

= Pool Party (The Office) =

" Pool Party " is the twelfth episode of the eighth season of the American comedy television series The Office , and the show 's 164th episode overall . The episode originally aired on NBC in the United States on January 19 , 2012 . It was written by Owen Ellickson and was directed by Charles McDougall . The episode guest starred Lindsey Broad and Eleanor Seigler .

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 , Robert California (James Spader) decides to sell his mansion following his divorce and Kevin Malone (Brian Baumgartner) suggests that he have an office pool party . There , Erin Hannon (Ellie Kemper) tries to make Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) jealous by flirting with Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) . Meanwhile , Robert gives everyone a tour of his massive home .

" Pool Party " received mostly mixed reviews from critics , with many criticizing the episode 's lack of a finite plot . According to Nielsen Media Research , " Pool Party " drew 6 @.@ 02 million viewers and received a 3 rating / 7 % share in the 18 @-@ 49 demographic , marking a slight increase from the previous episode , " Trivia . " The episode ranked third in its timeslot , and was the highest rated NBC series of the night .

= = Plot = =

After Robert California (James Spader) is forced to sell his mansion at the behest of his ex @-@ wife following his divorce , Kevin suggests that he have an office pool party . Andy (Ed Helms) takes his girlfriend Jessica to the party and brings an engagement ring his Jessica @-@ approving mother gave him , hoping to propose . The ring goes missing from Andy 's pants and he is horrified that he cannot find it . Kelly and Phyllis later find the ring and decide , based on the superstition of finding a lost ring , that it must be destroyed . Erin (Ellie Kemper) , having been told by Meredith that Andy followed her home after the Christmas party , decides to make Andy jealous by flirting with Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) . Dwight initially refuses , but , after realizing that Erin 's choosing him as her co @-@ conspirator is flattering to his attractiveness , agrees to help . The two flirt outrageously whenever Andy is close by , but Andy doesn 't notice . To ensure Andy 's attention , Erin and Dwight challenge Andy and Jessica to a series of chicken fights in the pool . After several defeats , Erin is so determined to win a match that she pushes Dwight to the point where he passes out in the water , ending the game . In a final attempt to make Andy jealous , Dwight tells Andy he wants to pursue a romance with Erin but wants to avoid an " Angela @-@ type situation " between them . Andy assures Dwight that he and Erin are through but , at the mention of Dwight having sex with Erin that very night , suggests that Dwight take things slowly instead , leading Dwight to pointedly tell him " You 're an idiot . " Erin later swims up to Andy with the lost ring , which Kelly had earlier set in the pool atop a tiny pyre , and he admits that he has doubts about proposing to Jessica . This makes Erin very happy .

While most of the employees are congregated in the pool area , Robert gives some of the male employees a tour of his massive home , spending most of the time mournfully describing how it was intended to be the location for wild , uninhibited parties . He offers those present on the tour a free bottle of wine from his wine cellar and the staff proceed to get drunk . Jim (John Krasinski) had intended to make a token appearance at Robert 's party and quickly return home to his wife and kids ; however , Robert , sensing his reluctance to be there , insists that Jim stay for the duration of the tour in order to punish him for laughing at an inopportune moment earlier that day as Robert had complained about having to sell his house . Eventually , Robert realizes that he is hosting one of the parties he had always imagined , at which point he jumps into the pool completely naked , followed by Gabe and Ryan (B.J. Novak) , who had both been battling all night to impress him . Jim takes this as his cue to leave , sneaking away and driving home at top speed . At the end of the night , Gabe and Ryan , both drunk and unwilling to concede defeat in their brown @-@ nosing battle , remain at the party with Robert even as the CEO passes out .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by co @-@ producer Owen Ellickson , his first writing credit for the series after joining the writing staff in the eighth season . It was directed by Charles McDougall , his seventh directing credit for the series . The episode also marks the sixth appearance of Lindsey Broad , who plays Cathy , Pam 's replacement during her maternity leave . She appeared in a recurring role for the season and she initially appeared in " Pam 's Replacement " . Due to Jenna Fischer 's actual pregnancy , Pam did not appear in the episode . The Season Eight DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes include Erin and Dwight taking turns suggestively massaging and stretching each other , Erin talking to the camera about her convoluted relationship with Andy , and Robert shows his guests his " shame " room .

