

= Headline News (song) =

" Headline News " is a parody song by " Weird Al " Yankovic . It is a parody of the Crash Test Dummies 's 1993 hit " Mmm Mmm Mmm Mmm " . It was released as the lead @-@ off single for the compilation box set Permanent Record : Al in the Box on September 27 , 1994 . The song was written after Yankovic 's label insisted he craft a new song to promote the album ; Yankovic in turn combined the music of the Crash Test Dummies ' song with three news stories that were popular in late 1993 and early 1994 .

To help promote the song and album , Yankovic directed a music video that was a direct parody of the Crash Test Dummies ' original . In it , the three news stories are presented as if they are one @-@ act plays before an audience of people . The video took two days to film and ended up running over the allotted time that had been scheduled for filming . The resulting video was also extremely expensive to fund . Several notable individuals made cameos in the video , such as Doug Llewelyn , Dr. Demento , Yokozuna and Judy Tenuta .

The song and video were met with mostly positive reviews from critics , although at least one critic noted that the source material would soon become dated . The Crash Test Dummies were very pleased with the final result and even performed the song with Yankovic in concert twice . " Headline News " charted at number four on the Billboard Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles chart , making it Yankovic 's first single to chart domestically since 1992 's " Smells Like Nirvana " .

= = Writing = =

While Yankovic was writing the original songs for a new album ? which was later released in 1996 as Bad Hair Day ? his label , Scotti Brothers Records , insisted that he release a new record in order to meet monetary projections for the fourth fiscal quarter of the year . Yankovic , however , explained that he would be unable to finish a new record in time , so his label decided to release a box set entitled Permanent Record : Al in the Box . The label then stipulated that Yankovic would need to at least record a new single to promote the box set .

Yankovic had previously heard " Mmm Mmm Mmm Mmm " during 1994 and felt that it was " one of two or three songs " that could be potentially parodied . He noted that it " would be really good to do for the next album " , but felt that " when the time is right , [he would] think of something " to write the parody about ; he then returned his attention to writing original songs . After Scotti Brothers insisted on the writing of a new lead single , Yankovic very nearly had his label cancel the box set due to being unable to write under pressure . However , he soon returned to the idea of parodying " Mmm Mmm Mmm Mmm " . He decided to pair the song 's music up with " all the weird news stories that were going on " and make each verse its own vignette . Yankovic also felt that by doing this and releasing it on the box set , he would be able to capitalize on the topicality of the issues .

= = Recording and lyrics = =

Recording for the song itself started on July 27 , 1994 , at Santa Monica Sound Recorders in Santa Monica , California . Backing Yankovic were Jon " Bermuda " Schwartz on drums , Steve Jay on bass , Jim West on guitar , and Kim Bullard on keyboards . Lisa Popeil provides the female backup vocals , as well as the scream of Nancy Kerrigan . The song also features various idiosyncratic elements to increase the humor . The song features manualist Mike Kieffer , who produces the flatulence @-@ esque sound effects heard near the end of the song . Additionally , the ending features a chorus of kazooes , and Yankovic plays a short riff of the song on his trademark instrument , the accordion . Yankovic himself produced the session . Due to the vocal part of the original being in such a low register , Yankovic had to record the parody 's vocal tracks early in the morning , when his voice was naturally lower .

While the original song 's verses each told the story of three abnormal children , each verse of " Headline News " tells the story of three famous tabloid stories of 1993 and 1994 : Singapore caning American delinquent Michael Fay , figure skater Tonya Harding 's then @-@ boyfriend attacking her

rival Nancy Kerrigan , and Lorena Bobbitt severing her husband 's penis with a knife . In the last verse , Yankovic substitutes the term " penis " with euphemisms like " wiener " and " Mr. Happy " . Yankovic later joked that he " wanted to write a song about these people because [he didn 't] think they 're getting quite enough media attention " , a reference to the stories ' over @-@ saturation in the news .

