26 Outrageous Truths About Children's Television - mental_floss on YouTube (Ep.50)

List Show
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https://nerdfighteria.info/v/tDBSa5TMX2Y

Hi, I'm John Green. Welcome to my salon. This is Mental Floss on YouTube.

1. And did you know that a young Bill Nye worked in a local comedy show in Seattle called "Almost Live"? During one episode, the show's host said "Jigga-watt" meaning gigawatt and the story goes that Bill jumped in to correct him and the host snapped, "Who do you think you are, 'Bill Nye the Science Guy'?"' The name stuck.

And that's the first of many outrageous truths about children's television I'm gonna share with you today.

(Intro)

2. In 2000, People magazine included Steve from Blue's Clue on their list of America's one hundred most eligible bachelors. And they weren't the only ones to take notice. A New York Times' profile on Steve observed that he quote "developed an avid following among both preteen girls and mothers, though latter scrutinized the show with an intensity that might make even Elmo blush." So congratulations to the New York Times for that weird, misogynistic editorializing.

3. *Schoolhouse Rock* was created by Bob Dorough in the 1970s. His boss told him, "My sons can't memorize their times tables, yet they sing along with Jimi Hendrix and the Rolling Stones and they get **their** words. Dorough was initially unsure if combining education and rock and roll would work, but the show took off and aired through 1985. By the way, Dorough's personal favorite song was "Lolly, Lolly, Lolly, Get Your Adverbs Here", about three generations of a family who sold adverbs and he sang all three parts.

4. In 1997, over 700 people in Japan experienced seizures, vomiting, and eye problems after watching an episode of Pokemon. In the episode, the characters go into a computer and destroy a virus which causes Pikachu's eyes to flash red and led to a television-induced seizure in many viewers, mostly children. Mark says that this is a Pokemon. Not my area of expertise.

5. So as you may know, the internet has a theory that Barney is Satan. No real surprise there, but let me take you through the argument. So, you take the phrase "Cute Purple Dinosaur" and then replace the letters "u" with "v" (as the ancient Romans would have). Then, you pick the roman numerals out of that phrase and it just so happens to add up to 666. Coincidence? Yes, definitely. I mean, decide for yourself.

6. Sometimes 90s nostalgia strikes at weird times. Like, in 2012 when there was an *Adventures of Pete and Pete* reunion show featuring an appearance by the fictional band Polaris. The group spent time rehearsing at a warehouse in Providence, and the grungy punk band playing next door came over and said "Are you a Polaris cover band?" And truly only 90s kids will get that.

7. Nickelodeon only aired new episodes of the *Rugrats* from 1981 to 2004. Since the premier episode was Tommy's first birthday, if he aged naturally throughout the show, he would have been 13 by the time it ended.

8. The Powerpuff Girls were originally named the Whoopass Girls. Creator Craig McCracken started a short in college called “Whoopass Stew!” before Cartoon Network bought the idea and changed the name, you know, to tone it down a bit.

9. Now *South Park* is known for parodies, but sometimes other shows beat them at their own game including, believe it or not, *Arthur*. In a 1999 episode, the gang from Arthur entered a contest to write an episode of a TV show. Buster’s idea was shown in the animation style of South Park, complete with Buster getting killed by a spaceship and Francine saying, “Hey! You squished Buster!” That was my Francine impression. I know it was excellent.

10. *Reading Rainbow* was on PBS for 21 seasons, but that wasn’t enough for host LeVar Burton. Along with his business partner, Burton spent 18 months acquiring all of the rights to the show, so they could create an app version. The app launched in 2012 and has been enormously successful. As if you needed more reason to believe that LeVar Burton is the coolest person in the world. Well, it’s actually a three-way tie with T&G co-stars Wil Wheaton and Patrick Stewart.

11. Scooby-Doo’s name was originally “Too Much.” But right before production started, one of the creators of the program heard the Frank Sinatra song “Strangers in the Night” and was inspired by the refrain: “Dooby-dooby-doo.” Is that copyright infringement? No, apparently my singing was not good enough for that to be copyright infringement.

