

The Office BFFs

*Tales of The Office from
Two Best Friends Who Were There*

**Jenna Fischer &
Angela Kinsey**

from the hosts of the Office Ladies podcast





Photo of B. J. Novak and Mindy Kaling by Michael Gallenberg, all other photos courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

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Two Best Friends Who Were There*

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DEY ST.

An Imprint of WILLIAM MORROW

Hi!



Photo by Taylor Miller

Dedication

For our families.

Lee, Weston, and Harper.

Josh, Isabel, Jack, and Cade.

We love you all so much.

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Introduction

Jenna

I'm Jenna Fischer.



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Angela

And I'm Angela Kinsey.

Jenna

We were on *The Office* together.



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Angela

And we're best friends.

Jenna

We are also moms, business partners, podcasters, lovers of knickknacks, sometime-hikers, avid scrapbookers, and Wine & Canvas artists. And now, we are the coauthors of this book.

Angela

If you are reading this, that means you bought our book. Thank you! If we could hug you, we would. We are huggers.

Jenna

Here is a photo of us pretending to hug you.



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Angela

Between producing a weekly podcast, multiple Target runs, and getting snacks for the kids—do your kids snack as much as ours do?—you might wonder, “Why did these busy ladies add writing a book to their list?” I’ll tell you! In April 2018, Jenna and I both decided to do a big spring cleaning of our garages, attics, basements, and sheds—basically, all the places where we stash random stuff. Both of us had been putting off this task for years, so we decided to do it together. While digging through our boxes, we found tons of *Office* memorabilia: journals of our time on set, piles of photos of everybody and everything, and little mementos we had collected along the way. (I also found out that I apparently hoard baskets. I had thirty-two of them! Jenna hoards old lamps that no longer work. But that’s a story for our next book, *Baskets and Old Lamps: Tales of Two Ladies Who Hoard*.) Finding our *Office* treasures sparked lots of memories and gave us the idea to start our weekly podcast, *Office Ladies*, which we launched in October 2019. We’ve had a great time rewatching the show and breaking down episodes each week. But what about all our amazing photos? And our other best friend stories? Rather than keep these wonderful items to ourselves, we’ve decided to use them to create the book you are holding right now.



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Jenna

This book is several things—a scrapbook, a BFF journal, and a love letter to fans of our show. We like to think that if something happened back then, one of us documented the moment. We couldn't be more excited to share our memories, photos, stories from life on the set of *The Office*, and details of our friendship of more than eighteen years.

Angela

Our first challenge was figuring out how to write this book together. Well, folks, we love a good chat. During our writing sessions, I would start a story, and then Jenna would jump in with her memories, and vice versa. So get a cozy chair and curl up with us, because we are going to share our memories with you the best way we know how: by chatting back and forth as BFFs do.



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Jenna

And, thanks to this book, our garages are now clean and ready to fill with more stuff. Angela has already started collecting new baskets. I'm telling you, the woman can't pass a basket without buying it. If you really want to

make her heart sing, send her a gift that comes in a beautiful basket. It is like you are giving her TWO gifts. We really hope you like our book. We worked hard on it. That's what she said.

1

Job Opening: Office Work

In 2003, a group of strangers had one very big thing in common: We had all just been cast on a new TV comedy pilot called *The Office*. After years of living as struggling artists, we were all very happy to be employed and doing what we loved. We could never have predicted the impact it would have on the rest of our lives.

Jenna

I have an old photo from my first day of work on *The Office*. It was taken when Steve Carell, John Krasinski, Rainn Wilson, B. J. Novak, David Denman, Phyllis Smith, and I met with the producers, network executives, and director, Ken Kwapis, to do a table read of the pilot script for the first time. Allison Jones, our casting director, came to the table read armed with a plate of homemade chocolate chip cookies and a Polaroid camera. I desperately wanted a picture to commemorate the day (and this was before everyone had cameras on their phones), so I was excited when she told us all to gather together for a photo. I asked if she would take one for me too. She said sure, took a second picture, and handed me the Polaroid and a cookie. I remember standing and munching the cookie while watching the photo slowly develop before my eyes.

