

= Excellence in Broadcasting =

" Excellence in Broadcasting " is the second episode of the ninth season of the animated comedy series Family Guy . It originally aired on Fox in the United States on October 3 , 2010 . The episode features anthropomorphic dog Brian , an adamant liberal , confronting conservative radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh at a book signing in Quahog , and ultimately having a political change of heart when Limbaugh convinces him to read his latest book . Brian eventually decides to become a devoted member of the Republican Party , and soon begins criticizing liberals . This leads Brian to become roommates with Limbaugh , and begins following him everywhere , before Limbaugh convinces Brian of his true political convictions .

The episode was written by Patrick Meighan and directed by John Holmquist . It received mixed reviews from critics for its storyline and many cultural references , in addition to receiving both praise and criticism from conservative news outlets . According to Nielsen ratings , it was viewed in 7 @.@ 94 million homes in its original airing . As well as Limbaugh , the episode featured guest performances by Gary Cole , Christine Lakin , Phil LaMarr , Shelley Long , Nana Visitor and Rainn Wilson , along with several recurring guest voice actors for the series . " Excellence in Broadcasting " was released on DVD along with three other episodes from the season on December 13 , 2011 .

= = Plot = =

In light of " And Then There Were Fewer " , the Griffins watch on the news where Tom Tucker reveals that Diane Simmons committed the murders at James Woods ' mansion and is now dead . Tom then introduces Diane 's successor , Joyce Kinney . As Lois reads the newspaper , she discovers that conservative radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh is holding a book signing in Quahog , causing Brian to decide to confront Limbaugh about his political beliefs . At the signing , Limbaugh is criticized by Brian , he asks him whether he has read any of his books , leaving Brian dumbfounded and angry . Brian is mugged by a gang ; Limbaugh defeats them all . Thankful , Brian agrees to read Limbaugh 's book , and overnight becomes a conservative Republican . Lois questions Brian 's conviction , citing his past liberalism , while Brian defends his ability to change his mind based on new information . Lois mentions that Brian goes out of his way to not agree with the general consensus on many things ( for example , he hated Slumdog Millionaire and Titanic but defends the movie Cocktail ) , and accuses him of being a " contrarian " rather than a genuine believer . Brian meets with Limbaugh to thank him for helping his political conversion , and the two travel to the Republican National Headquarters , where they are greeted by former President of the United States George W. Bush and United States Senator John McCain .

Returning home , Brian informs Lois that Limbaugh will be coming over for dinner . That night , Lois and Peter begin arguing and challenging Limbaugh politically . Deciding to confront Limbaugh for brainwashing Brian , Lois demands for their dog to go back to the way he used to be . Limbaugh insists Brian became a conservative on his own terms , and the two sing a number based on " The Company Way " , " Republican Town " . Angered , Brian decides to move out and become roommates with a reluctant Limbaugh . Brian begins to irritate Limbaugh with his blind devotion . He replaces lots of Limbaugh 's possessions with American @-@ Made versions , which all go wrong . Deciding to follow Limbaugh to his radio show , Brian attempts to voice his own political opinions on the air about Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi , causing Limbaugh to become frustrated and throw him out . Deciding to prove his devotion to the conservative cause , Brian attempts to waterboard Pelosi before being apprehended and arrested . After being bailed out by Limbaugh later that day , Brian continues to assert his conservatism . Limbaugh attempts to convince Brian he is only fighting against the Establishment due to his desire of being the underdog . He tells Brian that a child was executed in Texas and Brian is visibly horrified ; Limbaugh then says that he made up the story , but Brian 's honest reaction to it shows he is a liberal at heart . Reassuring Brian of his liberal convictions , Rush leaves the jail , making a Grapes of Wrath @-@ like pledge to " be around " wherever conservative causes need help . Outside , they heckle each other with reassurance , and the episode ends with Limbaugh then transforming into a bald eagle and flying away into the skyline

