

= North by North Quahog =

" North by North Quahog " is the first episode of the fourth season of Family Guy , following the revival of the series three years after its cancellation in 2002 . The episode was first broadcast on May 1 , 2005 , on Fox , though it had premiered three days earlier at a special screening at the University of Vermont , Burlington . In the episode , Peter and Lois go on a second honeymoon to spice up their marriage , but are chased by Mel Gibson after Peter steals the sequel to The Passion of the Christ from Gibson 's private hotel room . Meanwhile , Brian and Stewie take care of Chris and Meg at home .

Family Guy had been canceled in 2002 due to low ratings , but was revived by Fox after reruns on Adult Swim became the cable network 's most watched program , and more than three million DVDs of the show were sold . " North by North Quahog " was directed by Peter Shin and written by series creator Seth MacFarlane . Much of the plot and many of the technical aspects of the episode , as well as the title , are direct parodies of the 1959 Alfred Hitchcock movie North by Northwest ; in addition , the episode makes use of Bernard Herrmann 's theme music from that film . The episode contains many cultural references ; in the opening sequence Peter lists 29 shows that were canceled by Fox after Family Guy was canceled and says that if all of those shows were to be canceled , they might have a chance at returning .

Critical responses to " North by North Quahog " were mostly positive , with the opening sequence being praised in particular . The episode was watched by nearly 12 million viewers and received a Primetime Emmy Award nomination for Outstanding Animated Program (for Programming Less Than One Hour) . Shin won an Annie Award for Directing in an Animated Television Production for this episode .

= = Plot = =

In the cold open , Peter tells his family that they have " been canceled " . He then lists all 29 shows that were canceled by Fox between the show 's cancellation and revival and says that if all of those shows were to be canceled , they might have a chance at returning .

As Peter and Lois are having sex , she yells out George Clooney 's name , so Peter realizes that she is imagining him as Clooney to maintain her libido . Lois and Peter decide to take a second honeymoon to enliven their marriage , and leave their anthropomorphic dog Brian to take care of their children Stewie , Chris , and Meg . Brian is unable to control the children , but Stewie offers to help (in exchange for Brian changing his diaper) and together they manage the home . The pair chaperone a dance at Chris 's school , during which a school staff member catches Chris in the boys ' restroom with vodka that belongs to his classmate Jake Tucker . Although Brian and Stewie punish Chris by grounding him , they try to clear his name . Jake 's father Tom refuses to believe Brian and Stewie , so they resort to planting cocaine in Jake 's locker , and Jake is sentenced to community service .

On the way to their vacation spot , Peter reads a comic book while driving with Lois asleep , and crashes his car into a tree . They are forced to spend their entire honeymoon money on car repairs and are about to return home when Peter discovers that actor / director Mel Gibson has a private suite at a luxurious hotel nearby , " which he barely uses " . He and Lois then go to the hotel , where Peter poses as Gibson to gain access to his room . When Lois yells out Gibson 's name during intercourse , Peter , again , decides to return home . As the two are about to leave , Peter accidentally stumbles upon Gibson 's private screening room and discovers a sequel to The Passion of the Christ entitled The Passion of the Christ 2 : Crucify This . To spare the world from " ... another two hours of Mel Gibson Jesus mumbo @-@ jumbo , " Peter steals the film . However , when they leave the hotel , they are noticed by two priests , Gibson 's associates , who were there to collect the film .

Pursued by the priests in a car chase that leads them through a shopping mall , Lois and Peter escape from the priests and drive to a cornfield where Peter buries the film . While he is doing so , the priests fly down in a crop @-@ duster and kidnap Lois . Peter is then given a message telling

him that if he does not return the film to Gibson at his estate on top of Mount Rushmore , his wife will be killed . Peter arrives at the house and gives Gibson a film can . As Peter and Lois are about to leave , Gibson discovers that the film has been replaced with dog feces , leading to a chase on the face of the mountain . While being chased , Lois slips but hangs on to George Washington 's lips . Peter grabs her and , while being held at gunpoint , he tells Gibson that the film " is in President Rushmore 's mouth " and points to the other side of the monument . Gibson follows Peter 's direction and falls off the edge as Peter pulls Lois to safety . Upon climbing back to the top of the mountain , the two have sexual intercourse there , improving their marriage .

= = Production and development = =

In 2002 , Family Guy was canceled after three seasons due to low ratings . The show was first canceled after the 1999 ? 2000 season , but following a last @-@ minute reprieve , it returned for a third season in 2001 . Fox tried to sell rights for reruns of the show , but it was hard to find networks that were interested ; Cartoon Network eventually bought the rights , " [...] basically for free " , according to the president of 20th Century Fox Television Production . When the reruns were shown on Cartoon Network 's Adult Swim in 2003 , Family Guy became Adult Swim 's most @-@ watched show with an average 1 @.@ 9 million viewers an episode . Following Family Guy 's high ratings on Adult Swim , the first season was released on DVD in April 2003 . Sales of the DVD set reached 2 @.@ 2 million copies , becoming the best @-@ selling television DVD of 2003 and the second highest @-@ selling television DVD ever , behind the first season of Comedy Central 's Chappelle 's Show . The second season DVD release also sold more than a million copies . The show 's popularity in both DVD sales and reruns rekindled Fox 's interest in it . They ordered 35 new episodes in 2004 , marking the first revival of a television show based on DVD sales . Fox president Gail Berman said that it was one of her most difficult decisions to cancel the show , and was therefore happy it would return . The network also began production of a film based on the series .

