

Office Ladies episode 3

JENNA: I'm Jenna Fischer.

ANGELA: And I'm Angela Kinsey.

JENNA: We were on The Office together.

ANGELA: And we're best friends.

JENNA: And now we're doing the ultimate Office rewatch podcast just for you.

ANGELA: Each week we will break down an episode of The Office and give exclusive behind the scenes stories that only two people who were there can tell you.

JENNA: We're the Office Ladies.

ANGELA: Hey! Welcome back to Office Ladies. This is Angela Kinsey.

JENNA: And Jenna Fischer.

ANGELA: And we're gonna be talking today about Health Care.

JENNA: Health Care. One of my favorite episodes from season one.

ANGELA: I love it. I love this episode because to me it's The Office at its best because it's ordinary people doing ordinary things and it all goes south.

JENNA: And it's big stakes because having a job that has good health care is everything. So yes. Today we are talking about season one episode three Health Care. It was written by Paul Lieberstein who plays Toby Flenderson. And directed by Ken Whittingham.

ANGELA: I love Ken.

JENNA: And we love Ken.

ANGELA: Ken is a tall gentleman. Like he is just so sweet and kind.

JENNA: Oh, you and I would talk to Ken all the time.

ANGELA: All the time.

JENNA: Yeah.

ANGELA: Probably like too much. Like he probably at some point was like, "Ladies, I have work to do." And we're like, "Hi Ken." He's just so lovely.

JENNA: We had Ken back a lot over nine seasons. He directed nine episodes of The Office including Phylliss' Wedding.

ANGELA: Yes. You just had a little bit of St. Louis there.

JENNA: I did?

ANGELA: I hear it every once in a while. But you said ay-ver.

JENNA: Oh, is that a St. Louis thing?

ANGELA: I don't know but you say some words like different. I think it's St. Louis.

JENNA: The biggest St. Louis thing that I don't do but that Phyllis does, speaking of Phylliss, is fardy far.

ANGELA: Oh.

JENNA: So we have a highway there called highway forty four. They call it fardy far and you eat with a fark.

ANGELA: Yeah. Sometimes Rainn and Phyllis sat back to back, you know, and every once in a while Rainn would turn around to Phyllis and say "Phyllis say forty four." And Phyllis, when she gets really tickled, she snorts when she laughs. So she would be like fardy far. Okay, alright, keep going.

JENNA: Alright, well let me do a summary of Health Care. It's pretty simple. Jan tells Michael that he needs to pick a cheaper health care plan for his employees to help prevent downsizing. Michael gives the job to Dwight and then hides in his office all day because he knows no one is going to want their health care slashed.

ANGELA: This classic Michael passing the buck you're going to see over and over in the lifetime of the show.

JENNA: So after Dwight picks a plan that slashes almost all the benefits and the entire office revolts, Michael promises us a surprise. Very vague.

ANGELA: Yes. Which is what you do with your children when you have to give them bad news but there's gonna be a surprise!

JENNA: It's so true. And what I think is interesting is that everyone is skeptical but also like, "Well maybe there is a surprise."

ANGELA: It's so sad. It's a little bit like Charlie Brown kicked the football. Like when Lucy kept doing that. I feel like they're like there's no way he's gonna come through. But maybe because we hate our jobs so much maybe there'll be something nice.

JENNA: But then Michael has to spend the entire rest of the day scrambling to come up with something.

ANGELA: Yeah.

JENNA: And what he comes up with is--

ANGELA: Just nothing.

JENNA: A whole lot of nothing.

ANGELA: Just nothing.

JENNA: Yes.

ANGELA: Alright Jenna, do you want to do some fast facts?

JENNA: You know I do, Angela. You know it. Alright, so my first fast fact is that after the pilot episode, which we talked about was pretty much a word for word adaptation of the British pilot because this was a British television show before it was an American television show. After that we started writing all original episodes. So Diversity Day was all original, it was our story. And this was all original with the exception of a little wink. A little nod to the British show.

ANGELA: What? Trivia master?

JENNA: I know. So in an episode of the British Office, their Dwight character whose name is Gareth, he gets to lead an investigation into some dirty emails that came into the office. So he takes over the conference room and he even puts a sign on the window and that is the little thing that we stole for this episode. It's that Dwight is gonna do that same thing.

ANGELA: He's gonna take over the conference room.

JENNA: Yes but in this case it is to pick a new health care plan for the company. So we did that from time to time, we'd just do like little nods to the British show which I always think are kinda fun. Especially because there were people who were huge fans of the original who were then watching our show and that was a little treat.

ANGELA: Well I like it. I like where your head's out starting out this episode with some really good trivia, Jenna. I like where you're going. I like it. I got my note cards ready, lady.

JENNA: Do you wanna hit me with a note card or should I continue with fast facts?

ANGELA: No. Do your fast facts. I got some note cards waiting for you though.

JENNA: Alright. Well, this is a fast fact and it's actually something that, Angela, you pointed out.

ANGELA: Oh is it a Kinsey fast fact?

JENNA: It's a Kinsey fast fact.

ANGELA: Okay.

JENNA: That this is the first time that we see Devon and Creed at their desks.

ANGELA: Yes. I loved spotting little things in the background.

JENNA: You are. I'm gonna label you a background expert.

GEORGE: No don't. I'm not the expert.

JENNA: You are. You notice those things. You really notice continuity stuff. Was it because you spent so much time in the background, Angela?

ANGELA: Is that a dig?

JENNA: No, we all did.

ANGELA: I'm totally kidding.

JENNA: No we did but I'm like--

ANGELA: Alright miss front reception. Let me tell you something. Back in the accounting corner we noticed shitake, okay? We notice things.

JENNA: No but you're always lurking back there.

ANGELA: Lurking? Now I'm a lurker?

JENNA: I thought maybe, you know, you're noticing more of what's happening back there.

ANGELA: Some real truths coming out today. You know what I noticed in this episode? That Jim has an ET on his desk. An ET doll.

JENNA: What? A little extra terrestrial doll?

ANGELA: Yes.

JENNA: See what I'm saying? This is a Kinsey background observation.

ANGELA: He's got a little ET on his desk and the ET is wearing a blue coat.

JENNA: I have never noticed that.

ANGELA: I know. For you guys watching it's at fourteen minutes thirty five seconds. There's an ET on Jim's desk and I'm like what the heck? I don't remember that ET. Okay anyway. See if you see ET at fourteen minutes.

