

= Andy 's Play =

" Andy 's Play " is the third episode of the seventh season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's 129th episode overall . Written by Charlie Grandy and directed by John Stuart Scott , the episode aired on NBC in the United States on October 7 , 2010 . Guest stars include Robert Mammana , Phil Abrams and Robert R. Shafer .

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 , Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) lands a role in a local production of Sweeney Todd and invites the entire office to the performance , hoping to impress his former girlfriend , Erin Hannon (Ellie Kemper) . While Michael Scott (Steve Carell) struggles to put his jealousy aside , Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) and Pam Halpert (Jenna Fischer) have trouble with their less @-@ than @-@ stellar babysitter , Erin .

Originally , the producers and writers wanted the in @-@ show musical to be performed badly , but they later changed their minds and decided that the musical should be quality work , according to Helms . The episode featured several guest actors and actresses to round out the parts in the musical . " Andy 's Play " was viewed by 6 @.@ 95 million viewers and received a 3 @.@ 5 rating among adults between the age of 18 and 49 , marking a slight drop in the ratings when compared to the previous week . Despite this , the episode was the highest @-@ ranked NBC series of the night and received positive reviews from critics , many of whom enjoyed the character @-@ driven story .

= = Plot = =

Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) is going to perform in a local production of Sweeney Todd , and he wants his co @-@ workers to come . He makes a special effort to invite Erin Hannon (Ellie Kemper) , whom he hopes to win back with a good performance . Michael Scott (Steve Carell) is especially hard to convince , since he is still upset that he was not asked to play the part of Sweeney Todd after his own audition . Andy informs him that no one auditioning got the part of Sweeney Todd , which was instead given to a veteran " world class " actor , and Michael agrees to go . Jim (John Krasinski) and Pam Halpert (Jenna Fischer) say they want to go , but have been unable to find a babysitter for their daughter Cece . Erin agrees to come , but she later decides to babysit Cece so Pam and Jim can come instead .

On the night of the show , Darryl Philbin reads from the program that contrary to Andy 's assumption , the actor (Robert Mammana) playing Sweeney Todd has no acting or singing experience , and was discovered by the director while singing karaoke . Put out by this , Michael steals a bottle of wine from the concessions table , which he and his co @-@ workers drink during the show . Andy , upset that Erin is not in the audience , repeatedly checks for messages from her on his cell phone . While he is on stage , his phone rings in his pocket , disrupting the musical and forcing the performers to improvise . To make matters worse , Michael drops his bottle of wine , causing a commotion as it rolls . Then he loses grip of balloons he brought to his seat , which pop as they hit the top of the hall . This startles a baby , and the sound of her cries alerts Jim and Pam to the fact that Erin came to the play with Cece , exciting Andy , but angering Jim and Pam . At the end of the show , everyone cheers except for Michael , who angrily boos the actor playing Sweeney Todd . During the party for the performers afterwards , the director compliments Michael on the " energy " of his audition and encourages him to audition again , suggesting that he felt that Sweeney Todd simply wasn 't the right production for Michael 's acting style .

Angela Martin (Angela Kinsey) , having found a loophole in her parenting contract with Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) which permits him to develop romantic feelings for her , attempts to attract him . She uses another technicality in the contract to force him to take her to Andy 's play as a date , and wears uncharacteristically revealing clothing . But when Dwight becomes lustful , Angela rebuffs him and insists that they count the date as one of their five required instances of sexual intercourse . Meanwhile , Andy and Erin chat backstage , and Erin states how happy she is that they are spending time together outside of the Office . This moment ends when Erin leaves with her

boyfriend , Gabe Lewis (Zach Woods) . As Andy sulks backstage , his co @-@ workers arrive and cheer him up .

= = Production = =

" Andy 's Play " was written by supervising producer Charlie Grandy , his fifth writing credit for the show . The episode was directed by John Stuart Scott , his first and only directing credit for the show . With the seventh season of The Office being Carell 's last , the writers decided to divide the season into two distinct halves ; the first half would " celebrate Carell 's finale year and highlight different actors on the show " , whereas the second half would focus on his departure and the search for a new manager . As such , " Andy 's Play " was one of the first episode of the season to specifically highlight " potential heirs to the throne " , in this case Ed Helms ' character , Andy .

