

COLD OPENFADE IN:INT. OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - MORNING - DAY 1

JIM arrives, soaking wet. We hear THUNDER outside. PAM sees Jim, and can't help LAUGHING.

JIM (V.O.)

Every morning I watch the news for the weather, just so I know when to bring an umbrella.

JIM TALKING HEAD

Jim is still wet.

JIM

This morning, the weather guy just said "cloudy." And...now I'm soaking wet.  
(to camera, smiling)  
Thanks, Super-Doppler Six Million.

INT. OFFICE - JIM AND DWIGHT'S DESKS - CONTINUOUS - D1

Jim trudges to his desk.

DWIGHT

(smiling)  
What'd you do, swim to work today?

JIM

Yes, Dwight. Ten miles.

DWIGHT

That's impossible. It would've taken like...seven hours.

Jim reacts to camera, then sits down, soaking his chair.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

I think I can help you.

DWIGHT reaches below his desk and pulls out an electric DESK FAN. He plugs it in and it BLOWS a very strong gust in Jim's face, knocking some papers off his desk.

JIM

No, Dwight...thanks, I-- Turn that off, Dwight!

DWIGHT

It's on my desk, I don't have to.

MICHAEL enters from his office and sees Jim.

MICHAEL

Whoa!

(to camera)

What'd you do, swim to work today?

He LAUGHS HEARTILY to camera.

JIM

Can you please make him turn off the fan?

MICHAEL

I can't. It's on his desk.

DWIGHT

(grinning at Jim)

You're powerless to stop--

Suddenly, there is a flash of THUNDER and LIGHTNING. The LIGHTS GO OUT, and Dwight's desk fan WHIRRS to a stop.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

Okay -- how did you do that?

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONEEXT. DUNDER MIFFLIN - MORNING - D1

It's still RAINING. An ELECTRICIAN repairs a transformer atop a telephone pole.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

There is nothing worse for morale than a power outage.

DARRYL, LONNY, ROY and other WAREHOUSE WORKERS, all soaked, sweep water out of the loading bays.

INT. OFFICE - SAME - D1

As Michael talks, we see employees setting up makeshift lamps out of FLASHLIGHTS and ZIPPO LIGHTERS. Stanley puts birthday candles in a tub of cream cheese to do his crossword.

Dwight has activated several GLOW STICKS. He starts twirling them around like a raver and accidentally THROWS one into the accounting area.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

...because it reflects poorly on the leadership. Me. If I don't have the power, and the lamps and computers don't have the power, it's just...anarchy.

MICHAEL TALKING HEAD

Michael holds a FLASHLIGHT below his face like he's telling a ghost story.

MICHAEL

...And that's when the crazies come out!

He starts making GHOST NOISES, then LAUGHS at himself.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - D1

The office resembles a hobo shantytown. People have formed little groups around DIM LIGHT SOURCES, passing the time.

Michael enters from his office, carrying a TRASH CAN filled with paper, and drops it in the middle of the room.

MICHAEL

Okay, everybody! Gather 'round! Come one, come all! If we can't work hard, then we'll play hard, right?

(over-excited)

Yes... Okay. Dwight: matches.

Dwight eagerly rifles through his desk, emerging with a BOX OF MATCHES. The other EMPLOYEES gather around the trash can.

STANLEY

Um, what are you doing?

MICHAEL

I'm...where are you?

STANLEY

Right in front of you, Michael.

MICHAEL

Well, you kind of blend--

(realizes)

No. You...are visible...in the dark.

Michael quickly takes the matchbox from Dwight and LIGHTS a match, dropping it into the trash can. The paper CATCHES FIRE and lights up the room.

RYAN

Are we allowed to do this?

ANGELA

That's a major fire hazard, Michael.

TOBY

Really dangerous.

KEVIN

Can I make another one?

DWIGHT

No, Kevin. I'm doing it.

MICHAEL

Nobody's doing another one! This is the office campfire. Two fires -- as I think Angela pointed out -- would be a major, major fire hazard, so...

Michael's trash can fire BURNS OUT.

DWIGHT

(raising his hand)

I call next fire.

KEVIN sulks.

INT. OFFICE - LATER - D1

The trash can is now filled with BURNING LOGS. PULL OUT to REVEAL Dwight stoking it, with the OTHERS gathered around.

JIM

Why, again, do you keep firewood in the trunk of your car?

DWIGHT

(still stoking)

Have to. Scout Motto: Be Prepared.

