

= Fatbeard =

" Fatbeard " is the seventh episode of the thirteenth season of the American animated television series South Park . The 188th overall episode of the series , it originally aired on Comedy Central in the United States on April 22 , 2009 and in the United Kingdom on April 24 , 2009 . It was the mid @-@ season finale , marking the final South Park episode for six months . In the episode , Cartman misinterprets news reports about piracy in the Indian Ocean to mean the return of the classic era of swashbuckling pirates , and misleads a handful of South Park boys to voyage to Mogadishu to start a pirate crew .

The episode was written and directed by series co @-@ founder Trey Parker , and was rated TV @-@ MA L in the United States for strong to extreme language . " Fatbeard " was a reference to increasing international media attention to piracy in the Indian Ocean , and the script depicted the pirates in a sympathetic light . The crew of the USS Bainbridge , the Arleigh Burke @-@ class guided missile destroyer which participated in the rescue of the hijacked MV Maersk Alabama , contacted the South Park creators to praise them for the episode . " Fatbeard " received generally positive reviews and was seen by 2 @.@ 59 million households in its original broadcast , making it the most @-@ watched Comedy Central production the week it aired .

= = Plot = =

Having misunderstood the news about an upsurge of piracy in the Indian Ocean , Cartman excitedly tells his friends the classic era of piracy has returned , and asks the boys to join him in becoming a pirate in what he describes as a responsibility @-@ free life in a warm tropical paradise . Sensing an opportunity to get rid of Cartman once and for all , Kyle encourages him to go , even offering to help pay for his ticket . Although Butters , Ike , Clyde and Kevin are the only students who agree to join his crew , an undaunted Cartman uses his mother 's credit card to book a trip to Somalia . After a long flight and a 49 @-@ hour bus ride , the boys arrive in Mogadishu dressed as stereotypical pirates . Once there , however , they are shocked to find themselves in a desolate land , the complete opposite of their expectations .

They quickly find the pirates , who are shocked that anyone would knowingly venture into their base . The pirates decide to ransom the boys to the first European vessel they find . The boys confidently go with them , believing they are being taken to a pirate ship , but are once again disappointed when they are taken to a small motorboat . Eventually , the pirates find a French schooner and demand a ransom of five thousand euros in exchange for the boys ' lives . Meanwhile in South Park , Kyle happily claims partial credit for sending Cartman to Somalia and expects things will be better without Cartman around . But when his parents discover a farewell letter from Ike , Kyle realizes his brother has run off with Cartman to Somalia , and he sets off for Mogadishu to bring his brother home . Back in Somalia , the ransom is paid and the boys are surrendered . Once on board , however , Cartman assumes control of the schooner and orders the crew to get onto the lifeboat . Although the captain initially refuses , Kevin brandishes a toy lightsaber , frightening the French crew into abandoning ship . Cartman and the boys return to Mogadishu with the captured vessel , giving several bundles of Euros to the pirates . The pirates are initially shocked , but begin to respect Cartman . Unimpressed by their lack of " pirate " traits , he in turn leads them in raiding ships via a traditional sea shanty called " Somalian Pirates , We " , and starts fashioning them into a stereotypical pirate crew .

Meanwhile , the French crew is rescued by a cargo ship , and the U.S. Navy is deployed by NATO after getting word from the cargo ship captain that the pirates now have " advanced weaponry " (which was really just Kevin 's toy lightsaber , that the French crew thought was real) . Kyle arrives in Mogadishu , but is immediately taken captive by the pirates and held hostage . He pleads with Cartman to let him and his brother leave , but Cartman refuses , believing that Kyle is simply jealous of his new pirate life . Meanwhile , an English @-@ speaking pirate named Guleed asks Butters and Ike why they decided to become pirates . When they say that they left because they were tired of things like school , chores , homework , and being yelled at by adults , Guleed responds by telling

them that he dreamed of a simple life going to school , and that his mother is suffering with AIDS but cannot be treated , and his father was killed in an attempt to find food for his family . He never set out to be a pirate , but was forced into piracy to support his family . Realizing how close @-@ minded they 've been , Butters and Ike admit that a life of piracy is one of hardship and suffering , not fun and adventure like normal life can be . They then tell Cartman that they want to return home , but he refuses to give up his romantic delusions of grandeur and threatens the boys with death by calling the real pirates to hold them at gunpoint . However , Cartman 's vision is quickly disrupted when a U.S Navy ship hired by NATO appears off the coast carrying snipers , who shoots all of Cartman 's pirate colleagues with a single gunshot to each of their heads . This leaves Cartman dumbfounded and annoyed .

= = Production = =

" Fatbeard " was written and directed by series co @-@ creator Trey Parker . It originally aired on Comedy Central in the United States on April 22 , 2009 and was the mid @-@ season finale , marking the final South Park episode until October 2009 . " Fatbeard " is based on real @-@ life piracy in the Indian Ocean , which began receiving increasing international media attention in 2008 until its demise in 2012 / 2013 .