= = Cultural references = =

The songs " Big White Elephant " and " Model Homes " by the band In @-@ Flight Safety were featured during scenes at the party . The song " Can 't Complain " by Bomb the Music Industry ! appeared around 14 minutes in . Many of the references were a result of Robert California bemoaning his position in life . He mentions early on in the episode that , " The 1 % are hurting too " , a reference to the slogan of the Occupy movement . During the tour of his home theater , California explained that he had it created to watch Caligula , Last Tango in Paris , and Emmanuelle 2 , but that the last two movies he watched in there were Marley & Me and On Golden Pond .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Pool Party " originally aired on NBC in the United States on January 19 , 2012 . The episode was viewed by an estimated 6 @. @ 02 million viewers and received a 3 rating / 7 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 3 % 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 marked a slight increase in ratings compared to the previous episode , " Trivia . " The episode finished third in its time slot , being beaten by Grey 's Anatomy which received a 3 @. @ 4 rating / 8 % share and the CBS drama Person of Interest which received a 3 @. @ 3 rating / 8 % share in the 18 @-@ 49 demographic . The episode , however , did manage to beat the Fox drama series The Finder and The CW drama series The Secret Circle . In addition , " Pool Party " was the highest rated NBC television episode of the night . It was also the last episode of The Office to be viewed by more than 6 million viewers .

= = = Reviews = = =

The episode received mixed reviews from critics . Many reviews criticized the episode 's lack of a cohesive plot . Myles McNutt from The A.V. Club awarded the episode a C rating , saying , " ' Pool Party ' was so loosely structured that it relied heavily on the characters to carry the narrative , and the result was some languid storytelling which gave me way too much time to think about missed opportunities , failed experiments , and the increasing burden of a show without any momentum . " Dan Forcella from TVFanatic gave the episode three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five and wrote , " There were bits and pieces of each story that worked in ' Pool Party , ' but neither Robert 's stroll through parties never had , nor Erin 's endeavor to make Andy jealous , came together to make completely funny or interesting tales . " The Huffington Post wrote that , " Once [at the titular pool part] , the plot bits were so loose it might have been difficult for casual fans to follow it all . " Craig McQuinn from The Faster Times wrote , " ' Pool Party ' was one of those episodes where you can tell the writers didn 't know what else to do This is filler , really , which

unfortunately tends to be unavoidable when you do 22 @-@ episode seasons and you 're eight years in . " Many reviews were critical of the continued Erin @-@ Andy romance taking center @-@ stage . McNutt wrote , " I still really do not care about Andy and Erin as a relationship . The show 's approach to this storyline ... is to have Andy enjoying a fairly normal evening with his girlfriend Jessica while Erin acts like a crazy person in an effort to get his attention . " Forecella noted that , while the Erin and Dwight pairing was funny , their attempts to make Andy jealous were not successful , as Andy 's sub @-@ plots were deemed not funny and " boring . "

Not all reviews were critical . WhatCulture reviewer Joseph Kratzer awarded the episode four out of five stars and wrote , " Now that 's what I 'm talking about ? few things are better in art than having your expectations overturned and " The Pool Party " pleasantly surprised me with the efficacy of its execution . " Jeffrey Hyatt from ScreenCrave gave the episode a 9 / 10 rating and wrote , " I think ' Pool Party ' is my favorite episode so far this season . The Robert California and Erin / Dwight / Andy story lines were rock solid . Previous excursions out of the office have been blah , but the pool party setting really complimented the ensemble ? and the sharp writing . " Michael Tedder from New York Magazine called the episode the season 's second best , after " Trivia . " In addition , many critics wrote positively of the characters and their actions . Jill Mader from InsidePulse wrote that while , " [the pool party] storyline itself was just OK ... Ellie Kemper was hilarious . " Many reviewers , including McNutt and Forcella , found Kevin 's lines and actions to be particularly memorable , most notably , his declaration that Val was racist after she asked if Darryl could swim . A variety of reviewers found the cold @-@ opening , featuring Jim pranking Dwight by placing meatballs in his desk in an attempt to make Stanley laugh , funny .