson said he proposed doing a full studio cover of the song , with Creed Bratton providing backup guitar and vocals , and selling it on iTunes for charity . Helms said he was happy to have the opportunity to play banjo on screen , but did not feel the instrument made much sense for his character ; Helms said , " It 's so fun and weird , but he 's a Connecticut preppy guy . How did he pick up a banjo ? It 's one of Andy 's many mysteries , not all of which I even understand . "

Prior to the episode 's airing , NBC set up a web site for the new Michael Scott Paper Company at [www.michaelscottpapercompany.com](http://www.michaelscottpapercompany.com) , which included a mission statement for the company , photos of the new office space and a downloadable copy of the coupon for " unparalleled customer service " featured in the episode . The official website for The Office included four cut scenes from " Michael Scott Paper Company " within a week of the episode 's original release . In one 85 @-@ second clip , Dwight and Andy pretend to shoot , stab and throw grenades at each other in pantomime in anticipation of their hunting trip ; they pretend to kill Jim and pester him until he plays dead , after which Charles walks in and believes he is napping . A second one @-@ minute clip includes Pam and Ryan fighting around the new office until they are interrupted by a janitor who believes the room is still a closet and leaves water jugs on the floor . In a third , 40 @-@ second clip , Jim asks Charles directly what a " run @-@ down " is , but when an annoyed Charles asks if this is " one of your pranks " , Jim gives up and leaves . The fourth and final clip , which is 85 seconds long , features Andy and Dwight both making passes at Erin ; Andy discusses how easy it would be to learn sign language , while Dwight tells her to be careful not to get her hair or clothes caught in the nearby paper shredder .

= = Cultural references = =

Dwight and Andy sing and perform the John Denver song " Take Me Home , Country Roads " while trying to impress the new receptionist . At one point , Toby is overheard through a vent discussing and praising the FX show Damages while on the phone in a bathroom . He said it is as good as anything on HBO , a premium television channel known for such shows as The Sopranos , Six Feet Under and The Wire . During the workday , Ryan watches a YouTube video of a rap music commercial for Flea Market Montgomery ; the low @-@ budget rap music advertisement for the Montgomery , Alabama flea market gained Internet fame . Michael uses Evite , social @-@ planning website for creating online invitations , to invite people to his pancake luncheon . On a whiteboard , Michael writes a quote of himself quoting Wayne Gretzky , the popular ice hockey player who said " You miss 100 % of the shots you don 't take " The new paper company office included Apple computers and a Nerf basketball hoop . During a phone conversation , Ryan said he wants an iPod music player that also serves as a phone , but not an iPhone , which is essentially that very product ; both items are Apple products . Michael listens to " Just Dance " , a Lady Gaga song , while driving his convertible to work , which he mistakes for a Britney Spears song . Near the end of the episode ,

when Andy states that every song sounds better a cappella , Dwight asks about the songs " Cherry Pie " by Warrant , " Enter Sandman " by Metallica and " Rebel Yell " by Billy Idol .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on April 9 , 2009 , " Michael Scott Paper Company " was watched by 8 million overall viewers , according to Nielsen ratings . The episode earned more ratings than " Dream Team " , the other Office episode of the night , which had 7 @. @ 2 million viewers . It also performed better than the Parks and Recreation pilot , which ran between the two Office episodes and had 6 @. @ 8 million viewers . " Michael Scott Paper Company " , as well as " Dream Team " , had the most viewers in its time slot among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 .

The episode received mostly positive reviews . Travis Fickett of IGN said this and other recent episodes are " proving that the show has plenty of life in it and ( that ) The Office has still got it . " He said the funniest element of the show was the emerging " bro @-@ mance " between Dwight and Andy . Will Leitch of New York magazine said , " The Office kind of needed this sort of shake @-@ up , even if it ' s something as simple as another room to put all our characters in . " Keith Phipps of The A.V. Club said he liked the plot aspects involve the new company , particularly the pancake breakfast and the first successful sales call : " I know the series probably has to revert to something like the old status quo at some point , but I almost wish it could stay in that dank little corner a little longer . " Phipps , who gave the episode a B + grade , said the " rundown " subplot between Jim and Charles was a bit strained by the end . Steven Mullen of The Tuscaloosa News called the episode " stellar " and particularly praised the comedic chemistry between Andy and Dwight .

Alan Sepinwall of The Star @-@ Ledger said he was enjoying the new paper company storyline , but that " Michael Scott Paper Company " was not as funny as " Dream Team " , which aired the same day . Sepinwall praised particular scenes such as Dwight and Andy ' s competitive duet and Kelly ' s plan to make Charles want her . She criticized the cramped new office space jokes as being less funny than those in previous episodes . Sepinwall also said the storyline between Jim and Charles was getting repetitive and , " It would help if the writers ever gave Idris Elba something funny to do . " Margaret Lyons of Entertainment Weekly said , " This episode wasn ' t one of my favorites ... No bombs , no bits that failed , and by The Office ' s standards , nothing even particularly cringe worthy . But ' TMSPC ' is more groundwork than payoff . " She said Dwight ' s rendition of " Take Me Home , Country Roads " in German was " the absolute funniest moment of the episode " .

In her list of the top ten moments from the fifth season of The Office , phillyBurbs.com writer Jen Wielgus ranked Michael ' s formation of the Michael Scott Paper Company in the downstairs storage closet as the number one , citing the " Dream Team " , " Michael Scott Paper Company " and " Heavy Competition " episodes in particular . She also said she specifically enjoyed the paper @-@ shaped pancakes from " Michael Scott Paper Company " . " Michael Scott Paper Company " was voted the twelfth highest @-@ rated episode out of 26 from the fifth season , according to an episode poll at the fansite OfficeTally ; the episode was rated 8 @. @ 27 out of 10 .

This episode received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Comedy or Drama Series ( Half @-@ Hour ) and Animation . " Michael Scott Paper Company " accounted for one of the ten Primetime Emmy Award nominations The Office received for the show ' s fifth season at the 61st Primetime Emmy Awards , which were held on September 20 , 2009 .