

= Pinewood Derby (South Park) =

" Pinewood Derby " is the sixth episode of the thirteenth season of the American animated television series South Park . The 187th overall episode of the series , it originally aired on Comedy Central in the United States on April 15 , 2009 and in the United Kingdom on April 17 , 2009 . In the episode , Randy helps Stan cheat in a pinewood derby race , which inadvertently leads to the discovery of alien life . When an alien gangster visits South Park and the residents come into possession of his stolen " space cash " , they decide to keep it for themselves and hide it from alien police officers who are looking for it .

The episode was written and directed by series co @-@ founder Trey Parker , and was rated TV @-@ MA L in the United States for strong to extreme language . " Pinewood Derby " was seen by 2 @.@ 78 million households in its original broadcast , according to Nielsen ratings , making it the second most @-@ watched episode on Comedy Central the week it aired . The episode received mixed reviews upon its initial broadcast .

" Pinewood Derby " has been noted for spoofing a number of world leaders , such as Gordon Brown , Silvio Berlusconi , Vladimir Putin , Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva , Raila Odinga , Taro Aso , Han Seung @-@ soo , Nicolas Sarkozy , Matti Vanhanen , Angela Merkel , Wen Jiabao and John Howard . The episode was originally scheduled to air on MTV Latin America in February 2010 but was pulled at the last minute , allegedly due to its perceived negative portrayal of Mexican President Felipe Calderón .

= = Plot = =

Randy Marsh , determined to make sure his son Stan win the annual statewide pinewood derby , slips an object into the back of the car to give it an advantage . Stan learns from a news report that the object is a superconducting magnet , stolen from the Large Hadron Collider by Randy disguised as Princess Leia . During the finals , Randy coaxes Stan to lie to the judges and say he used only the parts in the approved pinewood derby kit . Stan wins first place when his car reaches warp speed , shooting off the track and into space , where it is later found by an alien species . Soon after , a spaceship lands in South Park , but its pilot is a bank robber named " BabyFart McGee @-@ zax " who demands that Stan and Randy build him a new warp drive while holding the entire planet at gunpoint . Everyone believes Stan and his father can create the drive using only the approved pinewood derby kit .

Stan tries to persuade Randy to tell the truth about the stolen magnet , but Randy refuses in order to avoid embarrassment . As the pair works on the warp drive , an Intergalactic Police ship approaches Earth ; McGee @-@ zax cloaks his ship and drags Stan out of sight as a hostage , leaving the townspeople to divert the officers ' questions . The officers say that McGee @-@ zax stole a large sum of space cash , but no one admits to seeing him , and the officers leave . Randy then provides a diversion for McGee @-@ zax while Stan , at Randy 's insistence , stabs him to death with a shank . McGee @-@ zax 's ship is found to contain the stolen space cash , but instead of returning it , Randy persuades everyone to divide it among themselves . Randy , in contact with all world leaders , buys other countries ' silence by giving them a share . Four days later , the officers return to South Park . They now know that McGee @-@ zax landed here and Randy tells them of his death , but everyone denies finding any space cash .

Randy tries to keep other countries from spending the space cash since that might alert the Intergalactic Police ; however , this fails when Mexico spends its money on 32 hospitals and 7 water parks , and China spends it on 48 soccer stadiums . Learning that Finland is about to divulge to the cops , Randy persuades the rest of the world to wipe Finland out in a nuclear missile attack . The Intergalactic Police pay a third visit to ask about the strike , but the South Park residents fake disbelief . By this time , Stan has had enough of the deception , so he tells the truth about cheating in the pinewood derby and returns his trophy ; however , no one else on the planet comes clean about the space cash . McGee @-@ zax emerges from the officers ' ship , having only faked his death . He reveals that he is really Kevern Zaksor , ambassador to new world testing , and that the

entire chain of events was a test to see if Earth was worthy of joining the intergalactic community . As punishment for failing , the Earth and the moon are isolated from the rest of the Universe (although it appears to have disappeared later on) . The episode ends with Randy saying " Well , that sucks " .

