

= The Ring (South Park) =

" The Ring " is the thirteenth season premiere of the American animated television series South Park . The 182nd overall episode of the series , it first aired on Comedy Central in the United States on March 11 , 2009 . In the episode , Kenny and his new girlfriend are encouraged by the Jonas Brothers to wear purity rings , which is secretly a marketing tactic by Disney to sell sex to young girls .

The episode was written and directed by series co @-@ founder Trey Parker and is rated TV @-@ MA L in the United States . It was the first South Park episode to premiere in 16 : 9 and high definition . Parker and Stone were not very familiar with the Jonas Brothers before they wrote " The Ring " , which was inspired by the recent release of Jonas Brothers : The 3D Concert Experience . The two argued over whether to open the season with this episode or an episode focusing on the economic recession (" Margaritaville ") , but eventually decided they needed more time to craft a script for the latter .

" The Ring " portrays Disney as a corporation using the ruse of family @-@ friendly morals to disguise their primary motive of profit , particularly through the portrayal of Mickey Mouse as a foul @-@ mouthed , greedy , and physically violent company president . The episode received generally positive reviews and , according to Nielsen Media Research , was seen by 3 @. @ 41 million viewers the week it was broadcast . The publicist for the Jonas Brothers specifically forbade reporters from asking the band about the episode ; although Nick Jonas said they did not watch it , he did say it was an honor to be included in the show . " The Ring " was released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray along with the rest of the thirteenth season on March 16 , 2010 .

= = Plot = =

To the amazement of all the other boys , Kenny has a girlfriend , fifth grader Tammy Warner . Butters hears a rumor that Tammy is a slut because she gave another male student a " B.J. " in a T.G.I. Friday 's parking lot , so Stan , Kyle , and Cartman , hoping to spare Kenny 's feelings , decide to warn him . To their bewilderment , Kenny 's reaction is excitement and happiness . Kenny invites Tammy to go with him to T.G.I. Friday 's after school , at which point she confesses that the rumor about her is true , but , not noticing his delight , explains that the only reason she did it was because she became aroused after watching the Jonas Brothers perform . Consequently , Kenny , hoping she will give him a " B.J. " as well , takes Tammy to a Jonas Brothers concert at the Pepsi Center , with his friends disgusted by his intent ; Cartman claims that " the most bacteria @-@ ridden place on the planet is the mouth of an American woman . "

After the concert , Tammy and several other girls are invited backstage , where they think the Jonas Brothers want to have sex with them . Instead , they convince girls to wear purity rings as a pledge to abstinence and tell them to get all of their friends to start wearing them as well because " That is just the way we roll " which is a reference to one of their songs . To appease his girlfriend , Kenny reluctantly begins wearing a purity ring . As Kenny becomes dull as a result and ceases to spend time with his friends , it is revealed that the Jonas Brothers are being forced to wear and promote purity rings by their boss , a fearsome , greedy , sadistic , and foul @-@ mouthed Mickey Mouse , who verbally berates and violently beats them when they complain that the rings are overshadowing their music and projecting the wrong message . Mickey explains that the rings allow him to sell sexual stimulation to young girls while giving the false appearance of innocence and purity . Concerned for their friend , Stan , Kyle , and Cartman attempt to confront the Jonas Brothers at a televised appearance in Denver , but Mickey , mistaking the boys for secret agents hired by DreamWorks (or Michael Eisner) to sabotage the televised appearance , tranquilizes them and takes them prisoner .

When the boys regain consciousness , they are backstage at the Jonas Brothers ' 3D concert at Red Rocks Amphitheatre . Mickey interrogates them and eventually threatens them with a chainsaw , refusing to believe they are not working for another company . As Mickey once again rants about his true intentions , this time insulting the Jonas Brothers ' fans and Christians , Kyle stealthily turns

on the microphone and Cartman raises the curtain , broadcasting Mickey 's rant to both the concert @-@ goers and the national television audience . The crowd turns on Mickey and the Jonas Brothers leave the stage in a huff . An enraged Mickey inflates to an enormous size and begins spitting fire and destroying Denver . Tammy and Kenny remove their purity rings , and Tammy suggests they go to T.G.I. Friday 's . The show immediately cuts to Kenny 's funeral , where the audience learns that he contracted syphilis after receiving a blowjob from his girlfriend Tammy Warner and died .

