

# **Cartoon Mixtape Vol. 1: Hands on Hips**





Hey Arnold! - "Stoop Kid"  
by Ryann

Tiny Toon Adventures - "Tiny Toon  
Music Television" by Luke G.

"Cartoon All-Stars to the Rescue"  
by Steev

Pole Position - "Dial M for Magic"  
by @mildmojo

Mighty Max - "Armageddon: Outta  
Here" by Ida

Dragon Ball Z - "Goku's New Power"  
by Mason C.

Recess - "Weekend at Muriel's"  
by Emily E.

Batman: The Animated Series -  
"Baby Doll" by Luke G.

Cartoon Planet - "Love that Brak!"  
by summa smiff

쥐라기 월드컵 - "운명의 첫시합!"  
by Steev

"Occupy Bedrock: Fred Empathizes  
With the 1%" by Chuck C.

## Hey Arnold! - "Stoop Kid" by Ryann

if only my mom had known that being well versed in 90's nickelodeon catchphrases was going to be the best way to get laid when I was 27, she may have let ten-year-old me spend more than an hour a day in front of the television. in my version of well-adjusted childhood, though, I had to be very selective about the shows I watched, and most afternoons I chose Hey Arnold. those kids were my age and they lived in a world I had never even dreamed of. I grew up in a small town, went to a small church, and had an extremely small worldview, even for a child. I was eleven when I first met someone that wasn't a christian- until then I didn't even know that was an option. I knew one kid, in my entire elementary school, that was non-white. so Arnold, with his non-traditional family, living in a boarding house, playing in the streets of a big city with his diverse group of friends, fascinated me. and of course, there's one episode that stands out in my memory, almost 20 years later (dear god I'm fucking old I quit).

"stoop kid's afraid to leave his stoop!"

the legend of stoop kid, who was left on his own as an infant and grew up too afraid to ever leave the place he was born. you guys remember this one. all he's ever known is his stoop, he's proud and protective of it. outside of the stoop, anything can happen. the stoop is safe, the stoop is comfortable, the stoop has all he needs. why would he ever leave? it's not until everyone starts making fun of him that he



considers stepping off. and even though stoop kid threatened him when he kicked a football onto his stoop, Arnold decides to help him.

"look, there's a whole world out there for you to see. but you're never gonna see it if you never leave your stoop."

the message there is so obvious, even a sheltered ten-year-old could understand. maybe all that you know is a tiny piece of the world. and leaving that tiny piece is fucking scary at first. but once you take that first step, anything is possible. there are so many people to meet and places to see and things to try and the world doesn't begin and end with you eating canned food sitting in a lawnchair yelling at people who get too close to you as they pass by. don't stay on your stoop, kid.

## **Tiny Toon Adventures - "Tiny Toon Music Television" by Luke G.**

When I was 5, I bought the first album I ever owned. It was Janet Jackson's Rhythm Nation. That same year, I bought the second. It was the single "Money (That's What I Want)" by Barrett Strong. Kind of a big jump, right? I can attribute that to Tiny Toon Music Television.

Tiny Toon Adventures always seemed, to me, like should be better than it was. Amblin Entertainment made this show! Spielberg, baby! The animation quality was not the best, and in fact changed wildly between seasons as I'm sure the cels got shipped around to various low budget outsourced animation houses. The jokes careened wildly between references to old Loony Tunes bits to 90s pop culture goofs to inane references that no child watching FOX in 1991 would have understood. "Y'know, Babsie, in this moonlight, you look just like Morey Amsterdam." "MOREY AMSTERDAM?!!" A stitch! A stitch in our sides we say!

There were also things I still think are quality. The child version of Elmer Fudd, Elmyra Duff, didn't hate animals and want to kill them. She loved them! She also just happened to kill them. The movie, How I Spent My Summer Vacation, is still pretty damn funny. And then there is Tiny Toon Music Television.

This episode is crazy go nuts. 5 music videos, some of songs I would not have heard of otherwise until my 20s. The episode knows that, too, with Buster remarking in between They Might Be Giants songs, "Who are these guys?"



It had all of the 90s media cracks that would actually land with me then. Particularly memorable, and in hindsight incredibly creepy, is Julie Bruin's (voiced by Julie Brown) lovingly drawn and animated anatomy. No me gusta. On the other hand, you've got Elmer Fudd's cone boobs in his Fuddonna persona. Stellar. Montana Max's James Brown pompadour during "Money?" I have a wig of it that I wear in the mirror when none of you are around.

