

= Fishsticks (South Park) =

" Fishsticks " is the fifth episode of the thirteenth season of the American animated television series South Park . The 186th overall episode of the series , it was originally broadcast on Comedy Central in the United States on April 8 , 2009 . In the episode , Jimmy writes a joke that becomes a national sensation , and Cartman tries to steal the credit while Rapper Kanye West is the only person in the country who fails to get the joke , but cannot admit that he does not get it because he believes himself to be a genius .

The episode was written and directed by series co -creator Trey Parker , and was rated TV -14 in the United States . The episode was conceived from a joke among Parker and fellow co -creator Matt Stone about a fish dressed as motorcycle daredevil Evel Knievel , which eventually turned into a joke about Kanye West not understanding a joke about why liking fishsticks made him a gay fish . The way Cartman tries to steal credit for the joke was inspired by real people Parker and Stone have worked with in the television business .

Parker provided the voice of West in the episode and during the song " Gay Fish " , a parody of West 's song " Heartless " . " Fishsticks " received largely positive reviews , and generated a great deal of media attention when West wrote in a blog that the episode hurt his feelings , although he said it was funny and admitted that he needed to work on his ego problem . The episode also spoofed comedian Carlos Mencia , who praised the episode after it was broadcast .

According to Nielsen Media Research , " Fishsticks " was seen by more than 3 .5 million households in its original broadcast , making it the most watched Comedy Central production of the week . The episode received even further attention after West famously interrupted Taylor Swift during her acceptance speech at the September 2009 MTV Video Music Awards , after which Comedy Central replayed the episode four times back to back . " Fishsticks " was released on DVD and Blu -ray along with the rest of the thirteenth season on March 16 , 2010 .

= = Plot = =

Jimmy works on writing jokes for his comedy routine while Cartman sits on his couch , eating potato chips . Jimmy comes up with a joke with almost no assistance from Cartman (he only helped Jimmy originate the joke by telling Jimmy he was hungry for something more substantial than fruit , and Jimmy suggested there might be some fishsticks in the freezer) :

Jimmy : Do you like fishsticks ? Cartman : Yeah.Jimmy : Do you like putting fishsticks in your mouth ? Cartman : Yeah.Jimmy : What are you , a gay fish ?

The joke , which plays on the similarity of the phrases " fishsticks " and " fish dicks " when spoken , becomes a hit throughout South Park . When Cartman begins taking half credit for the joke , Kyle tells Jimmy he should stand up to Cartman . When Jimmy tells Cartman he feels he wrote most of the joke , Cartman fears Jimmy will try to take full credit and asks Kyle for advice on how to deal with Jimmy . Kyle instead says he believes Jimmy wrote the entire joke , and suggests that Cartman 's ego is so big that he subconsciously remembers things incorrectly to make himself feel more important . This is supplemented by Cartman 's flashbacks to the creation of the joke , which become more overblown and ridiculous as the episode goes on , showing him to truly believe that he deserves credit .

Meanwhile , the joke becomes a national sensation . Comedian Carlos Mencia goes on Conan O'Brien 's show claiming credit for the joke . The joke is played on rapper Kanye West , who does not understand it . West grows angry when others say he does not get it , and will not allow anyone to explain it to him , because he claims to be a genius and " the voice of a generation " . Kanye abducts Carlos Mencia , who admits he stole the joke to compensate for not being funny and claiming that his " dick don 't work " in a parody of Viggo Mortensen 's character Lalin in Carlito 's Way , but Kanye doesn 't believe him and beats him to death with the help of his hired thugs . Cartman and Jimmy go on The Ellen DeGeneres Show and claim they invented the joke , prompting Kanye to go after them . Jimmy confronts Cartman , asking how he can live with himself for taking

credit for a joke he did not write . They are interrupted by Kanye , who threatens to kill them . By now , Cartman has not only convinced himself he wrote the whole joke without Jimmy 's help , but believes he also saved his life from a black widow , slew a dragon , defeated an army of Jew robots , and has powers similar to the Human Torch . Cartman thinks he realizes what Kyle was trying to tell him , but he gets it completely backwards : Cartman believes that Jimmy 's ego is the one that is twisted and Jimmy 's ego trying to convince itself that he wrote the joke , while not accepting that Cartman wrote the whole thing , and Jimmy believes him . Kanye has an epiphany about his own massive ego and believes he finally understands the joke . However , he incorrectly thinks it means he is , in fact , a gay fish . The episode ends with Kanye donning a wetsuit and diving off the Santa Monica Pier into the ocean to embrace his new identity as a gay fish in the form of a music video , in which he happily swims around the sea , kissing and humping random fish .