= = Production = =

" The Ring " was written and directed by series co @-@ founder Trey Parker . It was first broadcast on March 11 , 2009 in the United States on Comedy Central , and then aired two days later on satellite Paramount Comedy in the United Kingdom . It was the first episode of South Park 's thirteenth season and the first episode to be broadcast in high @-@ definition (HD) . Parker and Stone argued over whether to start the season with a Jonas Brothers episode or a show about the economic recession , which they had been planning to do for some time . Stone argued they should focus on the economy because it was the biggest news item at the time , but Parker felt they needed more time to craft the script , and that the Jonas Brothers would be a funny season opener . Stone ultimately agreed , and later admitted it was the right decision . An episode about the economy entitled " Margaritaville " was shown later in the season . By March 8 , three days before the episode premiered , the script was only half @-@ finished and the animation was not yet complete , in keeping with the practice of show creators Parker and Matt Stone to finish episodes upon last @-@ minute deadlines ; Stone said of the practice , " We don 't do a live show , but we kind of harness some of that energy . We kind of need that to work . We 're , like , ' We have to do something right now . It 's going on the air in just a few minutes . ' "

The Jonas Brothers characters were voiced by Parker and Stone , with Parker providing the voices for Kevin and Nick , and Stone voicing Joe , although the two switched characters on some lines . Parker also provides the voice of Mickey Mouse in " The Ring " . Parker and Stone were inspired to make the episode by the Jonas Brothers : The 3D Concert Experience film , which was released the previous month . Because they were unfamiliar with the band , they spent a large amount of time watching Jonas Brothers concert clips online , which they found unoriginal and not very enjoyable . Parker said one of the Comedy Central employees told them that after she took her young daughter to see the concert film , the girl said , " Mommy , my giney tickles " . Parker thought the story was hilarious and worked the exact line into the episode .

= = Theme = =

Reviewers and commentators have described " The Ring " as not just a parody of the Jonas Brothers and their songs (The songs parodied include " S.O.S " and " Burnin ' Up ") , but also of the ethos of the Walt Disney Company . The episode portrays Disney as a corporation using the ruse of family @-@ friendly morals to disguise their primary motive of profit ; reviewers and articles said this point is further illustrated by the use of Mickey Mouse , a cartoon symbol for the wholesome Disney image , as a foul @-@ mouthed , contemptuous , greedy , all @-@ powerful and violent character . Specifically , the episode targets Disney 's marketing tactic of the band members pledging abstinence through purity rings , which the script suggests is used to subliminally sell sex to young girls , while simultaneously appeasing the ethical standards of their parents and taking advantage of their fearful desire to protect their daughters , as Mickey had said . Parker and Stone said after watching footage of the Jonas Brothers , he found their embracing of purity rings particularly fascinating , especially since they were simultaneously stirring sexual feelings in young girls .

The episode further illustrates the greed of corporate culture by portraying Mickey as capitalizing on religion for profit , while secretly mocking it in a particularly cruel tone : " I 've made billions off of Christian ignorance for decades now ! And do you know why ? Because Christians are retarded !

They believe in a talking dead guy ! " " The Ring " ends with a tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek cautionary message against engaging in oral sex , depicting Kenny 's death from a sexually transmitted disease in the final moments of the episode . When asked whether Stone really believed purity rings were " lame " , as they were portrayed in " The Ring " , he said , " Well , I don 't know . I didn 't have one in high school , and I was still lame . "

= = Cultural references = =

The Jonas Brothers are parodied in " The Ring " and play a prominent role in the episode 's plot . In a television column written before " The Ring " was broadcast , Lisa de Moraes of The Washington Post suggested Parker and Stone were using the Jonas Brothers in the thirteenth season debut as a means of improving the show 's ratings ; Comedy Central executives insisted Jonas Brothers fans do not fit into South Park 's demographic of males between the ages 18 and 49 . The scenes with the Jonas Brothers using hoses to shoot foam into the faces of their female fans were inspired by actual scenes in Jonas Brothers : The 3D Concert Experience . Matt Stone said some viewers found it so unusual they believed the writers made it up themselves . The Walt Disney Company , the Disney Channel and the Mickey Mouse cartoon character are also prominently featured , and spoofed , in the episode ; even when Mickey Mouse says callous things or physically assaults people , he follows up most sentences with the character 's trademark high @-@ pitched " Ha @-@ ha ! " laugh , which in context comes off like a nervous tic .

