

= Goodbye , Michael =

" Goodbye , Michael " is the thirty @-@ six @-@ minute episode of the seventh season of the American comedy series The Office and the show 's 148th episode overall . It originally aired on NBC in the United States on April 28 , 2011 . In the episode , Michael prepares to leave for Colorado with Holly , and spends his last day in the office saying goodbye to everyone individually , wanting no drama to ensue . Meanwhile , new manager Deangelo and Andy try to keep Michael 's biggest clients .

The episode was written by series developer and executive producer Greg Daniels and was directed by Paul Feig . It marks the final appearance of Steve Carell as a series regular having announced he was leaving the series near the end of the sixth season . The episode aired in an extended 50 @-@ minute timeslot , having originally been meant to be a two @-@ parter combined with the previous episode , " Michael 's Last Dundies " . The episode featured guest appearances from Will Ferrell and Amy Ryan , and Andy Buckley appeared in a deleted scene .

" Goodbye , Michael " was met with critical acclaim from critics and fans and is considered one of the best episodes of The Office . The later seasons that followed this airing received extensive criticism for a decline in quality , and many critics believed that it could have served as a potential series finale . In a poll conducted by fansite OfficeTally , the episode was named the best episode of the seventh season . The episode was viewed by 8 @.@ 416 million viewers and received a 4 @.@ 2 rating / 11 % share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , making it the third @-@ highest @-@ rated episode of the season among adults between ages 18 and 49 . It later received two Primetime Emmy Award nominations for Carell and Daniels ' work on the episode .

= = Synopsis = =

Michael (Steve Carell) arrives at work for what he claims is his second @-@ to @-@ last day before he moves to Colorado to live with his fiancée , Holly (Amy Ryan) . As the day progresses , he tries to have an individual goodbye with each employee . A phone call with Holly reveals that this is his last day , and he is flying out to Colorado that night . After having a few mini @-@ crises , including getting cold feet , he starts to break down , but regains his composure after speaking with Holly . Pam (Jenna Fischer) leaves the office to supposedly run errands , but takes a break from the workday to see The King 's Speech before Michael can say his goodbye to her .

Andy Bernard (Ed Helms) is given Michael 's client list as a going @-@ away present , much to the shock and envy of the other salesmen , and after losing one , requests the help of Deangelo Vickers (Will Ferrell) to retain them . Vickers nearly ruins a relationship with a client but Andy gains enough confidence to salvage the sale . Along the way , Vickers reveals that he was not hired for his business experience , but because he helped prevent the theft of one of Sabre CEO Jo Bennett 's dogs . Meanwhile , Dwight (Rainn Wilson) is antagonistic towards Michael , still bitter over Michael not recommending him for a manager position , despite Michael 's attempts to reconcile . He initially expresses disdain for Michael 's going @-@ away present , a recommendation letter , but appears touched as he reads further . He also discovers a card challenging him to a paintball match , and the two play behind the building .

Gabe (Zach Woods) is taking Erin 's (Ellie Kemper) public breakup badly . He makes several threats against Andy , who had dated Erin before she dated Gabe , and follows Erin into the women 's bathroom to make his case . Michael advises Erin that she does not necessarily need to choose Andy or Gabe , telling her that she is smart enough to know what to do .

Jim (John Krasinski) deduces over the course of the day that Michael is leaving early and confronts him about it . Michael admits his plans , and begins a personal goodbye , but breaks down after a few words . Jim , trying to hold back tears , in turn says how much he respects Michael , and that Michael was the best boss he ever had and they jokingly promise to have a proper goodbye over lunch the next day . Michael 's cab to the airport then arrives , and Michael departs the office after one last look at the employees , exiting silently . His cab pulls out of the parking lot just as Pam is pulling in . At the airport , Michael asks the camera crew to inform him if the documentary ever

airs , then turns over his microphone , quipping one last " That 's what she said " about how good it will feel to " get this thing [the mic] off [his] chest " . He begins to walk off when Pam makes it past security and runs up to him . They hug twice and say goodbyes that are not heard by the camera . Pam says in an interview that Michael was not sad , that he was hopeful and excited to start his new life with Holly . Pam stands at the gate and watches Michael 's plane take off .

In the epilogue , several of the staff share thoughts about Michael in private interviews . The episode finishes with a scene that takes place the next morning , with the entire staff waiting in the conference room for Michael to arrive for his farewell party , unaware he has already left , with the exception of Jim and Pam . When DeAngelo deduces Michael is not coming , he begins tearing pieces off Michael 's farewell cake (a major subplot point of the episode) and throwing them in the trash , in a bizarre public internal struggle over his dieting . The rest of the staff , particularly Jim and Dwight , watch their new boss 's outburst with concern .

