



A.A.R.M. Q&A with David Rogers

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Who played the adorable baby Phillip?
Is it "Beesly" or "Beesley"?

And what's the heartfelt real story behind Jim's card to Pam?

These questions answered and much, much more, in OfficeTally's final Q&A (*sniff*) with the awesome director and editor of A.A.R.M., David Rogers. David not only answers your questions but he goes super in-depth with lots of behind-the-scenes details!

Best. Q&A. Ever. Thank you, Dave!

David: Hey everybody! I'm so appreciative for all the overwhelmingly positive feedback we've been getting for A.A.R.M.! Thank you so much for watching and taking the time to write comments and ask questions. I'm gonna jump right in and answer two of the big ones right away.

Greg: During the intro to Jim's CD, was "Beesly" intentionally misspelled as "Beesley"? Or was that just a mistake?

David: Pam's last name is supposed to be spelled "Beesly." That's how Greg Daniels intended it to be. But I think once or twice early on it was misspelled as "Beesley", at least in the scripts or press, and he felt we were stuck with that spelling. Even Dunderpedia: The Office Wiki has it spelled as Beesley!

But after I read the first comment pointing out that the spelling might be wrong, I went hunting for onscreen references. I found one outside their Wedding Rehearsal Dinner and it's spelled Beesly. However Halpert is spelled as Halpret as a joke so I couldn't be sure that Beesly was spelled right. But then in Business School, at her art show, her last name is on the wall as Beesly.

I am planning on changing the spelling for all future airs, syndication cuts, and on the DVDs and Blurays.

Grumpy Walrus: If my memory serves me correctly, didn't the doctor specifically say Dwight was not the father? It was done in a way that I think would be hard for Angela to set that up.

David: The other big question is how is Dwight Phillip's father when the DNA test said that he wasn't? In [Free Family Portrait Studio](#), Dwight pulled a diaper out of the bathroom and had the lab run a DNA test from that. But between Jim and Pam's kids, and other babies and children from the building complex being there, it's safe to say that there were other diapers in the trash and Dwight grabbed the wrong one. If Angela didn't think the baby was or at least could possibly be Dwight's, she never would have went off and chased after him and the diaper in the first place. And when the doctor tells them that the baby isn't his, she does have a look of surprise.

We even had a line when Dwight brings Angela into his office to tell her that he thinks Phillip is a Schrute — he says, "It's about Phillip. How do I put this... I still think there was some mix-up, or you gave the lab the wrong diaper, or lots of people can have the same DNA..."

And Angela also added a little something in the proposal scene, about Dwight maybe grabbing the wrong diaper after she told Dwight that Phillip was his son. But ultimately, we didn't want viewers who weren't familiar with what happened in [Free Family Portrait Studio](#), to be confused and pulled out of the scene wondering what they were talking about.

Mathieu: My favorite shots in the episode were the one with Jim and Dwight! How much was improvised during those takes?

David: John and Rainn are incredible, in that they can really nail the scripted version of a scene by the second or third take, and then they start to play. As long as the key lines and moments are hit and the intent of the scene is clear, they will try different lines and physical actions to see if they can make the situation funnier and ultimately better. I will give a few examples of some of the improvisation that they came up with that were not in the original shooting draft.

When Jim points out the "hierarchy mobile" to Dwight and tells him that they're missing an Assistant To The Assistant To The Regional Manager, Rainn came up with the line "I'd need more string, but it's doable." Such a wonderful little Dwight moment that his consideration of a new position rests on how it would be able to fit in his mobile.

After Jim crowns Dwight and runs after Pam, Rainn came up with the line, "From now on anyone who needs to speak to me, has got to go through me first," which I loved and ended the scene with. Early on our Executive Producer Greg Daniels told us in editing, "Whatever's funniest wins. Doesn't matter if a writer wrote it, or an actor made it up on the spot. We go with what's best."

One hilarious improv that was cut out, was after Jim reassigns “performing a test on a baby.” He gives it to Dwight and leaves. But as Dwight sits behind his desk looking out at the bullpen, a “summoning bag” gets thrown at him and hits the blinds behind him. As the new A.A.R.M., he gets up and asks if Jim wants him, and Jim responds from the doorway, “Nope, just returning it.” Dwight immediately sits down and another bean bag hits him. Jim then says “Now I need you!” It was very funny, but took away from leaving us with Dwight’s intensity on what to do about Baby Phillip, which was better for the story.

twoblackballz: Was the warehouse scene with the A.A.R.M challenge a callback to Office Olympics? Also, what was your favorite scene of this episode to shoot?

