

Please Note: This was all written well before I knew about the allegations against John K. I heard about them through a friend and someone I followed at the time on Tumblr. Then I eventually watched a video breaking down the allegations by That Creepy Reading. I already didn't much care for John K as a person and I did not like his attitude about fictional media, especially animation. He had such a high horse attitude and felt like he separated himself from everyone else to the point that it made me wonder, buddy, what the fuck is wrong with you?

No wonder he was notorious for being hard to work with.

I wanted to share it with you guys in case you were interested in my thoughts on the APC as I mentioned on Twitter. Hope you enjoy it!

Last year (this was written around 2017 or so), I got into *The Ren and Stimpy Show* and had a fun time with it. Sure, I may not exactly talk much about it now, but there are episodes I do enjoy and laugh at.

However, before I rewatched the original show, I discovered the Adult Party Cartoon. So you can imagine my surprise! I read the episode summaries, which did make me feel both confused and a little weirded out. Then I eventually watched it and... well, it got a whole lot of mixed reactions out of me.

I'll give you a brief history. The APC aired on Spike TV in 2003, seven years after the original R&S was cancelled in 1996. It was made by the show's original creator, John K, but this time aimed at adults rather than children. It was highly rated at the time, but was also panned by critics and fans alike for many reasons, not least of which being the excessive gross-out humour. That may have been a standard for the original show, but even it had restraint.

While John K DID have full creative freedom this time around, there were hints he'd made after the fact (you can make of that what you will) that Spike TV was trying to get the show to be more like South Park. With a lot of emphasis on toilet humour (Really? There wasn't enough already?) and such like that.

However, four months later, Spike TV's animation block was removed from the channel and all of its shows went with it. So this meant that the APC only had six episodes in total, with a seventh having been on the way but never finished. Concept art, storyboards and voice reels were shared of the unfinished episode called "Life Sucks" which seems to be of Ren being a misanthropic and nihilistic douchebag to ruin Stimpy's good mood.

Like I mentioned earlier, critics and fans really didn't take to this revival. very well. In fact, this is definitely one of those shows where you love it or you hate it. Just about everything one person hates about the show, another fan would love it for the same reasons. This was especially true with the divisive episode "Ren Seeks Help", but I'll get to that later.

Looking back, I did talk about the APC at length here and there. I talked about a few scenes in certain episodes, had a good laugh with the infamous log-sawing scene that looked more like gay sex, and also criticized APC Ren for being a colossal unlikable shit. It just took all of his negative qualities from the original show and heightened them, leaving absolutely no room for any likable ones he'd had.

But I never did go into my own feelings about the show on a whole.

I guess the reason I held back from doing that was because at the time, I knew I wouldn't be able to give a clear answer, and not without delving into it. I was on the fence for quite a while! But now I can more or less get my thoughts out about it, I'll go ahead and get right to nitty gritty the matter.

I didn't like it.

Yep, that's the honest truth! As a whole, I did not like the APC.



....XD Okay, I still love that shot of him!

But overall, I just didn't like it. There are small things in it that I do actually like in the episodes, but I wouldn't say I enjoyed it as a whole. I was trying my damndest to like it, to enjoy it, to get myself into the mindset of the target audience. To even tell myself that everything I saw was intended for adults, intended for a certain brand of humour, intended to be vulgar and rude and all that.

Still didn't like it!

I can safely say that John K's style of humour isn't always to my taste. Which in itself is fine, to each their own. But aside from certain parts here and there that did elicit actual chuckles out of me, I just didn't find it funny. Everything was as gross and over the top as you can imagine.

I just didn't like it. It truly wasn't for me. The novelty of seeing Ren and Stimpy in an adult setting quickly lost its charm and I was left feeling a mix of emotions about it.

But I think I found the core problem I do have with the APC. I'm going to keep it as objective as I possibly can, but bear with me on it!

I will say one thing, though. As much as I did not like "Ren Seeks Help", the biggest problem with it wasn't the excessive gore and torture. That in itself was more of a personal thing I really didn't like about it. The real problem was actually the pacing. And this is in fact a prevalent issue in the APC as a whole.

The original show was also quite vulgar and pushed the envelope, most especially in the Spumco era! Every episode was pushed to its limits in some regard, usually with the gross-out visuals, dialogue, and themes presented. For a lot of cartoons to follow, *The Ren and Stimpy Show* was the core inspiration for that style of humour. It essentially became the benchmark for gross-out cartoons. So if you see gross-out humour in a cartoon, you can bet that it was likely inspired by the original R&S.

