

= A Rugrats Chanukah =

" A Rugrats Chanukah " , titled onscreen as " Chanukah " and sometimes called the " Rugrats Chanukah Special " , is a special episode of Nickelodeon 's animated television series Rugrats . The first episode of the show 's fourth season and the sixty @-@ sixth overall , it tells the story of the Jewish holiday Chanukah through the eyes of the Rugrats , who imagine themselves as the main characters . Meanwhile , Grandpa Boris and his long @-@ time rival , Shlomo , feud over who will play the lead in the local synagogue 's Chanukah play .

Raymie Muzquiz directed " A Rugrats Chanukah " from a script by J. David Stem and David N. Weiss . In 1992 , Nickelodeon executives had pitched the idea of a Chanukah special to the production team , but the concept was revised and became the 1995 special , " A Rugrats Passover " . After production of the Passover episode wrapped , the crew returned to the Chanukah idea . Nickelodeon broadcast " A Rugrats Chanukah " on December 4 , 1996 ; the episode received a Nielsen rating of 7 @. @ 9 and positive reviews from television critics . Along with other Rugrats episodes featuring Boris and his wife , the special attracted controversy when the Anti @-@ Defamation League compared the character designs to anti @-@ Semitic drawings from a 1930s Nazi newspaper .

= = Plot = =

On Chanukah , Grandma Minka reads a book about the meaning of the holiday to the babies Tommy , Chuckie , Phil , and Lil . The babies imagine that they are the story 's characters ; Judah ( Tommy ) is outraged by King " Antonica " , who has taken over the Jewish kingdom and forced Greek culture on its inhabitants . Judah leads an army of Jewish Maccabees to war against Antonica 's Seleucid Empire , emerging victorious . The story is left unfinished as Minka stops to help make latkes in the kitchen with her daughter Didi .

Meanwhile , Grandpa Boris is furious that Shlomo , a rival from his youth in Russia , is pictured in the local newspaper for playing the Greek king in the local synagogue 's Hanukah play , where Boris is portraying Judah . The babies find out about Shlomo and form the impression that he truly is the Greek king , whom they dub the " Meanie of Chanukah " . At the play that night , they attempt to storm on stage to defeat the " Meanie of Chanukah " , but are stopped and taken into the synagogue 's nursery . Angelica is in the nursery already and , vehement in her desire to watch a Christmas special that is airing that night , convinces the babies to help her break out and steal a television set from the custodian 's office .

Boris and Shlomo begin fighting on stage during the play , interrupting the production and inciting an intermission . Backstage , Shlomo and Boris argue once more , with Boris mentioning Shlomo 's dedication to his business pursuits over familial values . Shlomo informs Boris that he had a wife who died before bearing him children , making Boris feel sympathy for his rival . Angelica sprints backstage , bumping into Shlomo and inadvertently destroying the television set . Shlomo unsuccessfully tries to console her , but eventually lets Boris take over . Tommy hands Shlomo the Chanukah story book Minka read to the babies earlier ; Boris convinces Shlomo to read it to the children . In the conclusion of the story , the Maccabees rededicate the Holy Temple , and discover that there is only enough oil to light the Temple 's eternal flame for one day ; miraculously , it remains lit for eight . Shlomo 's reciting dissolves both the babies ' assertion of him as the " Meanie of Chanukah " and his and Boris ' rivalry .

= = Production = =

Nickelodeon executives pitched the idea of making a Chanukah special to the Rugrats production team in 1992 . Paul Germain , the show 's co @-@ creator , responded with a Passover special instead , as he considered it to be a " funny idea " and of " historical interest " . " A Rugrats Passover " was completed in 1995 ; the show was one of the first animated television series to produce a special for a Jewish holiday . After production wrapped on " A Rugrats Passover " , the crew

considered creating the Chanukah special that Nickelodeon had originally pitched . The episode was written by David Stem and David Weiss , and directed by Raymie Muzquiz . By the time Weiss came to write the teleplay , he had abandoned Christianity and converted to Judaism .

Paramount Home Video finished production of the home media version in July 1997 ; originally scheduling a release date of October that year , Paramount instead pushed the VHS release into 1998 . In time for Christmas 1997 , Paramount released the video Nickelodeon Holiday , which featured " A Rugrats Chanukah " and other holiday specials , such as " Hey Arnold 's Christmas " for US \$ 12 @. @ 95 ( equivalent to \$ 19 @. @ 09 in 2015 ) . On August 31 , 2004 , Paramount also released a DVD compilation titled Rugrats Holiday Celebration , which featured several holiday @-@ themed episodes , including " A Rugrats Chanukah " . Sarah Willson adapted the episode into the book , The Rugrats ' Book of Chanukah , illustrated by Barry Goldberg and published by Simon & Schuster in 1997 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

" A Rugrats Chanukah " was originally broadcast on December 4 , 1996 on Nickelodeon . Repeated twice that night , the episode received a Nielsen rating of 7 @. @ 9 in the show 's target demographic of children aged 2 ? 11 . On December 1 , 2001 , CBS broadcast the episode for the first time on its network , at 8 : 30 p.m. Eastern Time . Carrying a TV @-@ Y parental rating , it followed the Rugrats Christmas special , " The Santa Experience " . Nickelodeon has aired the episode throughout subsequent holiday seasons .

" A Rugrats Chanukah " received positive reviews from television critics , and is one of the most popular episodes of Rugrats . Delia O 'Hera of the Chicago Sun @-@ Times called it a " multigenerational tale " . Judith Pearl , in her book The Chosen Image : Television 's Portrayal of Jewish Themes and Characters , described the episode as a " fun [ treatment ] of Chanukah " . Chuck Barney of Knight Ridder and the Tribune News Service considered the episode a " hilariously imaginative take on the Chanukah legend " .

In a 1999 issue of TV Guide , " A Rugrats Chanukah " was listed at number 5 in their " 10 Best Classic Family Holiday Specials " . TV Guide later wrote that " Nickelodeon 's Rugrats secured its place in television history " with the episode , opining that it could " entertain a child of any religious denomination " . Ted Cox of the Daily Herald said that although the episode was not as good as the show 's Passover special ? which he considered " among the best holiday TV specials ever produced " ? it was " still noteworthy " . DVD Talk reviewer Francis Rizzo III wrote that the special " has a great historical opening " . In Flickipedia : Perfect Films for Every Occasion , Holiday , Mood , Ordeal , and Whim , Michael Atkinson and Laurel Shifrin said that the special was " ... a richer meal , even , for parents than for tykes " .

= = = Anti @-@ Defamation League controversy = = =

" A Rugrats Chanukah " , along with other Rugrats episodes featuring Boris and his wife , Minka , attracted controversy when the Anti @-@ Defamation League ( ADL ) charged that the two characters resembled anti @-@ Semitic drawings that were featured in a 1930s Nazi newspaper . Nickelodeon 's then @-@ president , Albie Hecht ( himself Jewish ) , professed bewilderment and called the accusation absurd . The controversy resurfaced in 1998 after the ADL made the same claims about Boris ' appearance in a Rugrats comic strip that ran in newspapers during the Jewish New Year . The organization was also offended by the character 's recitation of the Mourner 's Kaddish in the strip . Nickelodeon 's new president , Herb Scannell , agreed with the criticism and promised never to run the character or the strip again .

= = = Video = = =

Rugrats : " Rugrats Chanukah " Episode , Nick.com  
Rugrats Chanukah Clip , Nick.com