

Tom Cruise sues South Park

Manav Bhushan and Casey Selwyn question whether it was right for Tom Cruise to threaten to sue US show South Park over an episode that depicted Scientology in a pejorative manner and blatantly hinted that he was gay.



In November 2005, Comedy Central aired an episode of the US show South Park entitled [Trapped in the Closet](#) that depicted Scientology in a pejorative manner. The episode used cartoons to describe the history of Scientology and flashed, “Scientologists ACTUALLY believe this”, on the screen throughout. In the episode, a character who was obviously meant to be Tom Cruise believes that one of the children on the show is the reincarnation of the founder of [Scientology](#), L. Ron Hubbard. The episode also mocked Cruise’s acting abilities, and blatantly hinted that he was gay (hence “trapped in the closet”). After the show was aired, Cruise [reportedly](#) threatened that if Viacom allowed the programme to be shown again, he would stop promoting his film Mission: Impossible 3, which was produced by Paramount Pictures (Viacom owns both Paramount Pictures and Comedy Central). Cruise also threatened to sue the creators of South Park in court.

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Comedy Central pulled the repeat episode off of the air later that week, and the episode's planned screening on the UK's Paramount Comedy 1 channel was also cancelled. However, under pressure from fans and the creators of South Park, Comedy Central later aired the episode on two separate occasions, and also released the episode in DVD format.

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