

= Help Wanted ( SpongeBob SquarePants ) =

" Help Wanted " is the pilot episode of the American animated television series SpongeBob SquarePants . It was produced in 1997 and originally aired on Nickelodeon in the United States on May 1 , 1999 , following the television airing of the 1999 Kids ' Choice Awards . The episode follows the protagonist , an anthropomorphic sponge named SpongeBob SquarePants , attempting to get a job at the local restaurant called the Krusty Krab . However , he is tasked to find a seemingly non-existent high-caliber spatula because the owner , Mr. Krabs , considers him unqualified for the position . Eventually , crowds of ravenous anchovies stop by the Krusty Krab and demand meals . SpongeBob SquarePants returns from his errand , having fulfilled the request of Mr. Krabs and found a mechanical spatula . He utilizes the spatula to fulfill the anchovies ' hunger . SpongeBob is then welcomed by Mr. Krabs as a Krusty Krab employee .

Series creator Stephen Hillenburg initially conceived the show in 1994 and began to work on it shortly after the cancellation of Rocko 's Modern Life in 1996 . To voice the character of SpongeBob , Hillenburg approached Tom Kenny , who had worked with him on Rocko 's Modern Life . For the series pitch , Hillenburg originally wanted the idea of having SpongeBob and Squidward on a road trip , inspired by the 1989 film Powwow Highway . Hillenburg gave up the idea , and started anew with the idea he and Derek Drymon came up for " Help Wanted " based on an experience Hillenburg had in the Boy Scouts .

The episode was written by Hillenburg , Derek Drymon , and Tim Hill , and was directed by Alan Smart . " Help Wanted " features a posthumous musical performance from Tiny Tim singing his song called " Livin ' in the Sunlight , Lovin ' in the Moonlight " . " Help Wanted " was excluded in the series ' first season DVD release because Nickelodeon did not want to pay Tiny Tim 's estate for the DVD rights . It had since been released as a bonus feature to various series DVDs . " Help Wanted " gained an average of 6 . 9 million views , receiving positive reviews from media critics .

= = Plot summary = =

The episode opens with an introductory glimpse of the aquatic community of Bikini Bottom . The audience is then introduced to SpongeBob SquarePants , an ecstatic , hyperactive , and anxious young sea sponge preparing to fulfill a lifelong dream and passion by applying for a fry cook job at the underwater fast food restaurant , the Krusty Krab , to the annoyance of the restaurant 's cashier and SpongeBob 's irritable neighbor Squidward Tentacles . Spongebob then gets nervous and almost decides not to get a job at the Krusty Krab until his best friend , Patrick Star the starfish , convinces him otherwise . Humored with SpongeBob 's vulnerability , gullibility , and impenetrable enthusiasm and innocence , both Squidward and the restaurant 's proprietor , Mr. Eugene Krabs , decide to manipulate SpongeBob , whom they secretly consider unqualified for the position , by sending him on an impossible errand to purchase a seemingly non-existent high-caliber spatula .

Soon after his anxious departure , five buses containing crowds of ravenous tourist anchovies stop at the Krusty Krab , its abundance of passengers furiously demanding meals . Unable to satisfy the anchovies ' hunger and alarmed by the mob , Squidward and Mr. Krabs are left to helplessly deal with the unsatisfied crowd . Before long , SpongeBob SquarePants returns from his errand , having fulfilled the request of Mr. Krabs and found a mechanical spatula , which he uses in speedily whipping up bundles of Krabby Patties for the anchovies and satisfying their hunger . After the mob subsides , SpongeBob is welcomed as a Krusty Krab employee , much to Squidward 's dismay . After Mr. Krabs leaves , Patrick orders a Krabby Patty and is hurled from the establishment upon a mostly unseen , and audibly manic , reprise of SpongeBob 's cooking feat .

