

= The Sue Sylvester Shuffle =

" The Sue Sylvester Shuffle " is the eleventh episode of the second season of the American musical television series Glee , and the thirty @-@ third episode overall . It was written by Ian Brennan , directed by Brad Falchuk , and was broadcast immediately following Super Bowl XLV on February 6 , 2011 . In the episode , an effort to dispel student rivalry forces the McKinley High football team and glee club to unite . When cheerleading coach Sue Sylvester (Jane Lynch) withdraws her squad from the halftime show of a championship football game , the disparate groups must come together to perform a routine and win the game .

Reportedly the most expensive post @-@ Super Bowl episode ever produced , " The Sue Sylvester Shuffle " cost \$ 3 ? 5 million . It featured over 500 extras , including an array of stunt artists . News anchor Katie Couric guest @-@ starred as herself , provoking controversy by making a jibe about television personality Dina Lohan . The episode featured cover versions of five songs , including a dance performance of " California Gurls " by Katy Perry and a mash @-@ up of Michael Jackson 's " Thriller " with " Heads Will Roll " by the Yeah Yeah Yeahs . Series creator Ryan Murphy had considered using the episode as a musical tribute to Jackson . The performances were met with mixed reception from critics . With the exception of " California Gurls " , each of the numbers were released as singles , available for download . The " Thriller / Heads Will Roll " mash @-@ up was the highest charting in all regions , peaking at number seventeen in Australia .

In the US , the episode was watched by 26 @. @ 8 million viewers , and was the highest @-@ rated scripted TV broadcast in three years . It received a mixed response from critics , who differed over its accessibility to the Super Bowl audience . Several criticized the repetitive theme of football versus glee club rivalry , finding " The Sue Sylvester Shuffle " below typical Glee standards .

= = Plot = =

Sue Sylvester (Jane Lynch) , the coach of the McKinley High School cheerleading squad , grows disillusioned with the sport , and in an effort to recapture her love for it , plans to fire Brittany from a cannon during the team 's next competitive routine . Meanwhile , football coach Shannon Beiste (Dot @-@ Marie Jones) has the school football players join the glee club , New Directions , in order to dispel rivalry between the students . In revenge for opposition to her cannon plan , Sue has the cheerleading Regionals competition moved to the same night as a football championship game , so her cheerleaders will be unavailable for the halftime show , and forces the affected squad members to resign from the glee club . New Directions ' director Will Schuester (Matthew Morrison) announces that the club members , including the football players , will perform the halftime routine , planning a mash @-@ up of Michael Jackson 's " Thriller " with " Heads Will Roll " by the Yeah Yeah Yeahs . He notices and encourages the talent of Dave Karofsky (Max Adler) , a bully who has previously acted violently towards the glee club members . When the football players are attacked by members of the school hockey team , Karofsky encourages them to quit the glee club , resulting in Beiste barring them from the championship game .

To ensure that the game goes ahead , glee club members Rachel (Lea Michele) , Mercedes (Amber Riley) , Tina (Jenna Ushkowitz) and Lauren (Ashley Fink) join the football team . The game begins badly for the McKinley side , and when Tina is injured during a play , captain Finn Hudson (Cory Monteith) takes control of the situation . He has club member Puck (Mark Salling) convince the former football players to return , and convinces cheerleaders Santana (Naya Rivera) , Brittany (Heather Morris) and his ex @-@ girlfriend Quinn (Dianna Agron) to quit the cheer squad and perform at the halftime show . Only Karofsky refuses to participate , but when he sees the positive reaction the crowd has to the routine , he joins in himself . Beiste welcomes the football players back , and they go on to win the game by intimidating the opposing side , dressed as zombies from the halftime routine .

Sue 's cheer squad loses at Regionals for the first time in seven years , and she is named Loser of the Year in a televised interview with Katie Couric . Furthering her ire , the cheerleading budget is slashed due to the cannon being seen as endangering the lives of children . The money is then

handed over to the glee club so they can pay to go to regionals . Karofsky dismisses Finn 's suggestion that he join the glee club permanently . Finally , Quinn kisses Finn , telling him that his actions have reminded her of why she loved him .

= = Production = =

" The Sue Sylvester Shuffle " is reported to be the most expensive post @-@ Super Bowl episode in television history , as well as the most expensive episode of Glee , costing \$ 3 ? \$ 5 million . Filming was halted on December 10 , 2010 as a result of several cast members contracting tonsillitis . An outbreak of the flu soon followed , and filming of the " Thriller " performance was delayed by four weeks . The episode was co @-@ sponsored by General Motors , allowing for limited commercial breaks . The Glee cast featured in a two @-@ minute Chevrolet commercial during the episode . Based on the season one episode " Mattress " , they gave an in @-@ character performance of " See the USA in Your Chevrolet " .

