

= Volcano (South Park) =

" Volcano " is the second episode of the American animated television series South Park . It originally aired on Comedy Central in the United States on August 20 , 1997 . In the episode , Stan , Kyle , Cartman and Kenny go on a hunting trip with Stan 's uncle Jimbo and his war buddy Ned . While on the trip , Stan is frustrated by his inability to shoot a living creature and Cartman tries to scare the hunting party with tales of a creature named Scuzzlebutt . Meanwhile , the group is unaware that a nearby volcano is about to erupt .

The episode was written by series co @-@ creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone . It was inspired by the 1997 disaster films Volcano and Dante 's Peak , both of which Parker and Stone strongly disliked . The plot was also based on the large amount of hunting Parker and Stone witnessed while growing up in Colorado ; Stan 's hesitation about the sport mirrors Parker 's real @-@ life feelings about hunting . " Volcano " was the third episode produced , but it was broadcast as the second . Parker and Stone felt the computer animation in " Volcano " had greatly improved compared to the early episodes ; they were particularly pleased with the lava , which was made to resemble orange construction paper .

" Volcano " received generally positive reviews and was nominated for a 1997 Environmental Media Award . Slightly more than 1 million viewers watched the original broadcast , according to Nielsen ratings . The episode featured the first appearances of recurring characters Ned Gerblansky and Randy Marsh . The latter , who is also the town geologist , is established as Stan 's father in later episodes . It also marked the first of two appearances for Scuzzlebutt , who became a popular minor character and appeared in the video games South Park 10 : The Game and South Park Rally . The episode parodied the Duck and Cover educational videos from the 1950s and 1960s that advised people to hide under tables in the event of a nuclear attack .

= = Plot = =

Stan 's Uncle Jimbo and his Vietnam War buddy Ned take Stan , Kenny , Kyle , and Cartman on a hunting trip in the mountains . As they arrive , Jimbo explains to the boys how to hunt . Whenever they see a creature , they shoot it after yelling , " It 's coming right for us ! " , so they can claim the shooting was in self @-@ defense . Stan does not have the proper temperament to enjoy hunting , and finds himself unable to shoot a living target . Unlike Stan , Kenny is able to shoot animals , impressing Jimbo . Meanwhile , South Park geologist Randy discovers that the mountain on which the boys are hunting is a volcano that is about to erupt . He reports his findings to the Mayor , who directs one of her aides to make appropriate decisions about the crisis .

During the hunting trip , Jimbo proclaims Kenny his honorary nephew , upsetting Stan . When night falls , Cartman tells the story of Scuzzlebutt , a creature that has a piece of celery in place of one of its hands and Patrick Duffy for a leg . The boys are skeptical , so Cartman decides to dress up as the creature the next morning in order to convince and scare them . When he disappears the next morning , the others set out to find him . They then see Cartman disguised as Scuzzlebutt and start shooting at him . When they catch up with Cartman at the base of the mountain , Stan tries to shoot him in order to redeem himself in his uncle 's eyes . However , he is unable to do so and the delay gives Cartman time to remove the costume . At a lower elevation , Randy orders the South Park residents to dig a trench to divert the lava away from the town .

Suddenly the volcano erupts . The hunters try to flee , but find themselves trapped on the other side of the trench . The real Scuzzlebutt then appears , and Jimbo apologizes to the boys for their seemingly imminent deaths , just before realizing that Scuzzlebutt is weaving a wicker basket to carry the hunting party to safety . The lava then flows through the trench just as Randy planned , but due to a miscalculation he made , the trench leads the lava to Denver , destroying it . However , in a misguided attempt to prove he can kill something and impress his uncle , Stan kills Scuzzlebutt . Unfortunately for Stan , Jimbo is less than impressed , telling Stan that he will always be his nephew but that " some things you do kill and some you don 't . " Stan does not understand , since Jimbo tried to kill Scuzzlebutt earlier . Ned states that he now understands the folly of guns and drops his

rifle , which accidentally fires , killing Kenny . Finally , the boys decide that hunting is stupid and go home to watch cartoons .

