

The Office – Night Out

Just reading the synopsis of last night's episode even before I saw it made me laugh out loud:

Michael and Dwight decide a trip to the Big Apple is in order. There, they hope to mingle with bigwig Ryan and his colleagues at the nightclubs. Back in Scranton, the staffers must work on Ryan's pet website project – on a Saturday, no less.

The episode was hilarious, as usual. I won't give too much away, except that I almost fell off my couch laughing when Earl or Hank (or whatever the security guard's name ended up being) made a cameo – priceless!

For my friends who have just started watching the show, I don't know about you, but I really like to read tvguide's blog about the show the day after I watch it. Go to tvguide.com, find the tab at the top that says "What's on TV", and then go to Tv Show Blogs under that and find The Office. Here is a quick link to the tvguide write-up of this week's episode.

I agree with the tvguide writer – I caught on to Ryan's drug use pretty early in the episode, just before he ran for the bathroom sniffing, which only confirmed my suspicion. But I think the writer of the episode ([BJ Novak](#), aka "Ryan" himself) meant for it to be obvious that Ryan was experimenting with the nose candy. And to answer the tvguide blogger's question, yes, I think it will spell problems for him with corporate in the future. He's really been on my nerves lately, but in a good way, he is fun to watch and be annoyed with. Now with his drug problem and the fact that his 'perfect life' facade is starting to crack, I feel badly for him. It's been fun to watch his transformation from temp to corporate bigwig, and along the way, he's always been kind of a jerk, not a very likable person at all. But that's what is so great about the

Office – as the tvguide blogger says, “The Office is a terrific show because most of its comedy is rooted in real human behavior (no matter how exaggerated)...” – I couldn’t agree more!

Parenthood

After all this piñata talk (found the ñ symbol!), we had to pop in the movie [Parenthood](#) the other night. Along with the hilarious piñata scene (ok, now I am over-using the ñ a little bit), I had actually forgotten how entertaining this movie really is. It’s a really good blend of comedy and drama, and it’s not just another silly comedy – it actually has a valuable life lesson. I highly recommend it to anyone who has kids, but I do not recommend it for the whole family since it’s rated PG13 and can actually be somewhat crude at points. It has *great* directing and acting and 2 academy award nominations to boot.

The movie revolves around the Buckman family – elderly, empty-nesters (sort-of) and their 4 grown children and their families who are all facing regular life problems of their own. [Steve Martin](#) plays Gil, a man whose own overused stress responses to everyday life are mirrored in his son, and that situation only stresses him out further! He is such a worrywart that he has lost all ability to enjoy regular life and its trials and tribulations, and my favorite part of the movie is when he realizes this; thanks to the wise, if confused, words of his very elderly grandmother. This scene is hilarious and heartwarming at the same time, and if you’re anything like me (someone who tends to be a worrywart, sweats the small things), a movie like this really helps to keep the small bumps of life in perspective.

Watching this movie again as a parent made me appreciate it so much more than I appreciated seeing it as a teenager. Again, I'd really recommend it to any parent, and if you've seen it already, I'd say try it again if it's been awhile. That's what I did, and I would have to say that it's now one of my favorite movies!

Lost a post...

I really don't know what happened to it. I finished a post, and was sure I pressed the publish button, but it is gone. I typed it so fast it didn't seem to have time to save a draft copy either??? Oh well, it was only electrons.

Another blog got me thinking about security. As children we carry blankies, have our favorite stuffed animal or something else we just won't part with. Our parents can also give us a sense of security. They hug when we aren't feeling well, the kiss to "make it all better" are ways we feel secure. Then we grow up.

In our high school days being part of a group can make us feel secure. You may be surprised how many students have a favorite book, pen or key chain. Little things they can hold to make them feel better.

As we get to be adults, different things give us security. Money in the bank, a good car, a cell phone, a good job, the lock on the front door, your SO or spouse. Just losing one of the things that make you feel secure as adult can be a life altering blow. Some people never find their way back to normal when they lose their security blanket. Cases of depression can be caused by lack of secure job, being robbed (that lock didn't work), losing your money, getting in a car

wreck, losing a loved one. And then we, as adults, wonder why our children don't want to give up their blankies... Just food for thought.