The episode began production two weeks before its airdate , with the intention to broadcast it on April 15 , 2009 . The writing team had developed the idea for Cartman mistaking Somalian piracy for classic piracy amid the pirate hijacking of the MV Maersk Alabama at the time . Captain Richard Phillips was taken hostage in the event , and Parker and Stone decided to hold the episode indefinitely , although animation had begun . Realizing the severity of the situation ? if Phillips were killed and the South Park episode seemed to mock the situation ? they decided to resume work on the episode " Pinewood Derby " , which had been in production for a while , as the creators had no idea to where to go with its story . When Phillips was rescued over the weekend , they wanted to resume work on " Fatbeard " , but as animation work on the episode proved difficult , including new sets depicting Somalia , it was decided it would be unfeasible .

The episode 's ending was unusual , as many episodes of South Park tend to resolve the episode 's events ; in " Fatbeard " , the main characters don 't return home and are shown at the end still in Somalia . An alternate ending made it to the animatic stage , in which Cartman , in a self @-@ referential manner , congratulates the show on the conclusion of the season and invites the season 's celebrity parodies (among those the Jonas Brothers and Kanye West) . The ending , which Parker likened to that of a variety show , was something he felt was funny in writing but didn 't succeed visually .

While most South Park episodes feature Parker and Stone providing almost all the voice acting , " Fatbeard " included several French @-@ speaking actors providing the lines of the schooner crew . Outside voice actors were also brought in for the role of the Somalian pirates , including Abdi Fatah Adawe , Dahir Ali , Abdullahi Prime , and Julien Zeitouni . The week after its original broadcast , in response to requests by fans , the full 90 @-@ second version of episode 's sea shanty song , " Somalian Pirates , We " was made available for download on South Park Studios , the official South Park website . Shortly after " Fatbeard " was originally broadcast , the site also featured six different types of T @-@ shirts and hooded sweatshirts based on the episode .

= = Themes = =

The ending , in which the pirates are each shot to death by American snipers , reflects the resolution of the pirate hijacking of the MV Maersk Alabama in April 2009 , where U.S. Navy SEALs rescued the captain after three snipers simultaneously killed three pirates with one shot each . They are portrayed in a particularly sympathetic light when they are killed during the ending . Travis Fickett of IGN said , " It 's one of those moments where South Park feels the need to give voice to a side the media is ignoring ? and points out that things aren 't quite as cut and dry [sic] as we might like . " The episode has also been described as a commentary on the way in which Americans tend

to take their relative wealth and comfort for granted . A U.S. Navy SEAL ordering another to " not hit the white ones " has also been described as an indictment of the American approach to foreign policy .

= = Cultural references = =

Ike indicates he will " vomit my balls out through my mouth " if he has to hear anything more about Susan Boyle , the Scottish amateur singer who gained worldwide attention around the time of the episode 's airing for her performance of the song " I Dreamed a Dream " from Les Misérables on the show Britain 's Got Talent . The Boyle reference in particular received a great deal of media attention the week " Fatbeard " first aired . Cartman says that Jewish people , Mexicans , and ginger @-@ haired people are not allowed to be pirates . The French schooner crew members are portrayed as pretentious cowards , a stereotype of the French based on the government 's surrender during World War II . The schooner itself strongly resembles the French luxury yacht Le Ponant , which was seized by Somali pirates in April 2008 . Cartman refers to Blackbeard , the famous English pirate from the 17th and 18th centuries , from whom the episode derives its name . Much of the décor and music in the episode is influenced by the Pirates of the Caribbean theme park ride and associated film franchise . Kevin wields a toy lightsaber , the Jedi weapon from the Star Wars films ; this is also a reference to the sixth season episode " The Return of the Fellowship of the Ring to the Two Towers " , in which he dresses as an Imperial stormtrooper while the rest of the boys are in Lord of the Rings attire .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Fatbeard " was watched by 2 @.@ 59 million overall households , according to the Nielsen ratings , making it the most @-@ watched Comedy Central production of the week . The episode received generally positive reviews . Carlos Delgado of If magazine , who gave the episode an A- grade , particularly praised the Cartman and Ike characters and called the ending " perfect " . Delgado said of the show 's creators , " These guys see episode potential in nearly everything that passes through the news desk . And because South Park can be made in like a week ? and I ? m talking start to finish , from concept to finished product ? they end up being the most socially conscious and timely show on television today . " Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly praised the episode and the Somalian pirate song , and complimented the show for presenting the pirates as sympathetic human beings . Sean O 'Neal of The A.V. Club said the portrayal of Somalian pirates was a predictable storyline , but said he enjoyed the episode because of the pacing : " Rather than a cobbled @-@ together collection of gags , everything progressed very organically . " IGN writer Travis Fickett said the episode was amusing but not exceptional . Fickett enjoyed the takeover of the French vessel and the extent to which Cartman 's delusion about pirates takes him , but he said the pirate plot " isn 't entirely in good taste (and) it never really gathers a full head of steam " .

The crew of the USS Bainbridge , the Arleigh Burke @-@ class guided missile destroyer which participated in the rescue of Richard Phillips from the hijacked MV Maersk Alabama , contacted the creators of South Park 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 . " Sieg requested copies of the episode because the streaming online video was difficult to watch on the ship , and the South Park staff in return sent them a care package including several copies of the episode . On the official South Park Studios FAQ , they wrote back , " No , sir , thank you . We were honored to read that , and making an episode about you kicking pirate booty was our pleasure . "

= = Home release = =

" Fatbeard " , 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 .