David: The obstacle course wasn’t really a callback, but I can definitely see the similarities in using regular office equipment in a different way than they’re originally intended. I loved the upside down office chairs as turnstiles and the boxes of paper as hurdles. The episode’s writer Brent Forrester and I worked on the course with our Art Department and Set Decorators and I wanted Rainn Wilson’s input since he was the one doing the course. He came up with the elevation at the end, using paper boxes as steps, and finishing on a palette of boxes.

I was blessed with such a great script with so many great scenes that it’s hard to say what’s my favorite. I loved Dwight pulling over Angela and getting to film a car stunt. I had a blast filming Darryl’s dance with the rest of the gang. I loved shooting the whole day with Andy waiting in line and auditioning for America’s Next A Capella Sensation! There are literally tons of others from Jim talking to Dwight about love, Jim giving Pam the teapot card after she watches the DVD, and almost every scene with Baby Phillip!

gabagool: How many times did you guys cry while shooting this episode?

David: There was not a ton of crying on set during the filming of this episode. Even though we knew the show was very close to ending, the cast and crew were in great spirits and firing on all cylinders. However, on my second to last day of shooting, after filming Dwight pulling over Angela, and proposing, we then went to Poor Richard’s and blocked and rehearsed the last scene of the episode where the gang watches the premiere of the documentary. After rehearsal we broke for lunch and then had our table read for... our series finale.

That’s when the crying started. That final table read was an amazing experience and cast members, crew, writers, producers and even a director who had the rest of his afternoon to shoot all either cried or at the least got teary. It took a while to settle down when it was time to come back and shoot the bar scene.

Tiffany: That Jim/Pam moment was such a turning point in their relationship. How was the feeling on set shooting that scene?

David: Hands down the most emotional scene was when Jim gave Pam the card from the teapot. The cast and the crew were emotional for what was happening within the scene, and what it meant to all of us who had worked together for so long; that it was signaling that we were near the end of our adventures at Dunder Mifflin.

tanster: What can we expect in the way of deleted scenes or bloopers from this episode?

David: There are no deleted scenes that I wish could have been included in the final cut. But there is a cute, funny B-story between Toby and Nellie that will live on as a great pod of deleted scenes. There are a couple of funny bloopers from this episode that should make the blooper reel, but it's hard to know until they're all culled together and we see what's really the best of the season.

Brooke: Is the documentary supposed to be only one episode or a series?

David: The documentary isn't completely finished. It is a mini-series on PBS, probably 10 to 12 hours and I believe the last episode of the doc would feature them seeing the doc and capturing how they react, hence why they're still shooting.

remember to call: What do you think about "Livin' the Dream" and "A.A.R.M." both ending with musical numbers/goodbyes (Andy in the former, Darryl in the latter)?

David: I loved Andy's version of "I Will Remember You" in [Livin' The Dream](#), for what it brought emotionally and also since people had been doubting his talent and chances of success, and then he shows them that he can play guitar and sing pretty damn good!

The dance number with Darryl didn't really end the show, since it was followed with the proposal and the watching of the doc, but I just loved how much fun it was for the Office to dance with Darryl, and also how much fun the cast had in working out their moves and bringing it all together. Everybody is having a great time — just look at Phyllis and Leslie and Catherine!

Slumdunder Mifflinaire: What challenges are faced when trying to make sure all the plots and questions are answered in these final episodes, ones that may have been unanswered for years?

David: I don't think there are any questions that are unanswered. It's not like this

is “Lost” or “Smallville” where you’re wondering “what’s the black smoke?” or “will he ever fly?”

What questions do people have that they feel are unanswered? I’m just curious. To me the curiosity is with the ending of any series, which simply is “how’s it going to end?”

And for people who are wondering who the Scranton Strangler is — he’s just some guy, we gave his name George Howard Skubb I believe, and he has no direct connection to our gang at Dunder Mifflin.

Katie Drewes: Which scene was directed/filmed most differently than the way the script had been written? Why?

David: I will say that one of the smartest things I did on this shoot was to move the obstacle course from its original location, which was supposed to be in the parking lot.

I did it for two reasons. One is that I remember shooting many scenes out there, such as all day on “The Fire” and let me tell you — it gets really, really hot in that open space when the sun is beating down on you. Hard on the actors and the crew and hurts the comedy on a physical scene when everybody’s really uncomfortable.

The second reason why I moved it into the warehouse, was that it seemed more organic for them to spot Darryl in there as opposed to in the alley next to the building.

tanster: One of my favorite shots was of Dwight and Jim looking out into the office through the blinds, the way Michael and Dwight used to do. You mentioned that was an intentional homage to “Gay Witch Hunt.” What other scenes paid tribute to past Office episodes?