JENNA: Wow. See what I'm saying? You did have a note card.

ANGELA: I have a ton of note cards.

JENNA: There you go.

ANGELA: I have more. Okay go.

JENNA: Okay Angela. Here's my last fast fact. And this is something I learned while I was doing my prep for this episode and I listened to the DVD commentary. So this is the third episode of season one. However, we shot it sixth.

ANGELA: What?

JENNA: Yeah. So I remember we shot the pilot and then we waited like six months to see if we got picked up. And then when we did get picked up, the writers had turned in, like, they had all their scripts ready for season one because there were only five more to do.

ANGELA: That's right. We only did six.

JENNA: We did not shoot them in the same order in which they aired. So when we finished this episode, we all said goodbye.

ANGELA: Oh my gosh, did you know that?

JENNA: I remember that now.

ANGELA: That puts a whole different filter on rewatching it now because I felt we were really loosey goosey in this episode and we're gonna talk about it but a few of us just full-on laugh and it's in the episode but--

JENNA: We were really a tight knit group by the time we were filming this.

ANGELA: Yeah we were all pals at the time.

JENNA: And I think that it shows in the episode. And I think that might also be why I have such a warm place in my heart for this episode because when we were filming this episode we really believed that this was the last one we would ever do.

ANGELA: Oh for sure. I thought we were not coming back at all. And I had my name, they printed out our names on paper and then laminated it for our trailer doors with a little bit of velcro. That was on our trailer door. And I took my little laminated piece of paper that said my name.

JENNA: Me too.

ANGELA: I still have it.

JENNA: I still have it. You know what I did??

ANGELA: What?

JENNA: I made a mixtape.

ANGELA: Oh my god.

JENNA: I made a mixtape and I called it something like Scranton Sounds. Sounds of Scranton. And I gave it to John, Rainn, Steve, and BJ along with a tiny homemade scrapbook of some photos.

ANGELA: And then you said "Hi, 1994 called. They want my mixtape back."

JENNA: I'm sure those guys were like "This is the girliest present I've ever been given."

ANGELA: I'm just picturing you giving that mixtape to people and some people don't even have a tape player in their car.

JENNA: No it was a CD.

ANGELA: Okay.

JENNA: It was a mix CD. I call it mixtapes.

ANGELA: Okay I pictured an actual mixtape.

JENNA: No it wasn't a cassette. It was a CD. I am certain if I had to bet money, I am certain no one ever listened to it. I listen to it all the time.

ANGELA: You listen to it in your car ride because it was the Sounds of Scranton.

JENNA: This is real. So my commute to where we filmed the first season of The Office was very long. Over an hour because I lived in the San Fernando Valley and we shot in Culver City and if you live in Los Angeles or have ever been here, that's a very long commute in the morning. And I wanted to quote unquote get in character, so I wanted to pretend like I was driving in Scranton. So I wanted some Sounds of Scranton.

ANGELA: Did you like research what people were listening to in Scranton?

JENNA: I didn't.

ANGELA: How did you know what the Sounds of Scranton were?

JENNA: You know what? I really don't. I'm gonna say I made a lot of assumptions and I kinda went back to my college days and I had some classic rock and a little bit of Garth Brooks but now that I'm saying it I realize that I don't really know what East Coast people listen to. I was so whatever. It put me in a head space.

ANGELA: Okay well I just want you to know I want the Sounds of Scranton on our website.

JENNA: I'm gonna look for it. I bet I still have it.

ANGELA: Also I want to know if it was a CD, I want to know did you make a little cover and write out each song or did you type it out and print it? Is there a photo? What's the cover of the CD?

JENNA: The cover of the CD is a collage of different pictures that reminded me of Scranton.

ANGELA: Wait wait wait. Wait wait wait. Please stop. These aren't photos of people on the show?

JENNA: No.

ANGELA: They're images of Scranton that you got from the computer? Got from the internet?

JENNA: And it's a collage.

ANGELA: So there's photos of Scranton.

JENNA: Yes.

ANGELA: And it's called Sounds of Scranton? You're the biggest dork I know.

JENNA: I would listen to it on my drive to get into the character of Pam.

ANGELA: Oh my God.

JENNA: And then I would go to work.

ANGELA: This is why I love you. Because I want to be best friends with a person who prints images of places in Scranton and makes a collage and makes a CD.

JENNA: So as I'm telling this story now it's occurring to me when you live in a city, you don't make a tribute CD of the city you live in. Like I lived in St. Louis my whole life and I never drove around with a CD called Sounds of St. Louis.

ANGELA: Well I'm going to now. Sounds of Los Angeles is gonna happen.

JENNA: Let's make it. I didn't know what to give as a wrap gift. That's a thing. Do people know that when you finish a series, when you finish a season of a show, it's sort of customary to give out little presents to your cast members or crew members. So I really did not know what to give out. You know, Kate Flannery, had these Dunder Mifflin candles made. Do you remember that?

ANGELA: I have it.

JENNA: I still have it. Yeah. She gave out Dunder Mifflin candles but we really gifted like we're done.

ANGELA: I got everyone to sign my script. So I still have that and that's really cool. And Kate gave me a photo of her and I standing at our trailers because we shared a trailer. Kate and I had a trailer and the only thing between our toilets was like a plastic accordion door so if I sat on my toilet and she sat on hers, our knees touched. So we made a vow to never use our toilet. We were like we just can't. That's just not gonna happen.

JENNA: I remember that.

ANGELA: You remember our plastic accordion door? That didn't even shut so we just opened it and just shared basically one room with two toilets.

JENNA: Well when I think back to that time I remember having anxiety about, I mean, I just had the most thrilling experience of my acting life. I had been a struggling actor for eight years

before I got my job on The Office. I never really had a regular role on anything. I'd done pilots but they never got picked up. So this was my first series. And I thought, "What do I do if this show gets cancelled?" I guess I just got back to the beginning. I mean, we could've all had to go back and get day jobs again.

ANGELA: I mean, so Kate Flannery and I both, we did not quit our day jobs for the first season of The Office.

JENNA: Oh I remember that.

ANGELA: Kate Flannery was still a waitress at Kate Mantilini in Beverly Hills and so she should would work on The Office and then go wait tables.

