

= Customer Loyalty (The Office) =

" Customer Loyalty " is the twelfth episode of the ninth season of the American comedy television series The Office . The episode was written by Jonathan Green and Gabe Miller , and directed by Kelly Cantley . It originally aired on NBC on January 24 , 2013 . The episode guest stars Chris Diamantopoulos as Brian the boom mike operator , and Ben Silverman as Isaac , a coworker of Jim 's .

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 this episode , Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) is forced to miss his daughter 's first recital after a major investor exits his company , leading to a fight with his wife Pam (Jenna Fischer) . Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) tries to prevent Darryl Philbin (Craig Robinson) from leaving the office . Nellie Bertram (Catherine Tate) tries to put an end to Pete (Jake Lacy) and Erin Hannon 's (Ellie Kemper) flirting with each other . This episode also begins to finally reveal who is behind the documentary .

The episode received largely positive reviews from television critics ; many praised Krasinski and Fischer for the dramatic fight at the end . Furthermore , the reveal of the camera crew was commented upon by many critics . The episode was viewed by 4 @. @ 19 million viewers and received a 2 @. @ 0 / 5 percent rating among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 , ranking third in its timeslot . The episode ultimately ranked as the highest @- @ rated NBC series of the night .

= = Plot = =

Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) is upset that Darryl Philbin (Craig Robinson) will be leaving Dunder @- @ Mifflin to join Athlead , Jim Halpert 's (John Krasinski) startup . He tries to browbeat Darryl into staying with Dunder @- @ Mifflin by tallying up his perceived job failures since taking the Athlead job and holding a meeting on customer loyalty with a customer he describes as " enraged " , but who demurs at the characterization . When this is ineffective , Dwight joins Darryl 's delivery run to make the job more " fun . " One attempt at being more fun is to order a milkshake at a fast food drive @- @ through and throw it at the server , shouting " Fire in the hole ! " Morally outraged , Darryl forces Dwight to stay behind and clean up the mess , whereupon another customer pulls the same prank on Dwight himself . Darryl later laughs at footage of the event that has been uploaded onto the internet , saying that this is what he will miss when he moves to Philadelphia .

Nellie Bertram (Catherine Tate) assigns Erin Hannon (Ellie Kemper) and Pete Miller (Jake Lacy) to a social media project that meets with some success . She notices the two 's flirting with each other for the first time and assumes that she brought it on with the project , citing several unintentional double entendres in her project e @- @ mails . She feels guilty because Erin is Andy Bernard 's (Ed Helms) girlfriend and Andy recommended Nellie to the adoption agency , and is afraid that Andy will fire her when he finds out . She hijacks Dwight 's customer loyalty meeting to talk about fidelity in relationships , which soon zeroes in on Erin and Pete . Nellie also ends the social media project so they will not be able to flirt . Shamed by Nellie 's fidelity speech , Erin assumes a coldly professional attitude towards Pete . However , a talk with Toby Flenderson (Paul Lieberstein) reminds Nellie that Andy was not the best boyfriend to Erin and Nellie has second thoughts . She soon restarts the project , ' forcing ' Erin and Pete to work together again , much to their delight .

Jim 's plan to drive home from Philadelphia to see his daughter Cece 's ballet recital hits a snag when a major investor says he is backing out . Jim asks his wife Pam Halpert (Jenna Fischer) to record the recital with her phone , which she agrees to do . During the opening of the recital , she stops recording to take a phone call , informing her that she has been chosen to paint an important public mural . In her excitement , she messes up the recording and fails to record any of Cece 's appearance . Jim calls her that evening to tell her the investor backed out , and his group will have to work long hours to make up the lost funds . He asks her to send him her recording of the recital as a way to cheer him up , and Pam confesses that she did not tape it . She tries to make light of the

mishap by making self @-@ deprecating remarks and pointing out that they can get recordings of the recital from other attendees , but he becomes frustrated at her , scolding her and starting a fight over his new job , the time he spends away from the family , and the sacrifices they are making to get their new life to work . After he hangs up , Pam breaks down in tears . A previously unseen boom operator named Brian (Chris Diamantopoulos) enters into the shot and comforts her , and tells the crew to stop filming .

= = Production = =

" Customer Loyalty " was written by co @-@ executive producers Jonathan Green and Gabe Miller , their second writing credit for the series after " Andy 's Ancestry " . It was directed by Kelly Cantley , making her television directorial debut ; Cantley previously served as a first assistant director on the series and directed The Office webisode series The Mentor .

The episode is the first of the series to actively feature a member of the documentary crew interacting with the characters on screen ; before the episode was aired , showrunner Greg Daniels stated that this episode would begin to reveal who was behind the documentary . Originally , the idea to have a sound man named Brian comfort Pam when she was crying was proposed by former series actress and writer Mindy Kaling . According to an interview with B.J. Novak , she had proposed it during the show 's third season . The episode guest stars Chris Diamantopoulos as Brian the boom operator . Brian 's character is named after the series ' actual boom mic operator , Brian Wittle . Wittle played the part of one of the annoyed parents at Cece 's recital . Ben Silverman also appears as Issac , one of Jim 's coworkers at Athlead . This marks Silverman 's third appearance , after cameoing in the episodes " Here Comes Treble " and " Suit Warehouse " .