David: I did shoot from the same side of the room as Jim’s farewell to Michael, which was behind Dwight’s left shoulder and John’s right, but the scene wasn’t meant to look the same beyond shooting from that angle. However, when Jim and Dwight look out into the bullpen at their fellow workers, deciding to start the A.A.R.M. challenge, I did intentionally block the actors and recreate the same shots from “Gay Witch Hunt” when Michael and Dwight looked out into the bullpen to try to determine if anybody was gay.

I also really liked in The Delivery when you see the cop drive along side Dwight from through his car windows and I wanted a similar shot to be the reveal for him pulling over Angela.

Ginger: As the director, how much control did you let the actors/actresses have in this episode, knowing that the series is coming to a close?

David: I tackled this the same as every other episode I've directed, which is that I always give it my all, it's the most important thing I do, and I prepare, prepare, prepare to be as ready as I can for anything that comes up. But because this was such a milestone of an episode and the plot points were so huge, I could not help but be aware of the stakes and the pressure to hit not only a home run, but a grand slam.

The script was dynamite to begin with — it was an incredible table read — so then it just becomes about the best way to execute the vision and the most creative, fun ways to make the episode as great as it can be.

We always will shoot and perform the “as-scripted” scenes and then we have the freedom to try different things and different jokes. The cast has such chemistry and improvisational skills, that one actor can go off script and another will immediately adapt and go off with them in the same direction.

And if they're onto something, if it's working, then they'll refine and sharpen it for the next take. Everybody contributes, the actors have insight and great ideas and they'll listen to the Director, the Writer, and themselves to make the best scenes possible.

Jammer: Loved the Dwight painting, and the Mose and Dwight painting. Who painted them, and will NBC sell poster copies of them?

David: We have a terrific artist we work with named Jules Kmetzko. She has done other work for us throughout the series, including Pam's watercolor of the Dunder Mifflin building that hangs on the wall in the bullpen.

GKCFan: How did you select which three celebrities would be the judges on the talent show?

David: We reached out to a small group of celebrities that we thought would be good and Clay Aiken and Santigold were game. Brian Baumgartner asked his buddy Aaron Rodgers if he was interested, and the rest is history!

When I heard Mark McGrath was available to play the host who gives Andy and the people on line the rundown, I was ecstatic! They were all fantastic to work with and really hit it out of the park! I had no idea how cool or tall Clay Aiken is until I got to meet him and film his scene!

Brett Dale: How important was it to show the true friendship between Dwight and Jim in that scene near the end when Jim was giving advice to Dwight about Angela.

David: I loved how in [Livin' The Dream](#) each of them thinks the other would do a great job as manager. Dwight giving Jim back his seat by banishing Clark to the annex was a super cool move.

One of my favorite moments from this season was when Jim left the Christmas Party early but surprised everyone and came back and Dwight runs up to him and gives him a hug.

I love when they work together as a team, such as in [Traveling Salesman](#) and [Lecture Circuit](#), and another favorite moment of mine is in [Money](#) when Dwight is sad and despondent in the stairwell over breaking up with Angela, and Jim just speaks to him from the heart. So for me, seeing Dwight really need and respect Jim as a friend who he can share with and who's opinion he trusts, was very important not only for this episode, but for the series as a whole.

MuckMallard: I feel like Andy's character has evolved into an amalgam of Michael Scott and David Brent. When Steve left were there still some Michael storylines that were then adapted to other characters?

David: I don't think there were any storylines specific to Michael Scott that were adapted to other characters.

Greg: How do you decide what will be the final scene of the opening credits? When last night's episode was previewed during the wrap party, it ended with Andy still behind the manager's desk. When it aired last night, it ended with Jim kissing Pam. How do you decide on the final scene of the opening credits (whose decision is it?) and also specifically why the decision was made to end on Pam/Jim last night.

David: The preview shown at the wrap party had the wrong main title — that was the one that ran through most of Season 9, but with Andy no longer manager, we would not end on his shot behind the manager's desk.

When Andy left on his boat trip, we filmed a main title shot of his empty chair and even built up mail and papers piling on his desk to show the passage of time for later episodes. But ultimately we didn't want to focus on Andy being missing, especially since there was so much going on with everyone else and him being away wasn't what the shows were about.

If the shots of Michael and Andy, and the other characters who have inhabited

the manager's desk represent that being at this office is about why they're there in the first place, to be doing work, then the Jim/Pam kiss shot that we use to end the main title sequence represents the other number one reason why they're all there — for fun, friendship, and love.