To let you know how special this whole moment was, let me share a little about my backstory. I grew up in St. Louis, Missouri. From the time I was seven years old, I knew I wanted to be an actor. I can't say why exactly. But I barely remember a time when this wasn't my goal. (At age nine, I considered becoming a veterinarian, but when I learned I would have to do surgeries on animals, I went back to my original plan of actor.) My parents were very supportive, but also refused to let me act

professionally as a child (and it's not like there were a ton of opportunities in St. Louis, to be honest). They told me I had to graduate from high school and college before moving to Los Angeles. So I auditioned for every school play and joined every drama club. I spent most of high school in the dancing chorus until my senior year, when I was cast as the Fiddler in *The Fiddler on the Roof*. (I had no lines, but extra solo dancing.) I went to college at a small liberal arts school in rural Missouri called Truman State University and majored in theater. I learned a lot about acting technique, and my love of performing was solidified. After graduation, I packed up my Mazda 323 hatchback and drove across the country to Los Angeles, ready to give it a go in Hollywood. I ended up spending years in various odd jobs, trying to pay off my defaulted credit card and make my rent. Thanks to a mandatory typing class in high school, most of the jobs I found were working as . . . wait for it . . . a receptionist. In the meantime, I was going on hundreds of auditions and performing Commedia del Arte with a local theater company. I earned my Screen Actors Guild card doing background work (experience that would come in handy later, as you will learn in this book) and each year I seemed to do a little better than the year before. I booked some guest appearances on television shows, a couple of independent films, and a pilot called *Rubbing Charlie* (yes, you read that right). It was a comedy starring a stressed-out doctor named Charlie, played by Scott Wolf, who gets life lessons from his massage therapist, me. I actually rubbed Charlie. It was a really sweet and funny show, I was convinced it would be my big break. So when it didn't make it past the pilot stage, I was crushed. I told my manager I wanted to quit, the years of rejection having taken their toll, and my new plan was to apply to vet technician school (animal care with no surgeries). She told me to keep at it, that the right role would find me if I just didn't give up. I had my doubts; at that point I'd been plugging away in Los Angeles for nearly eight years, but I decided to take her advice and give it one more year. As fate would have it, the following pilot season I was asked to audition for the American remake of a BBC show called *The Office*. The role was for the receptionist, Pam, a worn-down yet still hopeful young woman with artistic dreams beyond her depressing day job. In other words, me.

After we snapped the shot, Steve Carell said, "One day this photo will be worth money. Especially after they fire me and replace me with a new actor for episode two. You'll all look at this photo and say, 'Aww, remember Steve What's-his-name? He was sweet. I wonder what he's up to now?'" Before *The Office*, Steve had the most experience of all of us. He wasn't a household name by any means, but he had been a

correspondent on *The Daily Show*, he'd been a regular on *The Dana Carvey Show*, and he'd had a scene-stealing role opposite Jim Carrey in the movie *Bruce Almighty*. He had also been rejected by *Saturday Night Live* and been cast in more than one failed pilot. He knew better than all of us how rough and random our business could be. Rainn Wilson had been knocking around for about ten years, traveling the country doing Shakespeare, and most recently worked as a recurring character on *Six Feet Under*. Phyllis had spent the previous nineteen years working in casting, including eight as a casting associate for Allison Jones. When we all came in to audition for *The Office*, Phyllis was our reader! Ken Kwapis was so taken with her, he told Greg he thought she should play a role on the show. John Krasinski had done some commercials, and, like me, his last pilot was not picked up. B. J. Novak had been doing stand-up comedy when Greg discovered him. David Denman was like Steve. He'd been an employed yet mostly unknown actor for years, having appeared in a number of studio films and miniseries. He'd also done four pilots, none of which ever made it to series. We all laughed at Steve's joke, but the truth is we were all also secretly wondering if we'd get to episode two.



