

= Thanksgiving ( Family Guy ) =

" Thanksgiving " is the sixth episode of the tenth season of the animated comedy series Family Guy . The episode originally aired on Fox in the United States on November 20 , 2011 . The episode follows the Griffin family , and several of their neighbors , as they celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday . As they sit down for dinner , they are shocked to see that Kevin Swanson , son of Joe and Bonnie Swanson , has returned from Iraq .

The episode was written by Patrick Meighan and directed by Jerry Langford . It received mostly mixed reviews from critics for its storyline , and many cultural references . According to Nielsen ratings , it was viewed in 6 @. @ 04 million homes in its original airing . The episode featured guest performances by Max Burkholder , Jackson Douglas , Kevin Durand , Colin Ford , Zachary Gordon , Scott Grimes , Julie Hagerty , Jonathan Morgan Heit , Christine Lakin and Patrick Stewart , along with several recurring guest voice actors for the series .

= = Plot = =

As the Thanksgiving holiday begins , Lois invites Glenn Quagmire and his father Dan / Ida , the Swansons , Carter and Babs Pewterschmidt , Mayor Adam West , and Carol Pewterschmidt to join the Griffin family in a Thanksgiving dinner .

Once the guests arrive , they then begin eating their meal , when suddenly another guest arrives at the door . It is revealed to be Kevin Swanson , the son of Joe and Bonnie Swanson , whom they had presumed had died fighting in the war in Iraq . Overjoyed , they ask why the army had reported that he had died in action . Kevin then tells them a story that he was in a coma following a bomb that had been placed inside a turkey during Thanksgiving years before . Later , while having dessert , Kevin voices his distaste of the war , and reveals several inconsistencies about his time in Iraq . Kevin then tells his father that he had actually gone A.W.O.L. , and because most of his unit was killed in the bombing but he miraculously survived , he faked his own death in order to leave the war and return home . Joe then arrests his son for the crime of desertion with the rest of the family criticizing him for lying about being a war hero .

Brian , the family dog , asks Kevin to explain why he deserted the army , with Kevin telling him that he had grown tired of the war , and had befriended many of the Iraqis , leading him to want to try to escape . Kevin and the family then begin fighting over the United States 's occupation of Iraq , with Brian sympathizing with him , and several others , including Quagmire 's Dad , a war veteran , disagreeing with Kevin 's choice to desert the army . Angered , Joe then begins to take his son to jail and handcuffs him . Kevin reminds his father of a time when he let a homeless man get away with stealing a can of tomato soup to feed his hungry family , for whom he had felt sorry . Emotional and sympathetic , Joe agrees to let his son off the hook , and the two make amends .

As the family goes to finish eating dinner , another man resembling Kevin Swanson enters the family 's home , saying that the other Kevin is an imposter , but Peter says " Guys , I don 't think we have time for this " and the episode ends .

= = Production and development = =

The episode was directed by series regular Jerry Langford , shortly after the conclusion of the ninth production season , in his first episode of the season . Langford joined the series in its seventh season , directing the episode " Tales of a Third Grade Nothing " . The episode was written by series regular Patrick Meighan , who joined the show as a writer in its fourth season , writing the episode " 8 Simple Rules for Buying My Teenage Daughter " . Series regulars Peter Shin and James Purdum served as supervising directors , with Andrew Goldberg , Alex Carter , Spencer Porter , Anthony Blasucci , Mike Desilets , and Deepak Sethi serving as staff writers for the episode . Composer Ron Jones , who has worked on the series since its inception , returned to compose the music for " Thanksgiving " .

The role of Kevin Swanson has been portrayed by several people , including actor Jon Cryer , in

the second season episode " There 's Something About Paulie " . In subsequent appearances , Kevin was voiced by series creator and executive producer Seth MacFarlane , until his eventual disappearance from the series , when it was revealed that he had supposedly died in Iraq . Actor Scott Grimes , who notably portrays the character Steve Smith in MacFarlane 's second animated series American Dad ! , took over the role of Kevin in the episode .