JENNA: I remember that.

ANGELA: And I was working at iOWest which is an improv theater and I was helping run the office and I stayed on and would help. I just would've gone back to helping run the theater and improv classes and I ran the intern program. I fired someone who's now famous. One of my interns.

JENNA: Who? Can you say?

ANGELA: He's a lovable person and I love him.

JENNA: Tell me.

ANGELA: So this was my intern who was always late. He was always late. The higher ups said "Okay you can be late three times and then you get fired" and so...

JENNA: As an intern his job was to keep the restroom clean.

ANGELA: He had come early and set up the box office.

JENNA: Okay.

ANGELA: Like we needed him early. And he was late a lot but I really liked him and then finally they were like "You're gonna have to fire him." So he walks in one day and his name is Derek Waters, creator of Drunk History. And he walked in and he was really late and I was like "Hey Derek" and he was like "Hey Angela, are you gonna fire me today?" and I was like "I am" and he's like "Okay."

JENNA: Oh my gosh. Angela, he told me this story. I wrote a book, everyone, plug The Actor's Life: A Survival Guide. Check it out. Local bookstores. Check it out. I wrote a book and I

interviewed Derek in the book and he told me this story of being fired from iO. I did not know it was you who fired him.

ANGELA: It was me.

JENNA: It's still very much on his mind because he mentioned it in an interview.

ANGELA: But anyway, I would go back to running a theater, basically. I have something, so I know Health Care is about the office finding a good health care plan and the downsizing. I know the overall arc of the episode, but I just want you to know I have started calling this episode the Pam sass.

JENNA: The Pam sass?

ANGELA: Uh huh. And it's gonna come up throughout this episode where Pam is super sassy.

JENNA: Well well.

ANGELA: Uh huh. It starts off right away when Michael comes up to you and you say "I'm not making any copies." Like you're sassy out of the gate, lady. And then you say "Oh do you want me to repeat the messages for the..." and then like you look to camera. I have many more as we go through this episode

JENNA: Oh my God. Did I piss you off before you watched this episode?

ANGELA: No.

JENNA: And then you're just looking for sass moments?

ANGELA: Hey listen, you rewatch it and right away you're just like here, like, you are not here to mess around.

JENNA: You try having a boss like Michael Scott and see what kind of mood it puts you in.

ANGELA: Well you were sassy in the script.

JENNA: I was matter of fact.

ANGELA: Pam sass. Okay go. Go on. What else is there?

JENNA: That's it.

ANGELA: Alright lady, I think we should take a break.

JENNA: I think we should but I think we should tell everyone that when we come back we're gonna have a special guest.

ANGELA: Well I think you just told them.

JENNA: I did. It's gonna be a tall drink of water.

ANGELA: Mhmm.

JENNA: Mr. Rainn Wilson.

ANGELA: Yes!

BREAK

JENNA: It's time to break down the Health Care episode.

ANGELA: Let's do it.

JENNA: Alright we're gonna go a little rogue here.

ANGELA: Okay

JENNA: We're gonna do a phone call with Rainn Wilson.

ANGELA: With Rainn Wilson.

JENNA: There were just too many things about this episode that were Dwight centric and we have a lot of questions from fans that I think we needed to go straight to the source. We agreed.

ANGELA: We agreed and Rainn said yes and we're so thrilled we're gonna talk to Rainn.

JENNA: We're gonna call him. Let's call Rainn.

RAINN: Hello.

JENNA: Is this Rainn Wilson?

ANGELA: Hey Rainn.

RAINN: It is Rainn Wilson.

JENNA: Rainn Wilson, it is Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey.

ANGELA: What's up, fella? How are you?

JENNA: Thanks for doing this.

RAINN: I'm great, guys. I'm really good. I'm watching a podcast this week called Metaphysical Milkshake and doing that with Reza Aslan.

JENNA: And is this in coordination with SoulPancake?

RAINN: It is. Yes. It's life's big questions about, you know, philosophy and psychology and spirituality and sociology and we're talking to some of the world's greatest minds. It's super interesting stories.

ANGELA: I love that.

RAINN: We're launching very soon.

JENNA: That is so you, Rainn. You are the person I go to with all of those questions in life. We can tell people. I have called you on occasion sobbing. You are my person who I trust with those big life moments. So this makes total sense.

RAINN: That's so sweet.

JENNA: It's true.

RAINN: I call you anytime I have an issue in the kitchen or anything with cooking or bread. Anything yeast related, whatsoever.

ANGELA: I will say this though, Rainn, you know what I love? Is that you do reach out to Jenna and I in times when you're definitely wanting like love and support and I love that we're all there for each other like that. It's true.

RAINN: Aw. Angela, you're the sisters that I never had.

ANGELA: Aw, you're too... we've talked about you a little bit how you'd look at us and say, "Look at them. They're two hens. Cluck cluck cluck."

JENNA: They will not stop talking.

RAINN: Blah blah blah.

ANGELA: Blah blah blah.

RAINN: If the listeners could only know what those conversations were like on the set. It's just like, "I made the best lasagna." "You did? I love lasagna. One time I went to Italy and had lasagna." "You went to Italy? I've been to Spain." "I like Spain."

ANGELA: I mean, Rainn.

RAINN: "Do you like ham?" "I love ham."

ANGELA: They weren't that interesting Rainn. That is like way more fascinating than anything we ever talked about for hours on end.

RAINN: That's fantastic.

JENNA: It's so true.

ANGELA: Well, we have some questions for you about the episode.

JENNA: We do. Alright, so we're talking to you about the Health Care episode which is appropriate because this is a Dwight A storyline.

ANGELA: Big storyline. We wanna hear, your first big one, right?

RAINN: Wow. Thanks, guys. Thanks for the support. Yeah. From 2004. Yeah. Thanks.

ANGELA: Hey, you did some great stuff a decade ago.

RAINN: It's true.

JENNA: Alright so I wanna ask you, Rainn, just what comes to mind for you when you first think of the Health Care episode.

RAINN: That was the first episode I remember we spent an inordinate amount of time at the conference room. And I remember saying hot dog fingers.

ANGELA: Yes!

RAINN: That was very funny.

ANGELA: Which totally made us break and they left it in the episode. Rainn, I full on start laughing and then Brian breaks character and points to me and starts laughing. And it's still in the episode.

JENNA: That's your real laughing.

