

= Dances with Smurfs =

" Dances with Smurfs " is the thirteenth episode of the thirteenth season of the American animated television series South Park . The 194th overall episode of the series , it originally aired on Comedy Central in the United States on November 11 , 2009 . In the episode , Cartman becomes the reader of the elementary school announcements , and starts making politically charged accusations against student body president Wendy . The episode was written and directed by series co @-@ creator Trey Parker , and was rated TV @-@ MA L in the United States and M (as) in Australia .

" Dances with Smurfs " served as a parody of the political commentary style of Glenn Beck , a nationally syndicated radio show host and former Fox News Channel pundit . The episode also satirized the 2009 James Cameron film Avatar , suggesting the plot of that film borrows heavily from the 1990 film Dances with Wolves , and comparing Avatar 's blue aliens to the cartoon Smurfs . It also included references to the Tea Party protests , radio personality Casey Kasem , and former @-@ vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin . The episode received generally positive reviews . According to Nielsen ratings , " Dances with Smurfs " was seen by 1 @.@ 47 million households among viewers aged between 18 and 34 .

= = Plot = =

Gordon Stoltzki , a third grader who reads the South Park Elementary morning announcements , is shot to death by a jealous husband mistaking him for a 40 @-@ year @-@ old truck driver with a similar name (Gordon Saltski) who had an affair with his wife , which the entire school hears due to it being heard over the intercom . During a memorial service at the gymnasium , guidance counselor Mr. Mackey announces the school will seek a replacement . Cartman gets the job after sabotaging the efforts of a talented student named Casey Miller . However , during his first announcement , Cartman is very critical of the school and makes politically charged accusations against student body president Wendy Testaburger . Principal Victoria asks Cartman to stick to the script during announcements , but he accuses her of trying to silence him , and brings in the American Civil Liberties Union to ensure his freedom of speech . Cartman 's announcements are soon broadcast as the politically themed " EC " show on televisions placed in each classroom . On his set 's chalkboard he uses the first letters of keywords that he writes to spell out Wendy 's intent to " kill Smurfs " which concerns Butters and some other students . When they confront Wendy , she simply refuses to acknowledge Cartman .

Cartman starts selling copies of his book , What Happened to My School ? , outside the cafeteria where Stan confronts him . Angry because of Cartman 's outrageous sexual lies about Wendy in his book , Stan tries to convince Cartman to stop selling his books to no avail . Principal Victoria and Mr. Mackey again confront Cartman , and force him to stop selling his books on school grounds . This upsets Cartman , who accuses them of turning the school into a " socialist horrorland " , and insists he is leaving the school . The next day , however , he appears on his show and spins a portrayal of himself in blue face @-@ paint and suspenders , having somehow found Smurfland , becoming part of Smurf culture and eventually falling in love with Smurfette . Cartman then claims that Wendy bulldozed Smurfland and slaughtered the Smurfs to get their valuable Smurfberries , the complete story of which he has chronicled in his DVD , " Dances with Smurfs " . Despite the fact that it is extremely obvious that the footage of " Wendy " was Cartman in disguise , Butters and a furious mob of students go to Wendy 's house to confront her . Butters pees on her front door and demands that she go on Cartman 's morning announcements show to answer his questions .

On the " EC " set the next morning a reluctant Wendy joins a gray side @-@ burned Cartman who promises he will stick to school @-@ related questions and go easy on her . However , as soon as filming begins , he immediately asks about her rumoured promiscuity and involvement in the Smurf genocide . To Cartman 's surprise , Wendy claims she indeed bulldozed Smurfland to get the valuable Smurfberries , but alludes that Cartman was involved with the plot , and that the Smurfs would have left Smurfland if Cartman had not integrated himself with them . She steps down as student body president , turning the title over to Cartman , and announces her own new book Going

Rogue on the Smurfs . Cartman is angry that she has turned the tables on him and stolen his Smurf idea , particularly when she announces she sold the movie rights to director James Cameron , who turned the book into his new film , Avatar . With being the student body president , Cartman can 't do the morning announcements anymore because a student can 't hold both positions at the same time . Cartman , much to his anger , also learns that being the student body president is a meaningless position with no real power . The episode ends with Casey Miller reading the announcements , which include a student 's explicit letter of disgust for Cartman 's performance as president , causing him to run out the room crying , " I 'm doing the best I can ! "

= = Production = =

" Dances with Smurfs " was written and directed by series co @-@ founder Trey Parker , and was rated TV @-@ MA L in the United States . It first aired on November 11 , 2009 , in the United States on Comedy Central . The episode marked the final appearance of Gordon Stoltzki , the third grade student who read the morning announcements for South Park Elementary . The day after " Dances with Smurfs " was originally broadcast , four T @-@ shirts based on the episode were made available at South Park Studios , the official South Park website . All four featured Cartman wearing a suit and tie , saying a quote from the episode . These included " I 'm not some dog on a leash " , " We 're in the poop box , my friends " , " I 'm a normal kid ... I just ask questions " , and " I ask questions " .