Calabound: How long ago had the writer's room thought up that Dwight's proposal? During the talking heads, has Stanley been in the background, or is it footage of him played on a loop?

David: I don't know when they came up with the idea of Dwight and Angela's proposal, probably fairly recently, but I know they wanted something different and representative of who these characters are and yet something special like Jim and Pam's proposal, and Michael and Holly's.

Leslie David Baker is a trouper who sits in the background for all of the talking heads — never on a loop, especially since the characters often move their arms in front of the window as they speak.

Dwight: In the beginning of the episode, when you show the line for the audition, you do a long tracking shot with many extras waving at the camera. How many of these were people from the actual crew in a cameo?

David: Zero. They were all professional background artists or "extras" as they're often called in the industry. We had 250 people there that day. Honestly, our crew doesn't have time to stand in a line.

Tyson: Dave, what was your favorite scene you had to cut out of an episode? Mine was Jim talking about his best first date (with Pam).

David: I love that scene too! I would have to go back and view all of the deleted scenes to see what I wish made it into an episode. The episodes and deleted scenes all blend together for me now.

Ashwin: In editing and directing the episode, how did you go about incorporating elements of the show's history that fans hold so dear (like the teapot) without having them come off as shoehorned in for nostalgia?

David: I think the key is we don't overdue it. We recognize and don't whitewash what's come before us and we respect our continuity, but at the same time we've never put the events from the past on a pedestal.

Cristy: If Esther dropped Dwight off at work, how did he have his car to pull Angela over? I keep thinking I have missed something.

David: Well they've been dating a bit to the point that he's considering asking her to marry him. My guess is that she picked him up from work the day before and they spent the night together.

tanster: Who was the choreographer for the Darryl dance scene?

David: Mary Ann Kellogg was our choreographer for the Darryl dance scene. She also choreographed the big dance number in [Niagara](#), the gang dancing in [Cafe Disco](#), and the Lip Dub from [Nepotism](#).

Monica: Who played Philip and how much interaction did he have with the actors prior to shooting? He seemed very comfortable with Oscar and Angela.

Grace: How did you train Baby Phillip to do all of those scenes so well? He mastered the act of calming down as soon as he was around Dwight. Did he have a lot of experience with the actors/actresses?

Debbie Wilson: Is baby Phillip related to anyone in the cast or crew?

David: Baby Phillip was absolutely amazing! He was played by Vince and Evan Edwards and this was their first professional job in front of cameras on a professional set. They were not related to anyone in the cast or crew, but quickly became part of our "family" as soon as everybody saw and fell in love with them. Phillip even looks like the perfect offspring of Dwight and Angela between having Dwight's nose and lips, and Angela's blonde hair!

The kids pointed at the Galactica, was never afraid whenever a new cast member would hold them, and one said the word "beet!" when asked what he would prefer during "Schrutes and Consequences." That wasn't even scripted. All he had to do was grab the beet, but he pointed at it and said "beet." It was amazing!

The cast would spend time with them before they were needed on stage, and those kids were just calm and attentive from the get go. And lucky for us, one cried when I needed him to when the scene called for it, and as for calming down as soon as Dwight picked him up, well that's where I come in as an editor, cutting to a take where the baby wasn't crying to give the illusion of Phillip instantly settling down.

theoffice: I think there's some interview or dvd commentary where John Krasinski mentioned that he wrote a card as Jim for Christmas Party. Was that the original card that Jenna read?

Chloe: I loved Jim's video tribute for Pam! What went into making it, and did you take inspiration from any fan videos on YouTube?

jL: Did Jenna get to watch the JAM montage before she filmed that scene? I feel like it would have been more powerful/dramatic for her to watch it in real-time, like we did.

Brooke: Was the Christmas card that Jim gives Pam the same prop from season 2, and did John actually write anything in the card?

RBG: The appearance of Pam's video seems to change drastically at one point. Initially, it looks very "punched in", like it was not actually playing on the laptop but was edited in from another source. Then we cut to a different scene, but when we come back to the video it looks much more natural—there are reflections of the characters (who are watching the video) on the laptop screen and there appears to be a bit of some sort of screen interference. What's the story behind that?

Laurie: Who suggested the Snow Patrol song?

David: The idea of Jim giving Pam the Christmas Card he pulled back from the Season 2 Christmas Party episode had been percolating in the writers room for a while but this finally seemed like the right time and place to do it.

The prop department used the same card and envelope that Jim gave Pam and pulled away from the original Christmas Party episode. Keep in mind that there are multiples — all prop masters have to cover themselves in case something ever breaks or rips or gets lost.

