

= Boys and Girls (The Office) =

" Boys and Girls " is the fifteenth episode of the second season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's twenty @-@ first episode overall . It was written by B. J. Novak and directed by Dennie Gordon and first aired on February 2 , 2006 on NBC . The episode guest stars Melora Hardin as Jan Levinson , Craig Robinson as Daryl Philbin , and Patrice O 'Neal as Lonny .

The series depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In this episode , Michael Scott (Steve Carell) becomes frustrated when he is not allowed to listen in on a " women in the workplace " seminar that Jan is conducting , so he conducts his own " men in the workplace " seminar in the warehouse , where talk of a warehouse union emerges . Meanwhile , Pam Beesly (Jenna Fischer) considers graphic design .

The genesis for the episode came from an idea cast members Angela Kinsey and Fischer had while spending time together on the set of the series . During the filming , Carell and the warehouse men were filmed on one set and Fischer and the office women filmed on another . The episode was viewed by 5 @.@ 42 million viewers , which was the lowest number since the first season finale " Hot Girl " . " Boys and Girls " received largely positive reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

Jan Levinson (Melora Hardin) leads the female Dunder Mifflin employees in a " women in the workplace " seminar . Miffed at being excluded , Michael Scott (Steve Carell) conducts a competing men in the workplace seminar in the warehouse . Roy approaches Jim under the belief that Jim used to like Pam . Darryl Philbin (Craig Robinson) and his equally irritated crew are forced to participate in Michael 's shenanigans , which culminates in Michael trying to drive a forklift , and knocking down several shelves .

Michael 's recklessness makes a complete mess of the warehouse while jeopardizing the employees ' safety . Michael 's plans to hold his own seminar backfire when the warehouse workers ' gripe session leads to them deciding to form a union . Jan intimidates them into reconsidering , citing a liquidation of the branch if it were to unionize .

Jan urges Pam to take a corporate training program in graphic design in New York when Pam reveals that she wants to be a graphic designer , but Roy squashes the idea . Jim rebukes Pam for listening to Roy when he is clearly wrong and acting selfish , which creates tension between them . Pam then tells the camera she is happy with her life now , and that they don 't even make her dream house in Scranton . She then breaks down and cries in front of the camera . As the day comes to a close , Michael leaves the warehouse in complete disarray .

= = Production = =

" Boys and Girls " was directed by Dennie Gordon ; it was written by B.J. Novak , who plays Ryan Howard on the show . The genesis for the episode came from cast members Angela Kinsey and Jenna Fischer . The two originally formulated an idea while spending time together on the set of The Office : " What if Jan came into the office and did a ' Women in the Workplace ' seminar , and Michael got all jealous ? " They presented their idea to executive producer Greg Daniels , who liked the idea . Daniels subsequently assigned the idea to Novak , who crafted the final episode . Pam 's monologue on reading about a girl who lived in a house with a terrace was based on a real book from the Choose Your Own Adventure series , although not specifically identified as such in the episode read by Jenna Fischer when she was a child . When the show 's cast and crew appeared at the Paley Center , Fischer related that Novak asked her if she had any personal stories that could relate to what Pam was feeling at the time the episode was being written . She then came up with the storybook idea , which was immediately written and filmed for the episode .

Fischer later called the episode " both the most masculine and most feminine episode of The Office

yet ". This is largely because , during the filming , the different sections were shot separately : Carell and the warehouse filmed on one set and Fischer and the office women filmed on another . The women of The Office later said that " it was great " to spend time with themselves . Fischer later claimed that the woman spent a large part of the filming time talking and " behav [ing] like seventh @-@ graders . "

The Season Two DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes include Michael asking Pam and Jim for help choosing a ringtone , Roy and Dwight talking about guns , Dwight shooting his spud gun , and Dwight agrees that " there 's no place like home . "

= = Cultural references = =

Michael compares modern working women to Ally McBeal , the titular lead of the American legal comedy @-@ drama television series of the same name . Dwight compares venturing into the warehouse to the television series Lost , specifically when the characters in Lost meet the mysterious " Others " . When Michael is setting with his shirt unbuttoned , one of the warehouse workers calls him " Hasselhoff " , a reference to actor David Hasselhoff . Kelly baits Jan by feigning ignorance about the various Baseball metaphors for sex . The blow @-@ up doll with Michael 's face on it is a reference to the earlier second season episode " Sexual Harassment " .

= = Reception = =

" Boys and Girls " originally aired on NBC in the United States on February 2 , 2006 . The installment was viewed by 5 @.@ 42 million viewers . The episode was , at the time , the lowest rated entry in the series after the first season finale " Hot Girl " . It was eventually beaten by eighth season episode " Jury Duty " , which was viewed by 5 @.@ 31 million viewers .

" Boys and Girls received largely positive reviews from television critics . Michael Sciannamea of AOLTV called it " another brilliant episode " , noting that Carell was " at his obnoxious and comedic best " . He also complimented the maturation of Jim and Pam 's relationship , writing that it " seems like it 's coming to a cliffhanger in the next few weeks . " M. Giant of Television Without Pity gave the episode a positive review and awarded it an " A ? " . Brendan Babish of DVD Verdict awarded the episode a " B " and called it " a solid but uneventful " outing for the show .

Elements of " Boys and Girls " have been analyzed in a legal context . Jan 's threat to have the warehouse closed if the employees unionize is unlawful under the National Labor Relations Act . American Rights at Work analyzed the episode and noted that " the show served up the hard truth about how far employers will go to stop their employees from forming a union . "