= = Theme = =

" Dances with Smurfs " served as a parody and social commentary of the political commentary style of Glenn Beck , a nationally syndicated radio show host and former Fox News Channel political pundit . Cartman makes outrageous claims with no basis for fact under the guise that he is simply asking rhetorical questions and seeking further discussion . Beck has been criticized for utilizing a similar style of commentary in his radio and television shows .

Cartman 's televised morning announcements are patterned after the Glenn Beck television program , using the same types of music and imagery , as well as a logo with the initials " EC " that closely resemble the logo of Beck 's show , which use the initials " GB " . Cartman also writes comments about Wendy on a blackboard , which is a prop often used by Beck on his television program . The day after " Dances with Smurfs " originally aired , Beck himself discussed the episode on his radio program . Beck said he had not watched the episode himself but took the parody as a compliment , and that he particularly enjoyed Cartman 's hair , which was combed in a style similar to Beck . Steve " Stu " Burguiere , the executive producer of Beck 's radio show , also complimented the episode , and said of Parker and Stone , " These guys skewer everybody and they are always very good at it . "

= = Cultural references = =

" Dances with Smurfs " satirized Avatar , the 2009 science @-@ fiction epic film directed by James Cameron , which tells the story of humans in the distant future mining for minerals on an alien planet inhabited by blue natives . Although Avatar had not yet been released in theaters by the time the episode aired , the script of " Dances with Smurfs " compares the plot of Avatar to that of Dances with Wolves , a 1990 drama epic film in which a United States soldier becomes integrated with a tribe of Native Americans . At the end of " Dances with Smurfs " , Cartman watches Avatar at a movie theater and grows angry that his idea was stolen , expressing the idea that Avatar borrows from other previous films . Avatar had already been compared to Dances with Wolves prior to the broadcast of " Dances with Smurfs " , and James Cameron said he welcomed the comparison . Cartman 's movie prominently features the Smurfs , a fictional group of small blue cartoon creatures , which draws a further parallel to the blue alien creatures in Avatar . The use of the cartoon Smurfs has also been interpreted as a joke that although Avatar had a famously large budget of hundreds of

millions of dollars , the film amounted to little more than a Smurfs @-@ like cartoon . On the commentary Trey Parker and Matt Stone described the Na 'vi who are natives of Pandora in Avatar as " ten foot tall sexy Smurfs " .

When Wendy resigns as student body president , she announces the publication of her book , Going Rogue on the Smurfs . This is a reference to Going Rogue : An American Life , the 2009 autobiography of former United States Vice President candidate Sarah Palin , who had recently announced her resignation as Governor of Alaska .

Casey Miller , the student who competes against Cartman for the morning announcements , heavily resembles and speaks in a manner similar to radio personality Casey Kasem .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on November 11 , 2009 , " Dances with Smurfs " was watched by 1 @.@ 47 million overall households among viewers aged between 18 and 34 , according to Nielsen ratings . It ranked behind a special 90 @-@ minute episode of Sons of Anarchy , the FX series about an outlaw motorcycle club , which was the most watched cable program of the week with 2 @.@ 5 million households among 18 ? 49 viewers .

The episode received generally positive reviews . Ramsey Isler of IGN said Cartman worked well for a Beck satire , and said , " The real accomplishment of this episode is how it totally roasted a semi @-@ political figure , without being political at all . " However , Isler said the script loses focus with the appearance of the Smurfs , and that Gordon 's death was disturbing and inappropriate in the light of recent school shootings in the United States . The A.V. Club writer Sean O 'Neal , a vocal critic of Beck , said mocking Beck is an easy task , but the episode " handled it with just enough of the show 's usual surrealist bent that it was never wholly predictable " . He praised some of the episode 's unexpected elements , like Cartman 's Smurf film and Wendy 's surprise resignation . Carlos Delgado of iF magazine said " Dances with Smurfs " became " a little strange " starting with Cartman 's Smurf story , but he called the episode " smart , sharp , and poignant " . Delgado said the episode had less " laugh out loud " humor than traditional South Park episodes , in favor of intelligent satire . AOL Television writer Donald Deane called it one of the funniest episodes of the season .

= = Home release = =

" Dances with Smurfs " , along with the thirteen other episodes from South Park 's thirteenth season , were released on a three @-@ disc DVD set and two @-@ disc Blu @-@ ray set in the United States on March 16 , 2010 . The sets included brief audio commentaries by Parker and Stone for each episode , a collection of deleted scenes , and a special mini @-@ feature Inside Xbox : A Behind @-@ the @-@ Scenes Tour of South Park Studios , which discussed the process behind animating the show with Inside Xbox host Major Nelson .