THE OFFICE - DAY ONE
TABLE READ

Photo by Allison Jones

Also there that day were the creators of the original version of *The Office*, Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant. I had watched every episode of the British series and naturally was a huge fan. I was in awe of Lucy Davis's portrayal of Dawn, Pam's British counterpart. She could communicate so much with just a glance. I hoped that I could bring as much heart and depth to Pam as Lucy did to Dawn. As I sat with the creators of this masterpiece, I remember thinking, *If I lose this job tomorrow, at least I got to sit in the same room as Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant.* After the read, Ricky and Stephen gave us ideas for how to best "Americanize" the show. This had been the subject of a lot of discussion amongst the creative team. In England, they do much shorter television seasons. The original *Office* series was only twelve episodes long in total, with one Christmas special. American networks expect a lot more than that. A typical American television show makes twenty-four episodes per season. Ricky noted that if we hoped to make one hundred episodes, we should be sure people didn't become too frustrated by Michael's incompetence. He suggested we make him a buffoon, but still good at his job. That way, American viewers would find something to admire in Michael amidst all the annoyance. Stephen Merchant then said that the Jim and Pam relationship was another way to balance Michael's obnoxious behavior. He said, "Always remember, Jim and Pam are the heart of the show." Gulp! No pressure!

Angela

I did not grow up in Los Angeles either. I grew up in Indonesia, by way of Louisiana and Texas—my dad was a drilling engineer, and we moved around for his job. I always knew I wanted to be a performer. My mom loves to tell the story about when she asked me and my older sisters what we wanted to be when we grew up. All my sisters had funny responses but mine she said was the most puzzling. My sister Billie said she wanted to be "the boss." Janet wanted to be a truck driver like our uncle Carl; Tina, a gymnast; and I wanted to be Carol Burnett. I was four. My dad had shown me *The Carol Burnett Show* and all I wanted to do for the rest of my life was be a comedian. My first big break was getting cast as Mary in the

Christmas play at school. Not a lot of jokes were written for Mary, but hey, it was a lead role. During college, I would write stand-up bits and try them out for my friends. I had grown up watching David Letterman's monologues and would even memorize some of his routines. I was desperate to learn more about comedy writing, and after four years at Baylor University and a bachelor's degree, I headed to New York City to intern for *Late Night with Conan O'Brien*. When I interviewed for my position on *Conan*, I was told only two interns were ever on the stage during rehearsals and tapings: the writers' intern and the band's intern. All the other interns were up in the offices. I was determined to have access to those rehearsals. That's where Conan and Andy Richter and the writers would work out his stand-up routine and sketches. Well, the writers' intern position had already been filled, so I told them I wanted to be the band's intern. They asked me if I knew anything about music. I lied and said, "Of course! Music is my life!" I got the job and learned that if you make a friend at SIR (Studio Instrument Rentals), you can fake it until you make it as a music intern.

I spent my weekdays watching Conan and my weekends taking acting classes. A friend of mine had given me Uta Hagen's book *A Challenge for the Actor*, and I was lucky enough to take a workshop from Carol Rosenfeld at the acting school started by Uta Hagen herself, HB Studio. Watching Conan and studying at HB Studio boosted my confidence, and I decided to move to Los Angeles to try to be a television actor.

At this point, I was working two jobs and auditioning constantly. I had had a string of national commercials—most notably for Buick, Chrysler, and Lay's WOW Chips with Olestra. Yes, the chips that gave everyone abdominal cramping, diarrhea, and anal leakage. (They were eventually discontinued.) Between auditions, I was an operator at 1-800-DENTIST and ran the intern program at the iO West comedy club. I had been performing improv three nights a week for a decade. You know that annoying friend who was constantly handing you a flyer for their show . . . that was me.