The fun part about the humour and the visuals in the original show was one particular way in how it was executed. It all felt like it was a child's imagination put to animation. The trippy visuals, the gross-out elements, the maddening moments, and everything in between feels like a child's wondrous imagination taking over. Like *Alice In Wonderland*, where you're in this strange, mad world that you could bet a child created.

That was what made *The Ren and Stimpy Show* a lot of fun and so accessible to children and adults. You were watching a fun, crazy adventure that only a child could possibly have put together! The crazy visuals and the fast pacing of the situations only added to this perspective! Even the Games era of the show, which was arguably a departure, still managed to capture this ideal.

Being aimed at children also created a restraint when it was needed. While the show was always about testing the limits, it became all the more fun for that. You would never expect half the things they say and do on the show because it's for kids! And that's a part of the child-like wonder, being able to test limits and see how far you can go with how crazy it can get.

That was one of the things that the show was most remembered for. Testing those boundaries and just barely crossing them in the long run created such a fun experience!

Overall, it worked so well because the show was allowed to be silly and fast-paced from the eyes of a child. The format was as episodic and non-formulaic as a show can get. The Looney Tunes is a prime example of this format; all you have are the characters with their established personalities, a lot of slapstick, and letting the jokes play out. There was no storyline, no character development, nothing of that sort. It was just pure stupid fun every single time.

Having the child-like wonder, imagination, curiosity and simplistic approach was EXACTLY the kind of style that worked for Ren and Stimpy. It worked BECAUSE it was aimed at children primarily and still kept older audiences in mind to catch all the naughty jokes.

The Adult Party Cartoon, however, didn't have any of that. The child-like wonder was completely stripped away and it ended up being turned into a generic adult-oriented animated show. Except with the Ren and Stimpy label attached to it.

As I mentioned, part of why the original show worked was the fast-paced comedy. The APC plays at a much slower pace in terms of visuals and the execution of the jokes. This often leads to a joke either dragging on for far too long, repeating itself, or giving you an unnecessary breather. It's as though the goal isn't to make you laugh or see how crazy it is, like the original show tried to do. Instead, they drag out the jokes as much as possible before getting to the punchline. If there even is one to begin with.

Shock value is a staple of Ren and Stimpy, but the APC simply just puts in a shock value kind of joke simply for the shock. It's something the Games era was *very* guilty of most of the time. There's very little thought involved and is simply put in because they know it'll get a response. If it's disgusting or shocks you, that's all that seemed to matter. Oh yeah, because never mind writing an actual joke! Just put something absolutely gross and shocking! That'll work!

That ends up being another problem. What do people remember the most about the APC? The excessive gross-out visuals of pure torture from "Ren Seeks Help" and the fact that "Stimpy's Pregnant" consisted of a baby made out of *fecal matter*.

For those of you unaware, I'm actually not joking about that last one. I wish I was.

Being aimed at adults created a slower pace, having absolutely no limits to the vulgarity at any angle, and being less silly. As I said earlier, it just became a generic adult-oriented cartoon. By then, we already had shows like *The Simpsons*, *South Park* and *Family Guy*, to name a few. We were already used to that brand of humour. But where those shows had at least *some* limits, the R&S APC did away with anything like that.

With the original show, kids at the time weren't used to the brand of humour that it ended up bringing to the table. It was a whole other concept no one would have believed would ever work! Not Nickelodeon at least!

But the APC never had that. Being an adult-oriented cartoon was nothing new in 2003.

There was no need to hold anything back and that in itself became a detriment because no limits were set. There wasn't anything to surprise viewers with by the time the second episode aired. It had already become a paint-by-numbers gross-out cartoon, except without boundaries to test. It also had the original show to live up to, which are tough shoes to fill.

There wouldn't be any question of a joke going too far. John K. had all the creative control (allegedly) and nothing holding him back. What was going to stop him from going all the way? There was little reason to ever say no to his vision by now. They didn't have children to think about, they didn't have the usual network standards and practices (as they did with Nickelodeon), therefore absolutely no need for restraint.

Without restraint or filters, it ended up being a bit more of a mess than it needed to be. The APC ends up feeling like it's missing something in the long run.

This was a problem especially present in "Altruists", which is not only the longest episode of the APC, but the longest Ren and Stimpy cartoon *ever made*. It clocks in at about forty-odd minutes, which ends up being at least four episodes all smooshed together in an hour-long special.