= = Production = =

" Pinewood Derby " was written and directed by series co @-@ creator Trey Parker . The episode first aired on April 15 , 2009 , in the United States , and was rated TV @-@ MA L in the United States . The theme of the episode was a warning about the dangers of greed , lying and cheating .

= = Cultural references = =

The NSA agents who contact the Marsh family are Agents Clark and Mars , an obvious reference to the Clark Bar and Mars Bar candy bars .

Among the world leaders who communicate with Randy in the episode are French president Nicolas Sarkozy , Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel , Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva , Prime Minister of Italy Silvio Berlusconi , Chinese president Hu Jintao , Japanese prime minister Taro Aso , Mexican president Felipe Calderón , and Finnish prime minister Matti Vanhanen . The episode received some degree of criticism overseas for depicting the wrong leaders for its countries . The episode featured John Howard as Prime Minister of Australia , even though he had been replaced by Kevin Rudd almost eighteen months earlier ; according to the Macquarie National News , the episode " has copped some flack on video sharing websites " over the error . The episode also features Vladimir Putin as President of Russia , even though he stepped down in May 2008 . The episode also featured Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Gordon Brown .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Pinewood Derby " was watched by 2 @.@ 78 million overall households , according to the Nielsen ratings , making it the second most @-@ watched Comedy Central production of the week , behind the Ron White stand @-@ up special " Behavioral Problems " , which was seen by 3 @.@ 36 million households .

The episode received mixed reviews . Josh Modell of The A.V. Club said the episode was " boring " and " unfunny " , and was particularly disappointing following the episode " Fishsticks " the previous week . Modell said , " South Park episodes don 't get much lazier or uninspired than this one . It was like half an idea stretched out forever and ever , and with very little payoff . " Carlos Delgado of If Magazine said the episode plot was too silly and lacked laughs : " All in all , I was left feeling a little cheated . " Pinewood Derby " wasn 't funny , it was just weird . " Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly said the episode was told with " the warp @-@ speed storytelling style that is making this season one of South Park 's best " . Travis Fickett of IGN said he was happy to see an episode centered on Randy Marsh , who he said is an excellent character ; Fickett said of " Pinewood Derby " , " This isn 't a great episode but its fast @-@ paced lunacy in the South Park tradition and most of the genre tropes it riffs on are dead on . "

= = Mexican flag controversy = =

" Pinewood Derby " drew considerable media attention in Mexico when it originally aired due to its depiction of Mexican president Felipe Calderón . The episode was scheduled to air in Spanish on MTV Latin America on February 8 , 2010 , and was advertised extensively for one week prior to the broadcast date . However , a few hours before the scheduled time , the network decided not to air the episode and replaced it with the episode " The Ring " , allegedly due to its depiction of Calderón irritating the international community and frivolously spending the space cash on water parks . This depiction was said to differ from the image Mexico 's Ministry of the Interior sought to present of

Calderón , whom they dubbed the " Employment president " . MTV said the South Park creators did not get a special permit needed to broadcast an image of Mexico 's flag , and MTV executives said they did not want to risk angering fans by altering the image . The explanation was met with skepticism by Mexican South Park fans , some of whom accused MTV of unfair censorship . MTV later announced it would broadcast the episode on April 4 after the network was granted permission from the Minister of the Interior to air it . When asked to comment on the episode getting pulled , Stone said , " That 's so far away from us . We read that on the news , too , along with everyone else . "

= = Home release = =

" Pinewood Derby " , along with the thirteen other episodes from South Park 's thirteenth season , were released on a three @-@ disc DVD set and two @-@ disc Blu @-@ ray set in the United States on March 16 , 2010 . The sets included brief audio commentaries by Parker and Stone for each episode , a collection of deleted scenes , and a special mini @-@ feature Inside Xbox : A Behind @-@ the @-@ Scenes Tour of South Park Studios , which discussed the process behind animating the show with Inside Xbox host Major Nelson .