TINY BLONDE ANGELA KINSEY

*and her
one woman
show*

*Angela Kinsey shown actual size

Tuesday October 10th at 7:30
at IMPROVOLYMPIC 6468 Santa Monica Blvd. 323-962-7560

Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

During this time, I was married to Warren Lieberstein, and related by marriage to Greg Daniels. Greg and his wife, Susanne (Warren's sister), were always very supportive and came to several of my shows. In the summer of 2003, Susanne invited us over for a swim. I coveted these afternoon swims because our tiny apartment had only one AC window unit, and summers were rough. I had wedged myself into one of their daughter's brightly colored floaties and was trying to paddle to the steps of the pool when Greg sat down to chat. He told us he was going to be remaking the BBC version of *The Office*. I remember trying to suppress an "uh-oh" look on my face. A few other major networks tried to bring BBC shows to the United States and failed. The sensibility and tone of a show for a British audience had not transferred well to an American audience. I loved the BBC version of *The Office* and was worried that making it for an American audience would be a disaster. But I also felt that if anyone could pull it off, it would be Greg. He had been writing and producing on hit television shows for years and had won several awards for *Saturday Night Live*, *The Simpsons*, and a show he cocreated, *King of the Hill*. Greg is one of the most brilliantly funny people you will ever meet, on a set or off. He suggested I come in and audition, because he thought that my improv background would lend itself to the mockumentary style of the show. Plus, he wanted to use as many unknown actors as he could. Greg felt that the world of a small paper company in Scranton, Pennsylvania, would feel more organic if there were no big Hollywood names in the mix. I was definitely not a big Hollywood name, unless "Lay's WOW potato chip lady" counted. I was very excited for the opportunity—but also incredibly nervous.

Greg told me he would put me on the list to audition but with one caveat: No one could know that we were related. Greg felt strongly that letting this information get out to the network would only hurt my chances. We decided that we would not acknowledge each other at the audition. He could get me in the room, but I had to win the room over on my own. (I later learned that this ruse was Allison Jones's idea. She was a big champion of mine and had told Greg this was the best plan. Thank you, Allison!)

On November 17, 2003, I auditioned for the role of . . . Pam! Yep, fact! I signed in to the audition at 2:40 P.M. and was the sixteenth person that day to read for the role of our favorite receptionist. I know this not

because I have an amazing memory, but because the incredible Allison Jones saved my audition sign-in sheet! When the series wrapped NINE years later, she gave it to me as a farewell gift. I ugly-cried, of course. I treasure owning this piece of my life history. Look at all the people who were there on the same day! Every female comedian I know went in for the role of Pam.

PROJECT: "The Office"

DATE: 1/17/03

Prod

Monday

ACTOR	ROLE(S)	AGENCY	TIME IN	TIME
1 Bob Odenkirk ✓	Michael Scott	WMA	11:50	
2 Patricia Hession ✓	Pam	Paradigm/Young	12:10	
3 LARK SPIETS ✓	Dwight HT	TAG	12:25	
4 Kevin Farley ✓	Michael Scott	Endavor	12:50	
5 Paul F. Tompkins ✓	Michael Scott	CAA	12:40	
6 Sally Nakamura ✓	Pam	innocent	12:40	
7 STEPHEN ROOT ✓	M. SCOTT	WMA	1:10	
8 Hugh Davidson ✓	Dwight	Osborne	1:10	
9 John Lehr ✓	Jim	WMA	1:15	
10 Kevin Chamberlin ✓	M. Scott	Paradigm	1:45	
11 STEVE LITTLE ✓	DWIGHT	Osborne	1:40	
12 Benjamin King ✓	Jim	Buckwald	1:40	
13 David Stars ✓	Dwight	VCA	1:45	
14 Lou Di Maggio ✓	M. Scott	VPA	1:50	
15 Karen Ruff ✓	"	Omni-prod	2:00	
16 Angela Kinsey ✓	Pam	Rosen/Merwin	2:40	
17 Alessi Warren ✓	Pam	Epstein/Wyoff	2:50	
18 Tom McGowan ✓	Michael Scott	Murphy	3:00	
19 Kathleen Hahn ✓	Pam	Gersh	3:10	
20				