DWIGHT TALKING HEAD

DWIGHT

Yes, I'm a Boy Scout. Though tragically, I never became an Eagle Scout. I almost got it, but then our Scoutmaster got arrested for not registering in his new neighborhood, and the troop had to fold.

(reminiscing)

It's too bad. He was really friendly.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - D1

Jim and Pam toss PIECES OF CHEESE from his sandwich into the fire. Kevin just stares, mesmerized, at it.

Michael enters from his office with his ACOUSTIC GUITAR.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Why did I bring my guitar today?

MICHAEL TALKING HEAD

MICHAEL

Because today, at 11 A.M...

He suddenly reaches down, excited, and pulls up a FLIER with "Scranton Idol!" on it in large type.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

...I become the next Scranton Idol! Hah! And, thanks to the power outage, now we can all warm our voices up together!

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - D1

MICHAEL

Hey, hey! It's sing-along time! Ha ha! Who wants to--

Suddenly, the LIGHTS COME BACK ON and Dwight's desk fan STARTS UP again.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Aw, shhh...

Everyone starts returning to their desks. Jim unplugs Dwight's fan.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

No! No! Stop...dammit! Let's just get back over here, and... Come on.

(suddenly cheerful)

Camp songs! Who knows a camp song!

He sits by the fire. People grudgingly rejoin him.

PHYLLIS

Kumbaya?

MICHAEL

Echh...no. Too... Anyone else?

TOBY

Can we put the fire out? I mean, the lights--

MICHAEL

No. Camp songs, camp fire. Come on, Toby. What's a good one?

DWIGHT

"If I Weren't A Boy Scout, I Would Be..."

MICHAEL

Gay! No. Stanley! You must know some good, spiritual, sort of...

(off Stanley's look)

What?

STANLEY

Michael, if you're not going to let us work, I'd like to go home.

MURMURS OF APPROVAL from the other employees.

MICHAEL

No, I-- Gahh...I just thought...we could try to make the best of a trying time, here, you know?

JIM

But the power came back--

MICHAEL

(getting "weepy")

So if you're all just too...callous, and...I'm sorry -- I just want to sing some camp songs, is all. If you could all find it in your hearts to--

JIM

Whoa, whoa. Michael. We'll stay. Just play your song, okay?

PAM

And we'll listen.

Michael, fighting back fake tears, nods in approval.

He STRUMS a few times, and it becomes clear that he has no idea what he's doing. Everyone returns to their desks. After a beat--

MICHAEL

Oh...achh. I think it's...broken.

Michael wallows in his failure.

MICHAEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Guitars...I don't know...

MICHAEL TALKING HEAD

MICHAEL

...one minute they're working. You're jamming...you've got a real Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton kinda thing going on, and suddenly...nothing. I don't know.

(shrugs: "What can you do?")

Guitars.

INT. OFFICE - LATER - D1

Dwight stokes the dying fire. He gets down and BLOWS on the logs, but ends up just blowing ASH into his own eyes.

DWIGHT

Ahh! God! Where's Ryan? It's dying.

EXT. DWIGHT'S CAR - SAME - D1

RYAN loads logs from Dwight's trunk onto a hand truck.

RYAN (V.O.)

Dwight put me in charge of getting firewood from his car while Michael is out getting his guitar repaired...

RYAN TALKING HEAD

RYAN

"Repaired."

EXT. DWIGHT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS - D1

Ryan, holding the FULL HAND TRUCK, CLOSES the trunk and heads back toward the office. Darryl and Lonny stop him half-way.

DARRYL  
(re: hand truck)  
Did you get that from the warehouse?

RYAN  
Uh, yeah. I'm sorry. We have a fire.

LONNY  
You're using wood to put out a fire? I mean, we got water, if you--

RYAN  
No.  
(embarrassed)  
We made a fire.

INT. OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - MOMENTS LATER - D1

Ryan enters, carrying the LOGS in his arms. Dwight runs up to him and swipes the logs.

DWIGHT  
Took long enough! It's almost out!

Dwight rushes back to the fire. Michael enters behind Ryan carrying a bag of new sheet music.

MICHAEL  
Ryan! You didn't hear me out there? I was yelling.

RYAN  
I guess not.

MICHAEL  
Oh. Well, come on! Help me hand out this sheet music around the fire.

RYAN  
Uh, I think the fire's...out.

MICHAEL  
(stricken)  
What? Gahh! Dwight!

Michael strides quickly over to the SMOLDERING trash can. Dwight sulks nearby.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Dammit, Dwight. All this firewood.

DWIGHT

I've failed you.

MICHAEL

How can I trust you again when you can't even keep the office campfire going? I thought you said you were an Eagle Scout.