John Krasinski wrote what's inside the card at some point prior to us shooting the scene for A.A.R.M. and it is a private message to his co-star and dear friend, Jenna Fischer. They are the only ones who knows what it says. She read it for the first time when he gave it to her in the first take we shot and I can tell you that judging from her emotional response, it's really something special.

We did get some inspiration from the fan videos that captured the great moments of Jim and Pam's relationship. Our editor Claire Scanlon combed through our episode library to build this amazing montage and she picked the Snow Patrol song which she felt was in the same style of music as the Travis song that Jim played to Pam in The Client. John had some input with the video and he did not want Jenna to see it until we shot the scene. The first time she watched it was the first take we rolled on. We played the video with music and we only filmed the scene a few times since the emotion from the video and Jim's teapot card were there from the start.

I would say that 90 to 95 percent of the shots we originally put in stayed, and we added and changed out a few by the time the episode was finished in editing. I did not notice the difference between the shots that played back in the computer screen, and the ones that were “burned in” after we shot — we add a slight monitor/glare mask to match them as best as we can, but I suppose if you look really closely you can tell the difference. I did like seeing the reflections of the room, especially when the video ends and you can see part of Jim in the screen. We also extended the original Teapot scene to end the video in a great place, but as a bonus we get to see a glimpse of what the significance of the golf pencil he put in there relates to.

Frankie: How much direction did you give Rainn and Angela before their big scene? Or did they just go for it?

David: Rainn and Angela just went for it! The last take was my favorite as Angela justifiably dropped the ‘F’ bomb after being run off the road, and Dwight was SO LOUD with that bullhorn. We tried some different things with timing and dialogue, but they were on fire from take 1!

Jkraislove: How long has this beautiful ending to the Dwight and Angela story been planned?

Threatlevelmiddwight: Did you guys initially rule out Dwight’s paternity at the beginning of the season because of The Farm? If The Farm had gone through, would Dwangela have been denied their happy ending?

David: A big if not the sole reason for initially ruling out Dwight as the father in the beginning of the season was because of the changes that would have taken place to allow for Dwight to leave for The Farm. We needed him untethered and leaving behind a son, and even a woman he loved, would not have made sense logically or been beneficial to who he is as a character. We always wanted them to end up together but I’m not sure when it was decided that it was time to make the big step. I think once The Farm was no longer going to be its own series then that cleared the way for Dwight and Angela to really reconcile and be together.

OfficEial Fan: Were Andy’s scenes always planned or was this a later adjustment to bring him back?

David: Andy’s exit from Dunder Mifflin was never intended to be his exit from the series. The camera crew is still following him as a major character in the doc. What happened in this audition is pretty big in that he’s suffered a major blow to his dream of being a singer/performer since he just quit his job and he’s serious about this and he’s been told that he’s just not good enough. Coupled with him

dropping to the floor and sobbing is pretty humiliating. What will be the repercussions to this in his life?

Michael Scarn: What was the change in mindset from the writers' view in Andy's characterization from Season 8 to Season 9? I don't think there's any denying that Andy's character changed significantly between the two seasons, but I wanted to know if this was a conscious decision on the writers' part or not.

David: Ed has a lot of depth so we wanted to explore that and give him fun things to do. Goofy Andy, Sensitive Andy, Romantic Andy, Angry Andy and Mean Andy are all sides of his persona. I loved in New Guys Andy's return from outward bound and his incredible confidence. Love that he's even a bit of a bully when he names Clark and Pete Dwight Jr. and Plop, and continually picks on Nellie.

Sam: Andy met a woman in line for his a cappella audition. Were they supposed to be a romantic connection so we know Andy will find happiness after Erin? Were there any scenes of Andy/line girl or Andy/Erin cut from the episode due to time?

David: Casey Dean was just a pal for Andy, a kindred spirit that he could have fun with and share the experience. No scenes of Andy and Casey or Andy and Erin were cut.

diahern: When Jim said he had to break the rules and ask for a favor, whose voice was it that responded to him? Who was credited for the documentary guy's voice?

David: That was the same voice as the doc director/producer who spoke to Pam and Jim in the beginning of New Guys when they ask why the doc crew is still filming them. That sexy, mysterious, somewhat nasal voice belongs to... me. :) I had recorded it as temp originally for [New Guys](#) and Greg Daniels re-recorded it with his own voice, which seemed fitting, but then he ended up liking mine better and we kept it in. When this line came up in [A.A.R.M.](#), he asked me to do it again since I had already been established.