Please Sign In- "The Office"

Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

I remember my audition very clearly. It's weird how the brain captures the biggest moments of your life and slows them down. Every single detail is stuck in my brain. I wore a pink sweater and a black pencil skirt. I had worked really hard to prepare my scenes. I waited in a very small room before my audition. Kathryn Hahn was sitting on a sofa in the corner. We smiled at each other and said hello. She is a doll and so talented, I tried my best not to get anxious. I am not sweaty by nature—I usually run cold no matter the temperature—but as it got closer to my turn, I really began to sweat. I actually went into the bathroom and dabbed toilet paper in my armpits. (Sorry for the overshare, but that's how nervous I was.) When it was finally my time, I walked into a room full of producers. There was a camera on a tripod, and sitting beside the camera was the casting associate, Phyllis, my future Party Planning Committee rival. I was to read with her.

Greg was sitting in the very back of the room and neither of us made eye contact. My agent told me they were having everyone read two scenes, but if they liked you, they'd ask you to do a third. Phyllis and I did my first two scenes, and everyone was laughing. It felt great! Then I was asked to do a third. I worked hard to contain my excitement! Phyllis and I began the final scene, the one where Michael fake-fires Pam in front of Ryan, the temp. To jog your memory, in the scene, Michael wants to “prank” Pam by pretending to fire her for stealing Post-it notes. The fake firing goes terribly wrong, and Pam is very upset. She starts to cry and calls Michael a jerk. The scene was going well. Phyllis was killing it as “Michael.” Imagine someone with Phyllis's sweet face smugly telling you that you've been PUNKED. When we got to the part where I was supposed to tear up and call Michael a jerk, I really let Michael/Phyllis have it!

Now, there are three times you can tell I am from Texas: when I am tired, tipsy, or pissed off. So I definitely slipped into a Southern drawl as I growled, “*Jerk!*” The room of producers burst out laughing, and I remember thinking, *Hmm, not so sure I am supposed to get a laugh at this point . . . but okay.* And that was it. Allison thanked me for coming in, Greg discreetly smiled from the back row and gave me a thumbs-up, and I walked out of there on cloud nine. I just knew I had that part.

The next day I got a call from Allison. I did not get that part. She told me they really liked me, but thought I was a little “too feisty” for Pam. I

was disappointed, of course, but I felt good about my audition, and I was thankful for the opportunity. So I let it go and I moved on. That's just what you have to do as an actor. Plus I had another audition that week for an improv pilot that I was really excited about. It was about a group of people working at a hair salon in New York City for the Oxygen network. The working title was *Salon Royale*. I auditioned for the role of the promiscuous receptionist (feisty was no problem here), and I was cast.

The producers of that show flew me out to New York City first-class. I had never flown first-class for work, and it felt so fancy. The cast was full of amazing improvisers—Ian Roberts, Beth Cahill, Dave Razowsky—and the show was written and directed by Emmy Laybourne. Emmy's mom, Geraldine, was the president of Oxygen at the time, so I thought we had a good shot of making it to series . . . but alas. We didn't get picked up. So back to Los Angeles I went.

After back-to-back rejections, I was feeling pretty discouraged about acting. I decided to concentrate my energy on writing and put acting on hold for a while. Several weeks went by and I was feeling good about my decision to lean into writing, and then I got a call that changed everything.

I was working the box office at iO West when I got a call on my flip phone (remember those?). It was a number I didn't recognize, and I let it go to voicemail. As it turns out, it was from Allison Jones's office. The producers of *The Office* wanted to see me again for a new role, the "prickly lady in accounting." Allison told me the creative team thought I was right for the world of Dunder Mifflin, just not quite right for Pam. This time there was no big room full of producers; it was just the director, Ken Kwapis; Phyllis; and the tripod. I was told to come in wearing something drab, my hair plain, and with little to no makeup. Apparently, the prickly lady in accounting was no fashion plate. I wore a light blue turtleneck sweater with a gray cardigan and black pants, pulled my hair back in a low ponytail, and left my face bare. I channeled all my sass, and I got the part! And I was pretty sure that the "prickly accountant" would be an easier role for my mom to talk about at her ladies' Bible study than the "lustful salon receptionist," so everything worked out. I am so grateful to Greg for getting me in that room on November 17. That moment changed my life forever. And little did I know, the gal that was cast in the role of Pam would become my best friend forever!

