

= Test the Store =

" Test the Store " is the seventeenth episode of the eighth season of the American comedy television series The Office and the show 's 169th episode overall . The episode was written by Mindy Kaling , directed by Brent Forrester , and aired on NBC in the United States on March 1 , 2012 .

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 , Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) attempts to put on a theatrical presentation to impress Nellie Bertram (Catherine Tate) . Meanwhile , in Scranton , Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) comes to work with an embarrassing black eye .

" Test the Store " contains many cultural allusions , including several to the NBC action @-@ comedy series Chuck . The episode received mixed reviews from critics . According to the Nielsen Media Research , " Test the Store " was viewed by an estimated 4 @.@ 95 million viewers and received a 2 @.@ 5 rating / 7 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . The episode ranked first in its time slot and was also ranked as the highest @-@ rated NBC program of the night .

= = Plot = =

At the Sabre store opening , Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) attempts to put on a theatrical presentation to impress Nellie Bertram (Catherine Tate) . Dwight assigns the members of his team various tasks : Erin (Ellie Kemper) is to act like a hipster to make the Sabre Pyramid more appealing , Cathy (Lindsay Broad) is to flirt with the bloggers , Ryan (B. J. Novak) is to give a presentation to wow the critics , and Todd Packer (David Koechner) is to play the part of a sexual predator ? much to Packer 's chagrin . As the grand opening progresses , things begin to fall apart . Several bloggers notice Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) using his old cell phone instead of his Sabre Arrowhead phone , resulting in a reprimand from Nellie . Erin disappears with a group of seniors after Dwight drives them away , fearing their age will frighten the youth . Ryan has a panic attack and , after being consoled by Dwight and Jim ? who imitate Kelly and his mother respectively in an attempt to calm him down ? leaves to go to his parents ' house . Jim is forced to give the presentation , which , despite a rocky start , impresses the crowd . After the opening , Dwight is named vice president by Nellie .

Back in Scranton , Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) tries to protect Pam (Jenna Fischer) from a group of kids who are throwing pine cones at her , and a young girl , " Tiffany " (Caitlin Williams) , punches him , giving him a black eye . Andy tells his co @-@ workers that he stepped in when a " gang " harassed Pam , and Pam plays along out of gratitude to Andy . Toby (Paul Lieberstein) arranges a meeting in the conference room to discuss self @-@ defense . Andy is then humiliated when Tiffany is brought in by her mother and half @-@ apologizes to him and Pam . After Kelly begins physically harassing Toby , Andy steps in between the two to break the fight up , resulting in his other eye being blackened . The rest of the office laughs but shuts up when Andy points out he got hit twice because he defended other people who were being attacked . The episode concludes with Andy noting that he took a bunch of pain medication , drank a bottle of wine , and took his pants off , thus greatly improving his feelings as the day ends .

= = Production = =

" Test the Store " was written by executive producer Mindy Kaling , her second script of the eighth season after the Christmas special , " Christmas Wishes . " The episode was directed by consulting producer and series writer Brent Forrester . The episode marks the fourth appearance of Catherine Tate as Nellie Bertram and her third consecutive appearance . Her character , Nellie , worked with several of the office workers on a special project for Sabre in a six episode arc . Matt Selman and Matt Warburton , writers for the long @-@ running animated comedy series The Simpsons ,

appeared in the episode as bloggers . The episode also features a guest appearance from David Koechner , who appears as Todd Packer in the series . He recently had made a deal with NBC to do more episodes for the series and also possibly join the cast of series developer Greg Daniels 's next series , Friday Night Dinner , an adaption of the British series of the same name .

The episode also marks the eleventh appearance of Lindsey Broad who plays Cathy , Pam 's replacement during her maternity leave . She appeared in a recurring role for the season , after she initially appeared in " Pam 's Replacement " . The Season Eight DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes include Erin and the senior citizen that she forcibly removed from the Sabre store discussing rent payments over pretzels , Nellie and Dwight lying and telling the team that they went to church , Jim and Cathy having an awkward moment , and Stanley attempting to convince a group of bloggers that he is Al Roker 's brother and Raven @-@ Symoné 's father .

= = Cultural references = =

" Test the Store " featured several direct allusions and references to the action @-@ comedy series Chuck , which had just finished its five season run on NBC on January 27 , 2012 . In the episode , a cut @-@ out of Zachary Levi is used by the sales team to garner support for the Sabre Pyramid ; Jim and Dwight both mention that Jim was originally supposed to dress as the titular character Chuck ; during Jim 's presentation , Jim mentions that the Sabre Pyramid has the capability to watch movies and TV shows ranging from " Chuck to Cars 2 " ; and lastly , Dwight admits to Nellie that the before @-@ mentioned presentation could have used more Chuck references .

As evidenced by the title , Sabre 's Pyramid tablet makes a reappearance . The device serves as a parody of several tablet computers , specifically the Apple iPad . B. J. Novak described the device as " really the worst piece of technology that you 've ever seen . " The device was created by Paul Lieberstein , who originally envisioned that the device only had the rights to the 1993 film Coneheads . The concept was then expanded and changed : the Pyramid would only have the rights to Chuck and Cars 2 .

The episode contains several direct mentions to popular music . Nellie mentions that , when she was younger , she tried out for the Spice Girls , failing to secure a call @-@ back for " the black one . " During Jim 's presentation , the opening of the song " Clocks " by the British rock band Coldplay is played . When pretending to be a hipster , Erin mispronounces both Coachella and Zooey Deschanel .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Test the Store " originally aired on NBC in the United States on March 1 , 2012 . The episode was viewed by an estimated 4 @.@ 95 million viewers and received a 2 @.@ 5 rating / 7 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 2 @.@ 5 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 7 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . The episode finished first in its time slot , beating re @-@ runs of the CBS drama Person of Interest , the ABC medical drama Grey 's Anatomy , and The CW drama series Supernatural . In addition , " Test the Store " was the highest @-@ rated NBC television episode of the night .

= = = Reviews = = =

The episode received mostly mixed reviews from critics . Myles McNutt from The A.V. Club awarded the episode a C rating , noting that " ' Test The Store ' was just too dumb to build any further momentum ; I wish I had a better word for it , but I just can ? t think of one . " However ,

McNutt appreciated Jim 's presentation , noting that " the final presentation was a pretty decent setpiece . " What Culture ! reviewer Joseph Kratzer awarded the episode three out of five stars , noting that the episode fell victim to " the overall lack of focus and believability that has plagued The Office all season . " Jeffrey Hyatt from Screen Crave gave the episode a review of seven out of ten , noting that " The Office continues to get the comedy boost it needs from the Florida storyline . " Hyatt called the scene featuring Dwight and Jim imitating Kelly and Ryan 's mom as " one of my favorite moments of the season so far . " Despite this , he did call the episode " uneven , " noting that the Scranton story @-@ line was " ho @-@ hum . " Dan Forcella from TV Fanatic awarded the episode four out of five stars and praised Jim 's presentation , writing , " Between Jim 's outfit and makeup , the fact that he embraced the presentation throughout , and all of the Chuck references , I was speechless by the end of that thing . "

Many reviews were critical of the Scranton sub @-@ plot . McNutt wrote that , " Andy getting hit by a girl plays into the most weak , infantile parts of his character , and making Pam his accomplice was a complete non @-@ starter . " Kratzer wrote , " Don ? t get me wrong , the idea of Andy getting punched in the face by a female fifth grader isn ? t necessarily unbelievable or unfunny , it ? s just that it had so little relevance or realism that it was difficult to follow for more than five minutes and it constituted an entire plot line . "