

= Radioactive Man (The Simpsons episode) =

" Radioactive Man " is the second episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on September 24 , 1995 . The episode sees the film version of the comic book series Radioactive Man set up production in Springfield . Much to Bart 's disappointment , the part of the hero 's sidekick , Fallout Boy , goes not to him , but to Milhouse . Milhouse , however , hates acting , so he quits the role and leaves the set , forcing the producers of the film to shut down production and go back to Hollywood .

The episode was written by John Swartzwelder , and directed by Susie Dietter . Mickey Rooney guest starred as himself in the episode . " Radioactive Man " was the first episode of The Simpsons to be digitally colored . The episode features cultural references to the Batman television series , the 1995 film Waterworld , and the song " Lean on Me " by Bill Withers . Since airing , the episode has received positive reviews from fans and television critics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 5 , and was the fourth highest @- @ rated show on the Fox network that week .

= = Plot = =

Bart and Milhouse are thrilled to hear that a film version of their favorite comic book series , Radioactive Man , is in production . Rainier Wolfcastle , the star of the McBain films , is chosen to play Radioactive Man , and even more excitingly for the Springfield Elementary School children , the production moves to their town . A search is launched for a young actor to play Radioactive Man 's sidekick Fallout Boy , and Bart auditions . Bart does well , but is rejected because he is an inch too short . Milhouse gets the part , albeit reluctantly , under pressure from his greedy parents .

A despondent Bart is told by Lisa that he is still needed as Milhouse 's friend and confidant , and Bart eagerly accepts this new role . However , Milhouse finds his own job intolerable and disappears , right during the filming of the most expensive scene in the movie . The film is suspended while the townspeople search for Milhouse . Eventually Bart finds him in the tree house , and despite encouragement from former child star Mickey Rooney , Milhouse gives up on his acting career . Mickey Rooney tried to take over as Fallout Boy ; however , all production on the film is aborted , with the project bankrupt , thanks to price gouging and other unscrupulous conduct by the people of Springfield . Despite Rooney 's stern lecture about their greed , Mayor Quimby insists the townspeople can not give any of the directors ' money back to them , so with their film cancelled , the directors return to Hollywood ? " where people treat each other right " .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by John Swartzwelder , and directed by Susie Dietter . When Dietter read through his first script , she did not find it very funny because of all the visual gags . Once the animatic was finished , her opinion changed , and she thought to herself : " Hey , this is really funny ! " .

This is the first episode of The Simpsons to be digitally colored . The duties of that task went to USAnimation , who would later work on " The Simpsons 138th Episode Spectacular " . Digital coloring would not be attempted again until season 12 's " Tennis the Menace " , and again in season 14 's " Treehouse of Horror XIII " . The show permanently switched to digital coloring later in that same season , beginning with " The Great Louse Detective " .

Mickey Rooney guest starred as himself in the episode . Nancy Cartwright recalls in her autobiography My Life as a 10 @- @ Year @- @ Old Boy that Rooney recorded his lines with the other actors . Although he was late for the session , she comments that he was " so full of pep " and very enthusiastic about the role .

= = Cultural references = =

The Radioactive Man character is based on Batman , and several scenes in the episode reference

the Batman television series from the 1960s . The antagonist of the Radioactive Man films , The Scoutmaster , is based on actor / comedian , Paul Lynde . The scene in the new Radioactive Man film where Radioactive Man and Fallout Boy are captured in Aquaworld is a reference to the 1995 film Waterworld . The director of the Radioactive Man film says : " That Milhouse is going to be big , Gabby Hayes big ! " , in reference to the American actor Gabby Hayes . Moe Szyslak , the bartender of Moe 's Tavern , says that he , as a kid , played the part of Smelly on The Little Rascals , until he killed Alfalfa for stealing his joke . Bill Withers 's song " Lean on Me " from 1972 is played at the end of the episode .

In one scene , Comic Book Guy sends a message to other Internet nerds about who will star in the new Radioactive Man film , two of whom are the nerds Homer met in " Homer Goes to College " , and one is Prince dressed in a purple suit . The last nerd is Curtis Armstrong with an appearance resembling his Revenge of the Nerds character Booger . The usenet newsgroup which he posts the message to (alt.nerd.obsessive) is a reference to the alt.tv.simpsons newsgroup .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Radioactive Man " finished 51st in the ratings for the week of September 18 to September 24 , 1995 . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 5 . The episode was the fourth highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files , Beverly Hills , 90210 and Melrose Place . Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from fans and television critics . The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , called the episode a " wonderful pastiche " on the Tim Burton Batman films , and added that Milhouse is an obvious candidate for Fallout Boy . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson enjoyed the episode , but he does not consider it a " classic " . He said that it offers " more than a few amusing bits " , and added that " spoofing the movie business isn 't anything new , but the show does it well in this solid program . " Jennifer Malkowski of DVD Verdict considered the best part of the episode to be when Krusty tries to prove the " range " of different characters he can do to the casting director . The website concluded its review by giving the episode a grade of A- .

Nancy Basile of About.com named it one of her twenty favorite episodes of the show , and said that she thinks the friendship between Bart and Milhouse in the episode is " endearing " and " touching " . She added that she thinks the episode " pokes fun at Hollywood very effectively " , and that " To top it off , funny favorite characters Rainier Wolfcastle [...] and Lionel Hutz are also in the episode . " Graham Beckwith of The Lantern singled out Rainier Wolfcastle 's line " My eyes ! The goggles do nothing ! " from the episode as one of The Simpsons " greatest one liners " . Total Film 's Nathan Ditum ranked Rooney 's performance as the eighth @-@ best guest appearance in the show 's history , commenting that he is " desperately funny and self @-@ effacing as a parody of his fallen child @-@ star self . "