" North by North Quahog " was the first episode to be broadcast after the show 's cancellation . It was written by MacFarlane and directed by Peter Shin , both of whom also wrote and directed the pilot . MacFarlane believed the show 's three @-@ year hiatus was beneficial because animated shows do not normally have hiatuses , and towards the end of their seasons " ... you see a lot more sex jokes and (bodily function) jokes and signs of a fatigued staff that their brains are just fried " . With " North by North Quahog " , the writing staff tried to keep the show " ... exactly as it was " before its cancellation , and did not " ... have the desire to make it any slicker " than it already was . Walter Murphy , who had composed music for the show before its cancellation , returned to compose the music for " North by North Quahog " . Murphy and the orchestra recorded an arrangement of Bernard Herrmann 's score from North by Northwest , a film referenced multiple times in the episode .

Fox had ordered five episode scripts at the end of the third season ; these episodes had been written but not produced . One of these scripts was adapted into " North by North Quahog " . The original script featured Star Wars character Boba Fett , and later actor , writer and producer Aaron Spelling , but the release of the iconic film The Passion of the Christ inspired the writers to incorporate Mel Gibson into the episode . Multiple endings were written , including one in which Death comes for Gibson . During production , an episode of South Park was released entitled " The Passion of the Jew " that also featured Gibson as a prominent character . This gave the Family Guy writers pause , fearing accusations " [...] that we had ripped them off . "

Three days before the episode debuted on television , it was screened at the University of Vermont (UVM) in Burlington , accompanied by an hour @-@ long question @-@ and @-@ answer session with MacFarlane . The UVM 's special screening of the episode was attended by 1 @,@ 700 people . As promotion for the show , and to , as Newman described , " expand interest in the show beyond its die hard fans " , Fox organized four Family Guy Live ! performances , which featured cast members reading old episodes aloud ; " North by North Quahog " was also previewed . In addition , the cast performed musical numbers from the Family Guy Live in Vegas comedy album . The stage shows were an extension of a performance by the cast during the 2004 Montreal Comedy Festival .

The Family Guy Live ! performances , which took place in Los Angeles and New York , sold out and were attended by around 1 @, @ 200 people each .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode opens with Peter telling the rest of the family that Family Guy has been canceled . He lists the following 29 shows (in chronological order) , that he says Fox has to make room for : Dark Angel , Titus (though Titus was facing cancellation the same year Family Guy was) , Undeclared , Action , That ' 80s Show , Wonderfalls , Fastlane , Andy Richter Controls the Universe , Skin , Girls Club , Cracking Up , The Pitts , Firefly , Get Real , Freakylinks , Wanda at Large , Costello , The Lone Gunmen , A Minute with Stan Hooper , Normal , Ohio , Pasadena , Harsh Realm , Keen Eddie , The \$ treet , The American Embassy , Cedric the Entertainer Presents , The Tick , Luis , and Greg the Bunny . Lois asks whether there is any hope , to which Peter replies that if all these shows are canceled they might have a chance , the joke being all these shows had indeed already been canceled by Fox . The New York Times reported that , during the first Family Guy Live ! performance , " ... the longer [the list] went , the louder the laughs from the Town Hall crowd [became] " .

Australian @-@ American actor Mel Gibson is prominently featured in the episode ; his voice was impersonated by André Sogliuzzo . Gibson directed the film The Passion of the Christ and , in the episode , is seen making a sequel entitled Passion of the Christ 2 : Crucify This . The fictional sequel is a combination of The Passion of the Christ and Rush Hour , and stars Chris Tucker , who starred in Rush Hour , and James Caviezel who portrayed Jesus in The Passion of the Christ .

The episode contains several references to Alfred Hitchcock 's 1959 film North by Northwest . Besides the title of the episode , several scenes in " North by North Quahog " are inspired by the Hitchcock film . In the scene in which Lois is kidnapped by Gibson 's associates , the two priests chase Peter through a cornfield , flying a crop @-@ duster , parodying the crop @-@ duster scene from the film . The final face @-@ off between Peter , Lois and Gibson that takes place on Mount Rushmore is also a reference to North by Northwest .