Poppies... Poppies Will Put Them To Sleep

Yes, Spring has finally arrived. For most, that means looking forward to making plans for the summer getaway. For me it means looking forward to auditioning for one of two (or this year... three) big musical productions in the area. I narrowed my choices down to two this week. I really wanted to audition for a production of [The Wizard of Oz](#). I have always wanted to be the Cowardly Lion... a fantastic character role if ever there was one. I contacted the director of the show to ask about performance dates. Alas, they begin in mid-July (after auditions for another play I am extremely excited about trying out for (now be nice)... [The Nerd](#). **And yes, I will be auditioning for the title role**, but of course will gladly accept any part offered to me.

Even while considering the possibility of dreaming that "If I Were King of the Forrrrrrest" (not Queen, not Duke, not Prince), the more logical option seemed to be to try out for the musical that is closer to home with the group I have been involved with for the past two years. It will save a bit of money on the gas tank as well. So... according to an email I received earlier today, I will make my way tomorrow to audition for a role in [Little Women](#) (and yes, there are male roles in the production).

Blankie Woes

I think 8 is too old for a blankie. I mean, it's ok to have one at that age, but only if it doesn't interfere with daily life. On February 19, I made a post in my blog about the same subject – the post is called Blankies. It's funny to read that post now and see how far we've come, yet we've also gone no where on this issue at the same time. My 8-year-old daughter has this raggedy blankie that goes everywhere with her... well, that's not accurate – it would if it could, but I put the kabosh on that long ago. It got so bad that if we didn't remember it to go out to eat or walmart or somewhere simple like that, the whole family would pay the price. So, probably about a year ago now, I said, that's it, blankie stays home. I got tired of the liability involved also. If we brought it to a restaurant or anywhere for that matter and it got dirty, I would have to wash it immediately when we got home or else it wouldn't be ready for bed time that night, and my daughter would put up a huge fuss. Now it's gotten to the point where I'm worried it won't make it through the wash in one piece. Heck, it's barely in one piece as it is.

A few weeks ago, I said, it's time for the blankie to stay upstairs. It's only for bed and that's it. My daughter would bring it down in the morning, then she'd leave for school all day, and I got tired of tripping over it while doing housework. She hasn't been listening to that rule very well... and old habits die hard, I guess. The other day, she brought it downstairs and left it on the couch where little sister came and sat on it. Problem was, little sister had just wet the bed, so needless to say, blankie needed a wash. Somehow, I did not find out about this until bedtime that night, when a huge fuss was made about blankie not being available for

bedtime. I was not about to do a load of laundry at 10 at night, especially on a Sunday, which is technically (though it never works out this way with a family of 5 almost 6 and 3 of them little kids), my day off laundry. Not only that, but the blankie would not have been ready for at least an hour anyway, and it was already bedtime. There was much struggle and lots of tears, but she did finally spend a night without her beloved blankie. And guess what? She survived unscathed!

A few weeks ago, she had a sleepover for girl scouts. The rules were, bring a sleeping bag or a blanket, so she planned on bringing her blankie, which is holey, threadbare, and of no use when it comes to keeping someone warm. Not only that, but she is at a good age for kids to start making fun of her for something like that, and both my husband and I know from experience that kids do not forget things easily! She has a really nice sleeping bag that she's never actually gotten to use at a sleepover yet, so we convinced her to just bring that... or so we thought. She packed her own overnight bag, and I didn't think to check for contraband. The next day when I unpacked the overnight bag, I found the stowaway blankie. I felt so duped.