12. Remember in the nineties when people who had way too much free time were up in arms because they thought that Tinky Winky, the Teletubby, was gay? Well, this rumor got so huge that people involved with the creation of the Teletubbies had to make official statements. The BBC responded, “Tinky Winky is simply a sweet, technological baby with a magic bag.” And a representative for the company that licensed the show in the U.S. said, “The fact that he carries a magic bag doesn’t make him gay.” [chuckles]

13. The cartoon *Rocko’s Modern Life* is known for its hidden inappropriate innuendos. One example is the restaurant in the show, “Chokey Chicken,” a possible reference to masturbation. The name of the restaurant was eventually changed, by the way, to “Chewy Chicken.”

14. A few different Jack Russell Terriers played Wishbone on the TV show of the same name, but the main dog actor was named Soccer. Now, I’m not calling Soccer a sellout, but he was also known for his commercial work, with companies like Nike and Mighty Dog Dog Food. Meanwhile, our office dog, Alex, can’t book a role to save her life. I mean, the only thing she’s ever done is, like, be in our hot dog eating contest.

15. The creators of *Yo Gabba Gabba!*, Christian Jacobs and Scott Schultz, started as directing partners who worked on music and skateboarding videos. After the men became fathers, they were struck by how unimpressive children’s programming was, so they developed their own show, despite having no experience with children’s TV or writing. The show took off when *Napoleon Dynamite* director, Jared Hess, found it on the Internet and sent it to a Nickelodeon exec and ever since, I’ve been hanging out with DJ Lance Rock.

16. All right, we’ve gotta speed this up! Little Richard sang the *Magic School Bus* theme song.

17. Sesame Street has won over a hundred Emmys, by far the most Emmys of any television program ever.

18. When Michael Cera was 14, he voiced Brother Bear in *The Berenstain Bears*.

19. Lamb Chop is still performing today with Shari Lewis’s daughter, Mallory. They do a lot of performances for the military who promoted the puppet to a three-star general.

20. Miranda Cosgrove earns $180,000 for each episode of *iCarly*. Compare that with Miley Cyrus who earned $15,000 per episode of *Hannah Montana*.

21. In 2011, the Fox News program *Fox and Friends* spent a segment devoted to whether the SpongeBob book, SpongeBob Goes Green!, was pushing the political agenda that climate change is real.

22. Johnny Knoxville has cited *Tom & Jerry* as a major influence on *Jackass*.

23. Kermit the Frog of *The Muppets* was originally made out of Jim Hensen's mother's coat and ping pong balls. To be clear, those were the eyes.

24. Inspector Gadget's nemesis, Dr. Claw, is never shown in any episode. But he does have an action figure that has a face.

25. Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie already had three kids when Jolie got pregnant with twins. To help the other three understand, they showed their kids an episode of *Dora the Explorer* about twins.

26. And lastly, we return to the salon so I can tell you that in 2001, Bob the Builder covered "Mambo No. 5" with relevant lyrics like "A little bit of tiling on the roof." That version hit number one on the UK charts.

Thanks for watching Mental Floss here on YouTube, which is made with the help of these nice people.

Every week we endeavor to answer one of your mind-blowing questions. This week's question comes from Victor Kugler who asks "What was the first flavor of ice cream?" That's a fantastic question, Victor, I don't know the answer. By the way, this is kind of a Transformer ice cream cone. It starts out as an ice cream cone and then it becomes a little person!

But Meredith tells me it depends on how loosely you want to define "ice cream." Like in the 6th century, people in the Persian Empire would combine snow with grape-juice concentrate, and that was sort of ice cream. But, the first known ice cream recipe involving actual cream comes from England in the early 1700s. The recipe mentions multiple fruits as flavor options including cherry, raspberry, and lemon. So one of those.

If you have a mind-blowing question please leave it in comments and we'll endeavor to answer as many as possible. Thanks for watching Mental Floss here on YouTube and as we say in my hometown - Don't forget to be awesome.