= = Music video = =

The music video for " Headline News " parodies the " Mmm Mmm Mmm Mmm " video in that it presents each news story as a one @-@ act play on stage before an audience of people . The video was directed by Yankovic , making it his third directoral credit after 1986 's " Christmas at Ground Zero " and 1993 's " Bedrock Anthem " . Yankovic appears as Brad Roberts , and his band appears as the other members of the Crash Test Dummies ; notably , the video also marks the on @-@ screen debut of Yankovic 's official keyboardist , Rubén Valtierra , who appears in drag as Ellen Reid . The video was filmed on August 29 and 31 , 1994 . All of the scenes that took place at the school were filmed during the day at Longfellow Elementary School Auditorium , in Pasadena , California . The scenes at the ice rink were filmed at night in a rink in Paramount , California . According to Yankovic , the crew ran over time and it was a rather expensive video . Yankovic noted that " without giving you the actual number " , he could have " recorded two albums , probably , for what it cost to do that one video . " The video features several celebrity cameos , including an appearance by Doug Llewelyn of People 's Court fame , and long time radio show host Dr. Demento . Comedianne Judy Tenuta also appears as Lorena Bobbitt .

= = Release = =

= = = Reception = = =

" Headline News " was released on September 26 , 1994 , as the lead @-@ off single for Permanent Record : AI in the Box , which was also released a day later . Yankovic also insisted that the song be commercially available as a CD single so that his fans who are completists would not have to purchase the expensive box set just to get the new song . Much like the cover for the Crash Test Dummies 's 1993 studio album God Shuffled His Feet , the cover for Yankovic 's single superimposes his faces over the figures of Titian 's painting Bacchus and Ariadne . The art direction is credited to Doug Haverty , and design is credit to Daniel Sorenson , David McDougall . The b @-@ side of " Headline News " was a remix of Yankovic 's 1986 original song " Christmas at Ground Zero " . The song was never officially released on a studio album , although it did appear on Yankovic 's Greatest Hits Volume II album , which was released a month later on October 25 , 1994 . The single charted and peaked at number four on the Billboard Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles chart , which corresponds to a position of 104 on the Billboard Hot 100 . This made it Yankovic 's first domestically charting single since 1992 's " Smells Like Nirvana " .

Brad Roberts , the original songwriter for " Mmm Mmm Mmm Mmm " was extremely pleased with the parody , and found it humorous . He later noted that , " People assume that I was annoyed but when [Yankovic] does a parody of you , you know you 've made it . " He later praised the way Yankovic interacted with the artists that he parodies , noting that " Weird Al goes the whole route and cultivates a relationship with the artist . Plus he gets half the earnings and that helps me make money . "

= = = Reviews = = =

" Headline News " received mostly positive reviews from music critics . Lou Carlozo of the Chicago Tribune wrote that the song " provided savage laughs at the expense of Tonya Harding and John Bobbitt . " Roch Parisien of Allmusic cited the song as one of the three stand @-@ outs from

Yankovic 's second greatest hits volume , and called it a " rib @-@ tickler " . Tina Maps of The Milwaukee Journal wrote a positive review and felt that the musical parody was a " dead @-@ on skewering of the Crash Test Dummies ' ' Mmm , Mmm , Mmm , Mmm " . Not all reviews , however , were so positive ; an article that appeared in The Commercial Appeal noted that while the video for " Headline News " had some " cute bits and unusual cameos " , it was " not as clever as many of Yankovic 's past efforts " and that " the current events included here are already dated " .

= = = Live performances = = =

Yankovic first started performing " Headline News " in August 1994 , almost a month before it was officially released . In addition , Yankovic has performed the song with the Crash Test Dummies twice : once on Canada 's MuchMusic channel and another time at the House of Blues in Los Angeles . Reportedly , during one of the performances , Ellen Reid , backing vocalist and keyboardist for the Crash Test Dummies , went out and purchased kazoos . The band then hid the instruments until the end of the song , when they took them out and played them ; this " came as a big surprise to " Yankovic . Yankovic 's Straight Outta Lynwood concert tour contained new lyrics as part of a parody medley , referencing Britney Spears , dealing with her 2007 head @-@ shaving shock and underpants @-@ less limousine trip in late 2006 . Later in the tour , he changed it to reference Paris Hilton 's DUI and imprisonment , and her subsequent interview on Larry King Live .

= = Track listing = =

CD single

" Headline News " ? 3 : 46

" Christmas at Ground Zero (Alternate Mix) " ? 3 : 07

= = Charts = =

= = Credits and personnel = =

" Weird " Al Yankovic ? Lead and backing vocals , accordion , production , arrangement

Jim West ? guitar

Steve Jay ? bass guitar

Jon " Bermuda " Schwartz ? drums

Kim Bullard ? keyboards

Lisa Popeil - backing vocals

Mike Kieffer ? manualism

Tony Papa ? engineering