



# “that’s what she said”

a ford & harrison blog about the popular television series “the office”

## The Vicker(s) Cometh

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Tonight truly marked the beginning of the end for Michael Scott, as the new Scranton Branch Manager made his first appearance. Deangelo Vickers, played by Will Ferrell, started out with a Michael-esque quality of lovable dope, but it soon became apparent Deangelo Vickers is no Michael Scott. It became apparent when he asked Erin to change the way she answers the phone. Deangelo wanted her to leave out her name, but Michael, being the ever-present slave to history (as well as the unbridled arrogance leader on the show) so confused Erin with his attempts to keep things the same left Erin answering the phone in silence and hanging up on the caller.

As for employment law issues, the only readily apparent one was Kelly’s flirtation with Deangelo—dropping a stack of files in front of him to gain his attention, then walking away after her brief dalliance. Obviously anyone flirting with the new boss on day one is someone the new boss should be wary of. And there was Andy’s efforts to curry favor with his new boss by beginning to tell a racially-themed joke. Wisely, Andy stopped as he realized he was in the presence of not one, but two co-workers who might have found the joke (whatever it was to be) offensive. But still, some of the damage was done just by the introduction of the joke. Here, some of the blame has to fall on Deangelo for putting Andy on the spot with a request to “make him laugh.” To add insult to injury, Andy tries to come

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up with a new joke of his own, only to be told to avoid the topic (politics) and then be laughed at as he nearly falls over a table.

The new boss is going to make for some interesting story lines. The man who Jim and Pam at first believe wants to talk about their families later tells them “enough about your kid” and pointedly tells them he knows they are sucking up to him. In the next breath, he asks the office how he can be the best manager for them.

I'd say the hidden tip in this episode is the managerial style of Deangelo. On the one hand, he attempts to bond with his employees and seek their input, but on the other hands shuts down the camaraderie shortly after it begins. He seeks out the advice of his employees while bringing in his own personal barber for an office shave. Most employees appreciate some personal relationship with their boss, but few would like to be silenced so abruptly. And virtually all employees appreciate being valued and having their advice sought out, but I doubt many would like the “King's Court” approach of giving such input while the boss is laid back in a barber's chair having his own personal groomer attend to his stubble.

And no employee wants to be thought of as the dancing monkey for the boss' amusement, as did Deangelo by relegating Andy to the Keystone Cops role of spilling hot coffee on himself and, as if this weren't enough, then handing Andy a bottle of liquid hand soap and asking him to “eat it” (which, to no one's surprise, Andy did). And employees know (or eventually figure out, as I'm sure will be the case with Jim and Pam) when a boss is faking interest in them as people. The truth is, most employees want to feel valued and appreciated, not pandered too or placated. Treating employees as you would like to be treated (sound familiar?) is the best way to create a productive work force.