The show Grey 's Anatomy is mocked in " The Ring " ; Kenny and Tammy , and the other characters who wear purity rings , develop a strong affinity for the show as they become more boring . (Incidentally several actors and actresses connected to Disney have appeared in the Disney @-@ produced Grey 's Anatomy , broadcast on a Disney @-@ owned network .) Those characters also frequently watch movies from Netflix , the popular online DVD rental service ; the company is referenced in one of the episode 's semi @-@ parodies of a Jonas Brothers song " I 've Got a Ring " (which parodies " SOS ") : " Who needs sex and drugs and partying when we can cook a meal and sit around and watch Netflix ? " T.G.I. Friday 's , a real @-@ life American restaurant chain , is referenced several times as the place where Tammy gave her ex @-@ boyfriend a blowjob . A can of Dr. Pepper appears repeatedly in the South Park Elementary cafeteria ; David Hiltbrand of The Philadelphia Inquirer said of the product placement , " I never thought I 'd see this type of crass commercialism turn up on South Park , which may be the most brazenly iconoclastic show TV has ever seen . "

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " The Ring " was watched by 3 @.@ 41 million viewers , according to the Nielsen Media Research , making it the second most @-@ watched Comedy Central production of the week , behind the Comedy Central Roast of Larry the Cable Guy , which was seen by 4 @.@ 08 million viewers . " The Ring " outperformed the March 11 and 12 episodes of The Daily Show , which received wide media coverage due to an ongoing feud between Daily Show host Jon Stewart and CNBC pundit Jim Cramer , who was a guest in the latter episode .

The thirteenth season premiere received generally positive reviews . Entertainment Weekly writer Ken Tucker gave the episode a positive review , showing approval of Kenny 's misadventure , saying " thus did South Park ultimately come down on the side of religion and sexual freedom , with lots of big laughs in the bargain Trey and Matt are off to a great 13th @-@ season start . " James Poniewozik of Time said " The Ring " was better than any of the twelfth season episodes . Poniewozik said the episode , " demonstrated that the cartoon is best when it focuses on the four kids and when it is driven by a white @-@ hot moral fury " . Travis Fickett of IGN also particularly applauded the Disney satire , which he said , " elevates this beyond shock humor and into sharp satire . " IGN gave the episode an 8 @.@ 4 score out of 10 .

Brad Trechak of TV Squad called " The Ring " a highlight of the season . Josh Modell of The A.V. Club gave the episode an A- grade , although he said it tended to become " heavy @-@ handed "

with its moral near the end . Modell said he particularly liked the reactions from the young girls at the Jonas Brothers concert , Kenny 's enthusiastic response to his girlfriend 's promiscuity and the line from the Jimmy Valmer character : " If you guys found out my girlfriend was a raging whore , I 'd want you to tell me . " In its list of top television moments for the week , TV Guide listed as number seven a line of dialogue from " The Ring " spoken by Butters : " A ring that says you 'll be together but not have sex . Isn 't that called a wedding ring ? "

Sonny Bunch of The Washington Times said , " The episode was both funny and smart , a wry commentary on the inherent trickiness of marketing a rebellious art form infused with sexuality to children who have no business being sexually active themselves . " Tamar Anitai , a blogger for MTV , said the episode was " hilarious " . He said " The South Park writers actually appeared to sympathize , if not side with , the Jonas Brothers ... In the end , Disney and Christianity ended up getting a far more severe skewering than the Jonas Brothers . " Alan Sepinwall , television writer for The Star @-@ Ledger , said he thought the Mickey Mouse character was used as an effective satirical device for corporate greed , but said he was not particularly impressed with the overall episode because " its targets ? the Jonas Brothers , and the Disney company for using them to sell sex to little girls with impunity ? were so easy to hit " . In contrast , Parents Television Council (PTC) , criticized the episode for such elements , and they named this episode the " Worst Cable Content of the Week " .

According to a news report by Canwest News Service , the Jonas Brothers ' publicist specifically forbade reporters from asking the band members about the South Park episode . Nick Jonas told the Orlando Sentinel that the band had not seen the episode : " We are always open to make fun of ourselves . For us , we 're so focused on what we 're doing with this tour and our album , we didn 't have much time to see it . "

In a 2016 AMA on Reddit , Nick Jonas reflected on the episode . " When it first came out I didn 't think it was funny to be honest , but probably because I was actually living all of that in real time , so it just made it harder to come and live your life as a young person and have all that going on , " he said . " But years later and once the purity rings were no longer around , it was very funny to me and I 've actually watched the episode a few times . "

= = Home release = =

" The Ring " , along with the thirteen other episodes from South Park 's thirteenth season , were released on a three @-@ disc DVD set and two @-@ disc Blu @-@ ray set in the United States on March 16 , 2010 . The sets included brief audio commentaries by Parker and Stone for each episode , a collection of deleted scenes , and a special mini @-@ feature Inside Xbox : A Behind @-@ the @-@ Scenes Tour of South Park Studios , which discussed the process behind animating the show with Inside Xbox host Major Nelson .