Finally, to completely contradict what I said earlier, this episode heavily references the Maltese Falcon during the video for "Istanbul (Not Constantinople)." I went out and got that movie afterwards and made my parents watch it way too many times. Sometimes dusty musty references are baffling, and other times they turn you into an insufferable hipster baby.



## "Cartoon All-Stars to the Rescue" by Steev

There was a VHS at the local video rental store that I gravitated to most times that I had the opportunity to pick my own rental. It wasn't a particularly good film, I didn't even necessarily like the characters and it's not even my pick for this zine thing you're reading. The reason I found it so appealing was it's gimmicky hook: the crossover movie. The Jetsons Meet the Flintstones blew my mind as a kid. That love of a good gimmick still resides within my soul and Instagram where you'll find endless photographs of limited edition cookies and chips that are flavored like things you wouldn't expect cookies and chips to be flavored like.

So now that you know my weakness, imagine my delight when I learned of an upcoming cartoon





special which would host the interaction of, not cartoons for old people like The Flintstones (sorry Chuck), but all the cartoons I loved right now (right now being 1990). Michelangelo, Garfield, Slimer, The Smurfs, The Muppet Babies... interacting with the likes of Huey, Dewey, Louie, Alvin, Simon, Theodore, freaking ALF and more. AND MORE.

There was a full color half-page ad in the Sunday paper the week before Cartoon All-Stars to the Rescue premiered and I carried that thing around to show all my friends before taping it's creased remains to my bedroom wall. I could not comprehend how such a cartoon could come into being. They must've discovered the secret! If any one of these cartoons is good on it's own, a cartoon starring all of them would be... the best thing ever produced. It was one of those easy solutions that 8-year old me figured out instantly, but for some reason adults never implemented. Like print more money. Except this time, they freaking went through with it.

Blank tape readied in the VCR, I sopped those visuals in like a thirsty sponge. And it was everything I had hoped it would be. It was a 30 minute cartoon with all of my favorite characters. Singing about how marijuana will make you steal from your little sister. And steal beers from your dad. And then your skin melts off.

I'm not sure I knew going in that this was going to be an anti-drug thing. And I didn't care. I watched that VHS hundreds of times. I probably knew it wasn't good. But they got me and I loved it.

## **Pole Position - "Dial M for Magic"** **by @mildmojo**

As video game tie-ins go, Pole Position was a stretch. The Atari-era grand prix arcade racer—a titan at bowling alleys and Action Family Arcades—had you speeding around a race track. The show featured three crime-fighting siblings with two talking, autonomous, gadget-stuffed supercars. Think Scooby-Doo, but the Mystery Machine was a slick tractor-trailer with living quarters and a built-in car carrier. Each week there was a new mystery, a new ne'er-do-well, and the kids in the secret Pole Position team drove their way to justice.

When Pole Position aired, we had a couple of ancient, cheap-import 1970s Saabs in the garage that, any given Sunday, Dad was probably wrenching on. The teens in the show had cars that could be anything.

In one episode, an illusionist controls a whole mining village by terrorizing the townsfolk with fake ghosts. Over less than 30 minutes, the cars show off a) firehose turrets, b) high-power searchlights, c) net launchers, d) self-inflating rafts, e) self-driving (duh), f) flying, g) catching falling objects mid-flight, and h) hovercraft conversion via DeLorean-style folding wheels.

Did I mention they talked? None of my pull-back-and-go Darda cars or Majorette coupes could talk. Maybe a talking Saab would've warned me not to leave crayons in the back-seat ashtray to melt in the summer sun.



Here in 2015 my aging car doesn't have gull-wing doors, but the top comes off. My car doesn't talk to me, but the

*"The teens in the show had cars that could be anything."*

smartphone in my pocket can and does. It's magically connected to my stereo and my car's diagnostic system, so it can sit on my dashboard and tell me where to go and how long it will take with traffic and how the engine's doing and play music directly from the wireless global data network and a custom playlist of radio shows that updates while I sleep and my wrist just buzzed to tell me my girlfriend wants pizza tonight and... our present future can be pretty fantastic, too.