ANGELA: That's me really laughing.

RAINN: It's true. They left it in the edit, you guys breaking and cracking over the diseases. It's truly hysterical. but I do remember saying to Kate Flannery.... Didn't I say "You had your vagina removed" and she's like, "It was a hysterectomy, it was my uterus." or something.

ANGELA: "I still have a vagina."

JENNA: Yes, that was in the conference room. But when you first come out, this is a frequently asked fan question, which is: Did you guys improvise the fake diseases or were they scripted? And I remember that there were scripted fake diseases but then at a certain point Paul and the director and the other writers came down and they were just handing you a piece of paper with improvised fake diseases and none of us knew you were gonna say hot dog fingers. It was a complete and utter surprise. That was not in the script. Do you remember that?

RAINN: Yes, there were some very ones that were scripted: nano robots, micro invasion, or whatever that one was that one was in there. And a lot of great ones were in there. But yeah they kept feeding me other ones. It was very hard for me to keep a straight face. I broke all the time.

ANGELA: I know. I remember thinking how are we gonna have any usable takes because we all kept laughing.

RAINN: You get to a certain point in laughing where you just cross a line where you just get tickled too much and you can't bring it back. That happened. You know that happened like maybe, I won't say every episode but every two to three episodes that kinda happened for me and it absolutely happened in this one. But my friend Kevin, Kevin Isola who's an actor in New York, he was visiting the set and he was the one who actually threw out hot dog fingers.

ANGELA: Oh my gosh!

JENNA: That's amazing.

ANGELA: Kevin!

RAINN: That's his claim to fame. Yeah.

JENNA: His claim to fame. I hope he has a shirt that just say hot dog fingers.

RAINN: I am going to buy him that shirt right now.

JENNA: Send that to him.

RAINN: That would be a really good shirt.

ANGELA: It would be.

RAINN: Wouldn't it?

ANGELA: Hot dog fingers. Rainn, you have one of my favorite talking heads in this episode. I mean, there's so many, you have so many good ones over the years but this is like the one, definitely season one, that is like--

JENNA: It sort of is the quintessential one for Dwight.

ANGELA: It's the lion. Your whole sort of like rant about "In the wild there is no health care. In the wild, health care is ow I hurt my leg."

JENNA: Should we play it?

ANGELA: Yeah.

JENNA: Do you want us to play it, Rainn? We have that ability. We're really high tech.

RAINN: Yeah, I'd love it.

JENNA: You wanna listen to yourself deliver a great talking head?

RAINN: I do.

DWIGHT: In the wild, there is no health care. In the wild, health care is ow I hurt my leg. I can't run. A lion eats me. And I'm dead. Well, I'm not dead. I'm the lion. You're dead.

JENNA: I love that so much.

RAINN: The only thing I'll say about that one was, you know, we were really establishing Dwight and his logic and how seriously he took himself. And these kind of rules that Dwight started to develop where he's very hierarchical and about status and like, this is how things must be done. But he has a completely different set of rules than other people do. Just how he sees the world. One of the things I think that has given the character enduring appeal is he sees the world in a very clear way. He's kind of stratus, stratum? Stratum? Hierarchy?

JENNA: Yes.

RAINN: Of rights and wrongs and morality and how things work and how they should work. I mean, they're very severe and this is one of the first talking heads that delved into that world of Dwight. And it's all Paul Lieberstein. He wrote that and was very happy with... he was so excited

to kind of help... it really helped to direct, he didn't direct the episode but he was right there giving a ton of notes on different inflections and ways to say it.

ANGELA: Interesting.

JENNA: Oh wow.

ANGELA: This is totally random but Rainn, in rewatching this, during that talking head you're passing out the new health care plan. You're tossing it to people. You're handing it around the office. And it looks like you have a lollipop in your mouth. There is a white stick sticking out of your mouth as you're passing all these papers out.

ANGELA: You should know something about this podcast, Rainn, which is that Angela is constantly picking up on these weird little details.

ANGELA: Well, I'm just like what the heck when I rewatch it. I'm like, does Rainn as Dwight, are you sucking on a lollipop as you're passing this out? Because that's brilliant.

RAINN: I have no memory of that whatsoever. But I think maybe I was. Yeah.

ANGELA: Look around four minutes and fifty seconds. You have like a lollipop in your mouth. It's just sorta.

JENNA: Four minutes thirty seconds.

ANGELA: No fifty. Around fifty seconds.

JENNA: Fifty seconds.

ANGELA: You just like flippantly passing these papers while sucking on a lollipop. I thought it was really cool and powerful. I don't know, I loved it.

JENNA: That's amazing.

RAINN: Thank you.

JENNA: Well this leads us into the scene with Jim and Pam confronting you about... confronting Dwight about picking a horrible plan where he slashed all the benefits. You have all those other great Dwightisms where you say you've never been sick. That you have an amazing immune system to which, you know, we ask you how can you have a great immune system if you've never been sick and it's just you have great genes. And that's when you say that you can raise and lower your cholesterol at will.

ANGELA: At will.

JENNA: And I say why would you want to raise your cholesterol? And you say "So I can lower it." I remember shooting that scene with you and I remember that was the couplet that I couldn't get through. Why would you... that was the one that got me. And that was a question from a fan actually. Christopher said how many times did it take you and Rainn to get through the cholesterol scene? And I can't remember how many times but it was a lot, Christopher.

RAINN: Yeah, it's funny how in history looking back on The Office there are these quotes that pop out that become like the classic quotes of the character and it's interesting that, you know, for Dwight there's like fifteen or twenty kinds of Dwightism that stand the test of time and that fans love. Identity theft is not a joke, Jim. Some of these ones. And the cholesterol one is definitely one of them.

JENNA: I feel like another one of those phrases that people talk about is the Count Choculitis. The scene where you are confronting Jim. But also something that ended up on the cutting room floor for this where you actually had meetings with a bunch of people in the office. You shot something where you confronted Oscar. I think you had a meeting with him, didn't you, Angela? And it was really short.

ANGELA: Probably.

JENNA: Where he asks you if you wrote the fake diseases. Because he goes through and interviews people. Well, in your interview with Jim, you say "Count Choculitis. Why did you write that down, Jim? Is it because you know I love Count Chocula?" I love the idea that you love Count Chocula. That that's what Dwight has for breakfast in the mornings or maybe late at night as he watches TV.