Series creator Ryan Murphy intended " The Sue Sylvester Shuffle " to feel thematically similar to the pilot episode , with the central idea being " music bringing disparate people together . " Co @-@ creator Brad Falchuk explained that one of the series ' core conflicts had always been the idea of " two worlds " within McKinley High : the glee club and the popular students . He stated that this discord would be brought to a head in the episode .

News anchor Couric made a guest appearance in the episode as herself . She was a fan of the series prior to her casting , having praised its handling of subject matters such as homosexuality , disabilities and teenage pregnancy . Brian Stelter of The New York Times noted that her appearance was unusual , as anchors from rival networks ? in Couric 's case , CBS ? do not typically make cameos on their competitors ' programs . Series regular Chris Colfer and recurring guest star Darren Criss were not included in the original draft of the script , but were added by series creator Murphy in a late revision . Other recurring characters who appear are football coach Shannon Beiste , glee club members Mike Chang (Harry Shum , Jr .) , Sam Evans (Chord Overstreet) and Lauren Zizes , cheerleader Becky Jackson (Lauren Potter) and school bullies Dave Karofsky and Azimio (James Earl) . Two new football @-@ playing characters were introduced : Scott Cooper and Strando , who E ! columnist Kristin dos Santos reported might have an increased role in the series as it continued . However , they did not make any additional appearances on the show in its second season . Additionally , producers hired fire breathers , jugglers , and bicycle motocross stunt performers for the episode . 500 extras were used , as well as the University of Southern California Trojan Marching Band . In January 2011 , entertainment website Zap2it reported that Filipina singer Charice would appear as exchange student Sunshine Corazon , performing The Black Eyed Peas ' " Meet Me Halfway " with rival glee club Vocal Adrenaline . However , Murphy later stated that Charice would not return to Glee until the end of the year , though she ultimately also made an appearance before then in " A Night of Neglect " .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

In the US , " The Sue Sylvester Shuffle " was watched by 26 @.@ 8 million viewers , and received a rating / share of 11 @.@ 1 / 29 Nielsen rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , marking the highest rating for a Glee episode . This also made the episode the highest @-@ rated scripted broadcast of a TV series in three years . The episode continued a trend of declining Super Bowl lead @-@ out show retention . It attained a higher rating than the last scripted lead @-@ out show , The Office episode " Stress Relief " , which followed Super Bowl XLIII , but was down 31 percent on the premiere episode of the reality television series Undercover Boss , broadcast after Super Bowl XLIV . Both ratings and viewership significantly increased from the previous Glee episode , " A Very Glee Christmas " , which was viewed by 11 @.@ 07 million US viewers and received a 4 @.@ 4 /

13 rating / share in the 18 ? 49 demographic upon its initial airing .

In Canada , where the episode was also broadcast on February 6 , 2011 , it attained 2 @. @ 16 million viewers and was the ninth most @- @ watched show of the week . Viewership declined from the previous episode , which was watched by 2 @. @ 37 million viewers and ranked fifth for the week . The episode 's Australian broadcast , on February 14 , 2011 , drew 1 @. @ 13 million viewers , making Glee the fourth most @- @ watched program of the night and the most @- @ watched in the 18 ? 49 demographic . It placed tenth in the weekly viewership rankings . Here , viewership registered an increase of approximately 47 % over the previous episode , " A Very Glee Christmas " , which aired on February 7 , 2011 , attracted 769 @, @ 000 viewers , and failed to reach the top fifty for the week . In the UK , the episode was watched by 2 @. @ 64 million viewers (2 @. @ 21 million on E4 , and 433 @, @ 000 on E4 + 1) , becoming the most @- @ watched show on cable for the week .

= = = Critical response = = =

The episode was met with mixed response from critics . Robert Bianco of USA Today found it lacking in plot and a driving moral , however felt that it was acceptable as a standalone episode ? one which could be enjoyed by fans and new viewers alike . In contrast , Vicki Hyman of The Star @- @ Ledger commented that despite the football @- @ centric plot , the episode would be hard to follow for new viewers brought in by the Super Bowl , requiring too much knowledge of previous storylines . New York 's Willa Paskin felt that Murphy demonstrated " utter contempt " for the potential new audience . She suggested that the McKinley High football team were used as a metaphor for new viewers ? who could come to love Glee if they embraced its musical numbers ? but found this insulting as the team are portrayed as being ignorant and intolerant . Kevin Fallon of The Atlantic found the episode lacking in Glee 's " usual acerbic wit and emotional heft " , and criticized the under @- @ use of Colfer and Criss .