## **Mighty Max - "Armageddon: Outta Here" by Ida**

Most people never saw the Mighty Max cartoon and only associate the character with the not so popular Polly Pocket toys for boys. It is unfortunate because the twenty-seven episode, two season series about a boy who has a magic hat that enables him to travel through space and time using portals is brilliant, epic, metal. Upon Jung Max receiving his enchanted baseball cap, he befriends a sagacious fowl named Virgil who mentors him through adventures and a hardcore guardian Viking named Norman who protects him. The three main characters, like Amadis de Gaul, travel to exotic places and fight with wit, comedy and bravery against evil. When the show first aired I was nine years old and



yet to know the classics or any ancient mythology, so the homage to various ones in every episode felt entirely fresh and wild to me.

*"I think the finale shifted something in my skull..."*

The two part series finale, Armageddon Closer and Armageddon Outta Here, can completely stand on its own as a masterpiece. Maybe I am speaking with a wealth of nostalgia for the first time I saw it, but the finale is sweet tragedy and psychedelic. The plot is complicated but basically all of the previous foes in the series return and Max, Norman and Virgil face their destiny as predicted in "Murals." Norman is killed in a fight with a giant spider, the one thing he fears. Virgil dies at Stonehenge because Max is unable to save him from Skullmaster, the series central antagonist, an underground sorcerer based on Milton's Paradise Lost. During the climax Skullmaster is not defeated but Max does absorb the powers of time itself on the sunset of the winter solstice. Max ends up travelling back to the opening scene of the first episode of the series and it all begins again. I am not sure how to comprehensively explain how the cartoon Mighty Max affected me but I think the finale shifted something in my skull so that I am always seeking intense, bizarre narrative and art.

## Dragon Ball Z - "Goku's New Power"

by Mason C.

The much-maligned "yelling and flexing" that comprises a good chunk of Dragonball Z's narrative build-up is hard to defend, but the payoffs that it leads to are genuinely satisfying. Goku's New Power exemplifies this better than maybe any episode in the series. It is kind of pointless to examine one single episode of "DBZ," but this episode represents the payoff of a major subplot and the beginning of a new arc. Goku, ostensibly the main character of the show, has been out of action for something like thirty episodes, and

Recoome, the villain of this episode and the two preceding it, is able to easily dispatch all our heroes as well as Vegeta, the erstwhile series antagonist. He does all this

*"The fun-loving innocent Goku has become a mythological force of destruction."*

while performing inane poses, talking like Buffalo Bill from Silence of the Lambs, and having most of his clothing torn off to reveal most of his shoulders and 98% of his butt. This was very sexually distressing for me as a kid and no doubt shaped me in some nebulous way. Recoome was not the only such



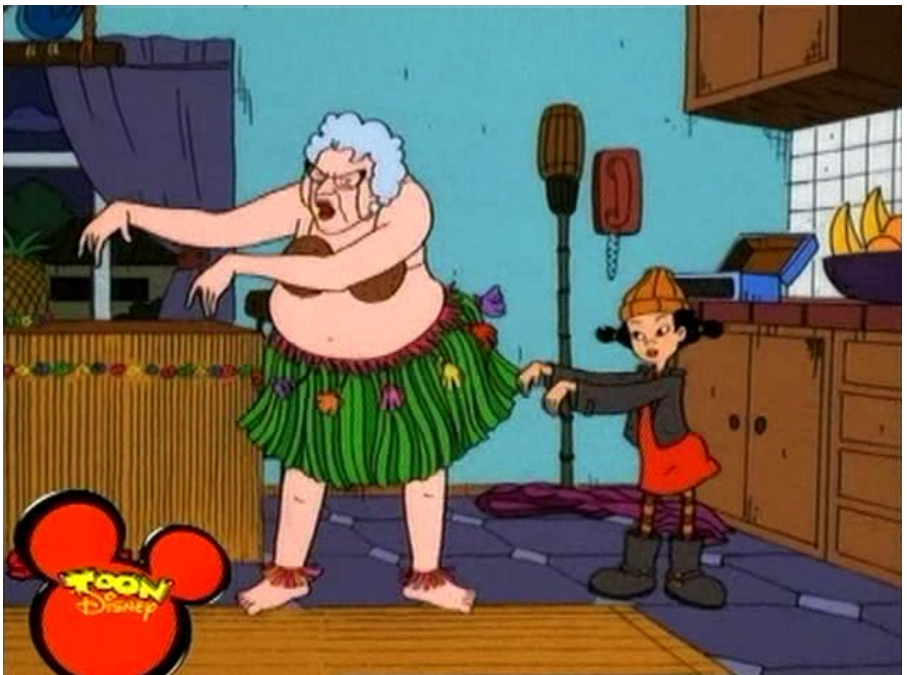
villain that Dragonball Z would expose to my fragile 11-year-old mind (see Cell's giant android scorpion tail/phallus), but he was the first.