Dwight gives a sly grin to the camera.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Well. We'll sing anyway! Come on everybody! That old man's river ain't gonna roll along itself!

INT. OFFICE - LATER - D1

Everyone is gathered around the trash can, holding SHEET MUSIC, paralyzed by embarrassment. Michael stands up.

MICHAEL

Ready? Okay. Five, six, seven, eight!  
(as Paul Robeson, badly)  
*Dere's an ol' man called de Mississippi/  
Dat's de ol' man dat I wants to be.../  
What does he care if de world's got  
troubles?/ What does he care if de land  
ain't free... Everyone! Ol' Man River,  
Dat-- come on, guys! This is a sing-  
along. It doesn't work with just me.*

ANGELA

We're not singing this song with you.

TOBY

I don't really think it's appropriate.

MICHAEL

Well surprise, surprise! Toby doesn't want to do something fun! Wah, wah, wah!

PAM

I think Toby means it's not appropriate for you to be singing that song...

MICHAEL

Oh, get real. Why?

MICHAEL TALKING HEAD

MICHAEL

Fact: Those are the lyrics of the song as written. Fact: The song was written by white guys. And what do white guys have to do with slavery?

(waits, then realizes:)

Oh...slavery...

INT. OFFICE - JIM AND DWIGHT'S DESKS - D1

Michael approaches Jim and Dwight from his office, holding the Scranton Idol flier.

MICHAEL

Hey, Jim, listen...I've got to...attend a meeting today. All day. And I need to put someone in charge while I'm--

DWIGHT

I'll do it! I'm a volunteer Sheriff's Deputy, so I know what to do in emergencies.

MICHAEL

Okay, well, this isn't an emergency, so--

DWIGHT

Michael. I won't fail you.

MICHAEL

Really? I see a burned-out trash can fire over there that says otherwise.

JIM

Are you sure you should be leaving the office right after a power outage?  
(reads flier)  
I mean, Scranton Idol's important, but...

MICHAEL

What? How did you--  
(sees flier)  
Oh this? No. That's...okay, forget it, Jim, if you're going to be belligerent. Dwight, you can take charge for now.

Dwight pumps his fist.

DWIGHT

Taking charge! Question: Can I sit in your office--

MICHAEL  
(quickly)  
No.

DWIGHT  
The Fortress of Scott-itude...

MICHAEL  
Absolutely not.

DWIGHT  
Okay. Can I fire people?

MICHAEL  
No. Just make sure...work...happens.  
(beat)  
Okay. See you later.

He strides off. Dwight reclines smugly in his chair.

DWIGHT  
Get to work, Jim. I'm in charge now.

JIM TALKING HEAD

JIM  
So...Dwight's in charge. It's almost  
like going from Kaiser Wilhelm to Adolf  
Hitler.  
(reconsiders)  
Or from Curly to Shemp.

INT. OFFICE - AFTERNOON - D1

Dwight struts around the office wearing his VOLUNTEER  
SHERIFF'S DEPUTY HAT. He approaches Stanley, who completes a  
sale and hangs up.

DWIGHT  
Alright. Next customer. Hurry up.

STANLEY CHUCKLES and makes another call. Dwight moves on.

OSCAR (V.O.)  
I can't believe Michael put Dwight in  
charge of the whole office.

OSCAR TALKING HEAD

OSCAR  
He's always pawning off tedious jobs on  
Dwight, just by giving them official-  
sounding titles.  
(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Like...Chief Xeroxer, or Executive Ceiling Panel Re-Aligner, or once: Senator Faulty Microwave Returner. Even that much power went to his head.

CREED TALKING HEAD

CREED

Michael put Dwight in charge of the whole office?

(considers)

Wait...which office?

EXT. COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - DAY - ESTABLISHING - D1

A banner out front reads: "Scranton Idol Auditions Today!"

INT. COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - AFTERNOON - D1

Michael waits in a LONG LINE down a side aisle, with PEOPLE of all shapes and sizes. Three JUDGES sit in the front pew judging a SINGER on the altar.

MICHAEL

(scoffs)

Amateurs. I guess they let just anybody enter these things now.

(looks around)

Nobody else here looks ready for the big time. Prime time.

(to camera, cocky)

I'm going to Hollywoood!

INT. OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - SAME - D1

Jim and Pam huddle over the desk, looking through a CD WALLET.

JIM

(to camera)

These are Dwight's CDs. I found them in his car when he made me go park it in Michael's spot.

PAM

Oh my God. The whole first half of this binder is video game soundtracks.