Ironically, as I'm writing this very post, my husband came downstairs and said, "Taylor can't find her blankie. She is really upset about it and crying." It was downstairs today, even though it wasn't supposed to be, so I know I had to add it to my huge load of laundry to bring upstairs... I told him to pass the message to Taylor that if I find it down here again, it will be gone forever because I am so sick of the whole situation. And I haven't done anything with it yet, honest, tempting as it may be. Don't get me wrong, I'm not mean or cruel, and I don't have a problem with kids needing a comfort item, even at 8. But when that item interferes with daily life, and one cannot function without it, then I believe it's time for a change. She should hope Dad or I don't find the blankie first – we are pretty fed up

with the situation and cannot guarantee the safety of the blankie should we come across it!

Science Court

Back to middle school, thankfully. Not many would actually say middle school is an improvement over younger grades, but it is over yesterday's special needs preschool classroom. In any event, I mostly enjoy middle school though there are **those days** of course. Science was the subject, and will be tomorrow as well since this is a two-day assignment. Today's repeated middle school lesson, only four times at least instead of six, was a video (surprise, surprise). This video was one of several [Squigglevision/Science Court](#) episodes. This series uses the really bad (in my opinion) [Squigglevision](#) method of animation and is about two lawyers who battle against each other over some science fact, one science-challenged and one who basically does the teaching and (you guessed it) always wins the case. There were some funny moments, and it was entertaining. However for education it seems like they could have put more content in there. For a half-hour show (commercials were included, yikes!) it really could have said much more about the topic at hand, which by the way was work. Not that one episode necessarily defines the series, mind you- I haven't seen any other episodes. The students just started a unit on simple machines and this video taught the [scientific definition of work](#). In it they also talked about a few simple machines that would make the work seem easier by increasing the distance moved ($\text{work} = \text{force} \times \text{distance}$, so increasing distance will decrease force if the work the same). We wrapped up after the video with a short discussion and a few minutes of silent ball.

If Squigglevision sounds familiar, it may be because of one of the other shows produced using this patented method. I specifically remember a show called [Home Movies](#) back in 1999. I'll tell you, I watched one episode of this show and that was enough for me. One of the drawbacks of Squigglevision animation is the lack of fluid, well, animation. Squiggly outlines are in abundance but the animation of the characters and whatnot is just lacking. Case in point is the entrance of a character. Rather than appearing a little at a time to show fluid motion, the character will just all of a sudden just be there. One frame not there at all, next frame, **bam** there he is. This is part of the reason I really disliked the show. The other was I just didn't care for the premise. All in all I found the show to be quite a snooze. So, when the show creators switched to [Flash animation](#) for the second season I still did not switch back.

Anyway, back to school. You may have noticed I wrote that I only had to do this lesson four times. The reason for this is: 1) this is the school that has tutorial for one of the periods (some students do a foreign language instead of tutorial), and 2) at this school each core teacher does one social studies class. Why they don't have a dedicated social studies teacher is a mystery, probably budgeting. So for social studies they just colored pictures of African masks. All period. Well, you wanted to know, right? ☐

Here He Is!!!

My new nephew looks totally adorable, so I had to share his picture:

Ryan Timothy



The Queen In Philadelphia

Tonight's Final Jeopardy category: The Academy Awards in the 21st Century

The Final Jeopardy answer: The only actress to win the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for portraying a former Best Actress recipient.

I have to admit that I was stymied (not to mention I have never seen the movie for which the actress won the award). The more recent actress has appeared with such well known performers as [Glenn Close](#), [Frances McDormand](#), and [Jude Law](#).

The former Best Actress winner is no longer with us. She holds the most Best Actress awards with four. Some of her co-stars

were [John Wayne](#), [Cary Grant](#), and [James Stewart](#). Her sister was also a former Best Actress winner as well as a UNICEF ambassador.

Be the first to give the correct question and you will have done better than I. Name the film for which she won the award and you are brilliant. Name the actress she played and you are a genius. Of course, you win absolutely nothing except the honor of having your answer posted on Morat's Blog which is (in a word) priceless. Once again, we are on the honor system which means: NO CHEATING!!!! No wikipedia, no imdb, no any other web site or outside source to aid you in your response. AND....

