

= The Return (The Office) =

" The Return " (originally titled " Oscar 's Return ") is the fourteenth episode of the third season of the US version of The Office . In the episode , the office celebrates Oscar 's return , who had been on vacation since the first episode of the season . Meanwhile , a recently departed Dwight finds a job at Staples .

The episode was written by Michael Schur , Lee Eisenberg and Gene Stupnitsky , and was directed by series creator Greg Daniels . Actor Oscar Nunez returned to The Office after having left to film the television series Halfway Home . The annoying personality of Ed Helms 's character Andy was noted by multiple observers , and even irritated the actor 's own mother to such a degree that she could not watch the episode . " The Return " marked Helms ' departure from The Office until the season 's nineteenth episode " The Negotiation " .

For its first American broadcast on January 18 , 2007 on NBC , " The Return " aired to an estimated 10 @. @ 15 million viewers according to Nielsen Media Research . It was positively received by television critics , with several focusing on the character development of Angela . Along with " Traveling Salesmen " , NBC later re @- @ broadcast " The Return " 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 = =

Having quit Dunder Mifflin , Dwight (Rainn Wilson) settles for a job at Staples . Andy (Ed Helms) relishes the thought of becoming Michael 's (Steve Carell) new Number Three and begins to pester Michael for attention . When Andy begins to irritate his co @- @ workers , Jim (John Krasinski) , after getting no support from Karen (Rashida Jones) or Ryan (B.J. Novak) , recruits Pam (Jenna Fischer) to play a prank on Andy by hiding his cell phone (which plays Rockin ' Robin , sung a capella by Andy himself) in the ceiling and continually calling it .

Meanwhile , Oscar (Oscar Nunez) returns to the office from his leave of absence , and Michael wants to celebrate by asking the Party Planning Committee to throw a Mexican @- @ themed fiesta that includes firecrackers , a chihuahua and a donkey . Later , as Jim and Pam continue to call Andy 's hidden cell phone , he is pushed over the edge by the combination of Jim and Pam 's prank and Michael 's rejection of his friendship , and in a fit of rage puts his fist through a wall .

When Angela (Angela Kinsey) finally reveals to Michael that she was the cause of Dwight 's secret visit to Corporate , Michael realizes his error in forcing Dwight out and goes to Staples to ask him to return to Dunder Mifflin . Angela was worried that Michael would realize the two were involved in a romantic relationship , but Michael believes that Dwight saved Angela out of loyalty to the company . Dwight returns to the office and , much to his delight , thinks Oscar 's welcome party is actually meant for him .

Karen has noticed how much fun Jim and Pam had together during their prank on Andy ; she confronts Jim and asks him if he still has feelings for Pam . Jim nods as he quietly says yes and Karen walks out the room , visibly upset . Meanwhile , corporate sends Andy to anger management where he plans to get out of the 10 @- @ week program in five weeks through his usual charms : name repetition and personality imitation .

= = Production = =

" The Return " was written by Michael Schur , Lee Eisenberg , and Gene Stupnitsky , while series creator and executive producer Greg Daniels directed and Dean Holland edited . The original title of this episode was " Oscar 's Return " , a reference to the reappearance of actor Oscar Nunez , who had temporarily left the series after the season premiere . Nunez spent the interim working on the Comedy Central series Halfway Home . It was the last episode Daniels filmed before the Thanksgiving holiday , the start of an eight @- @ week break for the cast and crew .

Then @- @ president of NBC Entertainment Kevin Reilly played Dwight 's first interviewer . Ed

Helms noted in the audio commentary that his mother had trouble watching a string of episodes that included " The Return " because she found his character so annoying . Helms recorded the self @-@ recorded cellphone ring on his own personal computer . For the big anger scene , Helms actually bloodied his knuckles while punching the wall , something that took five or six takes . Steve Carell and Rainn Wilson had difficulty with their reuniting scene and had to stage it in several different ways . As part of the episode is set in one of their stores , office supply chain Staples Inc. watched the episode carefully to ensure they were not portrayed negatively ; they were particularly afraid that Dwight 's manner of quitting was disrespectful to the company . At the time " The Return " aired , no one was certain Helms would be returning . In early February , NBC confirmed Helms had been hired on as a series regular for the rest of the year , with the actor returning in the season 's nineteenth episode , " The Negotiation " .

" The Return " was later rebroadcast with " Traveling Salesmen " as a combined hour @-@ long episode , on March 15 , 2007 . NBC added previously unaired and re @-@ edited scenes into the episode , which was perceived by one commentator as a method to " boost the ratings during the content dearth known as repeat week , giving its replays a creative twist " . Greg Daniels explained that in addition to the attempt to attract a larger audience , " 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 . "

= = Cultural references = =

Andy tells Michael he is going to " get my Lost on " , a reference to the ABC science fiction drama television series . Andy sings The Cranberries ' 1994 hit song " Zombie " , which was the most annoying song Helms and Krasinski could think of for Andy to sing . Dwight later returns to the office wearing a sweatshirt prominently displaying Battlestar Galactica , a Syfy military science fiction television series . When referring to Andy 's weirdness , Michael mentions radio broadcaster Marv Albert , who was convicted of sexual assault in the late 1990s .

= = Reception = =

" The Return " first aired on January 18 , 2007 in the United States on NBC . According to Nielsen Media Research , the episode was watched by an estimated 10 @.@ 15 million viewers . The Office and its lead @-@ in My Name is Earl finished first in the 18 ? 49 demographic against its time slot competitors , though it was not enough to prevent the overall network from finishing in third place among total viewers . The same day as the episode broadcast , NBC renewed The Office for a full fourth season , which came as no surprise to media pundits .

Beginning his review , Buddy TV 's Oscar Dahl declared Andy was " one of the most devastatingly annoying characters on television " . Dahl liked Dwight 's scenes at Staples , and wrote that series was becoming " more and more difficult to write about . It 's really funny . Consistently funny . Great episodes , week after week , breed little in the way of discussion [...] We have to appreciate greatness while it 's here . The Office is in the midst of a historic run of consistently great episodes . Bask in it . " AOL TV writer Michael Sciannamea agreed with Dahl 's initial assessment of Andy , and called him the " most obnoxious sitcom character in the last few years " . Sciannamea enjoyed seeing more of Angela 's and Michael 's personalities , and believed Andy was a " short @-@ timer " to the series .

Entertainment Weekly contributor Abby West praised Angela Kinsey 's performance , noting that she " brought wonderful contradictions to her prickly office priss " . West also enjoyed the love triangle for being " so skillfully kept as the subplot it should be . It is as much due to the light touches of the three actors as to the writers ... It 's refreshing that Jim and Karen have mostly been so mature and honest , but that 's a sure sign that the relationship will devolve , because the setup for the success for most long @-@ term TV romances requires miscommunication and no confrontation . " In his review of the third season , Travis Fickett of IGN highlighted a scene of the episode ; he commented , " Watching Andy slowly meltdown when he can 't find his cell phone is one of the

better moments of the season . "