

= After Hours (The Office) =

" After Hours " is the sixteenth episode of the eighth season of the American comedy television series The Office and the show 's 168th episode overall . The episode aired on NBC in the United States on February 23 , 2012 . " After Hours " was written by co @-@ executive producers Halsted Sullivan and Warren Lieberstein and directed by Brian Baumgartner , who portrays Kevin Malone on the series , marking his directorial debut .

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 , Dwight Shrute (Rainn Wilson) and Todd Packer (David Koechner) compete for a job . Meanwhile , Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) has to deal with Cathy 's sexual advances in his hotel room . Also , Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) has everyone stay late to cover for their co @-@ workers in Florida .

" After Hours " received mixed reviews from critics . According to the Nielsen Media Research , " After Hours " was viewed by an estimated 5 @. @ 02 million viewers and received a 2 @. @ 6 rating / 7 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 , marking a 16 % rise in the ratings from the series low ratings of the previous episode , " Tallahassee " . The episode also ranked as the highest @-@ rated NBC program of the night .

= = Plot = =

Dwight (Rainn Wilson) and Todd Packer (David Koechner) compete to become VP under Nellie Bertram (Catherine Tate) by seducing her after work at the hotel bar . For most of the night , Packer seems to be the most successful , so Dwight has Gabe (Zach Woods) spike Packer 's beer with his asthma inhaler , which causes Packer to vomit and leaves Dwight alone with Nellie . Dwight eventually succeeds in seducing Nellie as she asks for a key to his room . Dwight scratches off the magnetic strip on his hotel card before giving it to Nellie , stating the seduction was only to gain approval and that he doesn 't intend to have sex with her .

Andy (Ed Helms) has everyone stay late to cover for their co @-@ workers in Florida , which turns into an awkward situation when Val 's (Ameenah Kaplan) boyfriend , Brandon (Jerry Minor) , arrives and accuses Darryl (Craig Robinson) of having an affair with her , after having read Darryl 's text messages to her . Kelly (Mindy Kaling) demands that Darryl read them aloud out of voyeuristic interest . Upon hearing them , most of the staff agree that his text messages , particularly an extended ellipsis at the end of one , are suggestive of Darryl wanting to be with Val . Val protests that the idea of her being romantically involved with Darryl is ridiculous . Pam (Jenna Fischer) suggests that he try a bold step , saying that if Jim hadn 't made romantic advances while she was still engaged to Roy , she never would have ended up marrying him . Darryl follows her advice and tells Val that a potential relationship is not ridiculous .

Erin (Ellie Kemper) confides in Ryan (B. J. Novak) that she 's intending to stay in Tallahassee . Ryan interprets this as an invitation to hook up with her , so he attempts to seduce her by taking her to the kitchen to help her make a waffle . They hide under a table when the chefs come back . After Ryan compliments Erin , she suggests that they could become roommates in Florida and possibly start dating in six months if things go well between them . Not wanting that long timeline , he resorts to saying he loves Kelly .

Meanwhile , Jim (John Krasinski) has started spending more time with Cathy (Lindsey Broad) because Stanley (Leslie David Baker) keeps trying to rope Jim into having an affair . During the night at the hotel , Cathy asks to hang out for a while in Jim 's room under the pretext that the heat in her room is malfunctioning . She repeatedly makes seductive signals , making Jim uncomfortable , so he calls Dwight saying he has bed bugs . Dwight arrives and forces Cathy off Jim 's bed so he can lure out the bed bugs with his nearly naked body . This fails to sufficiently disgust Cathy , who merely steps into the bathroom to take a shower until Dwight leaves . Cathy gets out of the shower wearing only a bath robe . After ordering some desserts from room service and asking Jim to touch her legs , he finally comes out saying that he 's happily married , and doesn 't want to be with her .

Cathy gets defensive and insists that she did not have any romantic intentions whatsoever , so Jim relents , but Cathy immediately resumes her seductive technique . After Jim goes to the bathroom , he comes out to find her in only her underwear under his blanket . Fed up , he demands that she leave and lets Dwight , armed with spray chemicals , into the room . Jim claims to see a bed bug near Cathy , making her flee from Dwight 's spraying . However , because of the chemicals , Dwight suggests Jim sleep in Cathy 's room . Jim instead spends the night with Dwight in his room , eating Cathy 's desserts and watching TV , while a drunken Nellie is outside , trying unsuccessfully to get in .