= = Production = =

" Volcano " was written and directed by series co @-@ creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone . The episode was inspired by volcano @-@ related Hollywood disaster films , such as Dante 's Peak (1997) and Volcano (1997) , which came out around the time they were writing the script ; Parker and Stone considered the films two of the worst ever made . Stone said , " If you watch this episode and then go watch Volcano , this makes more sense than Volcano does . " Debbie Liebling , who served as a South Park producer at the time of the episode 's broadcast , said the volcano erupting in South Park helped establish the setting as a place where " anything can happen " . Although Stone and Parker acknowledged that a volcano could not actually erupt in this Colorado town , they felt they were entitled to create the episode anyway because the Volcano film was set in Los Angeles ; Stone said , " If they could do it , we could . " Similarly , the duo acknowledge the tunnel built in the episode would not really divert the lava , but they included it because Parker said , " Any movie today , that 's basically how dumb they are . "

Another influence on the plot was the large amount of hunting Parker and Stone saw around them while growing up in Colorado . Neither of them were hunters , and Parker said Stan 's hesitation about hunting was based largely on himself and his father , who hated the idea of killing an animal even though Parker 's grandfather , like Jimbo , was enthusiastic about the sport . Parker said he feels many of the first season episodes considered taboo in 1997 would have been considered less controversial five years later , but that " Volcano " is an exception . Since the episode involved children drinking beer and threatening each other at gunpoint during hunting trips , Parker said he did not believe Comedy Central would have aired it following the Columbine High School massacre in 1999 . Parker said , " Back then , it was just sort of funny , kids pointing guns at each other , and it 's just not so funny now . "

South Park animators spent the first four episodes of the show trying to perfect the animation of the characters . By " Volcano " ? which was produced after " Weight Gain 4000 " ? , Parker and Stone felt the textures were improved , as well as smaller details like the lines around the eyes of the characters . While the series pilot " Cartman Gets an Anal Probe " was animated with construction paper , subsequent episodes were made using computers . Nevertheless , Parker and Stone wanted the show to maintain its crude paper look ; for example , they specifically asked for the night sky in this episode to look like a black piece of paper with holes cut into it for stars , just as it was in the pilot episode . Stone and Parker were especially proud of the animation of the lava , which they said took hours to perfect , although they acknowledged it ended up simply resembling orange construction paper . The lava ball shooting out of the volcano and almost killing Kenny was directly inspired by the Volcano film . Parker and Stone came up with the character of Scuzzlebutt during a random conversation with Comedy Central executive Debbie Liebling . While meeting with her , they simply started drawing the character , and decided to add a celery hand and Patrick Duffy leg for no particular reason . Scuzzlebutt also appeared in a second episode , " City on the Edge of Forever " from the second season . Scuzzlebutt turning out to be a real character rather than a ridiculous story was the first instance of a common characteristic of the Cartman character , in which Cartman says outrageous and completely unrealistic things that turn out to be true . Stone commented , " He 's right more often than he 's wrong . "

The " Volcano " episode was in production when South Park debuted on August 13 , 1997 . Comedy Central executives did not object to most of the content of the episode , but said the scene in which Kyle farted while talking to Stan should have been removed because nothing happened after the fart , and they said it was not funny . Parker and Stone , however , insisted it stay in the episode , and they said the lack of any reaction whatsoever to the fart was what made it funny . During close @-@ ups of Cartman 's face while telling the story of Scuzzlebutt around the campfire , the flames from the fire stop moving . Parker and Stone noticed the consistency error after the episode was filmed , but they did not have enough time to go back and fix it before the broadcast

date , so it was left in . A cat featured in the background of one of the outdoor scenes was designed to look exactly like Parker 's cat , Jake . The scene in which Ned catches fire was based on an experience Parker had during a Colorado camping trip where he tried to do an " Indian Fire Trick " , in which one pours gasoline onto a fire to create large flames . Although nobody caught fire , Parker said the trick misfired and he nearly burned down the forest . After finishing the episode , Parker and Stone realized " Volcano " was about two minutes shorter than the time length required for the episode . In order to add time to the episode , Parker and Stone added the scene with Ned singing the song " Kumbaya " around the fire , as well as the long freeze @-@ frame on a shocked Chef and Mayor McDaniels reacting to the news of the volcano 's imminent eruption .

In addition to Scuzzlebutt , " Volcano " included the first appearances of recurring characters Randy Marsh and Ned Gerblanski . In this first appearance , Randy is identified only as the South Park geologist , and it is only in the episode " An Elephant Makes Love to a Pig " that he is first introduced as Stan 's father . Parker , who provides the voice of Randy Marsh , said the design , voice , and personality of the character are based on his real @-@ life father , who works as a geologist for the United States Geological Survey . Parker said his father is very calm in real life and Randy 's relaxed reaction to learning of the volcano ? calmly sipping his coffee ? is " about how my dad would react to anything " . The look of the Ned character was based on a drawing Parker made in high school , although the character did not originally have a voice box . The voice was inspired by a waitress who worked at a Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurant in Boulder , Colorado , where Parker and Stone would visit while attending the University of Colorado . The duo said they would go to the restaurant just to hear her voice , but that it was so low they would lose their appetite when she took their orders . Stone and Parker had trouble creating the right voice for the character ; they tried putting the microphone directly on their throat , and also bought an actual voice box , but ultimately decided that the best way to provide the character 's voice was with natural voice simulation .