ANGELA: Maybe it's a snack.

RAINN: Maybe he models himself after Count Chocula. Maybe there's an affinity about Count Chocula, the character and person behind the cereal.

ANGELA: Yeah not even the cereal.

JENNA: It's not the cereal. That's right. He loves Count Chocula the cereal.

RAINN: He's more connected to actual Count Chocula. He relates to him.

JENNA: Yeah. Well you brought it up earlier, there's also the conference room scene when you start announcing ailments and you tell us that if we want it covered, we have to fess up and admit it's a real disease. And that's when you have that bit with Meredith where she says, "You say inverted penis."

ANGELA: And she's like--

JENNA: And she says, "Do you mean vagina? Because if so, I want that covered." And then you bring up "I thought you didn't have a vagina. You had a hysterectomy." And then she has that great line.

ANGELA: I still have a vagina.

RAINN: Yeah I think I improvised that. And this is early on when we started to improvise more.

JENNA: Wait, you improvised that she had a hysterectomy? Did you improvise that because that pays off later in another episode.

RAINN: No no no no. That was in there, the hysterectomy. But the line "I thought you didn't have a vagina" was mine.

JENNA: Oh okay.

ANGELA: That sounds like you. Isabel has been wanting to watch The Office, Rainn, and I haven't let her yet but now like all of her friends have seen it in fifth grade so I let her watch this episode with me.

RAINN: In fifth grade? Her friends have seen The Office?

ANGELA: Her friends, oh my God, they're obsessed.

JENNA: Oh that's when it starts now.

ANGELA: That's when it starts.

JENNA: Fifth grade.

ANGELA: Fifth grade.

RAINN: But fifth grade is young.

ANGELA: Fifth grade is young. And so Isabel hasn't seen The Office and I didn't have her watch it because I didn't think it was age appropriate. And also, I just need to be mom. You know? And but she is getting more curious now and so she loves the bloopers so we've watched the bloopers because they were on YouTube and then I was rewatching this episode and she wanted to watch it. So I let her watch it with me and so her introduction to The Office is Health Care.

JENNA: Oh my goodness.

ANGELA: And so--

JENNA: Anal fissures.

ANGELA: That's it. That's it. So that scene came up and she was like "Wait, mom, that's not a real thing, is it? What is that?" and I was like "Oh God. It is a real thing."

RAINN: But if you ride on the New York subway, they have ads up for anal fissures. You can read all about them.

ANGELA: Well Isabel turned to me and goes "Does Brian have anal fissures?" I'm like "No, Brian doesn't. Brian does not."

JENNA: Kevin does.

ANGELA: Kevin does and anyways it was just sort of funny to watch the episode with her.

JENNA: Well this is a little bit off the topic of Health Care but a little on the topic of just how we're friends in real life. People ask that all the time. We're friends in real life, right Rainn? Rainn?

RAINN: Yes. Yes we are, Jenna.

JENNA: Okay we've gone to lunch. We text.

ANGELA: Jenna, do you need affirming?

JENNA: Can I get this in writing? No. Okay. No that we're all friends in real life and we shared so much of our lives doing this show for so long. I remember that your wife Holiday was pregnant with your son while we were shooting the pilot.

ANGELA: Yes.

RAINN: That's right.

ANGELA: I remember how he was--

JENNA: He was born during an episode but Rainn I couldn't remember which episode it was we were shooting.

RAINN: So Walter was born during the Hot Girl episode.

ANGELA: Oh right.

RAINN: So they shot me out the first two days. They were just like “We’ll just shoot all Rainn’s scenes Monday and Tuesday” and then sure enough, late Tuesday night, Walter was born and it was a horrific, ugly, difficult birth and we were in the hospital emergency room and all that kind of stuff. You can read about it in my book *The Bassoon King*.

ANGELA: Yes!

JENNA: I did read about it in your book.

RAINN: Available now. Now, I wasn’t talking to you two, I was talking to all the listeners out there.

JENNA: Listeners if you want the full story, you can read about it in *The Bassoon King*.

ANGELA: *The Bassoon King*.

RAINN: Yes.

JENNA: It’s a very good book.

RAINN: So that was kind of crazy and then I had a couple days off and then, yeah--

JENNA: We shot this out of order. Yes, because *Hot Girl* is the last episode that airs for season one but it we shot it in the middle. *Health Care* was actually the last episode that we shot. And you had a little tiny Walter while you were shooting this episode.

RAINN: Yeah I did.

JENNA: And I remember you had to come to work Monday. You only had, what--

ANGELA: You were so tired.

JENNA: Like five days off after he was born.

RAINN: Yeah we spent the whole weekend in the hospital. My wife was in the hospital for like four or five days so we went home from the hospital maybe Sunday night or even that Monday morning and I came to work on Monday.

ANGELA: You came to work. Oh my God, bless your heart.

JENNA: And I remember being worried. Just being concerned.

ANGELA: Hoping you guys were okay.

JENNA: Yeah, just emotionally what that must've been like.

RAINN: Yeah everything worked out great. She's great, Walter's great, all aces.

ANGELA: All aces. I remember the first time I met your wife was when we were filming the pilot and I remember how you introduced me to her. I'll never forget it.

RAINN: Oh no.

ANGELA: You said "This is my wife, carrier of my seed."

JENNA: That's such a Dwight thing to say.

RAINN: Yeah. Yeah.

ANGELA: And we were like oh, nice to meet you. And she was like "Yeah, hi, I'm Holly."

JENNA: Oh Rain...

RAINN: A line blurs. It definitely blurs between me and Dwight. And I think the line blurs between all of us and our characters.

ANGELA: Oh yeah. For sure.

JENNA: Rainn, thank you so much for talking with us on our podcast.

RAINN: Hey this was great. I love the Health Care episode and if you'll invite me back I'll come into the studio and we can sit down and have high fives and iced tea.

JENNA: Let's do that.

ANGELA: And you guys, we have to all check out Rainn's new podcast Metaphysical Milkshake.

RAINN: Yup.

ANGELA: And Rainn that is on what? Where do we find that?

RAINN: It's on Luminary. Download the Luminary app and it'll be right on the Luminary app.

ANGELA: Well I can't wait to listen, Rainn. I love you so much. Thank you.

JENNA: We love you.

