

= Get Away From My Mom =

" Get Away From My Mom " is the pilot episode of the American animated sitcom Home Movies . It originally aired on United Paramount Network on April 26 , 1999 . In the episode , eight @-@ year @-@ old Brendon Small discovers that his mother , Paula , is set to have a date with Brendon 's soccer coach , the lazy , profane alcoholic John McGuirk . Brendon resents McGuirk for this and expresses his outrage throughout the episode . The date goes terribly and McGuirk and Paula decide to not pursue a relationship . Meanwhile , Brendon and his friends Melissa and Jason film a new movie about a rogue police officer .

The episode used retroscripting , a process by which the actors completely improvised all their dialogue lines , the first time this technique was used for an animated television production . Certain script material , however , was provided by series co @-@ founder Loren Bouchard , who also directed the episode . The pilot also utilized the " Squigglevision " style of animation which was used to produce the show for the entirety of its first season . In its original broadcast , " Get Away From My Mom " received a 1 @.@ 4 / 2 Nielsen Rating , the lowest UPN had ever received in that time slot . The episode received mixed reviews from television critics , particularly pertaining to its employment of improvisation .

= = Plot = =

After soccer practice , eight @-@ year @-@ old aspiring filmmaker Brendon Small shows his mother Paula a self @-@ made trailer for his upcoming film , The Dark Side of the Law , a crime film about a rogue police detective . Paula expresses indifference to the production . At breakfast the next morning , Paula informs Brendon she plans to go on a date that night with Brendon 's soccer coach , John McGuirk , much to Brendon 's chagrin . Brendon seeks advice from his friend Melissa and her father Erik , but they are unable to advise him as they are late for a violin recital .

When McGuirk shows up at Brendon 's house for the date that night , Brendon tries to scare him off by acting as if he is his son , but it proves unsuccessful . During the date , Paula becomes agitated at McGuirk 's inappropriate , boring subject matter , and she becomes drunk in order to entertain herself . Meanwhile , Brendon , Melissa , and their friend Jason film a scene from The Dark Side of the Law in Brendon 's basement , where Brendon 's character is in a French prison , confronted by his mother , played by Melissa . They stop filming when Jason 's nose starts running , and he demonstrates how he can move the mucus up and down to their disgust .

At soccer practice the next day , Brendon ? still upset with his mother 's decision to date his coach ? is uncooperative and chastises McGuirk for dating his mother , accusing him of desires to engage in a relationship with all the soccer players ' mothers . While being driven home by Erik , Brendon asks Erik to fight McGuirk as revenge , but Erik denies his request and suggests he take his mind off the topic by playing a car game . Eventually , Brendon decides to apologize to McGuirk for his behavior , and the two reconcile . Later , McGuirk and Paula decide over the phone to end their relationship , a decision Brendon overhears using three @-@ way calling .

At the next soccer game , Brendon 's team plays poorly , and an opposing player injures Brendon , which causes McGuirk to yell at the referee . While sitting out , Brendon spots Erik and Paula engaging in meaningless and casual flirtation in the bleachers , which Brendon interprets as another possible relationship .

= = Production = =

" Get Away From My Mom " was the first episode of Home Movies , which was created by Brendon Small and Loren Bouchard . The episode , as with the four subsequent episodes , demonstrated a writing style known as " retroscripting , " in which the cast completely improvised their lines . Main cast members Small , H. Jon Benjamin , Paula Poundstone and Melissa Bardin Galsky wrote the episodes , while Bouchard also contributed to certain dialogue material . The episode marked the first animated television production without a script .

Bouchard directed this first episode and the entire series . Along with the rest of the first season , the episode was animated using " squigglevision , " a technique pioneered by the show 's executive producer , Tom Snyder . The animation style consists of eight frames of looped " zigzagged " lines that stimulate the character 's mouth movement . This style was used to produce the series on its incredibly low budget and allow for the actors to improvise . The style was eventually changed during the second season to Flash animation , which was believed to be a more conventional style .

To make the young characters sound like children , instead of adults , recordings of the actors ' performances were electronically altered . Galsky was cast to play Melissa despite having no prior experience in voice acting . Galsky considers Bouchard the biggest benefactor to her career based on that decision . After recording sessions for " Get Away From My Mom " concluded , Small ( who voices Brendon ) and Benjamin ( who plays McGuirk ) went out to drink beers before going to see a concert . According to Small , the experience contributed to their understanding of the unique dynamic between the characters .

" Get Away From My Mom " is available on the DVD " Home Movies : The Complete First Season , " which was released on November 16 , 2004 . A bonus feature on the DVD enables an audio commentary track , recorded by Small , Bouchard , and Benjamin , to play over the episode . Though generally intended to be humorous and entertaining , the track also details actual information on the episode 's production .

= = Reception = =

" Get Away From My Mom " was originally broadcast on April 26 , 1999 on UPN at 8 p.m. The episode received a 1 @. @ 4 / 2 Nielsen rating , positioning it at 133 in total viewership for 1999 's May sweeps . This marked the lowest rated telecast the network had ever aired in its timeslot at the time .

The episode received generally mixed reviews from television critics . Writing for The Cincinnati Enquirer , John Kiesewetter criticized the show 's use of improvised dialogue : " The uneven plot and sophomoric bodily function jokes sound like these people were making it up as they went along . And they were . " Rob Owen , television critic for the Post @-@ Gazette , paralleled Kiesewetter and said that the episode was a " pitfall " of the improvisation process : " The half @-@ hour seems like a collection of scenes rather than a cohesive episode . " Owen called it " so lackadaisical , it 's hard to imagine UPN 's most recently announced target audience - young males - having any patience for the program . The entertainment value is low " , but did note that McGuirk 's scenes in the episode were " the closest to ha @-@ ha funny the show gets . "

Conversely , John Levesque called the show a " keeper " in his review for the Seattle Post @-@ Intelligencer and applauded the series subtle , improvised style . Chicago Sun @-@ Times journalist Phil Rosenthal commended the episode . In his review , he wrote , " Rather than big laughs , it 's more likely to elicit the grin of bemused recognition . It 's not about sight gags or clever puns . It 's not about parodying the sitcom form . This sweet ass series [ ... ] is not always subtle - unless a child showing another how to have fun with a runny nose is intellectual - but it nicely plays off the inherent absurdities and weirdness of everyday modern life . " Dennis Landmann of DVD Freak wrote that the episode " sets up the tone quite well , for it develops the aspirations of Brendon becoming a filmmaker , " and praised the confrontational scenes that occur between McGuirk and Brendon .