

= The Carpet =

" The Carpet " is the fourteenth episode of the second season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's twentieth episode overall . It was written by Paul Lieberstein and directed by Victor Nelli , Jr . The episode first aired on January 26 , 2006 on NBC . The episode guest stars Ken Howard as Ed Truck , and David Koechner as Todd Packer .

The series depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In this episode , a disgusting " thing " ? implied to be human feces ? is left in Michael Scott 's ( Steve Carell ) office , and Michael tries to discover who did it . While his carpet is being replaced , he uses Jim Halpert 's desk , forcing Jim to move away from Pam Beesly ( Jenna Fischer ) into the annex .

" The Carpet " is the first and only episode to feature Howard as Truck . However , the death of the character would serve as the main plot for the third season episode " Grief Counseling " . The episode received largely positive reviews from television critics . Upon its original broadcast , " The Carpet " earned a Nielsen rating of 4 @. @ 6 in the 18 ? 49 demographic , being viewed by 8 @. @ 6 million viewers . At the time of its release , it was the second most @- @ downloaded episode of a television show on the iTunes store .

= = Synopsis = =

When someone leaves a disgusting substance on the carpet in Michael Scott 's ( Steve Carell ) office , he spends the day at Jim Halpert 's ( John Krasinski ) desk , relegating Jim to the back room ( referred to as the " Annex " ) to suffer Kelly Kapoor 's ( Mindy Kaling ) constant chattering . She asks Jim to hook her up with Ryan Howard ( B.J. Novak ) . Jim continues to yearn for Pam Beesley ( Jenna Fischer ) , but her groom @- @ to @- @ be , Roy Anderson ( David Denman ) , is in the office replacing the carpet along with Darryl Philbin ( Craig Robinson ) , and Jim is unable to speak with her .

As the day wears on , Michael becomes convinced that what happened to his office is a hate crime and an act of terrorism . Believing it to have been perpetrated by someone in the office , he begins to lose his faith in his employees , whom he considers his friends . Michael tries talking to his former boss Ed Truck ( Ken Howard ) , who tells him that he does not need to have his employees be his friends . But his mood changes drastically when he finds out the prank was carried out by his obnoxious friend Todd Packer ( David Koechner ) . Michael instantly finds the joke hilarious , and his faith in his friends is restored . At the end of the day , Jim is cheered up when he finds that all seven of his voicemail messages were left by Pam throughout the day . Jim is seen driving home , and Pam 's voicemails act as a voice @- @ over , closing out the episode .

= = Production = =

" The Carpet " was written by Paul Lieberstein , who portrays Toby Flenderson on the series , making it his third writing credit after the first season entry " Health Care " and the second season episode " The Client " . The episode was directed by Victor Nelli , Jr . The episode is the first and only to feature Howard as Ed Truck . However , the death of the character would serve as the main plot for the third season episode " Grief Counseling " . Actress Kate Flannery later revealed that , for the old 80s picture of Michael and Ed , Carell had to wear a mullet wig .

Before the episode aired , the cast and crew received news that the show would be renewed for a third season . Jenna Fischer ( Pam ) noted that " It is rare in this business to hear news of a pickup so early " , but that NBC was very pleased with how well the show was doing . It had previously , and erroneously , been advertised that the show would finish its run at the end of March 2006 . Fischer explained that while the season would end ? actually in May ? the show would continue .

The exact nature of the substance that is deposited on Michael 's carpet is never explicitly made clear . Fischer only described it as " soft [ ... ] smelly [ and ] brown " . In fact , the circumstance in which the substance is viewed by the camera is still ambiguous ; Television Without Pity reviewer M.

Giant noted that the viewer only gets " the merest out @-@ of @-@ focus Blair Witch glimpse " of the substance . Fischer also noted that one of the more interesting aspects of the episode was the " you [ the audience ] finally see Pam and Roy getting along . " She explained that this was because Roy and Pam returned from " a romantic vacation in the Poconos . "

Deleted scenes include : Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) believing that a higher power brought Michael to his desk , Angela Martin ( Angela Kinsey ) and Kevin Malone ( Brian Baumgartner ) speculating on the culprit , Jim unable to handle Kelly 's chattering , Jim eating lunch by himself in his car , Michael being unable to complete a sale , Michael stealing a crumpet from Dwight , Dwight and Angela having a secret conversation in the kitchen , and Jim asking Toby Flenderson ( Lieberstein ) how he handled Kelly 's loquaciousness .

= = Cultural references = =

Michael compares that the circumstances of the episode to the components for an audition tape for Fear Factor , an American sports dare reality game show . Michael later bothers Stanley Hudson ( Leslie David Baker ) with an impression of the Popeye cartoon character J. Wellington Wimpy . Dwight makes repeated calls to WEZX Rock 107 , a Scranton radio station that plays classic rock . Michael snidely compares Darryl and Roy 's work to Extreme Makeover : Home Edition , an American reality television series providing home improvements for less fortunate families and community schools .

= = Reception = =

" The Carpet " originally aired on NBC on the January 26 , 2006 . The episode received a 4 @. @ 6 rating / 11 percent share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 4 @. @ 6 percent of all 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ olds , and 11 percent of all 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . " The Carpet " was viewed by 8 @. @ 6 million viewers . The episode retained 93 percent of its lead @- @ in My Name is Earl audience .

Critical reception to the episode was largely positive . M. Giant of Television Without Pity awarded the episode an " A ? " . Brendan Babish of DVD Verdict gave the episode a largely positive review and awarded it an " A ? " . He called it " another solid episode " and praised the " guest appearance by Ken Howard of The White Shadow fame . " After the episode aired , several newspapers , including the Los Angeles Times and The Journal Gazette reported on the episode 's success , as well as others in the season , in building the show 's audience . Furthermore , the episode was particularly popular with fans of the series , especially college students . After the episode aired , it was made available on the iTunes online digital store , where , for a time , it was the second most @- @ downloaded episode of a television show .