I am make a the rules. So a you a follow the rules. And if a you a cheat I will a hunt a you down. And dems de berries.

Family and the calendar

I used to have a very good head for dates and numbers. I can remember all sorts of birthdays, anniversaries, phone numbers and other such stuff. Somewhere along the line my head got full. I can't seem to remember a lot of dates that I should.

Let's see. I can remember all the birthdays of my brother and sisters. I can remember birthdays of my children, parents and even get close on most of the in-laws. I definitely remember all the important dates that occurred in and around my marriage. I remember my oldest sister's phone number, even though she hasn't had that one in years. I even remember the birthdays of my best friend in grade school, and the first girl I had a crush on.

Things I can't remember... Birthdays of my daughter's husbands

and children. Anniversaries of said children and their spouses. Dates that specific bills are due. Dates for Drs. appointments. Dates of the next show one of my girls is in. Dates of the next show that I'm in... Dates set up longer than 1 week away. My cell phone number. My desk extension at work. Hmm a pattern is forming...

These dates are all more recent than the dates /numbers that I can remember. Maybe my mind is filled up with dates and numbers that I don't need anymore. If there was only a way to replace the numbers I remember with the new numbers I should remember. If I could bottle that, I'd make a mint.

There's a guy in the preschool classroom!

People who know me know that my preference for teaching is about 3rd-7th grades. Stretch a year in either direction, and those are pretty much the jobs I gravitate toward when I have a choice. Of course specials are an exception; I do take those no problem though they may include kindergarten or 1st grade. Since you are an observant reader, you will have noticed the words *when I have a choice*. Well, I was unable to procure an assignment yesterday leaving me at the mercy of what's available in the morning. First call came in at about 5:40 and was for kindergarten. I thought about it and foolishly chose not to do it. I figured I would take a chance and check the web since I was awake. I did find a couple of half-day jobs which I also skipped. Then came the full-day preschool assignment. I didn't think I would see anything younger than the one I rejected, but here it was. Being about 5:50 I decided to gamble again and keep hoping for a better

assignment to show up. Nope. Oddly enough though, no one was picking up this full-day assignment for some reason. Finally, the system called me for the assignment so I gave in and took it. At least it was a lot closer to me than the kindergarten job. Then I went back to sleep for an hour.

As it turns out, this district as far as I know does not offer normal preschool. It does however offer special education preschool for the "developmentally delayed." The morning had eight of ten students there, and was actually kind of a breeze. This kind of classroom has teaching assistants (three!), and today the speech teacher actually came in to take over the class! I had absolutely no problem with this as this age is really out of my comfort zone anyway. I just acted as another T.A. The most I did teachingwise was running a center where they matched patterns and did a connect-the-dots worksheet. Other than that it was keeping kids focused and helping as needed.

The afternoon was a little different. There were slightly fewer students (seven), but this was a more challenging group. One was very autistic and needed special attention, and as a whole the group was lower than the morning group and like the one autistic boy, required more attention. The title of this post refers to me, but in actuality one of the part-time T.A.s in the afternoon was a guy! I would guess he really likes kids to do this, because he is a retired principal from the school I was at and retirement packages for top school administrators tend to be very generous. Either that or some bad investments, but his actions during the afternoon clearly showed the former. He was very good with the kids- unlike a T.A. from another school I worked with recently. That T.A. really yelled at the kids, sometimes for very minor things. To be fair, that school was a middle school, but I really felt for those kids. Aside from that she did a pretty good job, doing things for the students she didn't have to. If not for this I would have thought she was in the wrong profession entirely.

I was somewhat relieved to go home a little early- preschool ends 15 minutes before the regular grades- partly due to the afternoon class and partly due to the relative inactivity of my job. This is one reason, aside from the very low pay, that I would not want to be a teaching assistant full time. The absolute worst times I have had subbing were as teaching assistants, particularly one-one-one assignments. Never again on those, though I would sub (at regular pay) for other types of teaching assistants, like those with multiple kids or general classroom helpers.