Jenna

Before we started taping the first episode, Ken Kwapis suggested we all personalize our desks. I loved this idea. Because of my real-life office experience, I had *very* strong feelings about the types of supplies a receptionist should have on their desk. The invitation to personalize my workspace made me very excited.

Ken also suggested John Krasinski and I spend some time getting to know each other outside of work. “Have lunch, have coffee, create a rapport,” was the suggestion, as “it will translate onscreen.” This is common for actors who are cast in a new project together. It’s key to try and get to know the people you are going to be pretending to be in a relationship with so you don’t seem like total strangers onscreen. For example, during rehearsals for my job on ABC’s *Splitting Up Together*, Oliver Hudson and I spent two days hanging out with the three children who would play our kids on the show. Like real parents, we sat reading each other bits of news articles off our phones while the kids wrestled. When I did the movie *Hall Pass*, I had drinks with Owen Wilson, who was playing my husband. Incidentally, I did not meet up with Scott Wolf before *Rubbing Charlie* and, well, you already know how that worked out. (Note: Scott Wolf is a delightful human being and I adore him. It’s not our fault the show didn’t go. We were fantastic.) And I couldn’t forget what Stephen Merchant had said—that John and I, virtual strangers, were to be the heart of the show. So one night after rehearsals, we decided to kill two birds with one stone. John Krasinski and I went to a nearby office supply store and shopped for things to decorate our desks. I got a label maker, message pad, message sorter, daily calendar, file folders, multicolored sticky notes . . . the list goes on and on. I left with two bags of supplies. I think John got a tape dispenser and maybe some Post-it notes. The whole time we were shopping, we just kept talking about how excited we were to start shooting. We wanted to do everything we could to go from pilot to series. John also shared about moving from New York and the adjustment to living in Los Angeles. I was happy to learn that we were both pretty boring people. In a good way. He felt stable. He had a good work ethic. And he was funny. We laughed a lot. I could tell he was going to be a good acting partner.



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Angela

Greg had encouraged us to think about our characters and their backstories, so when it came to my desk area, I tried to imagine what a stuffy lady in accounting might bring to the office. I brought in a photo of my grandmother Lena and me. In the picture, my eyes are closed but I am smiling. It makes me laugh that Angela Martin would choose to frame a photo where her eyes are closed. Like, perhaps that was just the best one of the bunch? I also brought in a day planner. I felt like Angela Martin would have an appointment book and it would be very comprehensive. The set dressers put a blue ceramic cat paper clip holder on my desk. The cat's left ear was slightly chipped, and I loved that little detail. It looked like a knickknack you would get from a garage sale in a small town. That cat paper clip holder did a lot to inform who Angela Martin was. It was clear to me that she must love cats, and that she didn't need fancy new things to make her happy. She was too humble for fancy. (In a judgmental way, of course.) People ask us all the time what we took from the set the day we wrapped the series, and I took that cat paper clip holder. It sits on my desk at home to this day.



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Jenna

Walking onto the set for our first day of shooting, I was so nervous. I'd left my house at 5 A.M. for what was a forty-five-minute commute. I made myself a song mix I affectionately titled "Songs of Scranton." I drank coffee and bounced along the freeway. I tried to imagine I was driving to my real job at a real paper company in Scranton, Pennsylvania. When I arrived, I was taken to wardrobe. There were a lot of very quick introductions to various other cast members who were coming and going between wardrobe, hair, and makeup. It was then that I first met Leslie David Baker, who would soon be known to many as Stanley Hudson. He was so warm, friendly, and open that watching him switch over to Stanley, the checked-out grump, was hilarious. Our director had requested that everyone be on set and at our desks at 7:30 A.M. sharp. He asked us to all pretend to work while the film crew recorded us. He wanted to capture us like real documentarians would. Because this was the convention of the show—we were real office workers being filmed by a documentary film crew. When we were all in place, the set was cleared of all crew members except for the camera operator, boom operator, and director. They started rolling, and it all felt so *real*. It was very quiet at first. Then Phyllis and Leslie started improvising fake sales calls. I started to answer the phone and transfer calls. A lot of the shots you see in the opening credits of the show are from that very first morning.



