

= South Park ( season 13 ) =

The thirteenth season of South Park , an American animated television comedy series , originally aired in the United States on Comedy Central between March 11 and November 18 , 2009 . The season was headed by the series creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone , who served as executive producers along with Anne Garefino . The season continued to focus on the exploits of protagonists Stan , Kyle , Cartman , Kenny and Butters in the fictional Colorado mountain town of South Park .

The season was the first of three new seasons Parker and Stone agreed to produce for the network under a renewal deal . It consisted of fourteen 22 @-@ minute episodes , which aired in two groups of seven episodes separated by a six @-@ month gap . Prior to the season 's premiere , all South Park episodes were made available for free viewing on the official series website , South Park Studios . The 13th season was the first to be broadcast in high definition and in widescreen . Continuing their practice from previous seasons , Parker and Stone wrote and produced each episode within the week before its broadcast date .

The 13th season satirized such topics as the ACORN scandal , Japanese whaling , piracy in Somalia and the marketing tactics of the Walt Disney Company . Celebrities were spoofed throughout the season , including the Jonas Brothers , Kanye West , Carlos Mencia , Paul Watson and Glenn Beck , all of whom publicly responded to their portrayals . The episode " Fishsticks " attracted particular media attention due to rapper Kanye West 's declaration that its jokes about his arrogance were funny but hurt his feelings . " The F Word " , in which the central characters attempt to change the definition of the word " fag " , was especially controversial and prompted complaints from the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation . A broadcast of " Pinewood Derby " in Mexico was pulled , allegedly due to its depiction of Mexican President Felipe Calderón . " Fatbeard " was praised by the crew of the USS Bainbridge , which was involved in the 2009 rescue of the MV Maersk Alabama from Somali pirates .

The 13th season received mixed reviews : some critics called it one of South Park 's strongest seasons , while others claimed the series was starting to decline in quality . The season maintained the average Nielsen rating viewership for the series , around 3 million viewers per episode . The episode " Margaritaville " , which satirized the global recession then affecting much of the industrialized world , won the 2009 Emmy Award for Outstanding Animated Program ( for Programming Less Than One Hour ) .

= = Episodes = =

= = Production = =

= = = Crew = = =

Series creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone were the executive producers of the 13th season of South Park , along with Anne Garefino . The season was distributed by Comedy Central , where the series has aired since its inception in 1997 . Frank C. Agnone II served as supervising producer , while Eric Stough , Adrien Beard , Vernon Chatman , Bruce Howell and Erica Rivinoja worked as producers . Parker also served as director and writer for the thirteenth season . Saturday Night Live cast member Bill Hader , who had previously worked as a consultant on the show , was credited as a producer starting in season 13 . Hader said of his role with the show , " It 's really Trey and Matt who kind of write everything , and you 're just in the room kind of helping them . Basically , I 'm friends with them and they 're just nice enough to invite me into the room and let me goof around . " Ryan Quincy served as director of animation during the 13th season .

= = = Development = = =

South Park was set to expire in 2008 , but in August 2007 it was announced the series would be renewed for at least three more seasons , extending it through 2011 . The new seasons , 13 , 14 and 15 , were each to consist of 14 episodes . Stone said of the announcement , " Three more years of South Park will give us the opportunity to offend that many more people . " Parker and Stone also announced they would partner with Comedy Central to create a Los Angeles ? based digital animation studio called South Park Digital Studios , which would serve as the center for all digital extensions of the South Park franchise and other animated projects .

Prior to the broadcast of the 13th season , Parker and Stone made every episode from the previous 12 seasons of South Park available for free viewing on the official series website , South Park Studios . New episodes from the 13th season were made available for one week after the original airdate , then removed for 30 days , after which they were returned to the site permanently . The episodes were uncensored and ad @-@ supported , so no membership fees were required to view the shows . In a statement , Parker and Stone said , " We got really sick of having to download our own show illegally all the time . So we gave ourselves a legal alternative . "

Two months before the 13th season premiered , South Park Studios announced that it would be the first season to be broadcast in high definition and presented in widescreen . Episodes from previous seasons were also converted to high definition . The season 's episodes first aired in the United States on Wednesdays at 10 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Comedy Central , and were repeated Wednesdays at 12 a.m. , Thursdays at 10 p.m. and 12 a.m. , and Sundays at 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. , all EST . The first seven episodes of the season aired from March 11 , 2009 , premiering with " The Ring " , and ended on April 22 with the mid @-@ season finale " Fatbeard " . The season returned with seven more episodes , resuming on October 7 with " Dead Celebrities " , and ending on November 18 with the season finale , " Pee " .