= = Production and development = =

First announced by series creator and executive producer Seth MacFarlane in an interview on August 13 , 2009 , the episode was written by series regular Patrick Meighan , and directed by series regular John Holmquist shortly after the conclusion of the production of the eighth season . In the interview , with The Hollywood Reporter , MacFarlane conceded that " Family Guy tends to be very liberal because " it 's written by liberals . " In choosing the conservatives who would be featured in the episode , MacFarlane stated , " we put it out there to a lot of Republicans ? ' we 're doing this show , who wants in ? ' ? and we got some bites . " Series regulars Peter Shin and James Purdum served as supervising director , with Andrew Goldberg , Alex Carter , Elaine Ko and Spencer Porter serving as staff writers for the episode . Composer Walter Murphy , who has worked on the series since its inception , returned to compose the music for " Excellence in Broadcasting " . It is the first episode to feature a high @-@ definition opening credit sequence .

On The Rush Limbaugh Show on September 27 , 2010 , Limbaugh explained that he agreed to do the episode based on his continuing friendly relationship with Family Guy creator and executive producer Seth MacFarlane , commenting , " Seth appreciates and has a great affection for professionals , and we 're all professionals here . " Limbaugh went on to reveal that he was in the studio 's sound booth for " three or four days at four hours at a time , " while recording his lines for the episode , as well as for the accompanying musical number , which Limbaugh admitted to being something of a challenge . Later on his radio show , Limbaugh went on to criticize 20th Century Fox 's public relations department , following a comment by author and commentator Andrew Breitbart , accusing the Fox Broadcasting Company of " burying " the episode . Limbaugh also admitted , however , that " there was nothing in the script that [ he ] would want them to edit out . "

" Excellence in Broadcasting " , along with the two other episodes from Family Guy 's ninth season , was released on a three @-@ disc DVD set in the United States on December 13 , 2011 . The sets include brief audio commentaries by various crew and cast members for several episodes , a collection of deleted scenes and animatics , a special mini @-@ feature which discussed the process behind animating " And Then There Were Fewer " , a mini @-@ feature entitled " The Comical Adventures of Family Guy ? Brian & Stewie : The Lost Phone Call " , and footage of the Family Guy panel at the 2010 San Diego Comic @-@ Con International .

In addition to the regular cast and Limbaugh , actor Gary Cole , actress Christine Lakin , voice actor Phil LaMarr , actress Shelley Long , actress Nana Visitor and actor Rainn Wilson guest starred in the episode . Recurring guest voice actors Chris Cox , actor Ralph Garman , and writers Danny Smith , Alec Sulkin , John Viener and Wellesley Wild also made minor appearances .

= = Cultural references = =

In the opening scene of the episode , the Griffin family are shown watching the syndicated television show The Brady Bunch , with Mike and Carol Brady then appearing in bed with one another . After Lois discovers that Limbaugh will be appearing at a book signing in Quahog , Chris references a previous episode , " FOX @-@ y Lady " , in which Limbaugh appeared as a character created by actor Fred Savage , which was subsequently reported on by Lois for Fox News . The episode featured a brief cameo appearance of conservative character Stan Smith from Seth MacFarlane 's second show , American Dad ! .

The scene of Limbaugh rescuing Brian is an almost shot @-@ for @-@ shot homage to the scene of Mr. Miyagi rescuing Daniel in The Karate Kid . Returning home after being saved by Limbaugh , Brian begins watching the NBC comedy series The Office , featuring actor and comedian Rainn Wilson . Deciding to thank Limbaugh for his newfound conservatism , Brian is taken by Limbaugh to the National Republican Party headquarters in Washington , D.C. , in order to meet former President of the United States George W. Bush and United States Senator John McCain from Arizona . McCain then recalls when he and Limbaugh solved mysteries together . A parody of the animated

television series Scooby @-@ Doo is then shown , including McCain and Limbaugh capturing United States Congressman Barney Frank from Massachusetts , disguised as a mummy .