= = Production = =

" After Hours " was written by co @-@ executive producers Halsted Sullivan and Warren Lieberstein . It was directed by Brian Baumgartner , who portrays Kevin Malone on the series , marking his directorial debut . The episode features a guest appearance from David Koechner , who appears as Todd Packer in the series . He recently made a deal with NBC to do more episodes for the series and also possibly join the cast of series developer Greg Daniels 's next series , Friday Night Dinner , an adaption of the British series of the same name . The episode marks the third appearance of Catherine Tate as Nellie Bertram and her second consecutive appearance . Her character , Nellie will work with several of the office workers on a special project for Sabre in a six episode arc . The episode also marks the tenth appearance of Lindsey Broad who plays Cathy , Pam 's replacement during her maternity leave . She appeared in a recurring role for the season , after she initially appeared in " Pam 's Replacement " . The Season Eight DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes include Nellie establishing boundaries for flirtation , Nellie and Dwight confessing peculiar secrets to each other , and Pam and Andy calling Jim for advice , only to have Cathy answer the phone .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" After Hours " originally aired on NBC in the United States on February 23 , 2012 . The episode was viewed by an estimated 5 @.@ 02 million viewers and received a 2 @.@ 6 rating / 7 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 2 @.@ 6 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 7 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . This marked a 13 @-@ percent rise in the ratings from the previous episode , " Tallahassee " . The episode finished third in its time slot , being beaten by Grey 's Anatomy which received a 3 @.@ 1 rating / 8 % share and the CBS drama Person of Interest which received a 3 @.@ 1 rating / 7 % share in the 18 ? 49 demographic . The episode beat The CW drama series The Secret Circle and the Fox drama series The Finder . Despite this , " After Hours " was the highest @-@ rated NBC television episode of the night . It was also the last episode of The Office to be viewed by more than 5 million viewers until the series finale a year later .

= = = Reviews = = =

" After Hours " received mixed reviews from critics . HitFix writer Alan Sepinwall called it the best episode of a " disappointing " season . He was mainly positive towards the focus of the episode with both story @-@ lines in Tallahassee and Scranton taken place after hours and for the several plot lines in the episode . He praised the pairing of Darryl and Val , saying that they are better matched to be the series ' " new " Jim and Pam than Andy and Erin . Cindy White of IGN said that the episode proved the series was " on a hot streak " . She mainly liked the storylines taking place in Tallahassee and said that the end of the Dwight @-@ Nellie storyline was a " nice bit of character development " . She was also very positive to Baumgartner 's directing in the episode , saying he "

nailed " the documentary format of the episode . She went on to slightly criticize the Scranton storyline and wrote that she hoped the writers would wait before putting Val and Darryl together . She ultimately gave the episode a 7 @. @ 5 / 10 .

Not all reviews were positive . The A. V. Club reviewer Myles McNutt wrote that the episode was too crowded and that while all four plotlines had " potential " , they weren 't given enough time to develop . Despite this , he did compliment the Dwight scenes , due to their ability to gain a " comic rhythm " . He also complimented the Dwight @-@ Nellie @-@ Todd storyline , saying that his decision to not sleep with Nellie was a " nicely human moment " and also wrote that the character was more grounded when he was more self @-@ aware . He ultimately gave the episode a C + .

Many critics commented on the plot featuring Cathy attempting to seduce Jim . White noted that , " Jim did bumble it a bit in the face of Cathy (sic) taking insincere offense at his accusation , but the outcome wasn 't hard to predict . Of course Jim would stay true to his real soulmate . " Sepinwall noted Dwight 's cartoonish behavior in the episode , although he called it a good addition to the Jim @-@ Cathy story @-@ line . McNutt wrote that due to the " choppy storytelling " , the Jim @-@ Cathy storyline wasn 't able to feel awkward enough to " feel Jim 's struggle " .