RAINN: I love you guys and miss you and am so happy you're doing this podcast. The fans are just gonna love it.

JENNA: I hope so.

ANGELA: Alright Rainn, come back. We love you. Bye.

RAINN: See you soon. Bye. Thanks, guys.

ANGELA: Why is it everytime we talk to someone from the show, I wanna start to cry. Like I'm tearing up a little.

JENNA: I don't know. I think it's just that those relationships are so fundamental to us.

ANGELA: Yes.

JENNA: They are like family. And it doesn't matter if it's a crew member, if it's a cast member.

ANGELA: It doesn't matter. It's just such a special chapter in our lives and hearing Rainn's voice and him laughing at you and I being chatty, it just brought me straight back. Rainn, thank you so much for coming on. That just made my day.

BREAK

JENNA: Angela, I wanna talk about something that was one of our other most popular questions. And it came from a fan and it's something I was wondering about as well when I rewatched this episode.

ANGELA: Okay.

JENNA: It has to do with the accounting department. So this is for you.

ANGELA: Okay.

JENNA: Paige O'Murphy asked "I love how you get to see the start of the dynamic between the accounting department in Health Care. And this is when you're leaving the conference room and you say "You let them walk all over you."

ANGELA: And I'm like "Did you talk to them? Did you talk to him? What was that? That was pathetic."

JENNA: You let him walk all over you.

ANGELA: Then Kevin's like "What're you guys talking about?" And I'm like "Nothing, Kevin."

JENNA: Okay so her question is: How much of that was you guys improvising and how much was written? This is to me like the quintessential accounting department dynamic.

ANGELA: Yes. This is on my note card because to me this really defined our corner. This moment.

JENNA: Yeah so let's watch it and then I want to hear the real story.

ANGELA: Okay.

OSCAR: This is not good.

ANGELA: It's ridiculous. Did you talk to him?

OSCAR: What was that?

ANGELA: You let him walk all over you. It's just pathetic.

KEVIN: What are you guys talking about?

ANGELA: Nothing Kevin.

JENNA: There it is. Okay so.

ANGELA: So we improvised that and here's the thing I learned really quickly on this show. And I learned it from our B camera operator Matt Sohn. Matt was like "Ang, if you guys have bits, make them quick and they have a chance of getting in the show." And so we had this moment where we were all walking back to our desks and Oscar and I kinda improvised this moment where I'm like "Did you talk to him" and "What was that?" and we sort of had this chit chat on the way and our B camera operator got it and he was like "If you tighten that up, it'll make it in, I think." So we did, we had this back and forth and then of course I had no idea that Brian was already up behind us and he was like, "What are you talking about?" and I was like " Nothing Kevin." And it just sorta crystalized that Oscar and I have this sorta weird office dysfunctional marriage in a way.

JENNA: Yeah.

ANGELA: And Kevin is like our child that we're like "Stay out of it. Leave him out of it." And it was so fun that it made it in for us. That was really fun.

JENNA: How did that dynamic come together? Because I know you guys would have to get stuff in the background. We've established that. But for real, you did, and I know you guys are all comedic improv performers

ANGELA: Well Oscar and I had done a show together. You know we met well before The Office. I've talked about this before. We had done a sketch show together called Hot Towel. And we had known each other a long time. We had done The Groundlings together and I think we just naturally fell into step with one another. I knew my character was always annoyed. That's like the baseline is that I was always annoyed. And just the way that Brian did Kevin, he seemed a little like the idiot.

JENNA: Yeah.

ANGELA: So pretty much if I had anyone I could go to about something, it was Oscar. And I was always annoyed and I was always going to him and he never had the answers I wanted. And I just didn't want to even talk to Kevin so that just sorta came about naturally I think and Oscar and I just picked up on all those cues.

JENNA: Well I love that Greg and the directors gave our camera operators the license to pick up moments that they hadn't even been directed to pick up. Like they would keep one eye open on everything that was happening in the background. And especially Matt, his job was to catch reactions and to catch these little moments that were happening off the main action. And Matt went on to direct episodes in later seasons.

ANGELA: Yes he did. And our director this episode Ken Whittigham was so great about letting us have that creative opportunity. So when he saw us do that as we walked away he was like "Yeah yeah, keep doing that." And so he encouraged us and then, you know, we used to joke that we would've kept going and going. And so, I'd have to say all the time to Brian, "It's not our show, guys. It's not our show." And then we had this whole running bit we did for years that there was an actual spinoff called Los Accountadores. Oscar, Angela, y Kevin. And it was on Telemundo. That was our spinoff.

JENNA: Angela, that is actually a good idea for a spinoff. Just The Accountants.

ANGELA: The Accountants!

JENNA: And Creed.

ANGELA: And Creed. The Accountants and Creed.

JENNA: Well I just think Creed has to work in every office somehow. Right?

ANGELA: Yes.

JENNA: Like he's always there.

ANGELA: I actually would like Creed to be in every project.

JENNA: I need to call someone at NBC.

ANGELA: Who are you calling?

JENNA: I don't know. I think this is gold.

ANGELA: I actually would like Creed to just show up in every project I have for the rest of my life. Also he texted me this morning and he really wants to come on the show..

JENNA: Well he's coming on the show.

ANGELA: That's happening.

JENNA: I know exactly what episode too.

ANGELA: Oh you've got it all figured out?

JENNA: Yeah he needs to come in for the Halloween episode which is the first episode that he speaks.

ANGELA: No, Jenna, that is not the first episode that he speaks in.

JENNA: What?

ANGELA: Yeah. Lady, look at my note card. He has a few lines in this episode of Health Care.

JENNA: What? Creed does not speak in Health Care.

ANGELA: Yes he does.

JENNA: No he does not.

ANGELA: Lady you have to listen. Okay so you know the scene where Michael calls the Lackawanna coal mine?

JENNA: Yes.

ANGELA: He's calling because he's like "Hey, is there some kind of ride there?" And there's a voice that's like "It's an industrial elevator, it goes three hundred feet into the ground really slowly." And Michael is like "What is there, laser tag down there?" And he's like "Nope." Remember that guy?

JENNA: Yeah.

ANGELA: It's Creed.

JENNA: What?

ANGELA: Yes!

JENNA: The voice of the coal miner guy is Creed?

ANGELA: Yeah.

JENNA: No way.