However , in a deleted scene , West drowns and his body is picked up and discovered by the US coast guards .

= = Production = =

" Fishsticks " was written and directed by series co @-@ creator Trey Parker . The concept for " Fishsticks " began when Parker , fellow co @-@ creator Matt Stone , and actor Bill Hader attended a writers ' retreat in Seattle , Washington and they visited a body of water where they could watch salmon jump . They started joking about a salmon wearing an outfit like the motorcycle daredevil Evel Knievel , which eventually reminded them of the music video for rapper Kanye West 's song " Touch the Sky " , in which West himself dresses like Knievel . This led to them picturing a scene with West on a news program , angrily denying reports that he is a fish , shouting " No , I am not a salmon ! " During a four @-@ hour ride in a car , Stone and Parker discussed the joke further , and eventually thought of the " fishsticks " joke that featured prominently in the final episode . The duo said they found it hilarious and told variations of the joke back and forth to each other for the rest of the ride . Stone said , " The van driver we hired was just so bummed because we just kept talking about fishsticks , ' You 're a gay fish ' , over and over . We thought it was so funny , and just the fact that he didn 't get it . "

Although the joke originally stemmed from Evel Knievel and not Kanye West , Parker and Stone said they realized West would probably be extremely humorless about the joke and not understand it , so they decided the episode should revolve mostly around him . After coming up with the idea , Parker and Stone waited a long time before they finally wrote the script because , Stone said , " It just seemed too dumb . Are we really going to do a whole episode about this ? " Stone said the jokes about Carlos Mencia were " just a complete afterthought " that came about during the writing process . During one scene in " Fishsticks " , Cartman steals credit from Jimmy for a joke he did not write . This was inspired by people Parker and Stone have worked with in the television business who were present for discussions the duo had , then later claimed credit for the idea even though they had nothing to do with it . Stone said , " They truly believe they did it . That 's the really sinister part . It 's not where they 're trying to steal part of the glory They actually fully believe that they came up with it . "

Parker provided the voice of Kanye , both in the episode and in " Gay Fish " , a full @-@ length song featured at the end of the episode about West 's realization that he actually is a gay fish . Parker used a large amount of Auto @-@ Tune pitch audio processing , which he had never used before . Parker said he eventually discovered he had to sing off @-@ key on purpose in order to get the desired effect . Parker said , " You had to be a bad singer in order for that thing to actually sound the way it does . " The day after " Fishsticks " was broadcast , the full two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half minute version of the Kanye West spoof , " Gay Fish " , was made available for download on South Park Studios , the official South Park website . The site also featured T @-@ shirts and hooded sweatshirts based on the episode . One featured Jimmy asking , " Do you like fishsticks ? " The other features text from Kanye West 's whiteboard in the episode : " Fishsticks + Me = Gayfish "

.

= = Cultural references = =

A Kanye West song in the episode about the fact that he is indeed a " gay fish " is a parody of the West song " Heartless " , from his 2008 recording 808s & Heartbreak and satirizes the rapper 's usage of Auto @-@ Tune pitch audio processing . When West first confronts Cartman and Jimmy , Cartman mistakes him for Puff Daddy , another rapper and record producer .

Carlos Mencia , host of the former Comedy Central show Mind of Mencia , is portrayed in " Fishsticks " as knowingly stealing credit for a joke he did not write ; this is a reference to accusations other comedians have made that Mencia plagiarizes jokes from other people . Mencia 's death scene in the episode , as well as his claims that he uses a catheter to relieve himself , are a reference to Lalin , a character who uses a wheelchair in the 1993 crime film Carlito 's Way .

Talk show hosts Jimmy Kimmel , David Letterman , Conan O 'Brien , Jay Leno and Ellen DeGeneres were featured in the episode . Kimmel is voiced by his real @-@ life brother Jonathan Kimmel , who previously served as a writer and voice actor on South Park .

During a fantasy sequence , Cartman says " flame on " and turns into a fiery , flying superhero ; this is a reference to the Human Torch , a superhero and member of the Fantastic Four .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Fishsticks " was watched by 3 @.@ 1 million overall households , according to the Nielsen Media Research , making it the most @-@ watched Comedy Central production of the week . It had over 1 @.@ 2 million more household viewers than the second most @-@ watched Comedy Central show that week , the April 8 episode of The Daily Show . In June 2009 , " Fishsticks " was announced to be the most watched South Park episode on South Park Studios , the official South Park website , which has all but 3 episodes of South Park to date available for viewing .

