

= Grief Counseling (The Office) =

" Grief Counseling " is the fourth episode of the third season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's 32nd overall . The episode was written by co @-@ executive producer Jennifer Celotta and directed by Roger Nygard , making it Nygard 's only series credit . It first aired on NBC in the United States on October 12 , 2006 .

The series 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) is overcome with grief when he learns about the death of his former boss Ed Truck . Michael spends the rest of the day attempting grief counseling for the mostly grief @-@ lacking office . Meanwhile , in Stamford Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) and Karen Filippelli (Rashida Jones) embark on a quest for a particular brand of potato chips .

The outdoor scenes were filmed during the summer , although the cast had to pretend like it was in the middle of winter ; this included wearing coats . " Grief Counseling " earned a Nielsen rating of 4 @.@ 1 with an 11 percent share in the 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ old demographic and was watched by 8 @.@ 83 million viewers . The episode was viewed favorably by most television critics ; Pam 's pranks and the bird funeral were a particular source of praise , as was Michael 's monologue on the five stages of grief .

= = Synopsis = =

Michael Scott (Steve Carell) is informed by Jan Levenson (Melora Hardin) that his former boss Ed Truck has died . Kelly Kapoor (Mindy Kaling) and Phyllis Lapin (Phyllis Smith) console Michael after he breaks the news to a mostly unmoved staff . Later , Creed Bratton (Creed Bratton) tells Michael that Truck , heavily inebriated , was decapitated in a truck accident . Michael summons the staff to a primitive grief counseling session involving a collapsible Hoberman sphere ball , in which Michael tells members of the staff to give stories of deceased love ones . This leads to the staff telling stories about losing loved ones based on death scenes in movies (Million Dollar Baby , The Lion King , and Weekend at Bernie 's) with Ryan Howard (B. J. Novak) saying he would elaborate more on his story , but it would take about an hour and a half to do it .

Toby Flenderson (Paul Lieberstein) tells Michael death is a part of life , and uses an example of a bird that flew into a first @-@ floor window that morning . Michael charges outside , picks up the deceased animal and tries in vain to revive it . Michael schedules a parking lot funeral for the bird . Pam Beesly (Jenna Fischer) fashions a makeshift coffin and reads a prepared speech that comforts Michael . Pam then proceeds to sing " On the Wings of Love " as Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) accompanies her on his recorder . The coffin is placed in a box of shredded paper and set afire .

Meanwhile , in Stamford , Connecticut , Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) gains authority over Karen Filippelli 's (Rashida Jones) schedule for the day . When Karen mentions her favorite kind of Herr 's potato chips is missing from the vending machine , Jim tells Karen that they cannot work until they find her chips . The duo spends the rest of the day searching stores and vending machines around town in a vain attempt to find the chips . But at the end of the day , Karen finds a bag of Herr 's on her desk . Jim tells the documentary crew that he traced the chips from the manufacturer to the distributor to the vending machine company to an adjacent office building .

= = Production = =

" Grief Counseling " was written by co @-@ executive producer Jennifer Celotta , and was directed by Roger Nygard , his only episode of The Office to date . In a later interview with Den of Geek , Nygard found that " television episodes are the domain of the writer @-@ producers . You are there to service their vision . The Office is fully scripted , but there 's always a little room to play when it 's warranted . The first cuts are around 45 minutes , so you often have to cut the episodes in half for air . " Though " Grief Counseling " broadcast before the fifth episode , " Initiation " , its filming took

place after that episode due to the availability of shooting on Dwight 's fictional beet farm .

The episode 's plot involved the death of former boss Ed Truck , a character who had been played by Ken Howard in the second season episode " The Carpet " . As part of the episode took place outdoors , the cast had to wear coats despite the hot summer weather . Actress Kate Flannery commented in a weekly blog she wrote for TV Guide that " we suffered while shooting the outdoor scenes ... We had to act like it was cold when it was warm . For hours and hours . You would never know it by looking at us . Isn 't that crazy ? " Flannery also wrote , " I love this episode because it 's dark , for a comedy . This time The Office tackles gutsy subject matter . " In her memoir *Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me ?* , Mindy Kaling wrote that the episode resulted in the worst disagreement she ever had during her years on the show , where she and Greg Daniels , normally a " very nice " person , disagreed on a story point to the extent that Daniels told her that if " you [were] going to resist what I 'm doing here , you can just go home . " Kaling briefly left the set before returning , with no further problems or repercussions noted .

Deleted scenes of the episode were released in the third season DVD . Such scenes included a coworker showing Jim photographs of her baby , Dwight telling everyone to delete their records of Ed Truck , Michael talking about a need for a grief counselor , Toby holding a grief counseling session for the office , and Roy telling Pam of the birth of a cousin 's twins .

= = Reception = =

" Grief Counseling " first aired on October 12 , 2007 on NBC in the United States . It received a Nielsen rating of 4 @. @ 1 / 11 . This means that it was seen by 4 @. @ 1 % of all 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ olds , and 11 % of all 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . The episode was viewed by 8 @. @ 83 million viewers and placed as the 24th most @- @ watched episode for the week in the 18- to 49 @- @ year @- @ old demographic .

IGN columnist Brian Zoromski rated " Grief Counseling " 9 @. @ 5 / 10 , an indication of an " amazing " episode . Writing that the opening sequence " excellently set " the tone of the episode , he found a " ton of great moments " , such as Michael 's " totally awkward speeches on Ed Truck 's death " and his conversation with Dwight over a robot statue . Zoromski saved the most praise for Pam and her pranks , particularly her " completely ridiculous bird funeral ... It was all so brilliantly over @- @ the @- @ top it becomes clear that the Scranton office will continue to be enjoyable to watch , as Pam takes over the mocking of the office all on her own , to a hilarious extreme . " AOL TV 's Michael Sciannamea also lauded Pam and her pranks , especially highlighting her actions during the opening sequence and her song during the bird funeral . Sciannamea assumed that " she feels liberated from Roy (and Jim , to some extent) [and] is allowing her personality and sense of humor to come out even more . " He concluded that it was " another solid episode with Steve Carell at his best . "

Entertainment Weekly 's Abby West expressed praise for an episode that " restored balance and order to our favorite paper @- @ pushers while still nicely forwarding the storylines of TV 's plainest super @- @ non @- @ couple . " West was also pleased " to have Michael back to his usual insanity " , and wrote that Pam " was priceless tonight , from the spot @- @ on reaction shots to the movie @- @ plotlines @- @ as @- @ my @- @ pain gag she started to the almost @- @ believably tender eulogy she delivered for the singing , er , impressionist bird , complete with the most tricked @- @ out pencil @- @ case coffin you 've ever seen . " Television Without Pity graded the episode with a B ? . Michael 's monologue about the five stages of grief has also been isolated for praise ; Michael Sciannamea called it " the best line of the night , " and in 2011 , IGN 's Cindy White selected it as one of the series ' best .