ANGELA: Well, between the two of us I'm sure someone caught this but I was watching this episode with my daughter because my daughter is at the age where she's very curious about The Office and she hasn't seen any episodes and I was rewatching this one so I let her watch it with me and she was like "Mommy that voice sounds familiar." And I was like "It does." The voice of the man who works at the coal mine sounded familiar to us. And I was like "Oh my gosh, it's Creed."

JENNA: It's Creed.

ANGELA: And I texted Creed and he said "Yeah, I was so excited." He said Ken Kwapis who was a friend of his, who was our director, he said, "You know, Creed, why don't you read this?" And Creed did and they were really happy with it. And he really felt like that helped him sort of down the line for Halloween. Because they already thought he was funny.

JENNA: And he is so funny.

ANGELA: He's so funny.

JENNA: His timing is perfect.

ANGELA: But I want you to know, I said "Creed, oh my gosh, so that was your first speaking part on The Office was as that coal miner guy?" And he goes "No."

JENNA: What?

ANGELA: I know!

JENNA: This is episode three.

ANGELA: I know! I know you don't know this and I'm bouncing in my chair because you don't know this. Okay the actual first time that Creed ever spoke was in Diversity Day.

JENNA: What?

ANGELA: Yes. So at the time they needed some banter and our first AD did not realize that Creed wasn't a series regular and didn't have a contract.

JENNA: That he was just a background player. And you're literally like... the contract for background players is that you're not allowed to speak. If you speak, there's a big bump in pay.

ANGELA: And they have to pay you. Creed said the AD said to him "Can you fill in some banter with Phyllis?" And Creed was like "You know me, Ang, I'm not shy." That's what he said. So he has this banter with Phyllis and it made it into the episode and then they realized they wanted to use it but Creed wasn't officially under contract so then they paid him and that is actually his first line.

JENNA: Well my mind is blown.

ANGELA: Your mind is blown because Creed actually had an improv line in Diversity Day that made it in the show and that is the first time he spoke. The second time he spoke was the elevator shaft operator guy on the phone with Michael. And then Halloween as we will get to is his big moment.

JENNA: Yes. Oh, that is some good stuff.

ANGELA: That was a good note card, lady.

JENNA: Very good note card. Okay Angela, well I have trivia. Why are you looking at me like that?

ANGELA: I dunno.

JENNA: I have trivia.

ANGELA: I'm feeling very smug with all my Creed trivia.

JENNA: You are!

ANGELA: My Creed trivia.

JENNA: Well it was really good. Alright, here's mine. You know the scene when Michael goes to the travel agent. Where he wants to try and get us the all expense paid trip to Atlantic City?

ANGELA: Yeah.

JENNA: Where he says the thing about a bus that takes you there and then you get all your meals comped?

ANGELA: Everything's free.

JENNA: And the travel agent is like "Yeah I don't know anything about that. You might just wanna contact the casino directly." Do you know who played the travel agent?

ANGELA: Is it his friend from college, Charlie Hartsock?

JENNA: Dammit! Angela.

ANGELA: I remember that. I remember Steve was very excited because his friend from, you know, like his good friend was gonna be on set that day.

JENNA: But you weren't there that day.

ANGELA: I wasn't, Jenna. But Steve is my friend and he shared with me. Yeah. Uh huh.

JENNA: Alright. Well what else have you got? You got more note cards over there.

ANGELA: You know what, Jenna, as I was watching this I was like, oh my gosh, this episode in particular I felt like we really saw that particular... I felt like we really saw that peep shot. And I know we're gonna talk about it.

JENNA: The peep shot? The spy shot, Angela?

ANGELA: I call it the peep shot.

JENNA: Please don't call it that to anyone else. It's called the spy shot.

ANGELA: Well you just called it--

JENNA: We're spying. We're not peeping.

ANGELA: Excuse me, you called the background actors lurkers, so we're lurking and we're peeping. Okay. But it's just that shot where you go through the blinds, right?

JENNA: Yeah.

ANGELA: And we saw that a lot in this episode because Michael is hiding. He's hiding in his office and one of my favorite ones is when you're being sassy.

JENNA: Oh my God this is a peep and a sass.

ANGELA: It's a peep and a Pam sass. So we're looking through the blinds and Michael is playing with his truck. He's rolling the truck back and forth.

JENNA: He's claiming that there's many calls coming in.

ANGELA: Busy busy busy. And Pam goes "Still no one calling."

JENNA: Yeah. It's matter of fact. You find matter of factness to be sass.

ANGELA: No I think there's a little bit of sass on it. But yeah so I thought I loved that you got to see how we spy on people through the camera. That we get to see these moments. They don't know that we're seeing.

JENNA: Yeah.

ANGELA: And you'll see it over and over but when I watched the BBC version of the show and then when I watched out version, those were the only shows doing that at this time.

JENNA: We were really trying to employ what you would do on an actual documentary where you want to catch people when they're not aware they're being filmed. And we behaved differently when we know we're being filmed or not. And so we would use the spy shot when we needed to catch people.

ANGELA: Or the peep shot.

JENNA: Or the peep shot as Angela calls it.

ANGELA: Moving on.

JENNA: Alright. Next card.

ANGELA: Two observations of John in this episode. The first one has to do with his hair. John has a full on bowl haircut in this.

JENNA: What?

ANGELA: Yes! Sam, can you pull up the picture of John in this to show Jenna? I grew up in a small town and some of these farm boys, they will just put a bowl on their head and cut their hair around it.

JENNA: What was that about?

ANGELA: I don't know. Look at that!

JENNA: Oh at fourteen minutes and nineteen seconds. That's full bowl.

ANGELA: Okay. And then the other thing I noticed about John is that John says Dee-wight.

JENNA: He does say Dee-wight.

ANGELA: I saw Dwight.

JENNA: Well, he doesn't say Dee-wight. He says Duh-wight.

ANGELA: Duh-wight. Okay. John says Dee-wight.

JENNA: Duh-wight.

ANGELA: Duh-wight. Oh my God. John says Duh-wight and I say Dwight.

JENNA: I saw Dwight. Duh-wight.

ANGELA: I absolutely love it now because it makes me miss John and everytime I hear him say Duh-wight it just makes me smile, So there are my two John observations.

JENNA: I have an observation about Jim in this episode. Which is... and actually a fan pointed this out as well, I have noticed it but I will give some props to the other person who noticed it. Except I don't have their names written down. I'm sorry. Person out there, you know who you are.

