

= Focus Grill =

" Focus Grill " is the thirteenth episode of the fourth season and the series finale of the American animated sitcom Home Movies , and 52nd episode of the series overall . It originally aired in the United States on Adult Swim on April 4 , 2004 . In the episode , Brendon , Melissa , and Jason decide to finally film an ending to the first movie they did together .

" Focus Grill " was written by Brendon Small and directed by Loren Bouchard . Despite struggling with the knowledge of the show 's cancellation since the start of the fourth season production run , Small noted that this final episode was actually an optimistic note for the series . The episode concludes with Brendon 's camera breaking , which Small believed was a way to finally eliminate the hindrances of the character 's metaphorical crutch .

The final episode received a largely positive response , with reviewers praising it for its sentimental , bittersweet way of concluding the show .

= = Plot = =

Brendon , Melissa , and Jason decide to start screening their movies in front of a focus group that consists of their schoolmates Fenton , Junior , Perry , and Walter . The group members harshly criticize this latest movie , and in the midst of trying to find the flaw in it , the three friends discover that the first movie they ever made together ? in which they are a biker gang contemplating whether or not to fight an unknown adversary ? is missing an ending . The three cannot agree on a conclusion for the movie , so they decide that each of them will create their own , and then screen the three potential endings in front of the focus group . All of their endings , however , are harshly criticized . The three sit down and watch a reel composed of scenes from several of their film projects ; they come to the consensus that their movies are designed only for them and should not actually be seen by anyone else .

Meanwhile , Coach McGuirk volunteers to assemble Paula 's large and complicated new grill , but he proves to be both incredibly inexperienced and largely incompetent at performing such a task . When McGuirk believes that he has finally completed the grill , he gathers Paula and the three kids together to witness its first ignition , but he ultimately causes a large explosion . The five go off on a drive , covered in soot , and Brendon accidentally drops his camera on the road , where it is run over by a car . He groans " oh no , " and almost begins to tell the others about what had just happened , but ends up getting drawn into a conversation about where to go for dinner .

The episode and series concludes with Paula , McGuirk , Jason , Melissa , and Brendon chattering about tapas , as Brendon 's broken camera briefly shoots an empty road before the picture flickers and turns to static .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Home Movies co @-@ creator Brendon Small , and was the final episode of the series ' production run . The episode was the fifty @-@ second of the series , a number that allows for an even distribution of reruns of the series ; Small noted that the technique is normally used on animated children 's shows , though Home Movies is actually created for an adult audience .

Small knew before writing the episode that it would be the last . Mike Lazzo , executive vice president of Adult Swim , had never " responded to the show " as Small had noted , which was in stark contrast to Vice President of Original Series Khaki Jones , whose enthusiasm over the series was what Small admitted to keeping it alive . During the production run for the fourth season , Lazzo had informed the crew bluntly that the season would conclude the series , explaining , " No matter what the numbers are , no matter what happens ? we 're not going to bring the show back . "

Having been informed of this definite end of the series ' run , Small decided to write " Focus Grill " with the intention of it concluding the show . While penning the teleplay , he kept in mind the knowledge that " nothing positive [is] happening " ; however , Small did admit that the final scene of

the episode ? Brendon 's camera breaking on the road ? was actually an optimistic footnote in the series ' narrative . Small considers that now that Brendon is without his camera , " he doesn 't need this crutch anymore . That he can actually start living his life as an actual earthling . "

" Focus Grill " , like all episodes , was directed by co @-@ creator Loren Bouchard , and as with every episode of Home Movies after its first season , the episode was animated using Macromedia Flash . The Squigglevision animation program is briefly used in one scene in the episode , where Brendon , Melissa , and Jason watch various movies of theirs from throughout the series , some of which are from the first season , in which the show utilized Squigglevision .

= = Reception = =

" Focus Grill " originally aired on Adult Swim , a cable network that shares channel space with Cartoon Network , on April 4 , 2004 . After the episode aired , Small received several e @-@ mails from various fans , who told him that watching the episode had made them cry . The episode received a largely positive response from reviewers . C.S. Strowbridge of The Numbers wrote that it was " able to really wrap up the series in a great way and show why the characters acted the way they did " , and praised it for " [showing] some real character development . " Pop Matters ' Jesse Hassenger described it as both " bittersweet " and " hilarious " .

Writing for his DVD Talk review of the show 's tenth anniversary DVD boxset , Jason Bailey considered the episode " especially strong , drawing the series to a fine full circle , both structurally and thematically . " Bailey concurred with Hassenger 's description of it as bittersweet , writing : " It 's an affectionate send @-@ off , bittersweet and kind of wonderful and therefore perfectly in tone with this charming little show . " Nate Meyers of Digitally Obsessed described it as the epitome of the show 's various themes , including childhood , art , and family , calling it " a slightly nostalgic episode " ; he considered it an excellent way to close the series , writing " Acting as probably both a reflection of the show 's staff at the time and a final send off , I can 't think of a better way to send Brendon Small and Loren Bouchard 's creation into the sunset . "