

= Work Bus =

" Work Bus " is the fourth episode of the ninth season of the American comedy television series The Office and the show 's 180th episode overall . The episode originally aired on NBC on October 18 , 2012 . The episode was written by Brent Forrester and was directed by Bryan Cranston .

The series depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In the episode , Jim ( John Krasinski ) convinces Dwight ( Rainn Wilson ) that the building is unsafe , leading to Dwight renting a bus and setting up the office inside . Meanwhile , Nellie ( Catherine Tate ) asks for Andy 's ( Ed Helms ) help in adopting a baby . Jim tries to make Pam ( Jenna Fischer ) happy with some pie .

" Work Bus " received mostly positive reviews from television critics . Many praised the episode 's humor and the dynamic between Jim and Pam , and Jim and Dwight . Despite this , Andy 's characterization throughout the episode was mainly criticized . " Work Bus " was viewed by 4 @.@ 28 million viewers and received a 2 @.@ 1 / 6 percent rating among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 , ranking third in its timeslot . The Office also ranked as the highest @-@ rated NBC series of the night .

= = Plot = =

When Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) is irritated that Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) will not fulfill his landlord responsibilities and fix the dangerously substandard office wiring , he comes up with a plan to pretend that magnetic power is affecting the office and thus get the repairs as well as a week off from work for his wife Pam ( Jenna Fischer ) ( whom he 's trying to be extra nice to in the wake of not telling her about his new job plans ) . Dwight calls Jim 's bluff and rents an overcrowded bus for the staff to work on , but Jim harnesses the office workers ' love of a local pie stand to please Pam . Dwight eventually gets angry and climbs into the roof of the bus , refusing to drive any further . Pam suspects something else is wrong and asks Jim to talk to him . Jim learns that Dwight thought his magnetic power prank was real as he suspects he is infertile , which he has convinced himself explains why he was not the father of Angela Martin 's ( Angela Kinsey ) baby . Jim tells Dwight he is like a father to the entire office , and Dwight then drives everyone to the pie stand where they have a great finish to their day .

Meanwhile , Nellie Bertram ( Catherine Tate ) asks for Andy Bernard 's ( Ed Helms ) help in adopting a baby , as the local adoption agency requires a reference letter from an employer . Andy promises to read her application letter , but tells the camera crew he 'll only sign it if she admits that she 's a horrible person in it . However , Andy is unaware that Erin Hannon ( Ellie Kemper ) is using her own painful past as a non @-@ adopted orphan to help Nellie with the process . When Andy coldly rejects Nellie 's letter ( which Erin helped her write ) , Nellie accepts his decision , but Andy is stunned to hear Erin crying sadly over the failure . He finally adds some mildly snarky but complimentary lines to her letter and signs onto it as a reference , leaving Nellie overjoyed .

= = Production = =

" Work Bus " was written by executive producer Brent Forrester , marking his tenth writing credit for the series , his first since the seventh season episode , " The Search " . Forrester had been previously been named executive producer to the series , before the start of the season . The episode was also directed by Bryan Cranston , the star of the AMC drama series , Breaking Bad . It was initially announced he was going to guest direct an episode by cast member Rainn Wilson , via Twitter . Cranston had previously directed episodes from other comedy series , including Malcolm in the Middle and Modern Family . Entertainment Weekly later confirmed the episode title and its airdate .

The official website of The Office included three cut scenes from " Work Bus " within a week of the episode 's release . In the 43 @-@ second clip , Pete and Erin indulge in a little unlawful fantasy . In the second 104 @-@ second clip , the office continues their " Shabooya Roll Call " , with Phylis ,

Oscar , Dwight ( reluctantly ) and Andy participating , while Angela criticizes their game . In the final 67 @-@ second clip , Clark helps Darryl out with Power Point .

= = Cultural references = =

The cold opening for the episode features Andy showing the office various sports bloopers that he edited to make look funnier than they actually are , a reference to the popular " Fail " internet memes . Dwight notes that he is fine living in an EMF field , because most of his super @-@ hero idols got their powers from massive amounts of electricity . Andy , by Nellie 's own admission , thinks that she should " go back to Loch Ness " , a reference to the mythical Loch Ness monster .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Work Bus " originally aired on NBC on October 18 , 2012 . The episode was viewed by 4 @.@ 28 million viewers and received a 2 @.@ 1 rating / 6 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 2 @.@ 1 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 6 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . This marks a slight decrease in the ratings when compared to the previous episode , " Andy 's Ancestry " . The Office finished third in its time slot , being beaten by an episode of the ABC series Grey 's Anatomy which received a 3 @.@ 4 / 9 percent rating and an entry of the CBS drama Person of Interest , which received a 2 @.@ 8 / 7 percent rating Despite this , The Office was the highest @-@ rated NBC television program of the night .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Work Bus " received mostly positive reviews from critics . The A.V. Club reviewer Erik Adams considered " Work Bus " to be the funniest episode of the series since the seventh season . He noted that while the episode had a slow start , " the script [ ... ] doesn ' t get moving until the bus gets moving " and comended the writers for using the ensemble cast to reach a " height of funniness " and compared the " mob mentality " of the cast to The Simpsons . He ultimately awarded the episode a B + . IGN writer Cindy White called the episode a " pretty good example of how to do an out @-@ of @-@ the @-@ office episode right " , considering it to be superior to other out @-@ of @-@ office episodes , including " Christening " and " Gettysburg " . She also complimented the characterization of the characters , specifically Jim , Pam and Dwight , and their relationships with each other . Despite this , she criticized the " aforementioned characterization of Andy " as well as the cold open , for making Andy too similar to Michael and later on commented that his new " douche @-@ bagery " spoiled the episode for her . She ultimately gave the episode a 7 @.@ 8 / 10 , concluding that it was a " good " episode . Michael Tedder of New York gave a positive review and praised the scene featuring Jim and Dwight on the roof of the bus , and praised their dynamic for maturing over the years . Tedder also complimented Cranston 's direction in the episode , commenting that the " cramped quality of ' Work Bus ' was well matched with Cranston 's talents " . He also wrote that the Nellie @-@ Andy subplot had some potential to become " promising " if their rivalry continues through the rest of the season , but " we 'll have to see " .

Brett Harrison Davinger of California Literary Review was more positive , writing that the episode had a more " classic Office " feeling , due to its humor and emotion , which he considered missing from the series in the previous seasons . He praised Jim for being " the show 's heart " for being motivated from " a real place " and complimented his final scenes with Dwight , for actually being more in @-@ character in his motivation unlike previous episodes , such as " The Incentive " and " Last Day in Florida " . He also praised Jim and Pam 's final scene together for having " genuine , quite tenderness " to it . He also complimented the episode 's humor and for Andy 's " dick "

behavior .

Other reviews were more mixed . Alan Sepinwall of HitFix had a more mixed review , calling the episode " decent " , by " late @-@ era [ Office ] standards . While he criticized Andy 's behavior for being too much like Michael Scott , and Kevin for being " developmentally disabled " , he complimented the episode for having " some decent laughs " and for the Jim @-@ Dwight @-@ Pam storyline . He especially praised Jim and Dwight 's scene on the roof of the bus , comparing it to previous scenes in the series between Jim and Michael or Pam and Michael , saying it was able to show the " core of real emotion underneath the cartoon character [ Dwight ] " . Dan Forcella of TV Fantatic awarded the episode three stars out of five , saying that without Brian Baumgartner 's performance , the episode " might not have been worth watching " . He only had praise for Baumgartner 's performance in his character 's gags throughout the episode .