

= Garden Party ( The Office ) =

" Garden Party " is the fourth episode of the eighth season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's 156th episode overall . The episode originally aired on NBC in the United States on October 13 , 2011 . It was written by co @-@ executive producer Justin Spitzer and was directed by David Rogers and marks Mindy Kaling 's first credit as executive producer . " Garden Party " features a guest appearance from Josh Groban , Dee Wallace and Stephen Collins .

The series ? presented as if it were a real documentary ? depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania , branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In the episode , Andy Bernard ( Ed Helms ) throws a garden party at Schrute Farms to impress Robert California ( James Spader ) , with his parents and brother in attendance . Meanwhile , Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) works to make it a classy event .

" Garden Party " features a substantial appearance by Josh Groban ; Kaling had asked Groban if he could guest star in the series , through Twitter . The episode received mixed reviews from critics , with criticism towards its repetition of plot ideas . According to Nielsen Media Research , " Garden Party " drew more than 6 million viewers and received a 3 @.@ 2 rating / 8 % share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , staying even with the previous episode , " Lotto " . It ranked third in its timeslot , and ranked as the highest @-@ rated NBC series on Thursday .

= = Plot = =

Andy Bernard ( Ed Helms ) decides to throw a garden party at Schrute Farms to impress his parents and Robert California ( James Spader ) , and exhaustively explains party manners to the office workers . Andy is jealous at the amount of attention his younger brother Walter Bernard , Jr . ( Josh Groban ) receives from his father , and thinks that by throwing an elaborate party he can ensure his father 's blessings . At first , the party goes along smoothly . Andy makes a toast to Robert in order to get his fellow employees to toast him , as if to show to his parents and California that he is valued by his employees . His plan backfires , however , and instead more people toast Robert . To get everybody 's mind off of Robert , Andy decides to sing " More Than Words " as a duet with his father . This too goes awry as his father corrects his playing and singing , and ultimately decides to sing a duet with Walter Jr. instead of Andy . Upset , Andy takes his guitar and storms off . His father confronts him privately about his outburst , and when Andy admits to trying to win his father 's affection , he reacts with annoyance . This conversation is overheard by the other staff on the baby monitor Jim and Pam brought for their daughter , and Pam quickly turns off the monitor to let Andy save face . Darryl Philbin ( Craig Robinson ) and Oscar Martinez ( Oscar Nunez ) confide to the camera that they now understand why Andy feels he needs to prove himself to everyone . After his family leaves , a dejected Andy , feeling unwanted by his family and co @-@ workers , says goodbye to the office staff as they turn the garden party into a barbecue . Darryl and Oscar , however , convince Andy to stay with a cheeseburger and a beer .

Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) wants to make the garden party a classy event to expand Schrute Farms ' clientele . He thoroughly reads a book called The Ultimate Guide to Throwing A Garden Party that he bought online , actually written by Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) under the pseudonym " James Trickington " . The book gives outlandish advice such as announcing each guest 's name as they arrive in an extremely loud manner , imitating The Last Supper in the middle of a meal , dancing with his party staff , and a fire court dance as the closing ceremonies , all of which Dwight follows to the letter .

Also , Pam Halpert ( Jenna Fischer ) feuds with co @-@ worker Angela Lipton ( Angela Kinsey ) over baby names . Pam and Angela learn they 've both chosen the name Phillip for their soon @-@ to @-@ be @-@ born sons , with Pam naming her child after her deceased grandfather and Angela after her favorite cat . Angela , annoyed that Pam doesn 't relinquish the name , makes a toast to " my son Phillip " at the garden party ? only to have Pam make the same toast but describe in great detail how the name honors her grandfather . Angela , unwilling to reveal her feline @-@ centric

reasons for the name , grouses to the camera that Pam is always copying her .

Meanwhile , Kelly Kapoor ( Mindy Kaling ) keeps hinting how cold she is , hoping Ryan Howard ( B.J. Novak ) will offer his jacket . However , Ryan instantly offers his jacket to Robert , who isn 't even cold . Gabe Lewis ( Zach Woods ) also offers his , hinting at a rivalry between them in terms of sucking up to Robert , later evidenced in Pool Party . Dwight 's cousin Mose ( Michael Schur ) has fun being a valet , lining them up to perform a motorcycle stunt . However , he fails to get his motorcycle up the ramp , and instead runs across the cars .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by co @-@ executive producer Justin Spitzer , his 10th writing credit for the series . It was directed by series editor David Rogers , his 4th directing credit for the series . Beginning with this episode , Mindy Kaling was promoted to executive producer . Before this , it was speculated that she might not return to the series as a writer . The episode features guest appearance from Stephen Collins , Dee Wallace and Josh Groban as Andy 's father , mother and brother , respectively . Collins and Wallace were reported to appear on the series by Joyce Eng of TV Guide . Josh Groban was later reported to appear on the series the next day . Writer Mindy Kaling had sent Groban a message through Twitter asking if he would want to appear on the series . He responded yes with the filming week of the episode lining up with his Los Angeles concert for his Straight to You Tour .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

In its original American broadcast on October 13 , 2011 , " Garden Party " was viewed by an estimated 6 @.@ 050 million viewers and received a 3 @.@ 2 rating / 8 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 3 @.@ 2 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 8 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . Although seeing a 3 @.@ 8 % increase in viewership , the episode matched the 18 @-@ 49 demo rating from the previous episode , " Lotto " . The episode ranked third in its timeslot beating Person of Interest which received a 2 @.@ 7 rating / 7 % share in the 18 ? 49 demographic and The Secret Circle which received a 0 @.@ 8 rating / 2 % share , but was defeated by Grey 's Anatomy which received a 3 @.@ 4 rating / 9 % share and The X Factor which received a 3 @.@ 6 rating / 10 % share .

= = = Reviews = = =

The episode received mixed reviews from critics . HitFix writer Alan Sepinwall stated that the episode " offered more laughs than some of this season 's other episodes " . Despite this , he criticized the episode 's main plot with Andy commenting that " where giving Michael Scott power made him a funnier character than he would have been were he just another salesman , Andy has somehow become less funny since the promotion " . Chris Plante of New York called the episode " funny , weird , touching , and unpredictable . A gem , really " . National Post writer Barry Hertz compared the episode to " Booze Cruise " , " Beach Games " and " The Search " . M. Giant of Television without Pity gave the episode a B- . Several critics praised the return of former Office writer , Michael Schur as Mose Schrute . Barry Hertz said that " the sight gag of him running atop a field of cars like a watered @-@ down Evel Knievel was enough to give this episode an easy A " .

Despite this , the episode received some negative reviews . The A.V. Club reviewer Myles McNutt was more negative towards the episode writing that " Here , we have a case where an episode could have signaled at least some sense of what else the show might be interested in other than Andy as the well @-@ meaning but hapless boss and Pam and Angela 's dueling pregnancies , and

all we got were variations on those storylines with no new angle either narratively ". He gave the episode a C. IGN writer Cindy White considered the episode superior to previous " external " episodes " Christening " and " Phyllis 's Wedding " , but considered it inferior to the " Niagara " and the " classic " " Booze Cruise " . She criticized the main plot for rehashing previous plot lines and ultimately gave the episode a 7 @. @ 0 / 10 .