= = = Writing = = =

Continuing their practice from previous seasons , Parker and Stone wrote and produced each episode within the week before its broadcast date , although as in previous seasons , only Parker was listed as writer in the end credits . The duo conceived a list of episode ideas at the start of the season , but said they preferred to wait until the last minute to start working . Deadline pressure , they explained , energized them as if they were doing a live show . Stone said of the practice , " We kind of need that [ chaos ] to work . We 're , like , ' We have to do something right now . It 's going on the air in just a few minutes . ' " For example , three days before the broadcast of the season premiere , " The Ring " , the script was only half @-@ finished and the animation was incomplete . Likewise , they did not start work on " Whale Whores " until five days before the episode aired , and the scripts for " Margaritaville " and " Pee " were both still being finished the day before the episodes were first broadcast . Parker and Stone said " Dead Celebrities " was a particularly challenging episode to make ? they were up all night working on it the day before it aired , and did not finish until 11 a.m. on its broadcast date . Some critics have said that this short turnaround process helps South Park stay fresh and allows the show to address current events in a timely fashion .

The 13th season introduced the characters Katie and Katherine , stars of a television show , The Queef Sisters , that consists largely of vaginal flatulence jokes . They are female equivalents of long @-@ time characters Terrance and Phillip , who are initially angered at the competition from Katie and Katherine , but end up romantically involved with them . Season 13 also marked the final appearance of long @-@ time supporting character Gordon Stoltz , the third grade student who read the morning announcements for South Park Elementary . In the episode " Dances with Smurfs " , Gordon is murdered while reading the announcements by a gunman who mistakes him for a truck driver who slept with his wife . Some critics found the scene disturbing and inappropriate in the light of recent school shootings in the United States .

The running gag of killing protagonist Kenny McCormick continued , though he was killed only three times during the season : in the episode " The Ring " , he contracts syphilis after engaging in oral sex ; in " W.T.F. " , he is shot by a rocket launcher during a professional wrestling match ; and in " Pee " , he drowns in the urine that inundates the water park . During the final half of the season ,

aliens were hidden in images throughout the episodes as part of a contest offered by South Park Studios . Viewers able to find the alien in the episode could enter a contest , with the grand winner getting an animated version of himself or herself placed in the South Park opening credits starting the next season . In December 2009 , Matthew Kliner was announced winner of the contest .

= = = Cultural references = = =

The 13th season also continued a South Park tradition of lampooning celebrities and timely issues . The episode " Margaritaville " satirized the global recession affecting much of the industrialized world at the time of the episode 's broadcast . Parker and Stone said they had long planned to do an episode about the recession , but did not want to rush it because they wanted to make sure the script was strong . " Fatbeard " was based on real @-@ life piracy in Somalia , which began receiving increasing international media attention in 2008 ; the Somali pirates are portrayed in a sympathetic light in the episode . " Dances with Smurfs " parodied the political commentary of Glenn Beck , a nationally syndicated radio show host and Fox News Channel political pundit . In the episode , Cartman makes outrageous claims with no basis in fact under the guise that he is simply asking rhetorical questions and seeking further discussion , a practice for which Beck has been criticized .

The episode " Whale Whores " addressed the controversies surrounding Japanese whaling , condemning not only the whalers who engaged in the practice , but shows like Whale Wars and activists like television celebrity Paul Watson who profit from fighting whaling . " Butters ' Bottom Bitch " featured a scene in which Butters visits an ACORN office seeking benefits for prostitutes working for him , a reference to a similar 2009 scandal . The episode " Eat , Pray , Queef " demonstrated a double standard between rights of men and women by showing the South Park men , who have no problem with farting , strongly objecting to vaginal flatulence from women . The season finale , " Pee " , satirized the disaster film genre , especially the movie 2012 , which was released five days before the episode aired . Cartman interprets the large number of minorities at his favorite water park as a sign of the 2012 phenomenon , the prediction that cataclysmic events will occur in the year 2012 , which is said to be the end of the Mayan Long Count calendar .

