

= Sex Ed ( The Office ) =

" Sex Ed " is the fourth episode of the seventh season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's 130th episode overall . Written and directed by Paul Lieberstein , the episode aired on NBC in the United States on October 14 , 2010 . The episode features the return of several recurring characters , most notably Melora Hardin as Jan Levenson , Linda Purl as Helene Beesly , and Nancy Carell as Carol Stills . Actresses Amy Pietz and Amy Ryan ? who portray Donna and Holly Flax ? only make vocal cameos .

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 , Michael Scott ( Steve Carell ) comes to work thinking he has a pimple , but it turns out to actually be a cold sore . When he is told that it is a form of herpes , Michael contacts all his ex @-@ girlfriends ? Jan , Holly , Helene , Donna , and Carol . Andy Bernard ( Ed Helms ) holds a sex education meeting in the office hoping to learn if Erin Hannon ( Ellie Kemper ) is having sex with her boyfriend , Gabe Lewis ( Zach Woods ) .

Along with several actresses reprising their characters , " Sex Ed " also saw the introduction of Nate , played by Mark Proksch ; he would go on to feature in this season , as well as the following two . " Sex Ed " was viewed by 7 @.@ 36 million viewers and received a 3 @.@ 8 rating among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 , marking a slight increase in the ratings when compared to the previous week . The episode was also the highest @-@ ranked NBC series of the night , but it received mixed reviews from critics , many of whom felt that Michael was characterized as too stupid and that Andy 's subplot was not compelling .

= = Plot = =

Michael Scott ( Steve Carell ) arrives to the office with a fake mustache to hide what he thinks is a pimple over his mouth . Michael soon learns that it is a cold sore , and he over @-@ reacts , thinking he has herpes . With some prodding from Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) , Michael decides to tell his former lovers he has herpes , despite not yet having gone to a doctor . He calls Donna ( Amy Pietz ) first , abruptly telling her to get tested . Michael then calls Holly Flax ( Amy Ryan ) , joking around with her before they have a more serious discussion . Much to Michael 's dismay , she claims that he over @-@ romanticized their relationship , and he hangs up without telling her about the herpes . Michael and Dwight drive out to tell Carol Stills ( Nancy Carell ) , Jan Levenson ( Melora Hardin ) , and Pam 's mother , Helene Beesly ( Linda Purl ) .

Michael and Dwight meet with Jan , who is now a fairly successful office manager for a hospital and single mother . After Jan gives Michael a brutal description of why their relationship failed and he watches her play with her daughter Astrid , Michael reveals that he has herpes . He meets with Helene , Pam 's mother , who is playing with Cece at a playground ; after an awkward conversation in which she also points out his skewed memory , he insults her and walks off . He meets with Carol while she is conducting an open house . Carol attempts to be polite , but then abruptly points out his faults too . Finally , Michael calls Holly one last time , only to get her voicemail . He leaves her a heartfelt message that what she said hurt him and that when he saw all his other exes , he had not been happy to see any of them , but when he talked to her , he was happy . He says that does not understand why she wants to downplay what they had , but he remembers their relationship perfectly and considers it special . Before hanging up , he awkwardly adds that she should be tested for herpes .

Meanwhile , Andy Bernard ( Ed Helms ) uses the situation to host a sex education class in order to learn if his former girlfriend Erin Hannon ( Ellie Kemper ) has been having sex with her current boyfriend Gabe Lewis ( Zach Woods ) . Distraught after realizing that they are having sex and after everyone mocks him , Andy throws a tantrum , hurling a box of pizza at the wall and storming out of the conference room . Gabe takes Andy to his cubicle and admonishes him for his behavior , revealing he is aware why Andy hosted the sex ed class . He explains to Andy that the only reason he asked Erin out was because Andy gave his blessing , which Andy reveals was just a result of his

difficulty saying no to how politely Gabe asked him . Gabe tells Andy that he is going to let this whole situation slide this time and advises Andy to put Erin behind him .