Both Kanye West and Carlos Mencia responded within one day of the episode 's original broadcast and said they enjoyed the parodies of themselves , although Kanye West said on his blog that his feelings were hurt . After the episode was broadcast , Mencia wrote on his Twitter feed , " They just made fun of me on South Park . I thought it was hysterical . Catch the rerun . " Dave Itzkoff , arts reporter for The New York Times , complimented Mencia for his response . West wrote on his blog , " South Park murdered me last night and it 's pretty damn funny . It hurts my feelings but what can you expect from South Park ! " West thanked the South Park writers in his blog entry and acknowledged he has a problem with his ego , but said he was trying to change . Parker and Stone said they were extremely surprised by West 's reaction , and felt Mencia was treated far more harshly in the episode than West . Parker said , " It was like , dude , we just said you were a gay fish . What are you talking about ? It was so dumb . "

Simon Vozick @-@ Levinson of Entertainment Weekly said the post was " a fascinating look at where Kanye 's head is at these days " , and complimented West for his " humility and honesty " . Daniel Kreps of Rolling Stone said : " Many have tried , all have failed , but in the end it only took four animated children from Colorado to topple Kanye West 's ego One day , we 'll all look back on this day and thank South Park for ushering in this historic moment in the life of Kanye . " Kerrie Mitchell of Entertainment Weekly suggested West 's modest response was actually a marketing stunt to help sell his upcoming personal fragrance and energy drink . Mitchell wrote , " Did he just get the last laugh on South Park ? Conspiracy ! " In response to the media coverage , West wrote another blog entry on April 10 claiming he had only seen part of the episode and found it funny , but he had been working on his arrogance problem for some time and that South Park did not lead to his " ego epiphany " . The next day , he said in another blog entry that while visiting The Cheesecake Factory restaurant , the manager brought him a plate of fishsticks as a joke .

The episode received positive , if slightly mixed reviews . Ramsey Isler of IGN declared it the best episode of the season , calling it a " beautiful Kanye West spoof that was so well @-@ timed , so hilarious and so spot @-@ on " that it became a " phenomenon " . Ryan Brockington of the New York Post said of the episode , " Best . ' South Park . ' Ever . " He particularly praised the West song

parody and the fact that " a simple running joke can hold a full episode ; brilliant " . Carlos Delgado of If Magazine said the episode was " another South Park classic " which " takes full advantage of Cartman 's monumental ego " . Delgado , who gave the episode a B + grade , described the West parody as " awesome " and the final scene with the " gay fish " West song as " spell binding " . TV Guide listed the episode at number five on the top ten television moments of the week .

Travis Fickett of IGN said the episode included some good laughs but " never kicks into high gear " and said the themes might have worked better as subplots than a full episode : " ' Fishsticks ' is one of those episodes that typically occur around now in the South Park season . It 's not great , not bad ? hovering somewhere around amusing towards forgettable . " Sean O 'Neal of The A.V. Club said he was disappointed by the episode and thought the message about celebrity self @-@ delusion might have been better if it focused on only West or Mencia , rather than both . Although O 'Neal liked the West song in the episode 's final scene , O 'Neal said " cramming (West and Mencia) together ? even mixed in with Cartman 's very funny fantasy sequences ? felt too cobbled to me , and the time limits imposed by cutting back and forth between it all made the respective digs start to feel a little too one @-@ note . "

= = Legacy = =

On September 13 , 2009 during the 2009 MTV Video Music Awards , Kanye West interrupted an acceptance speech from Taylor Swift by walking onto stage , grabbing the microphone and praising her fellow nominee , Beyoncé Knowles . The incident received considerable press attention and drew further attention to " Fishsticks " , which Comedy Central re @-@ broadcast for two straight hours on September 15 , 2009 .

Kanye West referenced this episode in his song " Gorgeous " from the 2010 album My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy where he says " choke a South Park writer with a fishstick " . He similarly referenced the episode on his album Watch the Throne in the song " Made in America " when he says " South Park had them all laughin ' / Now all my niggas designing and we all swaggin ' . "

Following a controversial 2008 performance at music festival Bonnaroo , many concertgoers have since sprayed graffiti around the festival grounds , as well as making signs , deriding the rapper as a " gay fish . "

= = = Coinye = = =

A cryptocurrency called Coinye was created in January 2014 . Under legal pressure , the developers had to change the logo from resembling West to resembling " a half @-@ man @-@ half @-@ fish hybrid " instead .

= = Home release = =

" Fishsticks " , 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 .