

= I Never Met the Dead Man =

" I Never Met the Dead Man " is the second episode of the first season of the animated comedy series Family Guy . It originally aired on Fox in the United States on April 11 , 1999 . The episode follows Peter Griffin as he teaches his daughter Meg how to drive . Due to his horrible advice they crash into a satellite dish , knocking out the city 's cable . Peter begins to suffer from television withdrawal but finds new life in outdoor activities , driving his family to exhaustion . Meanwhile , Stewie plots to destroy the world 's supply of broccoli with a weather control device so Lois cannot force him to eat the vegetable .

" I Never Met the Dead Man " was written by Chris Sheridan and directed by Michael Dante DiMartino , both firsts in the Family Guy series . Much of the episode 's humor , in standard Family Guy fashion , is structured around cutaway sequences that parody popular culture , including those centered on Wile E. Coyote and The Road Runner , Star Trek , Wizard of Oz , ALF , Gilligan 's Island , Bewitched , and Beverly Hills , 90210 . The title " I Never Met the Dead Man " was derived from 1930s and 1940s radio programs , particularly the radio thriller anthology Suspense , which featured several elements pertaining to death and murder . The episode featured guest performances by Erik Estrada , Butch Hartman , Aaron Lustig and Joey Slotnick , along with several recurring voice actors for the series . This episode was rated TV @-@ 14 .

Critical responses to the episode were favorable ; several television critics singled it out as among the " most memorable " episodes in the series and considered it to be an improvement over " Death Has a Shadow " .

= = Plot = =

Annoyed that Peter spends more time watching television than with his own family , Lois suggests he teach Meg how to drive . Peter reluctantly agrees , and unwittingly gives Meg a series of bad driving tips , including instructing her to " rev " her engine twice at stop lights and challenge other drivers to a race , which causes her to ultimately fail her driving test . As Peter drives them home from the DMV he notices that a show he wanted to watch is on television in a nearby house . Distracted by the show , he crashes the car into a main cable television transmitter , knocking out reception for the whole entire town of Quahog . Panicking , Peter makes a promise to Meg so that if she takes the blame for knocking down the cable transmitter , she would get a new convertible when she finally gets her licence . Once they arrive home with the transmitter still attached to the car , Lois becomes furious with Peter for placing the blame on his own daughter . Meg , of course , is blamed , and is about to admit the truth , but then decides to keep quiet , reflecting with an inner voice , a reference to The Wonder Years , at school . This shows an incredible lack of good judgment and morals by Peter . Meanwhile , Stewie , (seeing the opportunity of the dish attached to car) , steals the satellite dish in a plan to create a weather control device capable of destroying the world 's supply of broccoli , since Lois had forced him to eat the vegetable earlier that day .

Suffering withdrawal syndrome from the lack of cable , Peter straps a television @-@ sized cardboard cutout to himself , making it appear as though his whole world is actually a television program . When Meg can no longer deal with the public scorn , she reveals that her father is really responsible for Quahog 's loss of television , causing the town to turn against him . In an attempt to save Peter from further scorn and verbal attacks , Lois gives a heartfelt speech to the community about how television has kept them all from enjoying one another . Inspired by the speech , Peter drags the family to one outdoor activity after another , which quickly exhausts them . Once the family can no longer keep up with him , Peter decides to go off with William Shatner , who has appeared on the Griffin family doorstep after experiencing a flat tire , to a nearby festival . Meanwhile , Stewie 's weather machine creates a huge rainstorm . The storm 's lightning strike destroys Stewie 's weather machine and blows Stewie off the roof and on the ground . While Meg is practicing driving with Lois , the storm causes her to accidentally hit Shatner and Peter , killing Shatner and hospitalizing Peter . As her father recovers , in a full @-@ body cast , he is forced to watch television , causing him to become addicted once again , much to his family 's relief .

During the credits , Stewie tries (and fails) to make believe he is eating his broccoli by pouring it onto Brian 's plate .