At the end of episode 65 Goku's pod arrives on the planet and he wordlessly exits, his eyebrows pointier than ever. After twenty episodes of build-up, showing him train, anxiously awaiting his re-entry into the series, this moment was 24 carat tv gold. This entire episode consists of Recoome flipping Goku off (leading to hilariously horrified reactions from Gohan and Krillin), Goku proceeding to effortlessly tear apart this formerly unstoppable titan, and (my favorite part) Vegeta's internal monologue. Vegeta sells this fight to kids like they are witnessing an apocalyptic event. The fun-loving innocent Goku has become a mythological force of destruction. This episode is where we first heard the term "Super Saiyan." In the school cafeteria this was a pretty big deal.



## Recess - "Weekend at Muriel's" by Emily E.

Recess was the highlight of my Saturday mornings. I always wished actual recess was as exciting as the shenanigans TJ, Gretchen, Mikey, Vince, Gus, and Spinelli got into. And that my teachers and peers were as progressive as Ms. Grotke and Gretchen. But even in the show, rules and social norms exist. Strict teachers are part of this hierarchical environment. Everyone has had both laidback and strict teachers. Luckily for me, mine were always good at their job, no matter their teaching style. Still, I could never imagine my teachers outside of the classroom. Surely they lived at school. Perhaps they ate three meals in the cafeteria and slept



under their desks. They must have lived and breathed to grade quizzes and prepare for drilling long division into students' heads.

An episode of Recess that has stuck with me focuses on this very subject. Badass Spinelli spends the weekend with Ms. Finster, an older teacher

*"I could never  
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classroom"*

all the kids see as mean. After one day with her, Spinelli begins to find her boring too. Ms. Finster notices her dismay and decides to relive her younger days she spent with Spinelli's wild grandmother. She serves Spinelli a luau dinner Saturday, and they spend Sunday at batting practice, playing mini golf, and eating junk food. Spinelli is pleasantly surprised that Ms. Finster does indeed have a life and knows how to have fun!

Even now, working for a university and pursuing an MBA there, I have to remind myself that my professors are just people. They joke. They have interests. They want to get to know their students. This realization really makes all the difference in a worthwhile education.

Thanks, Recess!

## **Batman: The Animated Series - "Baby Doll" by Luke G.**

I'm assuming that if you're reading this right now, you don't need dumb old Luke to tell you about Batman the Animated Series. It is a cartoon series that was better than most live action serial shows for adults being made in the early 90s. Get out of here, Twin Peaks. Go suck an egg, Picket Fences. Beat cheeks Baywatch.

One episode of the show puts it all in a neat little bubble. "Baby Doll" tells the story of Mary Dahl, a "child" actress who was in fact an adult with a rare medical disorder that renders her a constant adolescent. Dahl has perfected this persona for her hit TV show, and speaks her innocent catchphrase, "I didn't mean to!" in a perfect cutesy voice. Hiding under this is a dramatic actress and complicated adult who wants to get out. When she fails at a Shakespearean career, she is rebuked when the networks don't want her juvenile antics for a second run.

Dahl slips into a nostalgia that quickly turns deadly, and reasons that if she just gets the family back together, she can have the good times again. She has made the decision that many have made before her: I am going to become a Batman villain. She assembles henchmen who inexplicably cosplay Gilligan and the Skipper. She hires a personal assistant that looks like Marcy from Peanuts and obviously knows martial arts. She goes to one of the knockout gas stores that we can only assume litter the streets of Gotham City and orders a pallet. She puts a gun in a doll.

I poke fun at the conceits necessary to make a show for kids, but this episode has it all. Batman is at his best when he wins through brains, not brawn. When Mary attempts to conceal herself in a crowd of children, he dramatically reveals himself so all the kids run to him in awe...all except Mary.



Dahl is something that the wide release Batman movies never really managed to pull off: a sympathetic yet creepy villain. Many times in the episode, you only see her giant stylized eyes. Her dancing and lilting girly taunts are disturbing. With her frilly breeches and overpronounced curls, she comes off as a living, malicious toy.

She is also a human being dealing with insane circumstances. When she sees (hallucinates?) herself as a normal woman in a funhouse mirror, she breaks down, begging to know why Batman couldn't just let her play her pretend kidnapping game. She fires her Derringer-doll at all the mirrors, destroying her false images. When she realizes she has lost, she grasps Batman's legs, sobbing in a normal adult voice "I didn't mean to..." Bruce Timm and Paul Dini have punched you in the gut again.