= = Production = =

= = Development = =

" Help Wanted " was written by series creator Stephen Hillenburg , Derek Drymon , and Tim Hill , and was directed by Alan Smart . Hillenburg also functioned as storyboard director , and Drymon worked as storyboard artist . Hillenburg initially conceived the show in 1994 and began to work on it shortly after the cancellation of Rocko 's Modern Life in 1996 .

Hillenburg 's original idea for the pitch was that the writers would write a storyboard for a possible episode and pitch it to Nickelodeon . One of the original ideas was to write an episode with SpongeBob and Squidward on a road trip , inspired by the 1989 film Powwow Highway . Eventually , the idea developed while they were working on it but Hillenburg gave up on the storyboard idea for the initial pitch . The crew resurrected the road trip idea during the first season and used a lot of the ideas for an episode called " Pizza Delivery " .

Originally the character was to be named SpongeBoy and the show was to be called SpongeBoy Ahoy ! . However , the Nickelodeon legal department discovered that the name SpongeBoy was already in use for a mop product . This was discovered after voice acting for the original seven @-@ minute pilot was recorded in 1997 . Upon finding this out , Hillenburg decided that the character 's given name still had to contain " Sponge " so viewers would not mistake the character for a " Cheese Man . " Hillenburg decided to use the name " SpongeBob . " He chose " SquarePants " as a family name as it referred to the character 's square shape and it had a " nice ring to it " .

Hillenburg and Derek Drymon had dinner and came up with the idea for " Help Wanted " based on an experience Hillenburg had in the Boy Scouts . Hillenburg and writer Hill worked it into an outline . In 1997 , while pitching the cartoon to Nickelodeon executives , Hillenburg donned a Hawaiian shirt , brought along an " underwater terrarium with models of the characters , " and Hawaiian music to set the theme . The setup was described by Nickelodeon executive Eric Coleman as " pretty amazing " . When given money and two weeks to write the pilot episode , Drymon , Hillenburg and Jennings returned with what Nickelodeon official Albie Hecht described as " a performance [ I ] wish [ I ] had on tape " . Although described as stressful by executive producer Derek Drymon , the pitch went " very well " ; Kevin Kay and Hecht had to step outside because they were " exhausted from laughing , " making the cartoonists worried . With a help from Hill and art director Nick Jennings , Hillenburg finished the pitch and sold SpongeBob SquarePants to Nickelodeon . Drymon said " the network approved it ? so we were ready to go . "

In an interview with Cyma Zarghami , she told " their [ Nickelodeon executives ' ] immediate reaction was to see it again , both because they liked it and it was unlike anything they 'd ever seen before . " Hillenburg said the character construction in the episode was loose . But the character development was already " pretty strong . "

= = = Design = = =

When the crew began production on the episode , they were tasked to design the stock locations where " the show would return to again and again , and in which most of the action would take place , such as the Krusty Krab and SpongeBob 's pineapple house . " Hillenburg had a " clear vision " of what he wanted the show to look like . The idea was " to keep everything nautical " so the crew used ropes , wooden planks , ships ' wheels , netting , anchors , and boilerplate and rivets .

The pilot and the rest of the series features the " sky flowers " as the main background . When series background designer Kenny Pittenger was asked " What are those things ? , " he answered " They function as clouds in a way , but since the show takes place underwater , they aren 't really clouds . " Since the show was influenced by tiki , the background painters have to use a lot of pattern . Pittenger said " So really , the sky flowers are mostly a whimsical design element that Steve [ Hillenburg ] came up with to evoke the look of a flower @-@ print Hawaiian shirt ? or something like that . I don 't know what they are either . "

= = = Casting = = =

While Hillenburg , Drymon and Hill were writing the pilot , Hillenburg was also conducting auditions

to find voices for the show characters . He had created the character of SpongeBob with Tom Kenny , in which he utilised Kenny 's and other people 's personalities to help create its personality . Drymon said , " Tom came in a few times so we could pitch him what we were working to help him find the right voice . Tom had already worked on lots of other animated shows , and Steve wanted to find an original sounding voice . " The voice of SpongeBob was originally used by Kenny for a very minor female alligator character named Al in Rocko 's Modern Life . Kenny forgot the voice initially as he created it only for that single use . Hillenburg , however , remembered it when he was coming up with SpongeBob and used a video clip of the episode to remind Kenny of the voice . Kenny says that SpongeBob 's high pitched laugh was specifically aimed at being unique , stating that they wanted an annoying laugh in the tradition of Popeye and Woody Woodpecker .