" The Ring " featured parodies of the pop @-@ rock boy band Jonas Brothers and a foul @-@ mouthed , greedy , physically violent Mickey Mouse , satirizing the Walt Disney Company 's exploitation of family @-@ friendly morals to disguise its profit motive . " The Coon " served as a parody of dark @-@ toned comic book movies , like The Dark Knight ( 2008 ) , The Spirit ( 2008 ) and Watchmen ( 2009 ) . " Dead Celebrities " mocked numerous recently deceased celebrities , including Michael Jackson , Billy Mays and David Carradine , as well as the show Ghost Hunters . " Dances with Smurfs " mocked the 2009 James Cameron film Avatar , suggesting the plot borrows heavily from the film Dances with Wolves and comparing Avatar 's blue aliens to the cartoon Smurfs . The episode " W.T.F. " parodied professional wrestling in general and World Wrestling Entertainment in particular , highlighting the soap opera aspects of wrestling storylines and fans who believe the stories are real .

= = = Music = = =

Several original songs written by Parker and Stone were featured in the 13th season . The episode " Fatbeard " features a song , " Somalian Pirates , We " , in which Cartman and his crew of pirates sing in the style of the Golden Age of Piracy . In response to fan requests , the full 90 @-@ second version of the song was made available for download on South Park Studios the week the episode aired . The season finale , " Pee " , features a tune sung by Cartman , " ( Too Many Minorities ) Not My Water Park " , in which he despairs over the large number of African @-@ American , Hispanic @-@ American and Asian @-@ American patrons at his water park . Among other topics , Cartman expresses his anger about long lines full of minorities and park employees speaking Spanish rather than English . The episode " Eat , Pray , Queef " features " Queef Free " , a charity single recorded by the men of South Park after they realize women should be free to queef just as men are free to

part . The song has been described as a parody of such celebrities @-@ for @-@ charity songs as " We Are The World " .

The 13th season also featured or spoofed real @-@ life songs and bands . The episode " Fishsticks " , which prominently featured rapper Kanye West , includes a two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half minute song , " Gay Fish " , that parodies West 's " Heartless " . " Gay Fish " satirizes the rapper 's tendency to rely on audio processing to correct his mistakes in pitch . After " Fishsticks " aired , the full song was made available for download on South Park Studios . Several fake Jonas Brothers songs , with lyrics about the band members ' physical attractiveness , were written for " The Ring " . Some songs also emphasize the band 's belief in sexual abstinence , with lyrics like , " Who needs sex and drugs and partying when we can cook a meal and sit around and watch Netflix ? " The strongly erotic reactions of the young girls at their concert parody the frenzied female fan reactions the Jonas Brothers tend to elicit , even though their image projects wholesomeness and chastity . In the episode " Whale Wars " , Cartman plays the video game Rock Band and performs a rendition , praised by critics , of the Lady Gaga song " Poker Face " . On March 16 , 2010 , Rock Band developer Harmonix released this version of the song ( along with the original version ) as downloadable content for the game . In " W.T.F. " , during an audition for the boys ' professional wrestling league , one of the participants sings a Broadway @-@ style number ? parodying the song " Nothing " from A Chorus Line ? about why he wants to be a wrestler . The episode " Fatbeard " received considerable press attention after Ike stated in a letter he would " vomit his balls out through his mouth " if he had to hear anything more about Susan Boyle , the Scottish amateur singer who had recently gained worldwide attention for her performance of " I Dreamed a Dream " on Britain 's Got Talent .

