

= A Fish Called Selma =

" A Fish Called Selma " is the nineteenth episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on March 24 , 1996 . The episode features Troy McClure , who attempts to resurrect his acting career by marrying Selma Bouvier . Show runners Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein were fans of Phil Hartman and wished to produce an episode that focused on his character McClure . Freelance writer Jack Barth wrote the episode , and Mark Kirkland directed it .

Barth 's script underwent a substantial rewrite in the show 's writing room , including the expansion of the Planet of the Apes musical and addition of the song " Dr. Zaius " . The episode ran too long because of the slow pace of Troy and Selma 's speech . Consequently , guest star Jeff Goldblum rerecorded his dialogue as MacArthur Parker at a faster speed . The episode received generally positive reviews , with particular praise given to Hartman and the musical . Entertainment Weekly placed the episode eighth on their list of the top 25 The Simpsons episodes .

= = Plot = =

Chief Wiggum pulls Troy McClure over for dangerous driving . Not wishing to be required to wear his glasses while driving , Troy goes to the DMV to get his license changed to remove the requirement . He offers to take DMV employee Selma Bouvier to dinner if she lets him pass the eye test , to which she agrees . After dinner , photographers notice Troy leaving with a human woman (rumors about a sexual abnormality concerning fish had essentially destroyed Troy 's career) and the story hits the news . The next day , Troy 's agent , MacArthur Parker , calls and says that he can get work again if he continues seeing Selma . Troy continues to date her and his career begins to recover . On his agent 's advice , Troy asks Selma to marry him ; overjoyed , she agrees .

The night before the wedding , a drunk Troy tells Homer the reason for his marriage : he doesn 't really love Selma , and he just plans to use her as a sham wife to help further his career . Although Homer fails to act , Marge and Patty try to explain it to Selma , who accuses them of just being envious . She confronts Troy , who shamelessly admits that their marriage is a sham . Troy explains to Selma that even though their marriage is a sham , she has everything she could want and will be " the envy of every other sham wife in town " . Selma has doubts , but accepts the situation because she fears being alone . Parker thinks he can get Troy the part of McBain 's sidekick in McBain IV : Fatal Discharge , but concludes he will have a better chance if he has a family . Troy and Selma try to conceive a child , but neither feels comfortable with their situation , and Selma finally leaves after deciding that bringing a child into a loveless family is wrong . Troy turns down the role of McBain 's sidekick to direct and star in his own film , The Contrabulous Fabtraption of Professor Horatio Hufnagel .

= = Production = =

Show runners Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein were fans of actor Phil Hartman , who had been a recurring guest star since the second season . They decided to produce an episode entirely about his character Troy McClure to give Hartman as much to do as possible . Oakley wanted to explore Troy 's character because he had never interacted with the show 's other characters before , only appearing on television . The writers chose the plot idea of Troy 's marriage to Selma Bouvier because she was " always marrying people " . The episode 's first draft was written by freelance writer Jack Barth , although the rest of the writing staff rewrote it . One aspect of the rewrite was the song " Dr. Zaius " from the Planet of the Apes musical , which the staff consider to be one of the greatest musical numbers ever written for The Simpsons . Weinstein pitched it in the writer 's room as " Rock Me Dr. Zaius " , in parody of the 1985 song " Rock Me Amadeus " by Falco . It expanded into a full song primarily concocted by George Meyer , who included " corny " aspects of vaudeville . The line " From chimpan @-@ A to chimpan @-@ Z " in the final song of the musical was written by David Cohen . Oakley commented that he has heard the line " all over the world " . Director Mark

Kirkland was pleased that Troy was the star of the episode ; he enjoyed interpreting Hartman 's voice performance because it allowed him and the other animators to " open [McClure] up visually as a character " . Due to the slow talking speed of Troy and Selma , the episode 's audio track was 28 minutes long which meant that multiple scenes had to be cut , including Troy 's bachelor party . After the cast had completed their original recording , guest star Jeff Goldblum rerecorded his dialogue as MacArthur Parker at a faster speed to further shorten it . His character 's design was loosely modeled on him , as well as a real @-@ life " sleazy Hollywood agent " . The animators watched several of Goldblum 's films , including The Tall Guy , in order to get a better representation of his performance .

Throughout " A Fish Called Selma " it is hinted that Troy engages in strange sexual activity . The writers initially did not know what the " unsavory " sexual preference would be , but eventually decided on a fish fetish , a suggestion from executive producer James L. Brooks , since it was " so perverted and strange , that it was over the top " . At the episode 's table reading , a female staff member demanded the line , " From now on she 's smoking for two " , be removed from the script ; however , her request was denied . On the walls of the Pimento Grove restaurant , the animators placed caricatures of every single guest star who had appeared on the show up to that point , as well as pictures of the fictional celebrities of the show .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode 's title is a reference to the film A Fish Called Wanda , while the opening scene features a parody of The Muppets . McClure appears in a musical version of Planet of the Apes ; the song " Dr. Zaius " is a parody of " Rock Me Amadeus " by Falco . The scene with Selma and Troy smoking is similar to Now , Voyager . The house that McClure lives in is based on the Chemosphere in California and his car is a DeLorean DMC @-@ 12 . The showbiz news anchors , voiced by Hank Azaria and Pamela Hayden , are based on Entertainment Tonight hosts John Tesh and Mary Hart , respectively . McClure describes Jub @-@ Jub the iguana as " Everywhere You Want to Be " in reference to a Visa commercial . Ken Keeler pitched the name MacArthur Parker , in reference to the song " MacArthur Park " , written by Jimmy Webb and first recorded by Richard Harris . Selma 's costumes are modeled on the clothes of Marilyn Monroe . At the wedding , Homer sings " Rock and Roll Part 2 " by Gary Glitter in his head .

The rumours of Troy McClure having a bizarre fetish for marine life mirror sex rumours about Richard Gere and a hamster .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " A Fish Called Selma " finished tied for 66th place in the weekly ratings for the week of March 18 ? March 24 , 1996 , with a Nielsen rating of 7 @. @ 8 . It was the sixth @-@ highest rated show on the Fox Network that week . Entertainment Weekly placed the episode eighth on their list of the top 25 The Simpsons episodes . IGN named the episode the best of the seventh season , stating that it seemed the " obvious pick " . They called the musical the best moment of the episode and " maybe even the whole show " . In a later review , IGN 's Robert Canning praised Phil Hartman 's performance as " simply the best of any guest appearance on The Simpsons " . He concluded by saying : " Sure , [the episode 's] writing is smart and the jokes are funny , but without Phil Hartman as Troy McClure , ' A Fish Called Selma ' would only be good . With Hartman , it 's fantastic ! " Michael Moran of The Times ranked the episode as the best in the show 's history . In 2012 , Johnny Dee of The Guardian listed it as one of his five favorite episodes in the history of The Simpsons , noting that " Key to The Simpsons longevity is the minor characters who only crop up every season or so . And none more so than Troy McClure " .

Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , were pleased that " Troy McClure gets a starring role at last " . Empire called the episode the " high point " of the show 's " long @-@ standing love affair with The Planet of the Apes " , and cited it as McClure 's " finest hour " . Kimberly Potts of AOL Television

named the episode the 14th best episode of the show . Dave Foster of DVD Times praised the episode , as well as Jeff Goldblum 's participation on the audio commentary . He stated : " for those yet to witness Troy McClure 's musical take on Planet of the Apes , well , you might say you haven 't lived ! Musical parody at its very best , the visuals and aural delights in this one brief sequence guarantee this season a recommendation being one of the most inspired moments of The Simpsons many seasons . "