Kenny also provided the voice of Gary , SpongeBob 's meowing sea snail , and the narrator in the episode . According to him , " It was always Steve 's intention that the narrator be a nod to his beloved Jacques Cousteau . " Kenny described Cousteau 's voice as " very dispassionate , very removed , very flatline , even when he 's describing something miraculous and beautiful . " At first , they found that the narrator " just sounds bored , " so they decided that he " has to sound a little fun and playful . " Kenny said , " ' Eet ees the most amazing thing I have ever seen I have ever seen in my life . ' We found that after a while we had to make the narrator a little more playful than that . "

Bill Fagerbakke voiced SpongeBob 's best friend , a starfish named Patrick Star in the episode . He auditioned for the role after Kenny had been cast as SpongeBob . Fagerbakke said , " Steve is such a lovely guy , and I had absolutely no feeling for the material whatsoever . " He described his experience in the audition , saying " I was just going in for another audition , and I had no idea what was in store there in terms of the remarkable visual wit and really the kind of endearing child @-@ like humanity in the show . I couldn 't pick that up from the audition material at all . I was just kind of perfunctorially trying to give the guy what he wanted . " For the part of Squidward , Hillenburg originally had Mr. Lawrence in mind for the role . Lawrence worked with Hillenburg and Drymon before on Rocko 's Modern Life , so while working on the episode , Hillenburg invited him to audition for all the characters . Drymon said , " We were showing Doug the storyboard , and he started reading back to us in his Tony the Tiger / Gregory Peck voice . It was really funny , and we wound up having SpongeBob use a deep voice when he entered the Krusty Krab for the first time . " Hillenburg decided to give Lawrence the part of the series villain , Plankton , instead .

= = = Music = = =

The episode features the song called " Livin ' in the Sunlight , Lovin ' in the Moonlight " by Tiny Tim . At the point the pilot had already been completed , music editor Nick Carr was asked to retool the existing music on it . Carr said " When I first started on SpongeBob , my duties were mainly music editorial but would quickly thrust me into the composers / supervisor chair . " The production team had no budget and no music but they placed the budget on the song called " Livin ' in the Sunlight , Lovin ' in the Moonlight " . Carr said " [ It is ] a sadly familiar scenario with most cartoons for television . By the time it comes to consider the music , the budget is blown . "

The idea of using " Livin ' in the Sunlight , Lovin ' in the Moonlight " originated when an anonymous sent Hillenburg a tape with " a bunch of music . " While the writers were developing the show outside Nickelodeon , Hillenburg played the song for Drymon as an example of the enthusiasm he was looking for . When it came time to write the pilot , they had the idea to use the song in the third act . The crew eventually got the rights to use the song for the pilot , but all they had was " the crummy copy on Steve 's old tape . " The writers were able to use the music , as one of the women who worked at Nickelodeon at the time " knew somebody somewhere who had access to something , " and she brought in a copy of the song on CD . Drymon said " We were totally lucky that she had the contact , otherwise we wouldn 't have been able to use it . The sad part was Tiny Tim died right around the time we were writing the pilot , so he never knew we used his song . "

Jeff Hutchins was with Hillenburg in Rocko 's Modern Life working on animation sound . Hutchins was approached by Hillenburg to do music for the show . He was asked for " 20 things , like an ocean liner horn , " and Hutchins knew he had the music Hillenburg was looking for . Hutchins said "

I offered him options and , in some cases , multiple choices . We agreed to meet at the Warner Bros. gate near the water tower in 20 minutes . " He recorded the sound to a tape and met Hillenburg by the gate . Hutchins said " He was about as happy as you could imagine , and off he went . Next thing you know , I am working on the show . " Hutchins became the regular series sound designer .