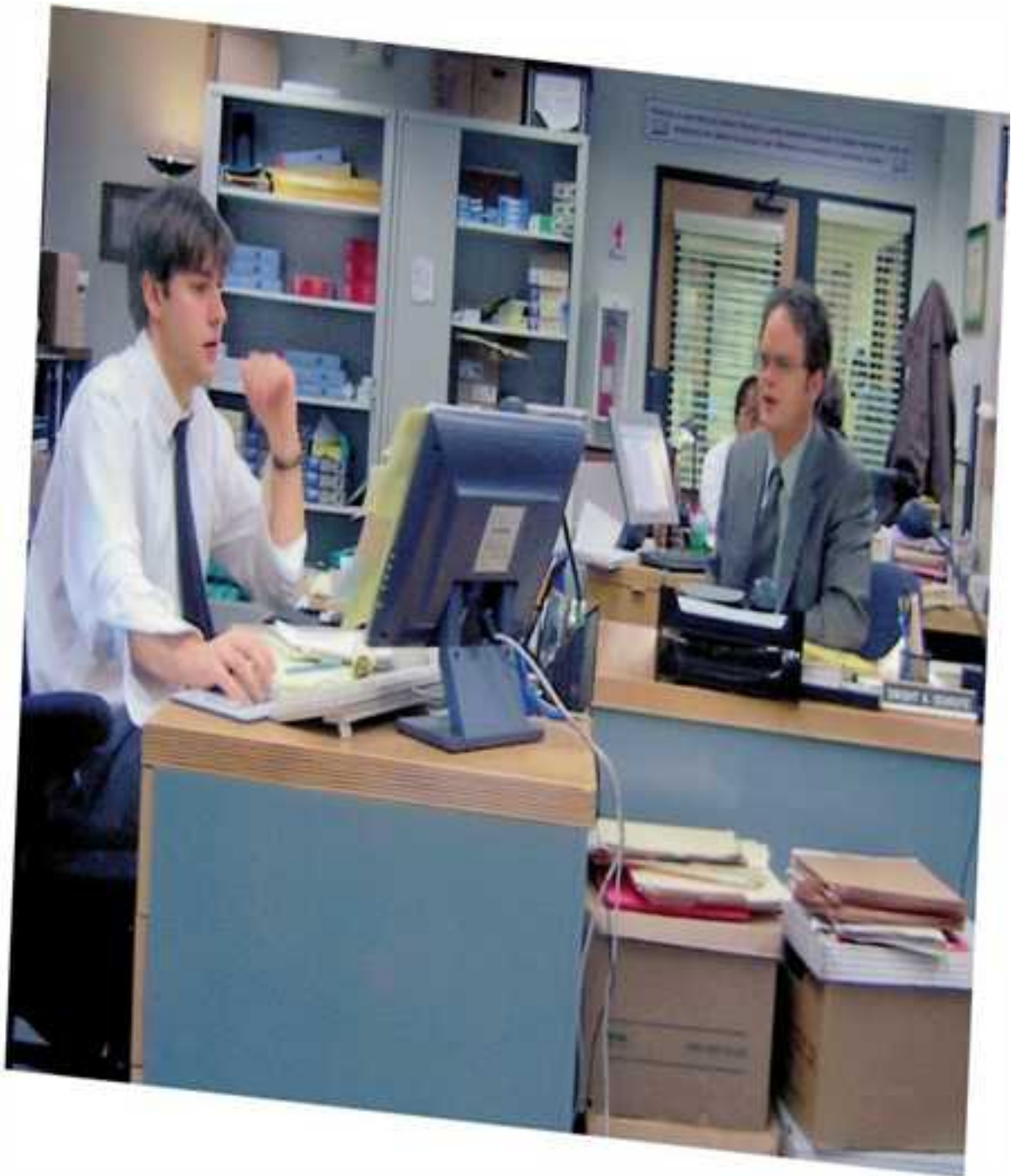
Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Angela

