

“that’s what she said”

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

Threat Level Midnight, a/k/a There’s An Hour of My Life I’ll Never Get Back

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It was another nonproductive workday at The Office. After 10 years, Michael’s little known, self-written, self-produced, self-directed, and self-starred-in movie, Threat Level Midnight, finally debuted in Scranton. Despite a private staff-only viewing a few years back in which the movie was mistakenly taken for a comedy (it’s really Michael’s rip-off of James Bond and Austin Powers themes), this time the movie finally got shown to completion. And what did it show?

Of course, with Michael Scott’s fingerprints all over it, it doesn’t take long for the inappropriateness to kick in. It starts with a threat by villain Golden Face (played by Jim Halpert). Golden Face tells his hostages he plans to dig up the dead wife of Michael’s James Bond-esque hero, Michael Scarn (played of course by Michael), and “hump her real good.” From there, we get overt sexual innuendo when Pam’s mom, Mrs. Beasley, playing a hospital nurse, displays serious cleavage. Later Michael is asked by one female participant in a local bachelor party (played by Jim’s old flame, Karen Filippelli) if he’s ever “banged an entire bachelorette party.” Toward the end, Michael’s old offensive friend, Todd Packer, throws out an offensive term for homosexuals.

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Aside from these inappropriate items, the real lesson here is two-fold: First, this is obviously a horrible way to conduct business. The entire movie took staffers away from work for hours on end, and they spend an enormous amount of time actually watching the movie. Clearly, not the best use of company time.

But the flip side is (and I can't believe I'm saying this), despite the inappropriate use of company time and resources, and despite the inappropriate content of the movie itself, it does show what team building activities can do to bring a workplace together. Now, admittedly, some of the team building here is Jim, Pam, and Oscar just having a good laugh at Michael's expense. But some of the others, particularly Dwight and Andy, really seem to feel honored to play such prominent roles in Michael's masterpiece.

So while I don't recommend anyone go about team building exercises the way Michael Scott does, there is something to be said for activities that involve the entire office. Studies routinely show that happy workers are more productive, and happy workers are those who feel valued and included. So if you can fight through the moronic antics of Michael Scott, you can actually learn a pretty valuable lesson from Threat Level Midnight.