Highlighting a general malaise with the show , Lisa de Moraes of The Washington Post deemed Sue 's boredom with cheerleading a meta @- @ reference to the series itself . Both she and Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club noted negatively the repetition of familiar storylines , such as the football team vs. glee club rivalry and Sue 's attempts to destroy the club . VanDerWerff observed that Glee " keeps tossing the same elements into the hat and coming out with similar results , as though the only thing anybody ? s putting any effort into are the musical numbers . " He graded the episode a " C " , calling it " boring " . Time 's James Poniewozik also commented on the repetitive premise , suggesting that the jocks versus geeks plot was the one most likely to be accessible to the new audience . He found the episode " easily forgettable " overall , criticizing the flat characterization , but noted that even when the series frustrates him , he continues to love Glee for , not in spite of , its inconsistency .

IGN 's Robert Canning also found the long @- @ running football vs. glee storyline repetitive , but wrote that the football players joining glee club was " a welcome twist " , however convoluted and unrealistic . He rated the episode 8 / 10 , finding it " preposterously fun " . Entertainment Weekly 's Ken Tucker considered the episode " at once in @- @ your @- @ face and under @- @ handed , very clever about its very cynicism . " He noted that while he had become jaded with Glee , he enjoyed " The Sue Sylvester Shuffle " , summarizing that , " Everything in this episode was chaotic and topsy @- @ turvy , but you never had the feeling the silliness was getting away from the producers . It all came together . "

Rick Porter of Zap2it criticized Katie Couric 's cameo for an attack made against Dina Lohan . During her interview with Sue , Couric lists Lohan and her dog Sparky as failed Loser of the Year contenders . In a previous episode , Glee also mocked Lohan 's daughter , Lindsay . Porter felt that the jibe diminished Couric 's journalistic credibility , deeming the Lohans easy targets . However , Canning called Couric 's cameo " perhaps the funniest part of the episode " , and de Moraes stated that the best line of the episode comes when Sue " looks Katie Couric right in the eye and says , ' I hate you , Diane Sawyer . ' "

The Daily News 's Soraya Roberts expressed relief that the writers were not gullible enough to have

Karofsky end the episode by joining the glee club . Amy Reiter of the Los Angeles Times opined that Karofsky 's character development was the best element of the episode , but found his conflicted emotions convoluted , and was pleased that he was victimized by the hockey team .

= = Music = =

= = = Performances = = =

Murphy initially intended the episode to be the second of the season paying tribute to a single band or artist , following the Britney Spears tribute episode " Britney / Brittany " , and considered covering songs by Elton John , Prince , The Beatles , Bruce Springsteen or Michael Jackson . Although several artists agreed to a tribute , ultimately it was decided that songs by multiple acts would be covered . Katy Perry 's " California Gurls " was used as the opening number , performed as a dance routine by the school cheerleading squad , the Cheerios . Paying homage to Perry 's original music video , one element features the cheerleaders appearing to shoot fire from their breasts . Falchuk , the episode 's director , stated that the sequence was included to attract male Super Bowl viewers who would not ordinarily watch Glee . Rachel and Puck perform a duet of Lady Antebellum 's " Need You Now " , intended to showcase the merits of glee club . Finn leads a performance of The Zombies ' " She 's Not There " as the halftime show warm @-@ up number , and rival a cappella choir the Dalton Academy Warblers perform Destiny 's Child 's " Bills , Bills , Bills " , led by Blaine . A mash @-@ up of Jackson 's song " Thriller " with " Heads Will Roll " by the Yeah Yeah Yeahs was used as the final number . In early reports relating to the episode , Lynch claimed that Couric and Morrison would perform a dance number to " Tea for Two " , Vincent Youmans and Irving Caesar 's song from the 1925 musical No , No , Nanette . This rumor was later dispelled by Murphy .

= = = Commentary = = =

Musical performances also attracted mixed commentary . Though Perry was reportedly excited by the performance of her " California Gurls " , it was poorly received by critics . VanDerWerff found it surprisingly " weak and lifeless " , and Fallon called it " slow , unfunny , and , quite frankly , boring . " Reiter also deemed it boring , describing it as " an elaborate smorgasbord without flavor " , and Rolling Stone 's Erica Futterman criticized the uninspired , over @-@ the @-@ top choreography .