I was also a bundle of nerves that first day. My call time to set was 4:30 A.M., so I didn't get much sleep the night before. We were filming in an empty office building in Culver City, California. The building was only

two stories, and we filmed on the second floor. There was an empty soundstage next to the main building where the hair and makeup team was set up. It was cold and dark when I arrived, with only one small space heater in that big drafty room. We huddled around it and waited our turn. Our director had instructed the hair and makeup departments to keep our looks very simple. I was given a loose French braid and some powder and lip balm. That's all. The wardrobe department asked me to bring the clothes and shoes I had worn to my audition for Angela Martin, so I actually wore my own clothes in the pilot. With barely any hair and makeup and no wardrobe fitting, it didn't take much time for me to get ready. I walked onto the set early and realized I wasn't sure where I was supposed to sit. Ken Kwapis must have seen me looking around sort of lost. He came over to me and told me I'd be sitting in the corner in what would become the accounting department. He walked me over to introduce me to my deskmates. There I found seated at the desk right next to me—Oscar Nuñez! I had known Oscar for years. We first met at the Groundlings and then went on to perform together in a sketch comedy show called *Hot Towel*. I played a horny Boy Scout and Oscar a crazy professor.

YOU ARE INVITED TO

HOT TOWEL?

Sketch Comedy with a Hint of Lemon



DIRECTED BY:
DOM IRRERA

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY:

Regan Burns
Andrew Busca
Bill Escudier

Angela Kinsey
Shane Nickerson
Oscar Nunez

Greg Pitts
Lucy Reeves
Julie Welch

L.A. WEEKLY

calls Hot Towel "... a lively evening of sketch comedy, well-directed by veteran comedian Dom Irrera." It's "...original and thoroughly realized."

Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

I was so thrilled to see my old friend that I yelled out, "Holy crap,

Oscar!” Neither of us knew that the other had been cast. This was in the antiquated times before everything everyone is doing and saying was posted online. You could still be surprised by things. Imagine that?!

One of the very first photos I took on the *Office* set was of the accounting department. We took the photo in character, and it cracks me up that even in the first week, Oscar, Kevin, and Angela were clearly formed people. We already knew who we were in the world of the show. I think it speaks to how amazing the writing was on *The Office* and also to Allison Jones and her gift for assembling acting ensembles. (Note my chunky shoes. I bought them at Payless. This was prime early-2000s fashion.)



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Jenna

I'll never forget seeing Angela pop her head up over the partition between our desks to introduce herself. Her face barely made it over the edge as she said, "Hello!" in her bubbly Texas twang. She was instantly funny, upbeat, and kind. I liked her immediately. She was clearly nothing like her character, Angela Martin, which shows what a great actress she is. In addition to our chats over the partition, Angela would talk my ear off in the hair and makeup room, and she would keep talking as we walked to the snack table and then to set. I often joke that I had no choice but to become friends with Angela because she wouldn't stop talking to me! I was so grateful for her. I was nervous and she was an instant comfort.



Courtesy of Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey

Angela

My first memory of Jenna is hearing a little dainty sneeze come from behind the partition next to my desk. It reminded me of my neighbor's Peekapoo sneezing. It was adorable. She sat directly behind me and was physically the closest gal to me on set. Jenna seemed shy, but then again I am super chatty, and I probably scared her. (I can do that to people.) Every day that first week, I'd get up on my tippy-toes and pop my head over and chat. Those desk partition chats became our daily habit for the next nine years.