JIM

Wow. We have to play these over the sound system.

PAM  
Definitely.  
(flips the page, smiles)  
Here we go. "Dwight's Personal Mix. FOR  
PRIVATE LISTENING ONLY."

JIM  
(to camera)  
Oh, Dwight. You make this too easy.

INT. MICHAEL'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER - D1

Jim enters and goes to the STEREO, followed closely by Pam.  
He inserts DWIGHT'S CD.

Dwight enters behind them.

DWIGHT  
Excuse me! Entrance to this office is  
prohibited.

He notices Jim pressing buttons on the audio receiver.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)  
What are you doing with Michael's CD  
player?

JIM  
Playing a CD we found.

PAM  
There's a whole bunch of them at  
reception.

Dwight exits.

INT. OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS - D1

Dwight sees his CD wallet.

DWIGHT  
These are mine! My CDs!

He hurriedly flips through the wallet, when the "Imperial  
Theme" from Star Wars COMES ON over the sound system. He  
quickly stands at rigid attention.

The other EMPLOYEES ignore the music. ANGELA starts to  
stand, but quickly reconsiders, embarrassed. Kevin and OSCAR  
see her, and share a glance.

Jim and Pam enter from Michael's office, when they see  
Dwight. Jim approaches him.

JIM

Are you...standing at attention?

DWIGHT

Obviously. It's the Imperial Anthem.

Jim mouths "anthem" to Pam, who tries to stifle a laugh.

With the Imperial Theme still playing, JAN enters.

JAN

What's going on? What is this? Where's Michael?

DWIGHT

Michael is currently at a meeting across town. Now please, we really shouldn't be talking right now. Out of respect.

Jan reacts to Jim, who shrugs.

JAN

What meeting?

(distracted)

I'm sorry, can we turn this music off?

Jim nods and exits to Michael's office. The music STOPS. Jim returns.

DWIGHT

I want that CD back, Jim. Now.

JIM

I'd give it back, but entrance to Michael's office is prohibited.

JAN

Look, Darryl called New York this morning reporting a power outage and severe water damage in the warehouse. I got in my car as fast as I could, and now I'm here. Where. The hell. Is Michael.

INT. COVENANT PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - ALTAR - D1

Michael performs on the altar.

MICHAEL

(singing way too loud)

*Some people wait a lifetime/ For a moment like this...Some--*

JUDGE 1

Thank you, Mr. Scott. That's fine.

MICHAEL

But I didn't finish.

JUDGE 1

Yes you did.

MICHAEL

No, I don't think you...have you seen the show? The song doesn't end there.

JUDGE 2

Please, Mr. Scott. We don't need to hear the end. You're too loud, and your choice of song is...disturbing. Next!

MICHAEL

Wait. I want to hear from Simon. Is he here? Because he loved that song.

JUDGE 3

I think you're confused, Mr. Scott. This competition is not affiliated with the television show. It's just a charity fundraiser for the church.

MICHAEL

But the winner gets a recording contract and a cash prize, right?

JUDGE 3

No. The winner gets a pie of their choice baked by our rector's wife.

Michael reacts, betrayed.

JUDGE 1

It's just a fundraiser.

MICHAEL (V.O.)

Here's what I don't get...

MICHAEL TALKING HEAD

Shot in the church's parking lot.

MICHAEL

If you're trying to draw a huge crowd and make lots of money for...Jesus...why not get the big names involved?

(gestures to himself)

They led me to believe that the best singer would be allowed to compete. And then get a recording contract.

(shakes his head)

(MORE)

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Judges are idiots. Please... "too loud?"  
Well that's just how I roll, Grandma!

INT. OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - AFTERNOON - D1

Jan fumes as Jim and Pam look on.

JAN

A singing contest? I drove for almost two hours, worried out of my mind that this branch could be suffering irreparable damage...and...and here Michael thinks it's more important to take a goddamn personal day!

JIM

Um, he's...technically...not taking a personal day...

Beat. Jan quickly opens her cell phone and dials.

JAN

Jim, I'm making you Acting Regional Manager until Michael and I can sort this out with corporate.

Jim reacts, stunned.

MICHAEL TALKING HEAD

Still in the church parking lot.

MICHAEL

So I'm not Scranton Idol. So what? I bet Clay Aiken can't sell paper.

His PHONE RINGS. He answers.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Hello? Jan! Whattup! How's the N-Y-C?  
(beat, he smiles impishly)  
Of course I'm at the office!

He winks at the camera, crossing his fingers impishly.

END OF ACT ONE