The performance of " Need You Now " was praised by Raymund Flandez of The Wall Street Journal , though he branded it a " disastrously tactless " song choice . Both he and Jenna Mullins of E ! Online questioned the likelihood of a country ballad enthusing the football players toward glee club . Entertainment Weekly 's Breia Brissey graded the performance " B + " , enjoying the union of Puck and Rachel , but finding it lacking in originality . She gave the same grade to " She 's Not There " , appreciating the way the song choice complemented the episode 's Finn / Quinn storyline . VanDerWerff also received the performance positively , calling it one of the season 's better numbers , and Futterman felt that Monteith 's vocals were a " perfect fit " for the song , appreciating the initially odd choreography for making the performance more interesting . Reiter was frustrated by the costuming , writing that the zombie makeup made the choreography difficult to follow .

Brissey 's lowest grade , a " B ? " , went to " Bills , Bills , Bills " . Though she enjoyed the a cappella cover , Brissey found it incongruous in context , opining that Glee 's best performances are those linked to the storylines , allowing viewers to invest in their message . Several critics voiced similar complaints while enjoying the song itself , including Mullins , Futterman and the Houston Chronicle 's Bobby Hankinson . Tucker felt that it had " more snap and vigour " than the final number , but also disapproved of its awkward inclusion , writing that it impacted negatively on the episode 's momentum . Fallon gave the track an entirely positive review , suggesting that it should have been the episode 's opening number and lauding it as " surprising , oozing with charm , and actually kind of joyous . " CNN 's Lisa Respers France embraced the " completely random and bizarre " song choice , writing that it reminded her of the first season , " when [she] never knew what to expect

and [...] was often happily surprised . " Reiter too reviewed it favorably , calling it the best performance of the show . She appreciated the focus on facial expressions during the performance , in contrast to the elaborate costuming which she felt distracted from other numbers .

Bianco preferred the intimacy of " Bills , Bills , Bills " to " Thriller / Heads Will Roll " , which both he and Hyman criticized for its overproduction and editing . While Bianco found the final number anonymous , Hyman and Futterman approved of the performance overall , particularly for the makeup and costuming . Flandez and Brissey compared it favorably to the Super Bowl XLV halftime performances , with Brissey stating that the mashup did Jackson justice and giving it her highest grade of the episode , an " A ? " . Roberts wrote that the performance " lived up to the pre @-@ show hype " , but felt that the rest of the episode " paled in comparison " . VanDerWerff commented favorably , " For the few minutes that number was on the screen , Glee was nearly everything it could be , blending fun music with insane production values and characters coming to certain emotional realizations in the moment , heightened as it is by the music . "

= = = Chart history = = =

" Bills , Bills , Bills , " " Need You Now , " " She 's Not There " and " Thriller / Heads Will Roll , " were released as singles , available for digital download . The last three tracks are also included on the series ' sixth soundtrack album , Glee : The Music , Volume 5 , and the first is also included on the seventh soundtrack album , Glee : The Music Presents the Warblers . Each song charted on the Billboard Hot 100 , and all but " She 's Not There " placed on the Canadian Hot 100 and Australian ARIA Charts . In the US , three of the four tracks debuted on the February 10 , 2011 issue : " Bills , Bills , Bills " entered at number 79 , " Need You Now " at number 72 , and " Thriller / Heads Will Roll " at number 75 . The February 17 , 2011 chart saw " She 's Not There " debut at number 87 , while " Bills , Bills , Bills " climbed to 44 , " Need You Now " to 62 and " Thriller / Heads Will Roll " to 38 .

In Canada , the three charting singles debuted on the February 11 , 2011 chart . " Need You Now " entered at its peak position of number 51 . " Bills , Bills , Bills " entered at number 86 and peaked the following week at 58 . " Thriller / Heads Will Roll " entered at 76 and peaked at 30 . The singles ' Australian release saw them enter the charts on February 21 , 2011 : " Bills , Bills , Bills " at number 71 , " Need You Now " at 46 and " Thriller / Heads Will Roll " at 17 . Having previously dropped out of the chart , the original Lady Antebellum version of " Need You Now " re @-@ entered at number 31 in the same week as the Glee cover . " Thriller / Heads Will Roll " also managed to chart in Ireland at number 37 and in New Zealand at number 38 .