= = Production = =

" I Never Met the Dead Man " was the first episode of Family Guy for both writer Chris Sheridan and director Michael Dante DiMartino . For the first months of production , the writers shared one office lent to them by the King of the Hill production crew . As with the remaining first four episodes of the season , the title of the episode was derived from 1930s and 1940s radio programs , particularly the radio thriller anthology " Suspense " , which featured several elements pertaining to death and murder . This convention was later dropped following the fourth episode of the season . In addition to the regular cast , actor Erik Estrada , writer and animator Butch Hartman , actor Aaron Lustig , actor Joey Slotnick and voice actor Frank Welker guest starred in the episode . Recurring guest voice actress Lori Alan also made minor appearances . The episode originally aired on April 11 , 1999 , nearly three months after the series premiere .

= = Cultural references = =

When Meg asks her mother to help teach her how to drive , Lois suggests Peter take her driving instead . With Peter refusing in order to continue watching an episode of Star Trek , actor William Shatner , as portrayed by series creator Seth MacFarlane , then appears on the screen .

Going on to suggest her father is not the best driver , Brian recalls a previous driving incident Peter had with Wile E. Coyote , in which he accidentally ran over the Road Runner in the middle of the desert . When Peter is concerned about the " Ostrich " he just hit Wiley tells him to keep going .

In school , when Meg is about to confess that her dad was actually the one who crashed the car , she reflects with an inner voice , a reference to the 1990s hit TV Show The Wonder Years .

Continuing to suffer a withdrawal from not being able to watch television , Peter has a Wizard of Oz @-@ inspired nightmare featuring Alf from the 1986 NBC sitcom ALF , Gilligan from the 1964 CBS series Gilligan 's Island , The Robot from " Lost in Space " , and Jeannie from " I Dream of Jeannie , " who promptly transforms into Samantha from the 1964 ABC series Bewitched .

After creating a cardboard cutout in the shape of a television , Peter walks around town with the contraption strapped to his waist , perceiving the actions around him as television . Two women talking over lunch suggests that he is watching the television station Lifetime , two elderly people out walking reminds him of CBS , a group of African Americans playing basketball suggests UPN , and James Woods High School reminds him of Beverly Hills , 90210 .

After TV service is restored and most of the Griffin family is watching Star Trek , James T. Kirk tells his crew that there is a dangerous mission in that someone will surely be killed . He says the landing party will consist of himself , Mr. Spock , Dr. McCoy , and " Ensign Ricky " (a redshirt) , who , upon being called , cynically says " Oh crap ! " , due to the television trope of oft @-@ related instances of redshirt ensigns being killed on the show . At the end of the episode , after Meg accidentally hits and kills Shatner with the Griffin family car , the group of people looking over includes the actor who played " Ensign Ricky " stating " Wow , I did not see that one coming . "

= = Reception = =

Reviews for the episode were generally favorable . A 2008 review of the episode by Ahsan Haque of IGN was positive , calling the storyline involving Stewie " elaborate [and] creative . " He gave the episode a perfect score of ten , calling it one of the most " memorable " episodes in the entire series . Haque went on to note that " the tightly woven and hilarious storyline , combined with a constant barrage of cleverly inserted random jokes , and some truly unique imagery help make this episode one of the finest in the series . This is Family Guy at its best , and definitely sets a very high bar for animated comedy . " Robin Pierson of The TV Critic rated the episode a 70 out of 100 , making it the highest @-@ rated episode of Family Guy on the site . Pierson described the episode as " A really

fun twenty two minutes of television . There are so many jokes to enjoy and they are more focussed than the pilot , " in particular praising the Fast Animals , Slow Children sequence .

In 2008 , Haque later listed Stewie 's plan to freeze broccoli crops as number one on his list of " Stewie 's Top 10 Most Diabolical Evil Plans " and placed Peter 's idea to pretend the world is a television program by attaching a cardboard cutout of a television set around his waist in fifth place on his list of " Peter Griffin 's Top 10 Craziest Ideas " .