In addition to Grimes and the regular cast , actor Max Burkholder , actor Jackson Douglas , actor Kevin Durand , voice actor Colin Ford , actor Zachary Gordon , actress and model Julie Hagerty , actor Jonathan Morgan Heit , actress Christine Lakin and actor Patrick Stewart guest starred in the episode . Recurring guest voice actors Alexandra Breckenridge , actor Chris Cox , writer Mike Desilets , actor Ralph Garman , writer Gary Janetti , writer Danny Smith , writer Alec Sulkin , and writer John Viener also made minor appearances throughout the episode . Recurring guest cast members Adam West , Jennifer Tilly and Patrick Warburton also appeared in the episode as Mayor Adam West , Bonnie Swanson , and Joe Swanson respectively .

= = Cultural references = =

As the Griffin family prepare to sit down for their dinner , baby Stewie is shown watching television , with the annual Macy 's Thanksgiving Day Parade taking place on the screen . Stewie notices a hot air balloon in the parade resembling himself . After the family decides to go to the Griffin family 's backyard to play football , Joe approaches his son to encourage him to beat the other team . Joe then references the 2009 war film The Hurt Locker , with Kevin responding with disdain for the film , despite supposedly being in a coma during its release . Joe also goes on to point out that Kevin is wearing an Ed Hardy t @-@ shirt , which also became popularized during his supposed coma , and despite Kevin telling his father that he flew straight home after he awoke . Later during dinner , when Kevin reveals that he went A.W.O.L. , Peter makes an off the wall reference , causing the episode to cut to a room showing several of the show 's editors , who become confused about what cutaway to play on the screen . They then decide to play a clip involving several characters from The Wizard of Oz , including the Cowardly Lion , who is shown to be actress Lindsay Lohan 's gynecologist .

= = Reception = =

" Thanksgiving " was broadcast on November 20 , 2011 , as a part of an animated television night on Fox , and was preceded by The Simpsons and Allen Gregory , and followed by Family Guy creator and executive producer Seth MacFarlane 's second show , American Dad ! . It was watched by 6 @. @ 04 million viewers , according to Nielsen ratings , despite airing simultaneously with the American Music Awards on ABC , The Amazing Race on CBS and Sunday Night Football on NBC . The episode also acquired a 3 @. @ 1 / 7 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , beating The Simpsons , Allen Gregory , American Dad ! , in addition to significantly edging out all three shows in total viewership . The episode 's ratings increased slightly from the previous week 's episode , " Back to the Pilot " .

Reviews of the episode were mostly mixed , calling the storyline " a loudspeaker for political views . " Kevin McFarland of The A.V. Club wrote of the episode , " I had a hard time listening to the characters spout out opinions , since none of them really made sense as character views and felt distinctly like the writers just wanted a place to dump their liberalisms ? I don 't want to only call out Seth MacFarlane because he didn 't write this episode , but considering the little bit I know about the show 's writer 's room , it 's pretty safe to assume he has final say on this sort of thing , especially given his 9 / 11 experience . " He also compared the A @-@ story to the television series South Park , noting , " It 's very clear that South Park benefits from the short turnaround time between production and air , because it allows that show to comment very quickly on current events , and stay timely . Family Guy seems to do the exact opposite , waiting an extraordinarily long time to weigh in on a serious issue it doesn 't satirize for comedy . " He ended his review by commenting , " After last week 's bright spot , I knew we were headed back down for another helping of the usual misery , but this week offered neither a surprise nor an all @-@ out failure , just expected , bland

mediocrity . " He graded the episode as a C. In a much more positive review , Terren R. Moore of Ology , writing , " It 's just funny , and it 's got a lot of ways of achieving that funniness , and it 's definitely true that the show isn 't always in its best form , but " Thanksgiving " shows that Family Guy refuses to be dead yet . " He also praised the episode for giving each character their own part in the episode , adding , " while most of the story revolves around Joe , Kevin , and Peter , the three kids and Brian also get time in as well . " Moore also stated his enjoyment of the cultural references in the episode , stating , " It 's all good fun , and the cutaways are also top notch , including Peter 's First Holiday and The Cowardly Lion as Lindsay Lohan 's gynecologist . I nearly fell out when Peter described his probably @-@ black coworker who turned out to be a white guy , which I should have seen coming because it 's very Family Guy , but still managed to get a laugh out of me . " He gave the episode a nine out of ten .