" Volcano " was released alongside five other episodes in a three @-@ VHS set on May 5 , 1998 , marking the first time South Park was made available on video . The episode was released on the " Volume I " video along with " Cartman Gets an Anal Probe " ; other featured episodes included " An Elephant Makes Love to a Pig " , " Death " , " Weight Gain 4000 " , and " Big Gay Al 's Big Gay Boat Ride " . " South Park : The Complete First Season " , a DVD box set featuring all thirteen episodes , including " Volcano " , was released on November 12 , 2002 . Parker and Stone recorded commentary tracks for each episode , but the tracks were not included on the DVDs due to " standards " issues with some of the statements ; Parker and Stone refused to allow the tracks to be edited and censored , so they were released on a separate CD .

= = Cultural references and impact = =

The episode features a fictional education film called Lava and You , which says lava will pass harmlessly over potential victims who duck and cover their heads . The film was inspired by actual " Duck and Cover " films from the 1950s and 1960s , in which children were instructed to hide under tables or lean against walls in the case of a nuclear weapon attack ; Parker and Stone , like many critics of the films , found the methods painfully simplistic and did not believe they would actually help in the case of such an attack . Jimbo and Ned are described as veterans of the Vietnam War , the military conflict between North Vietnam and South Vietnam that lasted from 1959 to 1975 ; Cartman , who is far too young to have participated in the war , claims to have flashbacks to his experiences in it . Patrick Duffy , the American television actor best known for his roles in the shows Dallas and Step by Step , appears in the episode as the living leg of Scuzzlebutt . Matt Stone claimed there was no particular reason Duffy was chosen as the leg except that he is such a nondescript actor : " He 's just super bland . Like , how could you possibly be a fan of Patrick Duffy ? "

The scene where Scuzzlebutt puts a star on top of a tree is a reference to a similar scene in the 1964 television special Rudolph the Red @-@ Nosed Reindeer , in which the Abominable Snow Monster places a Christmas star atop a large tree . Mount Evanston , the fictional mountain in " Volcano " , was named after the real Mount Evans in the Front Range region of the Rocky

Mountains in Clear Creek County , Colorado ; Nichols Canyon in the episode was named after Kirt Nichols , a friend of Trey Parker . Jimbo blames the Democratic Party for passing overly restrictive laws on hunters and gun owners . Upon learning children are in danger due to the volcano , Mayor McDaniels seeks publicity for herself by contacting the television news programs Entertainment Tonight and Inside Edition .

Several lines of dialogue from " Volcano " became especially popular among South Park fans , including " It 's coming right for us ! " by Jimbo , and the two Cartman lines , " Democrats piss me off ! " and " Cartoons Kick Ass ! " , the last of which was featured on T @-@ shirts . Despite the relatively small role Scuzzlebutt played in the series , he nevertheless became a popular minor South Park character . He was included in the South Park video games South Park 10 : The Game and South Park Rally . The song " Hot Lava " , sung by the Chef in the episode , was featured on the 1998 soundtrack Chef Aid : The South Park Album .

= = Reception = =

" Volcano " originally aired on Comedy Central in the United States on August 20 , 1997 . " Volcano " , like the early South Park episodes preceding it , was viewed by slightly more than 1 million viewers , according to Nielsen ratings . This was considered high for a cable program in the United States at the time . The Environmental Media Association nominated the episode for an Environmental Media Award in the " TV Episodic Comedy " category . However , the eventual recipient of the award was The Simpsons , for the episode " The Old Man and the Lisa " .

" Volcano " received generally positive reviews . USA Today critic Matt Roush praised the episode , especially the " Duck and Cover " films . The Advertiser called the episode " outrageously lewd " and " hysterically funny " . The Washington Post critic Tom Shales considered the episode funnier than its precedent " Weight Gain 4000 " . Peter Hawes of The Sunday Star @-@ Times in Auckland , New Zealand , said the episode was funny and intelligent . He said of the episode , " Once again , the US national psyche is imperishably captured by a crude cartoon . " He liked the way adults were portrayed as less sensible than the children , and he particularly enjoyed the " Duck and Cover " videos : " It is terrifyingly funny , for it is a word @-@ for @-@ word recreation of the insane Atom @-@ bomb Safety film , created and distributed in 1952 by the US government , who never for a second thought it would work . " The Daily Record of Glasgow , Scotland , praised the episode and described it as " hardcore humour " : " Love it or loathe it , you can 't ignore the adult animation series whose bite is worse than its bark . "