ANGELA: Yeah.

JENNA: Which is that all of this could've been avoided if Jim had just taken fifteen minutes and picked a plan.

ANGELA: No, I know.

JENNA: The way he was asked in the beginning of the episode.

ANGELA: Yes.

JENNA: I mean, he ends up having this fun playful day with Pam but if we're gonna get real here, it cost him and everyone else in the office decent health care. On the other hand, in his defense, I will say the task was to slash the health care. So I'm not sure he could've done much better than Dwight but maybe he could've. Does that make him kinda not as charming? I don't know. This is an argument.

ANGELA: Well I think what happens in this show is that Michael passes the buck to Jim and Jim passes it to Dwight and it happens over and over.

JENNA: It does.

ANGELA: It does and Jim is just like "Listen, I don't get paid enough to do this."

JENNA: Yeah. Well and I think the argument can be made that Jim knew it was inevitable. Like what we ended up with is what we were gonna end up with. Although the other argument can be made that Dwight made it worse than it needed to be.

ANGELA: Okay I have another note card.

JENNA: Okay.

ANGELA: Here it is. So, one of the things I love about our props department is just all the little details in the back. And a great example of this is all of the motivational posters that you see around Dunder Mifflin. There's some many.

JENNA: They're brilliant.

ANGELA: I like to think that Michael Scott really thinks they're gonna get everyone to like feel affirmed in their day. So you know, there's one behind you in reception that just says teamwork and it's a bunch of people jumping out of a plane and they're all locking arms.

JENNA: Teamwork.

ANGELA: These are all over the office though. At fifteen minutes fifty seconds, it flashes to the clock on the wall and under the clock, you just see it says Self Affirmations. Self Esteem. And you can't see what else it says but I'm like what is under the clock? What are all these self affirmations?

JENNA: The detail work in our set design was incredible.

ANGELA: It was.

JENNA: And that was Michael Gallenberg, our set designer.

ANGELA: He was so amazing.

JENNA: And so many details.. And then the props department would... anytime there was a sheet of paper that we had to look at as a prop, it was a fully formed idea. You know, if there was a memo, they wrote out like a whole real fake memo. And they were funny.

ANGELA: On Dunder Mifflin stationary.

JENNA: There were always funny little jokes hidden in them.

ANGELA: And all around the office, if you're in the break room, the menus, the magnets on the fridge, they're all from Scranton. They reached out to local businesses in Scranton and they all sent their items there. And they're all throughout our office. Also, of course, Froggy 99.5.

JENNA: Yes.

ANGELA: Local Scranton radio. That's what should be your playlist. You should've just listen to some Froggy.

JENNA: I really should have.

ANGELA: Alright.

JENNA: This episode ends with Michael coming out of his office. He's successfully hidden in his office until five pm. After five pm. And the entire office is waiting to confront him. Both about the horrible health care plan that Dwight picked and to finally find out what is the surprise. Because he's come in attempting to surprise us with ice cream sandwiches.

ANGELA: Oh, he almost hit me in the head with an ice cream sandwich. I mean, Steve actually, the look on his face after that take, he was like, "Angela, how close did that come?" I was like "Steve, you pretty much almost hit me in the head with it." And he also announced so proudly "Operation Surprise!"

JENNA: Yes.

ANGELA: So we're like, okay what is it? What is it?

JENNA: And all he can come up with in his whole day is ice cream sandwiches. So now it's the end and he says it's not the surprise. It's surprising but it's not the surprise. So at the end of the episode, you confront him.

ANGELA: I do. I love it. I loved being the person that confronted him because Steve was so funny and he turned to me and was "Yes, Angela?"

JENNA: Thank you for reminding me. so you ask him point blank "What is the surprise, Michael?" And then he says "The surprise is..." and then he short circuits. He just stops talking.

ANGELA: He just stops talking and he just starts to have like upper lip sweat. And we all are just looking at him. It is so awkward. And I remember when we did it, timing it out to that moment where we start to slowly leave, each person, and how long that felt... it felt so long.

JENNA: It really did as we were standing there. And they had choreographed the order in which we would leave. And of course we did many takes so we would have to come back and reset. And I remember thinking "Are we gonna leave? This is a giant pause with no dialogue. Is this gonna be able to stay in?" Because this was not something you did on television shows. In fact, on television shows, especially comedies, it was pretty traditional to have like setup, setup, joke. Setup, setup, joke. And this was like a whole different rhythm. And so, yeah I remember this and I remember he just had to stand there.

ANGELA: It was so awkward. And then when you watch it, it's so cringey but it's perfect. It's perfect.

JENNA: It's so good.

ANGELA: And there's so many times when I watch episodes of The Office where I'm like "How does Michael come back from that?" Like I say that to myself. How does he come back the next day?

JENNA: We all knew there was no surprise.

ANGELA: We all knew but man, we made him suffer through that pause.

JENNA: And then, best line ever. After that suffering silence, Rainn says "Oh. Um, Jan wants you to call her." So good.

ANGELA: So good.

JENNA: That's Health Care, guys.

ANGELA: That is Health Care. Thank you so much, Rainn Wilson, for calling in and it was just so great to hear your voice.A

JENNA: And guys, if we missed anything, remember you can write us as officeladies@earwolf.com. And just put the episode name in the subject line so that we can easily sort through things.

ANGELA: Put the episode in the subject line or Jenna's gonna be ticked off.

JENNA: I'm won't be ticked off.

ANGELA: You're gonna get some Pam sass.

JENNA: You're gonna get some Pam sass. You might get Pam sass.

ANGELA: I'm just gonna go listen to the Sounds of Scranton. I'll be right back. I'll see you guys next week.

JENNA: See you guys next week when we do The Alliance.

ANGELA: The Alliance.

JENNA: Oh there's so much good stuff in that one. Not to be missed.

ANGELA: Not to be missed.

JENNA: Thank you for listening to Office Ladies. Office Ladies is produced by Earwolf, Jenna Fischer, and Angela Kinsey. Our producer is Codi Fischer. Our sound engineer is Sam Kiefer.

ANGELA: And our theme song is Rubber Tree by Creed Bratton. Remember you can listen to ad free versions of Office Ladies on Stitcher Premium. For a free month of Stitcher Premium, use code Office.