After deciding to sing a song entitled " Republican town , " several political figures are shown and parodied , including former Vice President of the United States Dick Cheney , President of the United States Barack Obama , and former Presidents of the United States Jimmy Carter , Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton . Actors Mickey Rourke , Chuck Norris and Jon Voight also appear , while Voight 's " pretty hot at one time " daughter is Angelina Jolie . The song " Republican town " is a parody of the song " The Company Way " from the musical How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying .

= = Reception = =

" Excellence in Broadcasting " was broadcast on October 3 , 2010 , as a part of an animated television night on Fox , and was preceded by The Simpsons , and Family Guy creator and executive producer Seth MacFarlane 's spin @-@ off , The Cleveland Show , and followed by the 100th episode of American Dad ! . It was watched by 7 @. @ 94 million viewers , according to Nielsen ratings , despite airing simultaneously with Desperate Housewives on ABC , the season premiere of Undercover Boss on CBS and Sunday Night Football on NBC . The episode also acquired a 3 @. @ 9 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , beating American Dad ! and The Cleveland Show in addition to significantly edging out both shows in total viewership . The episode 's ratings decreased significantly from the show 's season premiere .

Television critics reacted mostly mixed to " Excellence in Broadcasting " , calling the storyline " funny , " but " toothless . " In a simultaneous review of the episodes of The Simpsons and The Cleveland Show that preceded the show , and the broadcast of American Dad ! that followed it , The A.V. Club reviewer Rowan Kaiser noted , " most of the episode was spent justifying its existence as a Rush Limbaugh episode of Family Guy , " and that the episode " failed to do that . " In the conclusion of his review Kaiser praised Family Guy for its past political humor , but ultimately rated it as a D , the second worst rating , behind The Simpsons episode " Loan @-@ a Lisa " and the American Dad ! episode " 100 A.D. " , beating only The Cleveland Show 's F @-@ grade episode " Cleveland Live ! " . In a slightly more positive review , Jason Hughes of TV Squad praised Limbaugh 's appearance in the episode , commenting Limbaugh " certainly deserves credit for his willingness to participate and lend his own voice . " Hughes went on to comment positively on the episode 's debut of the high @-@ definition opening sequence , and its introduction of Joyce Kinney as a replacement for news anchor Diane Simmons , who was killed off in " And Then There Were Fewer . " Adam Markovitz of Entertainment Weekly wrote , " The show definitely skewered Brian ? s hardcore conservative conversion , but overall it seemed like a pretty fair fight . "

Limbaugh 's appearance in the episode has drawn both praise and criticism from news outlets , including Daniel Foster of National Review who commented , " It is to Mr. Limbaugh 's credit that he can make fun of himself . But Seth MacFarlane , the whiskey @-@ soaked Dada creator of Family Guy , is responsible for more sophomoric cartooning than the combined patrons of America ? s truck stop and dive bar bathrooms . " Foster went on to add , " I can only look at the Limbaugh @-@ MacFarlane mash @-@ up with a wary eye . " Columnist Matt Lewis of Politics Daily also questioned Limbaugh 's appearance on Family Guy , citing his support for former Governor of Alaska Sarah Palin , whose daughter , Bristol Palin , has openly criticized MacFarlane and called the show 's writers " heartless jerks . " In contrast , John Nolte of Andrew Breitbart 's Big Hollywood wrote , " What MacFarlane ? s doing fits exactly into our template . He ? s entitled to his opinion , worked very hard to reach the top of the most difficult business there is to succeed in , and in turn uses that forum to further his own agenda ? that ? s how it ? s supposed to work . But at the same time he doesn ? t completely shut us out . " Prior to the episode 's official broadcast on television in the United States , Jarett Wieselmann of the New York Post called Limbaugh 's guest appearance in the episode " genuinely funny , " and David Weigel of Slate commented , " I 'm not at all surprised that Limbaugh would embrace the show and answer its mockery of conservatives ; the plotline [ ... ] is a perfect conservative narrative . "