= = Reception = =

= = = Reviews = = =

Ramsey Isler of IGN said South Park continued to be the " best animated comedy show on TV " during its 13th season . He said the season had some low points , particularly " Eat , Pray Queef " , but that episodes like " The F Word " and " Dances with Smurfs " delivered significant social commentary . Isler described " Fishsticks " as a well @-@ timed , hilarious episode that became a " phenomenon " . Ben Flanagan of The Tuscaloosa News said the 13th season was one of the strongest yet for South Park , and that the series continued its tradition of entertainingly combining gross @-@ out comedy with social satire . He wrote , " Whether they tackle the Jonas Brothers , Somali pirates , Kanye West , The Dark Knight , the current economic woes or just the frequent greed and foolishness of the human race , the show continues to solidify itself as not only the funniest show on TV , but the best . "

Not all reviews of the season were positive . A.V. Club writer Sean O 'Neal called it " one of the more hit @-@ or @-@ miss seasons of South Park in the show 's history " , but said he was confident the series could do better and that it had yet not entered the " staggering animal begging to be put out of its misery stage of a show 's lifetime " . He described the season as a " weekly exercise in South Park schizophrenia " , with some episodes faring better than others , although he said the first half of the season was generally strong . Josh Modell , also of the A.V. Club , agreed that the season was uneven , with several episodes " you kinda shrugged your shoulders at " , but others like " Butters ' Bottom Bitch " that he found " pretty damn funny " .

" Fishsticks " particularly attracted media attention , and some critics declared it one of the best episodes of the season . In the episode , Jimmy writes a joke that becomes a national sensation , while Cartman tries to steal the credit . A fictionalized version of rapper Kanye West fails to understand the joke . He cannot admit that he does not get it because , in reference to a perceived ego problem on the part of the real West , he considers himself a genius . On September 13 , 2009 , during the MTV Video Music Awards , West interrupted an acceptance speech by country singer Taylor Swift , walking on stage , grabbing the microphone and praising her competitor Beyoncé

Knowles . The incident received considerable press coverage and , as a result , Comedy Central rebroadcast " Fishsticks " for two straight hours on September 15 .

" The F Word " was especially controversial , even by South Park standards . In the episode , the South Park boys attempt to change the official definition of the word " fag " from an anti @-@ homosexual slur to a term describing loud and obnoxious Harley bikers . The uncensored word is voiced casually and very frequently throughout the episode . A.V. Club critic Genevieve Koski argued that " The F Word " advocates a philosophy that language is ever @-@ changing and that taboo words receive their stigma purely due to social circumstance . Although some LGBT activists accepted that the episode had noble intentions , the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation nevertheless objected to it , claiming that it still used " fag " as a means of insulting others and could be unintentionally harmful to the gay community . Some critics praised the episode and said it addressed an important and difficult issue , whereas others felt the satire was ineffective and unfunny .

= = = Celebrity reactions = = =

Some celebrities who were spoofed in 13th season episodes responded to their portrayals . The day after " Fishsticks " aired , 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 . The blog post drew substantial media attention ; 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 . " Carlos Mencia , host of the Comedy Central show Mind of Mencia , was also spoofed in " Fishsticks " . He is portrayed as knowingly stealing credit for a joke he did not write , which is a reference to accusations other comedians have made that Mencia plagiarizes jokes from other people . After the episode aired , Mencia wrote on his Twitter feed , " They just made fun of me on South Park . I thought it was hysterical . Catch the rerun . "

In " The Coon " , Butters suspects heavysset comedian Bruce Vilanch is Cartman 's superhero alter ego based on his physique . After the episode aired , Vilanch sent a card to Parker and Stone thanking them for referring to him . Shortly after " Whale Whores " aired , Paul Watson said he was not offended by his portrayal in the episode , and was glad South Park brought the issue of dolphin and whale slaughter , and the Japanese role in it , to a large audience . After Billy Mays appeared in " Dead Celebrities " , his son Billy Mays III said he loved the episode and found its portrayal of his father tasteful and respectful . Jason Hawes and Grant Wilson , the stars of Ghost Hunters who were also mocked in " Dead Celebrities " , said they loved the parody and encouraged fans to watch the show on their Twitter accounts . The day after " Dances with Smurfs " originally aired , Glenn Beck discussed the episode on his radio program and said he took the parody as a compliment . The Jonas Brothers ' publicist specifically forbade reporters from asking the band members about their portrayal in " The Ring " . Nevertheless , Nick Jonas said , " We are always open to make fun of ourselves . "

" Pinewood Derby " drew considerable media attention in Mexico when it first aired due to its depiction of Mexican President Felipe Calderón . The episode was due to air in Spanish on MTV Latin America on February 8 , 2010 , but it was pulled a few hours before the scheduled time . Media reports indicated the decision stemmed from the episode 's depiction of Calderón irritating the international community and frivolously spending alien @-@ provided " space cash " on water parks . MTV said the South Park creators did not get a special permit needed to broadcast an image of Mexico 's flag , but the explanation was met with skepticism by Mexican South Park fans , some of whom accused MTV of censorship .