You know what you're getting into when you hear that operatic and almost keening Shirley Walker opening theme instead of the action packed Danny Elfman number. The show would continue to get older and darker, and you would continue to age and mature with it.

## **Cartoon Planet - "Love that Brak!" by summa sniff**

The Internet makes it really easy to find new TV to watch. Whenever I'm bored, I can just surf the AV Club, or Vulture, or Pajiba to find some new show that fits neatly into a Venn diagram of my interests. You like 19th century dramas about surgery starring Hollywood hotties? Here's three. You like watching comedians do math? Try this out. We truly live in the future.

The only thing is... it takes a lot of the fun out of tv watching. I'm way more critical of what it finds for me. I expect to be fully entertained for the entire 42 commercial-free minutes, and, if not, I can go find literally thousands of other things to watch.

It would have never picked Cartoon Planet for me. Only a lack of supervision, a cable box, and too much sugar did that.

When I was in the fourth grade, I had this friend, Emily. She was an only child of a single mom who worked nights, so obviously she had the best sleepovers. Three of us (the weirdos in the class) would hang out Friday nights, watching whatever was on, drinking Peach Nehi, and playing Ouija all night.

Cartoon Planet was always on.

It was the beginning of Cartoon Network, before they really had anything to air. During the day, it was mostly reruns of Wacky Races and Scooby Doo, and at night, their flagship original show, Space Ghost Coast to Coast. I was too young to really "get" Space Ghost, since at 9, I had no idea who Bjork or Thom Yorke were. Cartoon Planet was the non-interview Space Ghost show, and came on after, around 1 AM.

Each episode was twenty minutes of bizarre recurring goofs played over stock footage of some old cartoon. There wasn't that much footage, so it was just

talking heads punctuated by explosions. The recurring segments were silly to the point of absurdity. My favorite were Zorak's Horrorscopes, where a praying mantis said mean things about Geminis, and Brak's School Daze, where an alien that looked like a lion wearing a Luchador mask sang songs about missing the bus. Most of them would end with Space Ghost using his phasers to blow up the segment.

It was unlike anything I'd ever seen. I loved Doug and Pepper Ann and all the Disney Channel Original Movies, but they were pretty similar. Some "relatable kid" would run into a problem with bullies or homework or \*gasp\* even drugs on a Very Special Episode, but everything would work out and they would learn from the experience.

Cartoon Planet had nothing like that. It inherited a lot from the improv comedy, mixtapes, and anti-humor floating around in the late 90s - but I didn't know that. To me, it was me and the weirdos' secret, the cool thing that none of the normal kids knew about.



## 쥐라기 월드컵 - “운명의 첫시합!” by Steev

I spent a lot of my childhood in a place where I didn't understand the language and experienced the culture as an outsider. I was incredibly fortunate to've had these experiences, but my naivete led me to constantly trying to introduce my American friends to things I discovered in Korea which always ended poorly. Always.

I once brought Nongshim shrimp flavored crackers to show and tell. That is how you isolate yourself as foreign and weird in second grade. I'm not sure I ever fully recovered. My bus driver would allow us to bring tapes to play on the bus' stereo system for the trip to school. Do not bring early 90s Korean rap artist Seo Taiji and Boys on your day. Do not try to convince your classmates that Strawberry Cheetos exist. Do not try to explain what Street Fighter II is or how it works to your friends before they see it with their own eyes. These things will make you seem like a liar.

I found myself for entire summers in a place that didn't quite feel like home. I found comfort in seasonal friendships, television and games.

The cartoon that I became enamored with was 쥐라기 월드컵, although I wouldn't know the title or translation "Dragon League" until over 20 years later when I finally Googled the correct combination of "Korean, Cartoon, 90s, Soccer, Dinosaurs, Bird Goalie, Energy Dragon Bicycle Kick..."

Every kid would sprint home after school, no time for chit-chat, new episode of Dragon League. In the states, I had never seen this kind of passion for a cartoon.

American kids loved their cartoons, don't get me wrong, but missing an episode didn't have consequences. Dragon League was the first dramatic action cartoon I'd



encountered where the plot was ongoing. It was the first time I'd seen a cartoon where you needed to know what had happened in the previous episodes and were excited to see the ongoing plot's new developments in the next episode.