As Peter and Lois are driving to Cape Cod for their second honeymoon , Peter is reading a Jughead comic book and their car crashes . The fictional Park Barrington Hotel , where Peter and Lois steal Gibson 's film , is located in Manhattan . The car chase scene through a shopping mall is a recreation of a scene from the 1980 comedy film The Blues Brothers . To stop Meg and Chris from fighting , Brian reads to them from one of the few books Peter owns , a novelization of the 1980 film Caddyshack and quotes a line by Chevy Chase 's character , Ty Webb .

The episode contains a number of other cultural references . When Peter and Lois enter their motel room and find a hooker on the bed , Peter warns Lois to stay perfectly still , as the prostitute 's vision is based on movement . This is a reference to a scene in the movie Jurassic Park in which Dr. Grant gives this warning in reference to a Tyrannosaurus Rex . Pinocchio appears in a cutaway gag , in which Gepetto bends over and deliberately sets Pinocchio up to tell a lie in an attempt to emulate anal sex . This was based on a joke MacFarlane 's mother had told her friends when he was a child . Lois yells out George Clooney 's name when she and Peter are having sex . The 1950s sitcom The Honeymooners is also referenced when a fictional episode of the sitcom is shown in which Ralph Kramden , the show 's main character , hits his wife , something he would only threaten to do on the show . Meg watches an episode of the CBS sitcom Two and a Half Men , which shows three men in a living room , one of whom is cut in half at the waist and screaming in agony , the other two standing over him and screaming in horror . Fictional army soldier Flint of G.I. Joe : A Real American Hero appears briefly after Chris is caught drinking vodka , and educates the children on drinking and informs them that " ... knowing is half the battle " . Flint 's voice was provided by Bill Ratner , the actor who had voiced the character in the G.I. Joe television series . According to Seth Green , who voices Chris , the reason the Family Guy cast members did not voice Flint themselves is because if you have the original actor providing the voice " [...] you take it with a little bit more gravitas " .

= = Reception = =

" North by North Quahog " was broadcast on May 1 , 2005 as part of an animated television night on Fox , was preceded by two episodes of The Simpsons (including the show 's 350th episode) , and was followed by the premiere of MacFarlane 's new show , American Dad ! . It was watched by 11 @. @ 85 million viewers , higher than both The Simpsons and American Dad . The episode 's ratings were Family Guy 's highest ratings since the airing of the season one episode " Brian : Portrait of a Dog " . Family Guy was the week 's highest @- @ rated show among teens and men in the 18 to 34 demographic , and more than doubled Fox 's average in its timeslot . The episode 's first broadcast in Canada on Global was watched by 1 @. @ 27 million viewers , making it fourth for the week it was broadcast , behind CSI : Crime Scene Investigation , CSI : Miami and Canadian Idol .

The reactions of television critics to " North by North Quahog " were mostly positive . In a simultaneous review of the two episodes of The Simpsons that preceded this episode and the American Dad ! pilot , Chase Squires of the St. Petersburg Times stated that " North by North Quahog " " ... score [d] the highest " . Multimedia news and reviews website IGN was pleased to see Stewie and Brian get more screen time as a duo , something they thought had always been one of the show 's biggest strengths . IGN placed Peter 's idea to pose as Mel Gibson and steal Passion of the Christ 2 in 9th place on their list of " Peter Griffin 's Top 10 Craziest Ideas " . Matthew Gilbert of The Boston Globe commented that the episode 's material " would wear thin after a while if the character 's weren 't as distinct and endearing as they are , most notably Stewie , the wrathful infant . "

Critics reacted positively to the opening sequence ; in his review of the episode , Mark McGuire of The Times Union wrote : " ... the first minute or so of the resurrected Family Guy ranks among the funniest 60 seconds I 've seen so far this season . " Variety critic Brian Lowry considered the opening sequence to be the best part of the episode . M. Keith Booker , author of the book Drawn to Television : Primetime Television from The Flintstones to Family Guy , called the opening sequence an " ... in @- @ your @- @ face , I @- @ told @- @ you @- @ so rejoinder to the Fox brass [...] followed by one of the most outrageous Family Guy episodes ever " .

However , the episode also garnered negative responses . Melanie McFarland of the Seattle Post @- @ Intelligencer stated that " Three years off the air has not made the ' Family Guy ' team that much more creative " . Kevin Wong of PopMatters thought the episode made fun of easy targets such as Gibson and The Passion of The Christ , although he felt Family Guy regained " ... its admirable mix of niche nostalgia and hysterical characterizations " after the first two episodes of the new season . Though Alex Strachan , critic for The Montreal Gazette , praised the opening sequence , he felt " it 's all downhill from there " . Bill Brioux of the Toronto Star considered the show to be similar to The Simpsons . Media watchdog group the Parents Television Council , a frequent critic of the show , branded the episode the " worst show of the week " .

" North by North Quahog " was nominated for an Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Animated Program (for Programming Less Than One Hour) , the eventual recipient of the award being South Park episode " Best Friends Forever " . Peter Shin , director of the episode , won the Annie Award for Best Directing in an Animated Television Production . Fellow Family Guy director Dan Povenmire , was nominated for the same award for directing " PTV " .