According to Helms , the original script called for the musical numbers to be " slaughtered " by the actors and actresses . However , as the episode was being finalized , the producers decided for the cast to " perform razor @-@ sharp renditions " of the songs instead . Due to the ensemble nature of the musical featured in the episode , guest actors and actresses were required . Actor Robert Mammana portrayed Mitchel Walsh , who played the title role in the play within the play . Heather Marie Marsden played Mrs. Lovett , Maxwell Glick appeared Tobias , and Phil Abrams appeared as Shelby Thomas Weems , the musical 's director .

The Season Seven DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes include Andy discussing the " crowd dynamic " at musicals and music events , Gabe discussing his history of playing Ichabod Crane in three separate play productions , Pam and Jim discussing how hard it is to get a babysitter , Michael ordering flowers , Andy getting a pep talk from his director , Phyllis worrying about Cynthia and Bob bonding , and Kevin talking to his sister who happens to be playing a part in the musical .

= = Cultural references = =

The songs featured in the episode from the actual Sweeney Todd musical are " The Ballad of Sweeney Todd " , " Johanna " , and " By the Sea " . Erin accidentally references The Baby @-@ sitters Club , a series of novels by Ann M. Martin , when talking about breaking into the babysitting business in Scranton . Michael brings balloons to the musical , Phyllis notes that they remind her of the 2009 Pixar film Up . Jim mentions that trying to put CeCe to sleep reminds him of the 2008 war film The Hurt Locker . The ending scene features Michael auditioning for the musical by re @-@ acting of an entire episode of the American police procedural and legal drama television series Law & Order , complete with opening monologue and theme music . Andy sings Macy Gray 's single " I Try " with the rest of the office to cheer himself up at the end of the episode .

= = Reception = =

" Andy 's Play " first aired on October 7 , 2010 . In its original American broadcast , it was viewed by an estimated 6 @.@ 95 million viewers with a 3 @.@ 5 rating / 10 percent share among adults between the age of 18 and 49 . This means that 3 @.@ 5 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ old households watched the episode , and ten percent of that demographic had their televisions tuned to the channel at any point . This marked a 0 @.@ 2 rating decrease from the previous weeks episode , although the episode ranked second in its time slot and was the highest @-@ rated NBC series of the night .

This episode received mostly positive reviews from critics . James Poniewozik of Time magazine wrote that , " ' Andy 's Play ' was the kind of strong , character driven episode I 've missed from the show ? not just good by later season standards but an actual good Office episode , period . " Dan Forcella of TV Fanatic wrote that the episode was a reminder of " what has always been great about this show " . Alan Sepinwall of HitFix wrote that the episode " worked largely because it embraced [the] idea " that " the bonds you form at work go deeper than carpet , and that if you work with

people long enough they can feel like your family . " He ultimately concluded that the episode was one that " makes me happy [that] I spent an evening in the company of these goofballs . "

Myles McNutt of The A.V. Club gave the episode a " B + " , stating that it was " inconclusive " proof whether or not Andy could be the show 's lead , in advance of Steve Carell 's exit from the series , but that " in terms of providing entertainment , I think the episode worked quite well " and was " honest and charming " . Vulture writer Phoebe Reilly was slightly critical of Apple product placements ? Ryan 's iPad and Andy 's iPhone ? but found the use of the second " still funny : the signature chirp of Andy ? s iPhone interrupts a scene , prompting him to pretend it ? s a bird that he has to silence by saying , ' He 's gone to sleep now . I 've closed his beak . ' "

Many reviews commented upon Andy 's phone @-@ interrupted onstage scene . Poniewozik praised " Andy ? s flop @-@ sweat attempt to improvise his way out of his cellphone 's going off while running up against the limits of what his character knows about Sweeney " , calling it " hilarious " . Forcella was complimentary towards " the awkward moment when his phone didn 't stop ringing and [Andy] had to explain it on stage " , noting that it had " brilliant timing and execution . "