And not everyone had a TV, or at least a TV that (1) they were allowed to watch cartoons on and (B) wasn't occupied by something else. A dozen kids every day at someone else's house, still wearing their backpacks, screaming at the screen with mouthfuls of Binggrae banana milk, sugary liquid yogurt and Choco Pies. I had no idea what was happening on the show itself, but bliss is that summer feeling of "school is out, let's watch some motherfucking cartoons with our friends."

Korea never became home for me; it became heaven. I would've told my American friends about it but they were assholes.



## **"Occupy Bedrock: Fred Empathizes With the 1%" by Chuck C.**

From season 6 episode 21 of The Flintstones, Boss For A Day, we find Fred really feeling that proletarian angst. The episode starts with Fred driving, frustrated that he is going to be late for work. Stuck in traffic, he starts ramming the car in front of him; turns out to be his boss, Mr. Slate. After scolding Fred, Slate says, "now get back to where you belong... behind me." (what a jerk!) Fred laments, "Some guys get all the breaks - look at that, big boss, big car, big shot - sheesh, what's he got that I haven't?"

Next, we find Fred asleep on the job and Slate is spying on him through binoculars. "Look at that Flintstone, goldbricking again! No wonder we're always behind in production." Slate yells and Fred laments again, "That Slate, all he does is sit back and figure out how to make my life miserable."

Slate checks in on Fred again and finds him asleep at the water cooler (which is an elephant sucking cold water out of the inside of an ice block.) "Nevermind the OK, just remember what you're paid for. No more goofing off, I'm watching your every move!" Fred laments yet again, "Did anybody ever have it as tough as me?" Fred drives home angrily, mumbling about how rotten Slate is, and gets home. Dino, his pet dinosaur, excitedly runs at him but Fred is mad and barks back, stopping Dino. Their acquaintance, Great Gazoo, who can grant them wishes, asks Fred, "In other words, you'd like to be boss in his place?" "Oh, would I! Nothing to do all day but sit around and yell at people, giving orders, and raking in the dough!" Gazoo makes it so.

The next day, on the way to work, Fred becomes bossman at 0800 hours. He immediately

stops the car, kicks his carpool friend Barney out, and says, "I'm the boss, I can't be seen riding with you." Fred pulls up to the quarry gate: "Good morning Mr. Flintstone, lovely morning boss." "Not for everybody," says Fred, "when Slate gets in, make sure you mark him late." Fred gets a taste of power and instantly abuses it.

Fred calls Barney to his office to apologize about the morning. "I didn't treat you right, and I'm sorry." He gives him a cigar and invites him to lunch in the executive dining room. Fred is living the dream but his perception that being boss is a walk in the park is crushed when he walks the chairman of the board (Fred didn't know about him). "So, that's why we're always losing money. Throwing away the company's profits on entertaining and handing out expensive cigars to every Tom, Dick, and Harry that walks in. Do you know who I am? I am the chairman of the board of directors. You work for me!"

"Flintstone, follow me." "Where to?"



"Questions, questions, can't you underlings just take an order without a lot of yakking? Now come on!" Fred comments, "I never knew Slate had it so tough. Boy oh boy, being a boss is tougher than I thought."

Fred is begrudgingly pulled to the directors' meeting, where Fred realizes that Slate's job actually has responsibilities. Fred laments yet again, "gee wiz, I just took over this morning." The Chairman lashes back, "Alibis will get you no place! Well gentlemen, so much for business. I'm for a plunge in our executive pool and then a nice steam bath in our executive steam room. Who'll join me?" Fred excitedly says, "Me!" "You're just a boss around here! The steam room is for directors." Fred remarks openly, "Poor Mr. Slate. I never dreamed he had such a miserable life."

Later, Fred tries to leave at the end of the day and the Chairman stops him, "You stay until your work is done, and that's an order." Finally Fred goes home at night and tells Great Gazoo, with illuminated eyes, "Hey Gazoo, I'll never forget you for teaching me such a good lesson." Through empathy, Fred realizes that all people, of all classes, have struggles and problems. Even though he thought Slate had it easy, the reality was that Slate had it just as hard, if not even harder.

When I was little, I watched this episode and it made me start to think about the insecurity of poverty felt between bosses and workers. Growing up white and lower-middle-class in mid-western capitalist America, this misdistribution of wealth and lack thereof was omnipresent, especially magnified by being one of the poorest kids in the upper-class neighborhood. I think both Fred and I realize that all people of all classes have their problems, and with a little empathy, we can all become more understanding people.