= = Release = =

SpongeBob SquarePants aired its first episode , " Help Wanted " , along with sister episodes " Reef Blower " and " Tea at the Treedome " , on May 1 , 1999 , following the television airing of the 1999 Kids ' Choice Awards . The series later made its " official " debut on July 17 , 1999 with the second episode " Bubblestand " and " Ripped Pants " .

" Help Wanted " was excluded in the SpongeBob SquarePants : The Complete 1st Season DVD , featuring the rest of the first season episodes , since its release on October 28 , 2003 . It was not included because Nickelodeon did not want to pay Tiny Tim 's estate for the DVD rights , because the music in the episode was copyrighted . Drymon said " ' Help Wanted ' had to be left off [ ... ] " " Help Wanted " was later released on the SpongeBob SquarePants : The Complete 3rd Season DVD as a bonus feature on September 27 , 2005 . It was also released on the SpongeBob SquarePants : The First 100 Episodes DVD , alongside all the episodes of seasons one through five . The DVD included a featurette called " Help Wanted " the Seven Seas Edition that featured " Help Wanted " in numerous languages . The episode was also a bonus feature in the series DVD called SpongeBob SquarePants : 10 Happiest Moments that was released on September 14 , 2010 . On April 29 , 2014 , " Help Wanted " was released on the " SpongeBob , You 're Fired ! " episode compilation DVD .

In 2013 , the series main cast members , including Tom Kenny , Clancy Brown , Rodger Bumpass and Bill Fagerbakke , performed a live read @-@ through of the episode during the SpongeBob event called " SpongeBob Fan Shellabration " . The read @-@ through took place on a sound effects stage at the Universal Studios Hollywood on September 7 ? 8 . The event also hosted the screening of the winning videos from the inaugural SpongeBob SquareShorts : Original Fan Tributes competition .

= = Reception = =

Upon its release , " Help Wanted " scored a 6 @.@ 3 Nielsen rating , or 6 @.@ 9 million total viewers , including 3 @.@ 6 million children aged 2 ? 11 . Furthermore , the episode received generally favorable reviews from media critics . Michael Cavanaugh of The Washington Post ranked " Help Wanted " at No. 3 at his The Top Five SpongeBob Episodes : We Pick ' Em list . Other episodes in the list are " Band Geeks " , " Ripped Pants " , " Just One Bite " and " Idiot Box " . Cavanaugh rewatched the episode in 2009 and said " so much of the style and polish are already in place . " Nancy Basile of the About.com said " [ The ] humor and optimistic essence of SpongeBob is evident even in this first episode . " Maxie Zeus of Toon Zone said the episode is a " winner " . In an Associated Press article , Frazier Moore lauded the featured song in the episode called " Livin ' in the Sunlight , Lovin ' in the Moonlight " calling it the " kookie part . "

Kent Osborne , a member of the SpongeBob SquarePants writing crew , considers the episode " really good . " Eric Coleman , vice president of animation development and production at Nickelodeon , lauded the episode and calling it " one of the best pilots " because " it conveys a strong personality . "

In a DVD review of the first season , Jason Bovberg of the DVD Talk was disappointed on the set , saying " Where is it ? This is perhaps the only disappointment of the set . I was a little aggravated by the loooong animated menus that introduce all the characters , one by one , but it 's really that missing episode that has me upset . " Bovberg described the set as " annoying " for missing the episode . Bill Treadway of the DVD Verdict , on the exclusion of the episode on the DVD , said " It 's a small flaw in an otherwise top notch package . " In a DVD review of the third season , Bryan Pope of the DVD Verdict , on the episode as a bonus feature , said " The most intriguing extra is the

series ' pilot episode , ' Help Wanted ' . " He asked in his review " Why release it now instead of in its natural spot with the first season ? " At the end , he said " Regardless , SpongeBob completists will cherish its inclusion here . "