

= Casino Night =

" Casino Night " is the second season finale of the American comedy television series The Office , and the twenty @-@ eighth episode overall . Written by Steve Carell , who also acts in the show as Michael Scott , and directed by Ken Kwapis , the episode originally aired in the United States on May 11 , 2006 on NBC . The episode guest stars Nancy Carell as Carol Stills and Melora Hardin as Jan Levinson .

The series depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton , Pennsylvania branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company . In this episode , the office hosts a casino night , to which Michael Scott (Carell) inadvertently invites two dates . Meanwhile , Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) decides to transfer to Dunder Mifflin 's Stamford branch and reveals to Pam Beesly (Jenna Fischer) his feelings for her .

The episode was the first of the series to run as a " supersized " episode , featuring twenty @-@ eight minutes and twenty seconds of content rather than the standard twenty minutes and thirty seconds . In addition , the episode was the first of the series to be written by Carell ; he had suggested the idea for the episode to executive producer Greg Daniels , who thoroughly enjoyed the idea and green lit the script . " Casino Night " also introduces the musical exploits of Kevin Malone , played by Brian Baumgartner . The episode received wide acclaim from television critics and earned a Nielsen rating of 3 @.@ 9 in the 18 ? 49 demographic , being seen by 7 @.@ 7 million viewers . It is generally considered by both critics and audiences to be one of the show 's greatest episodes .

= = Plot = =

Michael Scott (Steve Carell) organizes a casino charity event in the warehouse , and unwittingly winds up with two dates for the evening , his boss Jan Levenson (Melora Hardin) and his real @-@ estate agent Carol Stills (Nancy Carell) . Jim Halpert (John Krasinski) and Pam Beesly (Jenna Fischer) go through audition tapes for her wedding band and discover that colleague Kevin Malone (Brian Baumgartner) has his own band . Jim , upset about Pam 's impending marriage to Roy Anderson (David Denman) , tells the documentary crew that he met with Jan about transferring to the Stamford , Connecticut branch of Dunder Mifflin because he has " no future here . "

During Casino Night , Dwight Schrute (Rainn Wilson) wins a game of craps and kisses Angela Martin (Angela Kinsey) on the cheek , disregarding their attempts to keep their intimate relationship a secret . She slaps him and walks away , the two quietly enjoying the experience . Jan and Carol share an awkward conversation when they realize Michael has invited them both . Jim tells Jan that he 's made a decision about the transfer . After Roy leaves , Jim tells Pam that he is in love with her . After a stunned pause , she states she cannot be with him . He tells her he wants to be more than friends , but she is sorry he " misinterpreted things . " Jim apologizes for misinterpreting their friendship and discreetly wipes a tear from his cheek as he walks away . Jan leaves Michael and Carol , noticeably upset at the night 's events , and it is revealed she packed an overnight bag in her car , implying she had planned to spend the night with Michael . Pam returns to the office and talks to her mother over the phone about Jim 's statement , eventually saying " Yeah , I think I am . " It remains unknown to this date what Pam 's mother asked her , with fans speculating that two plausible lines were " Are you in love with Jim ? " or " Are you still going to marry Roy ? " (But in a flashback in " Gay Witch Hunt " and " Cocktails " it is shown she must have feelings for Jim .) Jim enters the room and approaches her as she hastily hangs up . She begins to say something but Jim kisses her , and after hesitating , she returns the kiss . The two stare at each other in silence as the episode ends .

= = Production = =

" Casino Night " was the first episode of the series written by Steve Carell . Initially , Carell suggested to executive producer Greg Daniels that an episode should revolve around a casino night . When it came time to plan the finale for the show , Daniels chose the idea and picked Carell to

write the script . Parts of the script were fleshed out during the flights to and from New York when the show was filming the earlier episode " Valentine 's Day " . Later , Carell had only one weekend to write the bulk script . Daniels was very happy with the rough script and noted " came in with a great draft " . Jenna Fischer admitted that filming the episode was a relief because she had " been carrying around the secret cliff @-@ hangers for two months " . Toby Flenderson , who is portrayed by writer Paul Lieberstein , stated during the episode " I 'm gonna chase that feeling " after winning at a game of poker . The line was originally intended to lead to a subplot wherein Toby develops a gambling addiction , but the storyline was later abandoned .

The episode was the fifth episode of the season and the seventh of the entire series directed by Ken Kwapis . During the editing of the episode , executive producer Greg Daniels publicly addressed NBC in an interview , stating , " I 'd like to get a supersized episode , because it ? s a really long script with a lot of good stuff . " In response , fans of the show set up an online petition to " supersize " the season finale . The website generated over 2 @,@ 800 signatures . On April 20 , NBC announced it would be extending the season finale by ten minutes . Although other NBC shows Will & Grace and My Name Is Earl that aired on the same night had extended episodes , cast members David Denman and John Krasinski credited in interviews the petition for the extended time . Denman and Krasinski both believed that the petition was partially responsible for the other two shows getting extended times as well .

