

= Pilot (The Office) =

" Pilot " is the first episode of the first season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's first episode overall . The episode premiered in the United States on NBC on March 24 , 2005 . The episode 's teleplay was adapted by Greg Daniels from the original script of the first episode of the British version written by Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant . The episode was directed by Ken Kwapis .

In this episode , a documentary crew arrives at the Scranton , Pennsylvania offices of Dunder Mifflin to observe the employees and learn about modern management . Manager Michael Scott (Steve Carell) tries to paint a happy picture in the face of potential downsizing from corporate . The office also gets new employee Ryan Howard (B.J. Novak) as a temporary worker , while Jim Halpert 's (John Krasinski) pranks antagonist Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) .

" Pilot " debuted The Office as a midseason replacement for the 2004 ? 05 season . The episode was primarily adapted from the first episode of the British series , although it was partially re @-@ scripted in an attempt to " Americanize " the new show . Although the episode was a ratings success , receiving a 5 @.@ 0 / 13 in the Nielsen ratings among people aged 18 ? 49 , and garnering 11 @.@ 2 million viewers overall , the episode received mixed reviews , with many critics criticizing it as a complete copy of the original .

= = Plot = =

We are introduced to Michael Scott (Steve Carell) , the regional manager of Dunder Mifflin , a paper @-@ production company that is currently under threat of facing downsizing . The news is delivered to him by the Vice President of Northeast Sales , Jan Levinson @-@ Gould , who , along with the other employees , can barely tolerate Michael 's foolish antics .

We are also introduced to a few of the other workers in the office , such as Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) , a socially awkward salesman and part @-@ time , volunteer sheriff 's deputy , Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) , another salesman who enjoys playing pranks on Dwight , Pam Beesly (Jenna Fischer) , the receptionist on whom Jim harbors an obvious crush , and Ryan Howard (B.J. Novak) , a temporary worker .

= = Production = =

The episode debuted the series as a midseason replacement for the 2004 ? 05 season . The pilot is a direct adaptation of the first episode of the British version . Daniels had decided to go through this route because " completely starting from scratch would be a very risky thing to do " due to the show being an adaptation . Although the episode was primarily adapted from the first episode of the British series , it was partially re @-@ scripted in an attempt to " Americanize " it . Jokes such as Dwight 's stapler being put in Jell @-@ O by Jim were transferred verbatim from the original series , while others were only slightly changed . Although later reshot , a scene in which Jim tapes pencils to his desk was originally filmed as a parallel to a scene in the British version , in which Tim Canterbury stacks up cardboard boxes in front of Gareth Keenan to restrict Keenan 's view of Canterbury . The table reading for the pilot episode of The Office was held on February 10 , 2005 . " Pilot " was filmed almost six months prior to beginning of filming on the second episode of the season , " Diversity Day " . The Office used no laugh tracks in the " Pilot " , wanting its " deadpan " and " absurd " humor to fully come across .

= = = Casting = = =

NBC programmer Kevin Reilly originally suggested Paul Giamatti to producer Ben Silverman for the role of Michael Scott , but the actor declined . Martin Short , Hank Azaria and Bob Odenkirk were also reported to be interested . In January 2004 , Variety reported Steve Carell , of the popular Comedy Central program The Daily Show with Jon Stewart , was in talks to play the role . At the

time , he was already committed to another NBC mid @-@ season replacement comedy , Come to Papa , but the series was quickly canceled , leaving him fully committed to The Office . Carell later stated he had only seen about half of the original pilot episode of the British series before he auditioned . He did not continue watching for fear that he would start copying Gervais ' characterizations . Rainn Wilson , who was cast as the power @-@ hungry sycophant Dwight Schrute , watched every episode of the series before he auditioned . Wilson had originally auditioned for Michael , a performance he described as a " terrible Ricky Gervais impersonation " ; however , the casting directors liked his audition as Dwight much more and hired him for the role .

John Krasinski and Jenna Fischer were virtual unknowns before being cast in their respective roles as Jim and Pam , the central love interests . Krasinski had attended school with , and was a friend of B. J. Novak . Krasinski recalled accidentally insulting Greg Daniels while waiting to audition for the series , telling him , " I hope [the show 's developers] don 't screw this up . " Daniels then introduced himself and told Krasinski who he was . Fischer prepared for her audition by looking as boring as possible , creating the original Pam hairstyle . In an interview on NPR 's Fresh Air , Fischer recalled the last stages of the audition process for Pam and Jim , with the producers partnering the different potential Pams and Jims (four of each) together to gauge their chemistry . When Fischer finished her scene with Krasinski , he told her that she was his favorite Pam , to which she reciprocated that he was her favorite Jim . Many actors originally filmed as extras in this episode would later go on to become supporting cast members in later episodes , and the two women wearing blue sweaters towards the back of the room at the staff meeting scene were actual accountants that worked on the production staff .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Pilot " premiered on NBC on March 24 , 2005 . The episode received a 5 @.@ 0 / 13 in the Nielsen ratings among people aged 18 ? 49 , meaning that 5 @.@ 0 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds viewed the episode . The episode garnered 11 @.@ 2 million viewers overall . " Pilot " ranked as the number one show in the key 18 ? 49 demographic , outperforming all five of its network competitors . In addition , the episode ranked as the third most @-@ watched show for that evening . With over 11 million views , it is the second most watched episode of the series , after the fifth season episode " Stress Relief , " which attracted 22 @.@ 9 million viewers .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Pilot " received mixed reviews after its premiere . Many sources deemed it another failed American reincarnation of a British show . A reviewer from the Deseret Morning News said , " Maybe , after The Office dies a quick death on NBC , the network will decide that trying to Americanize British TV comedies isn 't such a great idea . " The New York Daily News said the show was " neither daring nor funny " , adding that " NBC 's version is so diluted there 's little left but muddy water " . The Los Angeles Times complained that Steve Carell , who portrays Scott and also appeared in the movie Anchorman : The Legend of Ron Burgundy , was " too cartoon " and said : " Lost in translation is the sadness behind the characters . "

Erik Adams of The A.V. Club gave the episode a C + and felt that it was a lackluster copy of the original . He noted that " the fatal flaw of this episode ? though it could ? ve been a proviso in the licensing agreement signed by Gervais and Merchant ? involves dropping reminders of the U.K. Office ? s pilot left and right " , and that " this episode pales in comparison " to the original British version . However , Adams complimented the character of Pam , noting that " she ? s also the embodiment of a certain grounded , de @-@ glamorized look and tone these early episodes sold well ? before subsequent seasons dropped them along with the most obvious concessions to the ' workplace documentary ' conceit . "

Although many perceived the first episode to have been a failure , some outlets praised the new show . While berating the show for coming across " slowly and painfully " , the Boston Globe said that " it is funny " . In relation to past failed shows adapted from British shows , the Pittsburgh Post @-@ Gazette stated " Despite botching the American remake of the Britcom Coupling , NBC makes a pretty good effort in its version of The Office in duplicating the original 's ethos while injecting it with an American sensibility . "