" Fatbeard " included prominent references to the April 2009 hijacking of the MV Maersk Alabama by Somalian pirates . The crew of the USS Bainbridge , the Arleigh Burke ? class guided @-@ missile destroyer that participated in the rescue of Richard Phillips from Maersk Alabama , contacted the South Park creators to commend them on the episode . Ensign Jonathan Sieg , the Bainbridge public relations officer , wrote , " Pretty much everyone onboard our ship ? from Captain to seaman

? is a huge fan of South Park , and when we heard about the episode ' Fatbeard ' , as you can imagine , we were thrilled and very interested to watch . "

== Ratings ==

The 13th season of South Park generally maintained the average Nielsen rating viewership for the series , around 3 million viewers per episode . The season premiere , " The Ring " , was seen in 3 @. @ 41 million households . That would prove to be the largest individual viewership for any Comedy Central show that season , outperforming even a highly anticipated and publicized episode of The Daily Show involving Jon Stewart 's ongoing feud with CNBC and pundit Jim Cramer . The 13th season of South Park received its lowest viewership in the episodes " Dances with Smurfs " , seen in 1 @. @ 47 million households ; " W.T.F. " , seen in 1 @. @ 37 million households ; and " The F Word " , seen in 1 @. @ 99 million households . However , " The F Word " was the highest rated show of the season among viewers between ages 18 and 49 , and outperformed The Jay Leno Show , NBC 's primetime talk show . The season finale , " Pee " , was seen in 2 @. @ 87 million households , which made it the most watched cable show of the night . Likewise , " The Coon " , seen in 3 @. @ 27 million households , was the most watched cable program among ages 18 to 49 the week it aired . Several episodes from the 13th season of South Park were the most watched Comedy Central shows the week they aired , including " Margaritaville " ( 2 @. @ 77 million households ) , " Fatbeard " ( 2 @. @ 59 million households ) , " Eat , Pray , Queef " ( 3 million households ) and " Fishsticks " ( 3 @. @ 1 million households ) . The latter two episodes were watched by over 1 million more viewers than the network 's second @- @ highest @- @ rated shows in their respective weeks .

== Awards ==

Parker and Stone decided to submit " Margaritaville " for an Emmy Award because they had received a large amount of positive feedback about the episode from adult viewers . Since most Emmy voters are older , they decided " Margaritaville " stood the best chance of winning . Stone joked , " If an Emmy voter were to watch this , they might think the show was smarter than it was , so they might be fooled into voting for us . " " Margaritaville " ultimately won the 2009 Emmy Award for Outstanding Animated Program for Programming Less Than One Hour against competing nominees Robot Chicken , The Simpsons and American Dad ! . The victory marked the third consecutive Emmy win for South Park , which won in the same category in 2007 for the 10th season episode " Make Love , Not Warcraft " , and won the award for Outstanding Animated Program for Programming One Hour or More for the 11th season episode " Imaginationland " . Parker , Stone , Agnone , Stough , Beard , Howell , Rivinoja , Chatman , Hader and Quincy were all recipients of the Emmy .

In February 2010 , " Whale Whores " was nominated for a Genesis Award in the television comedy category . The Genesis Awards honor news and entertainment media for outstanding work that raises public understanding of animal issues . " Whale Whores " ultimately lost to the Family Guy episode " Dog Gone . "

== Home release ==

The season was released by Paramount Home Entertainment in the United States on March 16 , 2010 , on both DVD ( as a three @- @ disc set ) and Blu @- @ ray ( as a two @- @ disc set ) . Each set included all 14 uncensored episodes in 1080p video and Dolby TrueHD sound , as well as brief audio commentaries by Parker and Stone for each episode , seven deleted scenes , codes for unlocking a character and challenge levels in South Park Let 's Go Tower Defense Play ! on Xbox Live Arcade , and a special mini @- @ feature , Inside Xbox : A Behind @- @ the @- @ Scenes Tour of South Park Studios , describing the show 's animation process .