With the original show, the episodes were all eleven minutes long, along with a couple of them maybe clocking in at twenty-two minutes. These time constraints were well utilized limits that the original show did need. Everything that was needed fell into place perfectly and made for an understandable reason for everything to be fast-paced. And yet you never feel like it's going at breakneck speed.

With the APC, however, all these episodes (minus "Altruists") are the standard length of a half-hour show. This is a part of where the problems with the pacing comes into play, there ends up being too much time given. So they have to pad out every second that nothing is happening (which, unfortunately, happens way too often) and compensate.

Without the usual time constraints, especially in "Altruists", the pace for everything inevitably slows down. It's not to say that the original show didn't have slower, calmer, and quiet moments, because it did. There were plenty of instances where the viewer was allowed to breathe and just take everything in.

And it worked because it balanced perfectly with the fast-paced craziness that's usually prevalent. It never took away from the fun and was utilized exactly as it needed to be. A breather. The show never lost sight of the fun, but it also didn't forget about being able to sit back and relax. Even the Games era understood this and had its share of a lot of quiet moments. You never felt that these moments were jarring, they were just a different kind of instance to be appreciated and could still be very funny.

Since the APC had no balance, there was never anything to slow down from. Everything was just slow to begin with. "Altruists" was especially rampant in the problems I mentioned earlier.

Jokes repeating themselves, running for far too long, or having shock value for the sake of it. There were even moments that didn't make sense, but all they ended up doing was making you scratch your head rather than laugh at the absurdity.

One joke that was present during the episode was when Ren and Stimpy were sneaking into a mansion so that they could steal money and other valuables.

Simple concept, we've seen that kind of thing a million times in other cartoons. They also have to get past a guard duck. Again, very typical, usually with a guard dog, but I digress. What can they do to get past the duck? A disguise! What kind of disguise? Dressing in drag so as to distract and seduce the target. One subject (Stimpy) is to wear the disguise, while the other subject (Ren) sneaks by, hides, and then knocks out the target.

Couldn't be more simple, right? This entire sequence could have been done in less than three or four minutes.

Unfortunately, the entire sequence runs well over three minutes, give or take. The pacing and the editing for the entire segment is incredibly slow and tedious. We are given a scenario we've seen so many times in other cartoons (including the original show!), but they end up dragging it out for far too long. What's the point? It didn't add anything to the plot or the situation itself, it just filled in the run-time.

Here's another example, this time from "Naked Beach Frenzy". There's a scene where a couple of the women are in the showers of the beach. Of course, the scene is meant to titillate and showcase how much of a dirty pervert Ren is. We are treated to one of the girls being washed by Ren, who is oblivious to his true intentions.

This scene, amidst Stimpy trying to sabotage the attempt, is well over five minutes. It falls victim to the bad pacing and it shows. We are treated to every single detail of the entire process. In all of that, nothing at all happens. The fact that Ren is a pervert and the girl is completely oblivious quickly loses steam and then has nothing else to follow it with. It just stays on that path the entire time. To the point that you might end up saying "We get it! Move along!". It could easily have been cut by a few minutes and it would've been all the better for it.

So yes, at its core, the APC is a much different cartoon and aimed at a different audience. That I do understand. But when you have the Ren and Stimpy label attached, you end up bringing out a lot of expectations. I'm not saying it had to be a perfect replica of the original show, but it clearly seems to miss the entire point of what made it so fun.

Then again, I could be wrong in all this. Maybe I just don't get it, maybe I'm really not the target audience for it, and maybe I'm misguided. That's all well and good. I only wanted to express my problems with the APC and why I feel it just didn't work.

As a whole, like I said, I didn't like it. I really can't recommend it either. If you are a fan of the original show, you may love it or hate it. But if you're curious and can handle excessive

gross-out visuals and a slower pace, you might get something out of it. But if everything I said here doesn't grab you, give it a pass. You're honestly not missing anything.

The only episode that felt in any way close to the original show was "Fire Dogs 2", because not only does it serve as a direct follow-up to the original episode, but it relegated Ren and Stimpy to being supporting roles who were passengers in the episode's plot rather than the focus. It was also less gross and the vulgarity was toned down quite a bit. Even Ren's jackassery, while still present, was definitely not as prevalent and felt a lot more in-tune to the original show.

As I also mentioned, there were little things I did like. But they're incredibly shallow and don't save the APC one little bit.

On top of that? Seeing Ren and Stimpy in an adult situation and swearing had a certain novelty for about five seconds and then it got old *really fast*. Callbacks to the original show just reminded you that you could be watching that instead! Funny moments were sadly anecdotal.

To quote Mr. Horse "No sir, I don't like it."