The filming of the episode 's ending caused a " huge divide among the writing staff and the director and the cast " . Carell , Kwapis , and the actors wanted the moment when Pam and Jim kiss to " follow the characters and the emotion of the moment " by having the action captured in full by the show 's cameramen . The writing staff , on the other hand , wanted Pam and Jim 's moment to be private and only heard via the mics ; Daniels explained , " The writing staff was itching to do something kind of weird [with the scene] and have it be a private moment that the doc crew didn 't know was going to happen and so only heard on their mics and came running around the corner to film . " Eventually , both versions were filmed , but the former was broadcast . The alternate version has never been released .

The episode features Kevin Malone playing the drums in a band , which had been an idea circulated since the first season , when allusions to him being in a Steve Miller tribute band were written ; the scenes had to be removed from the series due to issues negotiating with the singer . The crew later decided to have Kevin be in a Police tribute band called Scrantoncity because he " talks so low , and has very little expression , and there is no band that sings higher and with more expression than the Police . " While Kevin was always intended to be the band 's lead singer , executive producer Greg Daniels approached Baumgartner about possibly playing an instrument , but the actor replied he could not play anything . Daniels and Baumgartner then discussed instruments that would be " funny " to play and brought up harmonicas , saxophones , and drums . They ultimately decided on the latter because they deemed a " drumming lead singer [to] be the funniest choice , " regardless of the fact that the actor had " absolutely no drumming experience , and it 's a difficult instrument . "

The Season Two DVD contains a number of deleted scenes from this episode . Notable cut scenes include Michael creating Dunder Mifflin Mad Libs , Dwight and Jim choosing their charities , Dwight considering Jim 's telekinetic powers , an extension of Michael 's scene with Darryl , Pam finding planning a wedding stressful , Meredith and the casino dealer sharing a past .

= = Cultural references = =

On the phone with Jan , Michael compares the performance of the Scranton branch of Dunder Mifflin to the biblical story of David and Goliath . He later tells her that she 's the " Eva Peron to his Cesar Chavez " . He later calls answers his phone while talking to her and says " Jan Levenson , I presume " , a reference to " Dr. Livingstone , I Presume " . Michael reasons that the money from the casino night should benefit the Boy Scouts of America because " They don 't have cookies like the Girl Scouts ! " He later states that he will donate all of his charity winnings to Comic Relief , a British charity . Kelly reasons that she would donate her winnings to Kobe Bryant 's foundation , only

because he bought his wife a large ring .

When Michael mentions donating money to " Afghanistanis with AIDS " , the conversation gets confused , and the various office workers being talking about Afghanis , Afghans , and the nonsensical " Afghanistanannis " . In a talking head , Michael notes that AIDS is not a humorous disease , and is one of the many things that is off @-@ topic in comedy , including the assassination of John F. Kennedy and The Holocaust . However , he notes that the assassination of Abraham Lincoln recently became funny . While looking through the various cover bands , Jim and Pam stumble upon a Kiss tribute and Jim tells Pam that her wedding should have three stages like Lollapalooza . Kevin 's band is playing a cover of " Don 't Stand So Close to Me " by The Police .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Casino Night " originally aired on NBC in the United States on May 11 , 2006 . The episode received a 3 @. @ 9 rating / 10 percent share among adults between the ages of 18 and 49 . This means that it was seen by 3 @. @ 9 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds , and 10 percent of all 18- to 49 @-@ year @-@ olds watching television at the time of the broadcast . The episode was viewed by 7 @. @ 7 million viewers , and retained 93 percent of its lead @-@ in " My Name is Earl " audience . For his work on this episode , Steve Carell was nominated for and won the Writers Guild of America Award for Television : Episodic Comedy .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Casino Night " received widespread critical acclaim from television critics . Michael Sciannamea of TV Squad stated that " This episode , the season finale , was , in a word , brilliant . You could not ask for a better way to tie up story lines that occurred over the course of a season while opening up new ones at the same time . " Sciannamea went on to praise Carell 's writing , as well as the progression of the relationship arcs in the show . Brian Zoromski of IGN said that " ' Casino Night , ' was full of great character development , awkward situations and laugh @-@ out @-@ loud moments . " Zoromski enjoyed the unfolding of the Jim @-@ Pam relationship during the latter half of season two , and the climax of it in the season finale . He also enjoyed and praised the development of two minor characters , Kevin Malone and Creed Bratton , the latter played by the actor of the same name . He ultimately awarded the episode a ten out of ten , denoting a " Masterpiece " . Jacob Clifton of Television Without Pity awarded the episode an " A " . Gillian Flynn of Entertainment Weekly noted that , unlike other shows that featured resolved sexual tension , The Office was in no worry of being cancelled . She based this deduction on the fact that the show " isn 't based entirely on the endearing flirtation between " Jim and Pam . In a 2011 poll conducted by fansite OfficeTally , fans voted " Casino Night " as their favorite of all Office episodes that had been aired at that time .