

= Brian : Portrait of a Dog =

" Brian : Portrait of a Dog " is the seventh episode and the season finale of the first season of the animated comedy series Family Guy . It originally aired on Fox in the United States on May 16 , 1999 . The episode features anthropomorphic dog Brian after he swallows his pride , and joins a dog show , after much convincing , in order to win money for a new air conditioner . But after an argument over a trick gone bad , with his owner , Peter Griffin , Brian realizes he is a second @-@ class citizen and runs away from home , landing him in the pound on death row . Desperate to save their dog , the Griffin family attempts to release Brian , and prevent him from being euthanized .

The episode was written by Gary Janetti and directed by Michael Dante DiMartino . It received praise from television critic Ahsan Haque for its storyline and use of cultural references . The episode featured guest performances by Butch Hartman , Rachael MacFarlane , Dick Van Patten , Mary Scheer , Joey Slotnick and Wally Wingert , along with several recurring voice actors for the series .

= = Plot = =

Quahog is in the grip of an unusual heat wave and , not having air conditioning , the Griffins are suffering . Peter learns of an upcoming dog show offering a top prize of \$ 500 , which he sees as the perfect way to be able to buy an air conditioner . He persuades a reluctant Brian to participate . Brian performs his tricks at the dog show . Peter puts a bone biscuit on Brian 's nose ; finding this demeaning and becoming angry , Brian refuses to " perpetuate the stereotype of the ' good dog ' " , as well as Peter saying he is embarrassed that Brian would not comply . Brian subsequently exits in a huff .

On the way home , Peter and Brian argue until Brian gets out of the car . A police officer gives Brian a ticket , for which Peter has to pay \$ 10 , for violating the local leash law , which only widens the rift between Peter and Brian . Another argument ensues and Peter mentions that he found Brian on the road as a stray dog . Angry that Peter brought that up and becoming more angry when Peter then demands that Brian stop being a bad dog , Brian leaves the house , whereupon he is treated cruelly by the community , and is (ultimately) forced to sleep at the bus shelter . Peter buys a new cat which turns out to be mischievous and abusive ; the family gets rid of it and searches for Brian . By the time Peter decides to apologize to Brian , Brian has been kicked out of a restaurant and a public store and chased by the police when he was found drinking from a water fountain . Brian becomes homeless , having actually attacked a man on the street for treating him as a drunken hobo and for not believing that he was not a good dog but a crazy animal . He is subsequently taken away by the police .

A social worker announces to Brian and the rest of his family that Brian is sentenced to be put down by a lethal injection , which shocks everyone . While Peter works on Brian 's appeal , Brian decides to study the Law as much as he can , and goes to court to defend himself , and finally gets the chance to plead his case before the Quahog City Council . During his parole hearing , he references the court case Plessy v. Ferguson , but unfortunately for him , the council believes that it 's stupid to listen to a dog . Just when Brian is about to be dismissed , Peter steps in and delivers a last @-@ ditch emotional appeal on his behalf . The city council members remain unmoved until Peter bribes them with \$ 20 each , and Brian is immediately freed . The charges against him are finally dropped and the town shows him new respect , allowing him to finally drink out of a water fountain , showing his status to be the same as that of the other citizens of the community . The family returns home and Stewie , in an unusual (at the time) display of respect towards Brian , bows ever so slightly towards him . Brian and Peter are then left alone . Brian licks Peter 's face in an endearing dog gesture , and threatens to kill him if he ever tells anyone about it .

= = Production = =

" Brian : Portrait of a Dog " was written by Gary Janetti , his first time writing for the series , and

directed by former King of the Hill director Michael Dante DiMartino , who was a newcomer to the show at the time , having directed " I Never Met the Dead Man " . DiMartino would later go on to co - create and produce Avatar : The Last Airbender with Bryan Konietzko at Nickelodeon Animation Studios . Roy Allen Smith and Peter Shin (who have been supervising other episodes of the show) , acted as supervising directors . Mike Henry , Neil Goldman , Andrew Gormley and Garrett Donovan worked in the episode as story editors and staff writers . Series creator Seth MacFarlane , David Zuckerman , Lolee Aries , David Pritchard and Mike Wolf worked as executive producer , while Craig Hoffman , Danny Smith and Gary Janetti worked as supervising producers . In addition to the regular cast , the episode featured the voices of actress and comedian Mary Scheer , actors Dick Van Patten , Joey Slotnick , and actress and sister of show creator Seth MacFarlane , Rachael MacFarlane . Recurring guest voice actors included actress Lori Alan , writer and animator Butch Hartman , and voice actor Wally Wingert .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode makes references to the U.S. African - American Civil Rights Movement . While arguing his case before the city council , Brian tries to reference the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case Plessy v. Ferguson , before being cut off . Another reference comes after Brian is freed , he drinks from a drinking fountain in a defiant manner , a reference to the 1974 television movie , The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman . Other media references include the Griffins watching the TV show Eight is Enough and Peter writing a letter to Angus MacGyver , from the show MacGyver , asking him to rescue Brian from jail . When Brian puts eye drops into his eyes before the dog show , he says " Showtime " with jazz hands . This ritual and phrase are a reference to Joe Gideon in All That Jazz

= = Reception = =

Ahsan Haque of IGN rated the episode a 9 @ . 6 / 10 , praising the random jokes and calling it " yet another finely crafted early episode that tells a great cohesive story , has some great random jokes , and throws in a bucket of social satire for good measure . This was also the final episode of the extremely short but groundbreaking first season , and definitely ranks amongst the best in the series . "

" Portrait of a Dog " , along with the twenty @ - seven other episodes from Family Guy 's first and second season , were released on a 4 @ - disc DVD set in the U.S. on April 15 , 2003 . The sets included brief audio commentaries by Seth MacFarlane and various crew and cast members for several episodes . It also features French and Spanish versions of the episodes , an alteration of an episode , and deleted scenes of some episodes .