= = Production = =

" Goodbye , Michael " was written by series developer and executive producer Greg Daniels , his 10th writing credit of the series . The episode was directed by Paul Feig , marking his 14th credit for the series . On June 28 , 2010 , it was confirmed that the seventh season of The Office would be Steve Carell 's last . He had previously announced this while being interviewed on BBC Radio . " I just think it 's time ... I want to fulfill my contract . When I first signed on I had a contract for seven seasons , and this coming year is my seventh . I just thought it was time for my character to go , " Carell was quoted as saying . In January 2011 , it was announced that Carell would exit the show early , four episodes before the end of the season . A few weeks after this announcement came the news that Will Ferrell , who previously starred alongside Carell in Anchorman : The Legend of Ron Burgundy , had signed on to appear in a four @-@ episode arc as a Dunder Mifflin branch manager who temporarily takes Michael Scott 's position in Scranton . To help ease the transition , Ferrell appeared in Carell 's final episodes as well as one additional episode after he departs .

The writers had gone through different scenarios on how Michael would leave with one suggestion being that he was fired due to a business mistake . They ultimately decided that ending would not be " as much fun for the viewers " . According to Daniels , filming on set actors being " very emotional " and would often be " sadder than their characters were supposed to be " . Andy Buckley confirmed filming a scene saying goodbye to Michael as David Wallace ; however , these scenes were deleted from the network airing . When the episode re @-@ aired three weeks later , it was split into two parts , and Wallace 's scene was inserted into the first part . Steve Carell finished filming his final scenes for " Goodbye , Michael " on March 4 , 2011 . As a goodbye gift , Carell was given a hockey jersey with the # 1 ? his number on the call sheet . After Carell 's departure the number was no longer used . The episode ran for an extended 50 minutes instead of the usual 30 minutes . The episode marks the first extended episode since the third season penultimate episode , " Beach Games " . Greg Daniels stated in an interview with Entertainment Weekly that due to Ferrell 's performance and Michael 's goodbyes , the episode " ended up being real long " . NBC Entertainment Chairman Robert Greenblatt allowed Daniels to " do whatever is best [...] to give Steve [Carell] the proper goodbye .

= = Cultural references = =

" Goodbye , Michael " features several references to previous episodes . During one scene , Michael puts his Dundie on his desk , a homage to the final shot in the series opening sequence . Michael 's obsession with basketball and wanting to use the baler serves as a reference to the season one episode , " Basketball " and the season three episode " Safety Training " , respectively . Michael 's character Ping appears , having previously appeared in " The Dundies " and " The Seminar . " It also featured the reforming of the Party Planning Committee after being broken up in " Moroccan Christmas " , and briefly showed Creed 's continual habit of using the women 's bathroom as seen in " Women 's Appreciation " . Michael gives Darryl his book " Somehow I Manage " , which

was originally mentioned in " Happy Hour . " Two callbacks are made to the episode " Christmas Party " : Phyllis ' gift to Michael being homemade sewn mittens and Dwight wanting to play paintball with Michael . Michael 's goodbye to Pam serves as a homage to a scene in the British version of The Office , where Tim Canterbury proclaims his love for Dawn Tinsley in a meeting room , but Tim turns off his microphone first so the cameras pick up only their reactions and no sound . This scene was also referenced in the fifth season finale , " Company Picnic .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Goodbye , Michael " originally aired on April 28 , 2011 in a 50 @-@ minute timeslot from 9 p.m. ET to 9 : 50 p.m. ET . Nielsen ratings were expected to be high since it was Carell 's last episode and also due to the extended timeslot with 22 @.@ 66 % of readers of TV by the Numbers predicting the episode would receive above a 6 @.@ 0 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic . However , the episode was viewed by an estimated 8 @.@ 416 million viewers and received a 4 @.@ 2 rating / 11 % share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 4 @.@ 2 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 11 % of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . This marked a twenty @-@ six percent rise in the ratings from the previous episode , " Michael 's Last Dundies " . This made the episode the most @-@ watched episode of the season and the third @-@ highest @-@ rated episode of the season after " Ultimatum " and " Nepotism " in the 18 ? 49 demo . The episode ranked first in its timeslot beating Grey 's Anatomy , CSI : Crime Scene Investigation and Bones . " Goodbye , Michael " was the most @-@ watched scripted show for the week of broadcast among adults aged 18 ? 49 and the second highest @-@ rated NBC program after The Voice . Added with DVR viewers , " Goodbye , Michael " received a 5 @.@ 9 rating marking a 37 percent rise from the original viewership . The first half @-@ hour of the producer 's cut received a 2 @.@ 76 million viewers , and a 1 @.@ 1 rating / 3 % share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , while the second half @-@ hour attained 2 million viewers and a 0 @.@ 9 rating / 3 % share in the 18 ? 49 demographic .