= = Production = =

" Sex Ed " was written and directed by showrunner and executive producer Paul Lieberstein , who also plays Toby Flenderson on the show . The episode features several return appearances of former recurring characters . Amy Ryan appears in a voice @-@ only role as Holly Flax , who was last seen in the fifth season finale , " Company Picnic " . Melora Hardin appears as Jan Levenson , who was last seen in the fifth season episode , " Baby Shower " . Amy Pietz appears as Donna , also in a voice @-@ only role ; she had a recurring role near the end of the sixth season . Linda Purl appears as Helene Beesly , who had a recurring role in the sixth season . Nancy Carell , the actual wife of Steve Carell , appears as Carol Stills , who was last seen in the third season episode , " A Benihana Christmas " . Ryan would return later in the season as a way to provide Carell an exit from the series . Hardin would make a cameo appearance in the later season seven episode " Threat Level Midnight " , as well as two appearances in the ninth season episodes " The Whale " and " Couples Discount " . " Sex Ed " is the first episode to feature Dwight 's assistant Nate , played by YouTube star Mark Proksch . After the producers of The Office saw a series of prank videos that Proksch did under the name " Kenny Strasser " , they hired him to become a recurring character .

The official website of The Office included one deleted scene from " Sex Ed " . In the clip , Kelly asks Jim how she should deal with Ryan not completely loving her . The Season Seven DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . The cut scenes include Dwight looking up how herpes is spread , Dwight discussing how Holly brings out " a child @-@ like wonder in Michael " , Michael contacting the French @-@ Canadian concierge he had a brief relationship with in the fifth season episode " Business Trip " , and more cut scenes from Andy 's sex ed discussion . In addition , an entire subplot was deleted from the episode . This story involved the camera crew catching Pam and Jim in the middle of a fight ; the crew then tries to determine what caused them to fight in the first place .

= = Cultural references = =

Michael compares himself to Canadian pop punk musician Avril Lavigne , noting that both of them get pimples . Andy sings a parody of Foreigner 's 1978 hit single " Hot Blooded " about pizza . Jan mentions that she released " an album of Doris Day covers on [ her ] own label " .

= = Reception = =

" Sex Ed " first aired on NBC on October 14 , 2010 . In its original American broadcast it was viewed by an estimated 7 @.@ 36 million viewers and received a 3 @.@ 8 rating / 10 percent share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that 3 @.@ 8 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ old households watched the episode , and ten percent of that demographic had their televisions tuned to the channel at any point . This marked a slight increase in viewers from the previous episode .

Jonathan Teigland of Starpulse called the episode " simple and silly " . He applauded the final scene with Holly , writing that it was the " best " of Michael 's reconnection with his ex @-@ girlfriends . Dan Forcella of TV Fanatic awarded the episode three out of five stars , calling it " a miss " . He felt that none of the encounters with Michael 's former girlfriends were " funny " , and that " the meetings themselves left a lot to be desired " . He was also critical of Andy 's subplot , writing that " very little about the execution worked . " Forcella did , however , call Michael 's conversation with Holly " classic " .

Myles McNutt of The A.V. Club gave the episode a " C + " and felt that Michael 's antics ? largely the fact that he easily believes he has herpes ? were too stupid to be believable ; however , he felt that the episode 's main story largely worked as planned . However , McNutt panned the episode 's

secondary story focusing on Andy , noting that it " lazily tapped into the series ' basic structure " . He ultimately concluded that " without any particularly strong jokes , it fell entirely on Andy 's character , and there just wasn 't enough there to support it " . Alan Sepinwall of HitFix wrote that , while Michael 's story " had its moments " , it was largely " creepy and uncomfortable " . He also criticized Andy 's characterization , noting that , in the episode , he was written extremely similar to Michael .

= = Cultural impact = =

The episode served as inspiration for the Brazilian web series Viral .