

= Michael 's Birthday =

" Michael 's Birthday " is the nineteenth episode of the second season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's twenty @-@ fifth episode overall . Written by Gene Stupnitsky and Lee Eisenberg , and directed by Ken Whittingham , the episode first aired in the United States on March 30 , 2006 on NBC . The episode guest stars Nancy Walls as Carol Stills .

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 disappointed when only Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) celebrates his birthday . Meanwhile , Kevin Malone (Brian Baumgartner) spends the day waiting to find out if he has skin cancer .

The ice skating scenes were shot in an actual rink ; Carell 's talent at hockey was the reason the writers decided to set the episode there . Fischer had also learned to skate in preparation for the movie Blades of Glory , but the writers decided that there was no reason for Pam to be a good skater , so they had Pam lean on Jim . " Michael 's Birthday " was watched by 7 @.@ 8 million viewers and received mostly positive reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

Michael Scott (Steve Carell) is excited to be celebrating his birthday , and tries to get the employees excited with him . Unfortunately for Michael , Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) seems to be the only one joining in ; the rest of the employees are more concerned about Kevin Malone (Brian Baumgartner) , who is awaiting his results from his skin cancer screening . Pam Beesly (Jenna Fischer) and Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) sneak out to buy gifts for Kevin to cheer him up .

When Michael finds out about Kevin 's predicament , he gives Kevin his condolences , but subtly remains bitter that Kevin is ruining his birthday fun . Dwight and Angela Martin (Angela Kinsey) are less subtle than they think they are being when discussing their secret relationship within earshot of Ryan Howard (B. J. Novak) . After goofing around at the store , Jim and Pam return to the office .

In an attempt to make Kevin feel better and celebrate his birthday , Michael takes the employees out ice skating . At the rink , he also runs into his real estate agent Carol Stills (Nancy Walls) and her children . He entertains them , which makes Carol smile . Kevin gets the word that his screening results are negative , to the relief of everyone except Michael , who believes that negative means he does have cancer , and who reacts for the first time with genuine concern and compassion for Kevin . The gifts are passed out to Kevin and Michael , and the episode ends with Pam recalling that she had fun with Jim and it was a " good day " .

= = Production = =

This episode was the second episode of the series directed by Ken Whittingham . Whittingham had previously directed the first season episode " Health Care " . " Michael 's Birthday " was written by Gene Stupnitsky and Lee Eisenberg . The two had previously written the episodes " The Fight " and " The Secret " .

The ice skating scenes were shot in an actual rink . According to Jenna Fischer , Steve Carell used to play hockey , and the writers had been looking for a reason to use Carell 's ice skating skills in an episode . Fischer had also learned to skate in preparation for the movie Blades of Glory , but the writers decided that there was no reason for Pam to be a good skater , so they had Pam lean on Jim . Saturday Night Live alumna Nancy Walls , who played Carol Stills , is actually Steve Carell 's wife . At the rink , Michael tells Pam to be wary of breast cancer . This is the third joke that Stupnitsky and Eisenberg had aimed at Pam 's breasts , after one each in " The Fight " and " The Secret " . Fischer later jokingly said that " my breasts play a central role in one of tonight 's scenes . " Fischer also noted that , due to the slight emphasis her breasts were receiving , many fans on the internet were arguing that Fischer had had breast implants . Fischer denied the rumors , but stated that she was " flattered " .

The Season Two DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes

include Jim describing Michael 's typical birthday , Dwight explaining his duties on Michael 's birthday , Michael being upset when Ryan does not get him a present , Michael telling several variations of his worst birthday , and Michael making Ryan research skin cancer .

= = Cultural references = =

The cold opening features Michael trying to get various members of the office involved in a pyramid scheme , which is a non @-@ sustainable business model that involves promising participants payment or services , primarily for enrolling other people into the scheme , rather than supplying any real investment or sale of products or services to the public . The scheme is generally considered one of various internet scams . Michael later reveals having also fallen for a Nigerian 419 scam .

Michael notes that he shares his birthday with Eva Longoria , and that it will be a perfect icebreaker if he ever meets Teri Hatcher . After Michael asks what Dwight is playing on the recorder , Dwight replies that it is " for the longest time " , by " William Joel " (Billy Joel released " The Longest Time " in 1984) . When Kevin mentions he might have skin cancer , Kelly starts discussing a case involving cancer on the popular medical drama Grey 's Anatomy . She later says that the saddest funeral she ever saw was the one for Princess Diana . For Michael 's birthday , his mother sent him a picture of James Dean Resignedly , Michael notes that " I bet Luke Perry 's friends don 't treat him like this " . While at the grocery store , Jim and Pam buy a copy of the American comedy movie American Pie 2 . Pam later impersonates Darth Vader , a character from the science fiction movie franchise Star Wars on the store 's intercom . To show his support for Kevin , Michael makes a fake Livestrong wristband out of construction paper . Dwight later gives Michael a Wilkes @-@ Barre / Scranton Penguins jersey with the words " From Dwight " on the back .

= = Reception = =

" Michael 's Birthday " originally aired on NBC in the United States on March 30 , 2006 . " Michael 's Birthday " received 4 @. @ 0 / 10 in the ages 18 ? 49 demographic in the Nielsen ratings . This means that 4 @. @ 0 percent of all households with an 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ old living in it watched the episode , and ten percent had their television tuned to the channel at any point . " Michael 's Birthday " was watched by 7 @. @ 8 million viewers .

" Michael 's Birthday " received very positive reviews . Michael Sciannamea of TV Squad wrote that the episode was " simply the best one yet " , and that it " was so brilliant and so right on that I can 't give it any higher praise " . Sciannamea went on to write that " the scenes at the ice rink were hysterical " and The Office " is the best sitcom on TV " . M. Giant of Television Without Pity graded the episode with an " A " . Lindsey Thomas of Rolling Stone magazine named the scene wherein Michael confuses the term " negative " to mean that Kevin has skin cancer as the seventeenth greatest moment in the series . Brendan Babish of DVD Verdict was moderately pleased with the entry and awarded it a " B + " . He called the entry a " good episode " , but noted that it was helped by " great supporting work from Dwight " , who he called " as not only the best supporting character on the show , but perhaps the best in television . "