The cold open features a montage of Jim setting up a prank ? which involves sending Dwight on a quest for the Holy Grail . Through Jim 's voice @-@ over , it is heavily suggested that Jim set up the prank sometime circa 2006 , which would have taken place during the show 's second season . Appropriately , the montage was filmed to look as if the documentarians were using archival footage of Jim ; his hair matches the style that Jim had during the first few seasons of the show . This is not the first time this technique has been used on the show . During the cold open for the sixth season episode " Shareholder Meeting " , a montage of Dwight harassing past receptionists was shown . Furthermore , during the seventh season episode " Threat Level Midnight " , there is a short sequence that was shot to look as if it had been filmed during the show 's second season , although the scene itself was filmed in 2011 .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Customer Loyalty " originally aired on NBC on January 24 , 2013 . Before the premiere of the episode , OfficeTally ? the largest fan site for the series ? was given a message by the show 's producers that urged fans to watch " Customer Loyalty " due to the major reveal at the end of the episode . Reportedly , the producers had never done this before . In its original American broadcast , the episode was viewed by 4 @.@ 19 million viewers and received a 2 @.@ 0 rating / 5 percent share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 2 @.@ 0 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 5 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . The Office ranked third in its timeslot , being beaten by an episode of the ABC series Grey 's Anatomy which received a 3 @.@ 0 / 8 percent rating , and an installment of the Fox series Glee which received a 2 @.@ 6 / 7 percent rating . The Office was the highest @-@ rated NBC television program on the night it aired . 2 @.@ 04 million viewers watched the episode through DVR playback , bringing the total viewership to 6 @.@ 24 million .

== Reviews ==

" Customer Loyalty " received largely positive reviews from television critics . James Poniewozik of Time magazine concluded that it " showed the stakes behind its characters ? paper @-@ pushing lives in a way it hasn't since Michael Scott left Scranton . " He called the first half a " wacky ensemble show " , but said that the last part featured elements that allowed the audience to " all but hear the old machinery [of earlier episodes] waking up and sliding into place " . Poniewozik stated that Jim and Pam 's fight was " believable in its arc and its parameters " and that both characters were presented in a way in which their plights were understandable . Ally Serrigran of Hollywood.com wrote that the " episode was one worth tuning in for . " She felt that , for fans of the show who had left when Steve Carell departed , " Customer Loyalty " was the right episode for them to come back to the series . She called the fight between Jim and Pam " jarring in and of itself " . Mark Perigard of the Boston Herald commented on the fight between Jim and Pam , writing that it " felt just like the kind of argument that two real people would have . " Brett Harrison Davinger of the California Literary Review wrote that the episode was " fine " and was composed of " several small storylines , all of which worked " . Davinger called the ending " odd " but " effective " .

Michael Tedder of Vulture wrote positively of the episode and awarded it four out of five stars . He called the final fight between Pam and Jim " ugly and real " and one in which " the writers didn't flinch " , in that it truly made him feel uncomfortable . Tedder complimented both Fischer and Krasinski , and wrote that Krasinski " doesn't try to make Jim look charming in this fight , just terrified and exhausted . " He called Nellie 's subplot " the best use of this new version of Nellie " , but wrote that Dwight and Darryl 's subplot was undeveloped . Rick Porter of Zap2it felt that , while the episode was " up and down " (he wrote that Dwight and Darryl 's subplot was " flat " , but that Erin and Pete 's yielded several humorous lines) the final confrontation between Jim and Pam was " a big dose of reality " and that it was not " a contrived fight " . David Wilcox of The Citizen wrote that the fight between Pam and Jim was " welcome " because their relationship had grown stale ever since they had " hooked up and started living their perfect little lives together . " Wilcox praised the way in which the fight was written , and wrote that he " couldn't help smiling . Not because the fight wasn't wrenching to watch . But because it was . " Cindy White of IGN awarded the episode a 7 @. @ 8 out of 10 , denoting a " good " episode . She reasoned that while the episode was funny but largely forgettable , the final scene made it worth watching .

Not all reviews were as positive . Erik Adams of The A.V. Club awarded the episode a " C + " , and called it " a middle @-@ of @-@ the @-@ road table @-@ setting episode of The Office " with a " tacked @-@ on coda " . Adams wrote that the episode was " not really a ' story ' at all " because it was dragged down by elements that are necessary for the episode to play as a standalone piece , even though " it ? s not meant to be taken as " one . Adams was complimentary towards the episode 's cold open but wrote that " there aren't a whole lot of quality laughs in ' Customer Loyalty ' " . Nick Campbell of TV.com felt that the Erin and Pete relationship was not constructed properly , nor was the conclusion satisfying . Furthermore , he felt that the ending fight was " petty " .

Many reviews commented on the reveal of the documentary crew . E ! Online named the reveal one of the " Best TV Moments of the Week " . Verne Gay of Newsday called the scene a " historic " moment for the show . Serrigran wrote that , between Jim and Pam fighting , and the cameramen making an appearance , the scene was " a lot to take in " . However , she felt that the scene was properly done . Jason Hughes of The Huffington Post called the reveal a " huge " and " shocking " moment . Tedder called the reveal " something that we've never seen before on The Office . " He admitted that , " the last five minutes of this episode genuinely startled me , which is an impressive feat for a series on its ninth and final season . " Porter called the shots with Brian " good " because it reaffirmed that the camera crew was a character , one that had been an integral part of the show . Wilcox wrote that Brian 's appearance was a " weird turn " , and that it was " kind of funny " that the first time a member of the camera crew intervened with the characters was when Pam needed comforting and not " one of Dwight or Michael 's dozens of near @-@ death experiences . " Poniewozik enjoyed the reveal of the documentary crew . However , he wrote that , " I don't know if I'm going to like the idea of making Brian an actual player in the events , if indeed that ? s where

the show is going . " Adams , on the other hand , said that the reveal of the cameramen was " a Big Moment for The Office , but it has a hollow ring to it " because the cameramen had never before interacted with the members of the office before . Campbell wrote that " the show played its documentary crew trump card WAY [sic] too early " and noted that the crew had never intervened in past events that were on the same level as Pam crying .