

*-The Script Department-*  
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Type of Material:	TV spec script	Title:	South Park
Number of Pages:	30	Author:	XXXX
Coverage type:	Basic cable	Circa:	Present
Payment type:		Location:	South Park, CO
Coverage Date:		Genre:	half-hour comedy

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**LOG LINE: XXXX**

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	Excellent	Good	Needs Work	Rethink
Idea			X	
Overall execution			X	
Narrative/Structure			X	
Characters/Dialogue		X		
Effective Scene work		X		
Professional appearance: grammar, spelling, typos		X		
Commercial potential			X	
Readiness for Market			X	

Scouting Recommendation:	
Yes	
Not at this time	X

**COMMENTS:**

Lisa, XXXX is a good example of the raunchy, edgy, and funny world of SOUTH PARK. The political angle of the main storyline is good material for the satirical side of of the show. With some tightening up of the structure and adding another layer to the storyline, this will be a solid spec script for the writer's arsenal.

Writing a spec script of an existing TV show requires diligent research of that show. Viewing multiple episodes proved that SOUTH PARK is a show that always has both an A and B storyline. Some episodes might be the exception to that rule, but the writer should aim to be writing two storylines. Also, since the purpose of a spec script is to get staffed on a show that is NOT the spec script, writing two storylines for a half hour show will make the writer's skills more applicable to other half hour shows, which mostly have at least two storylines.

XXXX at this point only seems to have one storyline. While the boys' accidentally calling on the full force of the US Government onto South Park is a funny premise, two things are missing. One, there needs to be another storyline in play. A "B" storyline to counter-balance the A. Also, a more subtle hand needs to be at work here. SOUTH PARK, over many episodes, has made fun of a lot of famous people, and famous cultural issues. This reader recently caught the episode "BFF" where Kenny is dead and must fight Hell's army in Heaven. But, the B story in this episode is a cultural reference to the Terry Shiavo, where Cartman fights with everyone else over the right to pull the plug on Kenny. This episode is a good example of how both storylines

work together, and are necessary to urge each other forward. Also, the B storyline covering a political hot button issue manages to cover both sides of the argument. In the end, neither side really wins, but the story is resolved. Whether the issue is to bomb Iraq (“Ladder to Heaven”), pull the plug on someone on life support (“BFF”), or allow illegal immigrants to work in the US, (Sorry, I don’t have the title of that episode), SOUTH PARK always covers both sides of the argument. While, the show might be more liberal in its leanings, each episode does a great job of not taking sides. Right now, SAUDI PARQ is a one-sided argument firmly against the US and President Bush. (Also, coming from a writer with a Canadian address on the cover, this could hit the wrong tone with a reader.) A writer or reader might agree or disagree with that political point of view, but regardless, the writer’s job is to accurately reflect how the show works.

Maybe in brainstorming the B-storyline, the other side of the political argument could be represented somewhere. Cartman, who generally drives much more of each episode, was somewhat under-utilized here. Could he be the one responsible for somehow sending the US Government to bomb South Park? All to prove the point to Kyle that he can’t badmouth the President? After all, many, many episodes of South Park are based solely on how far Cartman will go to get Kyle to admit that Cartman is right. Also, Cartman was so sure the President was acting in the country’s best interest, let’s seem him defend that angle more? Cartman as a rampant Republican? (Ronald Regan hair and all?)

The current storyline has some great moments in it worth holding onto. How South Park so quickly became a foreign territory, with New Yorkers shouting “Bomb the shit out of them”, or the translations never quite working were funny and well-used ideas. The old telephones installed in everyone’s houses, and being so cheap the parents can’t argue, was a great visual that really worked with the show’s humor. The Dan Rather moments were funny, as were the “rim job” jokes by the Junior Officer. However, maybe one of those should be cut from the script because the writer spends too much time pushing for a joke that doesn’t apply to any of the series regulars.

In terms of structure, the writer needs to track down some official scripts from the show. This reader has never seen an actual South Park script, but would find it hard to believe that the act breaks are marked in the fashion presented here. In TV, commercial breaks are equivalent to act breaks. The writer should start each act with a “ACT ONE” written and underlined at the center of the first page. Then, “END OF ACT ONE” would be written when the act ends. The next act would start on a brand new page, rather than the same one, with “ACT TWO”, etc. It seems that South Park has three acts, which the writer did a solid job to incorporate into this spec. Proper formatting is easy to correct, and that will depend on how this show formats their scripts. Also, the task to the writer would be to notice any patterns in the show in terms of how act breaks are handled. Are the act breaks times to leave cliffhangers in the story? SOUTH PARK might not be that consistent in those decisions, but again, writing a spec script is also about learning how to research and view a show with a writer’s perspective.

When this script has the act breaks formatted, the next discovery will be that the script will go over 30 pages. And that’s before a B-story is added. In attacking this rewrite, the writer needs to figure out where to trim some fat from the story. A good exercise would be to try pulling up a Character Report in the screenwriting software. That is a great tool to see what percentage of your script the main characters are in. Right now it seems that the series regulars are not that present throughout this script. Much of what could be trimmed are the longer scenes with ancillary characters. Mrs. Garrison’s faux rape by the soldiers is funny, but it seems to take up precious page space without advancing the story. And Bush’s confession to the Mayor is great, but could the boys get Bush on tape or solve the problem instead of the Mayor? One thing we’ve learned in South Park, Colorado is that this Mayor is basically incapable of solving anything. Even Butters’ sobbing could be cut in half and still be funny. (Or, knowing Butters, somehow his parents would blame him for the mess.) Every scene should be pushing this story forward, and the series regulars should be driving that story much more. When writing comedy, writers always need to be open to murdering their darlings, as the journalism expression goes.

## **In Summary:**

While this spec is off to a great start, the writer needs to amp up a B storyline and potentially look for a subtler angle to make a big political statement. "LADDER TO HEAVEN" is a terrific example episode to draw from because it clearly is an allegory about the faulty logic the Bush administration used to bomb Iraq, but the episode is about Saddam potentially building a cookie factory in Heaven, and the US Government finds reason to bomb Heaven. This episode was one of the better SOUTH PARKs for totally subverting current politics, yet, still commenting on them. And mind you, they still managed to keep their political balance in check too. By applying some of these adjustments, SAUDI PARQ should shape up nicely.

**Page Notes:**

Pg. 1: Right away the politics are so clearly out in the open, a reader could personally be offended, and again, the show rarely is that on the nose about their points of view. That's the beauty of animation.

Pg. 4: Cartman squirms out of his "Bastard Jew" line. Cartman is quicker and less apologetic than that.

Pg 5: Who is Ernestine Tomlin? (Is that dating myself? Either way, the joke was lost and is time/page-consuming.)

Pg 7: Bush peeks out from under his desk. The rest of his behavior in the episode indicates that this is not a fearful man.

Pg 8: "Martin Sheen in Dead Zone". Again, the reference was lost on me, so was the joke.

Pg 9: Cartman is mad at the guys for questioning the President still. Follow this...this is where either the A story gets changed, or the B story begins. Cartman forms a neighborhood militia and it just fizzles out by the end of the episode?

Pg 11: "Bomb the shit of 'em!". Do you mean, "the shit OUT of 'em!" ?

Pg 17: Stan's line: "What the fuck is all this about?" seems out of place. Not quite sure why he's saying that now, not earlier, and it seems a strange line to end a scene on.

Pg 21: The other "Bomb the shit OUT of them", typo.