

= Initiation ( The Office ) =

" Initiation " is the fifth episode of the third season of the American comedy television series The Office ? the show 's 33rd overall . Written by B. J. Novak , who also acts in the show as Ryan Howard , and directed by Randall Einhorn , the episode first aired in the United States on October 19 , 2006 on NBC .

In the episode Ryan is taken by Dwight on what he believes is a sales call , but instead is brought to Dwight 's beet farm for an " initiation . " Pam is supposed to keep track of Michael 's productivity , but Michael spends his day waiting in line for a pretzel . Jim steals Karen 's chair and foils her attempts to get it back .

= = Synopsis = =

In the cold open , Dwight tries to test Ryan with riddles found on a website , but is angered when Ryan knows all the answers before he even finishes talking .

Ryan Howard ( B. J. Novak ) plans to go to his first sales call with Dwight Schrute ( Rainn Wilson ) . Dwight surprises Ryan by taking him to Dwight 's beet farm to both teach and haze . When Ryan accuses him of trying to college frat the situation , Dwight snaps at him , saying the reason Ryan has yet to make a sale is because he thinks he knows everything , and must think otherwise to sell . After Dwight tries to force Ryan to wrestle his cousin Mose ( Michael Schur ) , Ryan gets angry and walks out . Dwight apologizes to Ryan and begins to give Ryan serious sales advice as Ryan takes notes . The two then go on a sales call which ultimately doesn 't work out for Ryan . Irritated , Ryan throws eggs at the building housing the company that refused his sale . Dwight and Ryan then go to a bar and return to the office , where it appears they formed a new bond .

Jan Levinson ( Melora Hardin ) instructs receptionist Pam Beesly ( Jenna Fischer ) to keep a log of Michael Scott 's ( Steve Carell ) activity , and throughout the day , she dryly notes Michael 's antics , including a Bill Cosby impression for a potential customer and waiting in line with Stanley Hudson ( Leslie David Baker ) for a free soft pretzel , while hinting to Michael that he should focus on being productive . Michael enjoys Gary Glitter 's " Rock and Roll " in his office at a high volume . After consuming his sugary pretzel , Michael emerges from his office and launches into a hyperactive , sugar @-@ fueled speech before falling asleep at his desk . At the end of the day , Pam realizes that Michael 's antics secured a large sale .

At Dunder Mifflin 's Stamford branch , Karen Filippelli ( Rashida Jones ) discovers that Jim Halpert ( John Krasinski ) swapped his chair for hers , but Jim foils her efforts to switch them back . The two flirt for a while before Karen steals Andy Bernard 's ( Ed Helms ) chair . Later that night , Jim , who was trying to call Kevin Malone ( Brian Baumgartner ) , ends up talking to Pam on the phone for the first time since the two kissed . The two have a lengthy conversation and begin to reconnect . Jim misinterprets Pam 's parting phrase to Ryan as being directed at him , and the two end their conversation , much to their sadness . The episode ends with a brief talking head of Stanley , counting down the days left in the year until the next Pretzel day .

= = Production = =

This episode was the first full episode of the series directed by Randall Einhorn . Einhorn had previously directed all ten webisodes of the spin @-@ off mini @-@ series " The Accountants " . " Initiation " was written by B. J. Novak , who also acts for the show as Ryan Howard .

The episode was filmed before " Grief Counseling " , but it aired after it . There were rumors that " Initiation " was supposed to air before " Grief Counseling " , but it turned out the location of the beet farm was only available that week . Although the idea for writer Michael Schur to be Dwight 's cousin Mose had been a joke among the writers since the first season , B. J. Novak pitched the idea when writing " Initiation " . Schur had to grow out his beard for three months and wear wool clothes on a hot day as part of his character . Mose was based on an actual participant in the UPN reality show Amish in the City . In this episode , Jim was seen singing Lovefool by The Cardigans . The song

playing in Dwight 's car when he and Ryan are driving to the beet farm is River Runs Red by Life of Agony . In the basket that Mose makes for Ryan is " something he whittled " which strongly resembles a Venus figurine .

The third season DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from the episode , including Jan asking Michael to record his day on a schedule , Ryan being hugged by Michael before leaving for his first sales call , Dwight and Ryan leaving the office , Michael reading his schedule in a talking head scene , Pam encouraging Michael to " focus " for the day , Ryan reflecting on his life path , and Dwight showing Ryan his family cemetery and making a reference to his Nazi grandfather by calling him " a good man ... who did some VERY bad things " .

= = Reception = =

This episode was generally well received by critics . Abby West of Entertainment Weekly stated that " one of the many things I love about the show is how current it is . I love the pop @-@ culture references , like Lost 's Dharma Initiative , Deal or No Deal , and that soon @-@ to @-@ be classic SNL / Chronicles of Narnia sketch . IGN 's Brian Zoromski said that although the episode had " a few hit and miss moments " , it " was a very well done episode that carried through on three main storylines " and " began and ended beautifully " . Aaron from eTV Review said that even if it " wasn ' t as good as last week ' s episode " , it was still " another great one " . In a poll done by OfficeTally.com , " Initiation " was ranked by viewers as the thirteenth funniest of the twenty @-@ three episodes of the third season .