= = = Reviews = = =

Since its airing , " Goodbye , Michael " was met with critical acclaim and is considered one of the best episodes of The Office by critics and fans . Cindy White of IGN said that overall the episode was " one of those historic television moments " . She went on to praise the character 's awareness of the camera crew along with Michael saying his goodbyes to the staff . She ultimately gave the episode a 9 out of 10 . The A.V. Club writer Myles McNutt considered the episode to be a classic and praised Greg Daniels choice of showing " their [fans] Michael Scott " . He ultimately gave the episode an A. TV Squad writer Joel Keller wrote the episode felt like the series finale and that " As final episodes go , this one was a mixed bag " . Entertainment Weekly 's Hillary Busis praised Carell 's performance . HitFix writer Daniel Feinberg wrote that while the episode " wasn 't flawless " it was " an appropriate disentanglement " . Despite this , he criticized the episode for proving the point that the show could not survive without Michael . Despite this he complimented the performance of the supporting actors . New York writer Phoebe Reilly slightly criticized Pam 's silent goodbye to Michael . Despite this , she said , Dwight 's tears in his talking head and Jim 's goodbye to Michael " achieved the bearable level of poignancy " . Rob Sheffield of Rolling Stone praised the ending of the episode and the reference to the original British version of The Office . BuddyTV writer Meghan Carlson called Oscar 's scarecrow gift scene the best moment of the episode . HitFix reviewer Alan Sepinwall called the episode " a pretty fantastic tribute to that man on his way out the door . "

Will Ferrell 's performance received mixed reviews from critics . Rob Sheffield called his performance " pure magic " , while Miles McNutt said that his scenes were a " momentum killer " . Cindy White criticized the writers for waiting for Ferrell 's second @-@ to last episode to give his

character a " juicy quirk " . Soon after the episode 's airdate , the series received publicity for a possible storyline featuring Phyllis as Erin 's birth mother . The rumor was started during an interview with executive producer Greg Daniels with Entertainment Weekly in which he stated " A tiny mystery story ? which I 'm not sure anyone ? s going to catch and will come out a few episodes from now ? is being set up here " . This was further explored in the seventh season finale , " Search Committee " , where it was proven false .

The episode has also been put on several top ten lists for 2011 . Time reviewer James Poniewozik named the episode the second best television episode of 2011 calling the episode " pitch @-@ perfect " . The A.V. Club named the episode among the top 2011 TV highlights . David Sims wrote that " Although every member of the ensemble gets a moment in the sun , Michael ? s silent airport farewell to Pam [...] works best of all , a testament to the audience 's deep understanding of these characters " . Daniel Feinberg named Carell 's final episodes for The Office the 20th @-@ best television episodes of 2011 , although he only named Carell 's final episodes under the banner . He mainly praised Carell 's performance for switching from both laughs to sadness with a nuance . TV Guide named the episode the 12 @-@ best episode of 2011 and compared the episode to the humor of the series calling it " understated and pitch @-@ perfect " . " Goodbye , Michael " was voted the highest @-@ rated episode out of 24 from the season , according to an episode poll by the fansite , OfficeTally . In another poll , the episode was voted the fourth highest @-@ rated episode of the series , out of 139 , receiving 403 votes .

= = = Awards and recognition = = =

Greg Daniels , who wrote the script , received a nomination for Outstanding Writing for a Comedy Series at the 63rd Primetime Emmy Awards . Steve Carell had also submitted this episode for consideration for his nomination for Outstanding Lead in a Comedy Series . Daniels eventually lost to Jeffrey Richman and Steven Levitan of Modern Family for the episode " Caught in the Act " , while Carell lost to Jim Parsons of The Big Bang Theory . Office star Rainn Wilson expressed anger for the snub on Twitter saying " The world of TV should be ashamed of itself that Steve Carell never won an Emmy for Michael Gary Scott . Goodnight . " Former Office writer Michael Schur and director Paul Feig also criticized this choice with Schur calling it a " goddamn fucking embarrassment " . Daniels had also received a nomination for the Writers Guild of America Award for Television : Episodic Comedy , but once again lost to Richman and Levitan .