

= The Mansion Family =

" The Mansion Family " is the twelfth episode of the eleventh season of the American animated sitcom The Simpsons . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on January 23 , 2000 , and was watched in around 11 @. @ 3 million homes during the broadcast . In the episode , Mr. Burns goes to the Mayo Clinic for a check @-@ up after being declared the oldest man in Springfield at an awards ceremony . He leaves the Simpson family to house @-@ sit his mansion for him . When Homer throws a party on Burns ' private yacht in international waters , the party goers are captured by Chinese pirates .

American pop singer Britney Spears guest starred in " The Mansion Family " as herself . She appears as the host of the awards ceremony . The episode , which was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Michael Polcino , features several cultural references . Many parts of the story were inspired by real @-@ life events experienced by some of the staff members of the series . Since airing , the episode has received generally mixed reviews from critics . It was released on the DVD collection The Simpsons Gone Wild in 2004 , and The Simpsons ? The Complete Eleventh Season in 2008 .

= = Plot = =

At the annual Springfield Pride Awards hosted by Kent Brockman and Britney Spears , awards are given to prominent Springfield citizens for their achievements . They present the award for the oldest man in Springfield to Cornelius Chapman , who is 108 years old . Chapman comes up to accept his award , but when Spears gives him a congratulatory kiss on the cheek , he dies of a heart attack . The award is therefore given to the now oldest Springfieldian in the crowd , Mr. Burns . After Burns wins , he realizes he is not a young man anymore , so he and his assistant Smithers go to the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota for a check @-@ up . Burns decides to give the Simpson family an opportunity to house sit his private mansion while he is being tested for various diseases .

After enjoying life as a billionaire for a few days , Homer decides to throw a party before Burns returns . He heads to Moe 's Tavern to buy some beer and invite his friends to the party . However , Moe informs Homer that he can not sell him alcohol on account of it being Sunday before 2 : 00 PM . After Homer is told the only way he could buy alcohol would be to sail out to international waters where there are no laws , he and his friends (including his son Bart) set sail in Burns ' private yacht to throw the party there . Back at the Mayo Clinic , Burns discovers that he not only has all previously discovered diseases , but numerous new diseases the doctors have just discovered in him . However , the sheer number of diseases prevents any one disease from actually doing harm to him . This leads Burns to (incorrectly) conclude that he is indestructible , even though the doctors protest that even a slight breeze could disrupt the balance in his body .

Meanwhile , the party continues and the party goers force Burns ' monkeys into having a knife fight . The yacht is eventually boarded by Chinese pirates who take the ship hostage . The pirates rob everyone on board and tie them up in a net which they then toss overboard . But to the luck of Homer and some of the other guests who happen to be above ocean surface level , it floats and they avoid drowning . Eventually Homer and Bart make it back to the mansion where the family returns the house to Burns after Marge and Lisa have scrubbed all the rooms clean . Back at the Simpsons home , everyone is glad to live a normal life again ? with the exception of Homer , who is upset that he does not live the lifestyle of rich people . The episode ends with Homer wailing about how rich all the persons in the closing credits are (except Richard K. Chung , whom he dismisses as poor) and threatening to report them to the Internal Revenue Service and telling the Gracie Films woman not to shush him .

= = Production = =

" The Mansion Family " was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Michael Polcino as part of the eleventh season of The Simpsons (1999 ? 2000) . It was the first of many episodes of the

series that Polcino directed . Executive producer Mike Scully was the one who received the idea for the first part of the story . He explained on a DVD audio commentary for the episode that his grandmother was the oldest citizen of his hometown West Springfield , Massachusetts , and " they had a ceremony where she was awarded a cane that had a golden head on it . And the weird thing of the ceremony is her name wasn 't on the cane , and the mayor of the town stood up and he says : ' And now , of course as soon as Hazel passes away , her name will be engraved on the cane . ' So she would never live to see it happen . But nonetheless , she was given the cane . "

The subplot of " The Mansion Family " , where Mr. Burns gets a medical examination , was inspired by Swartzwelder 's own visit to a Mayo Clinic . George Meyer , an executive producer on the series , has said that " John , I don 't think is a guy who goes to the doctor very often . And every 20 or 30 years , he decides he needs to get a tune up . So he went to the Mayo Clinic , had them give him an entire battery of tests . And as John [jokingly] tells it , they said that his constant smoking had done no harm to him whatsoever . Might even be benefiting him . " While writing the parts of the episode that involve international waters , the writers did research and found that the actual laws of international waters are more complex and ambiguous compared to what they had already written in the story , but they decided to ignore that .

American pop singer Britney Spears guest starred in the episode as herself . According to Scully , she was seventeen to eighteen years old when she recorded her lines , and " She was a lot of fun to work with . She was a fan of the show , and she was willing to do all the lines . It was all the people around her that were crazy , the management and all that . We originally had her introduce herself [in the episode] as ' I 'm teenage songbird Britney Spears . ' And she recorded a few takes and they were fine . And suddenly , all these guys come rushing in [saying] ' She can 't say songbird . ' [We asked] what 's wrong with songbird ? And they were somehow convinced that it was some sort of slam or an insult . " The staff members were therefore forced to change her opening line to " I 'm teen sensation Britney Spears . "

Many scenes in " The Mansion Family " were inspired by popular culture . For example , there is a painting hanging on one of the walls in Burns ' mansion that depicts Burns playing poker with dogs , referencing the oil paintings series Dogs Playing Poker . Another painting , showing a nude Burns , is a callback to a previous episode of the series , " Brush with Greatness " (1991) , in which Marge produced the painting for Burns . Featured in the episode is also a joke that makes fun of the Grammy Awards . During the awards ceremony , Homer complains , " Why won 't anyone give me an award ? " When Lisa points out that " You won a Grammy , " Homer says " I mean an award that 's worth winning . " At this point the screen freezes and a message scrolls across the bottom of the screen reading " LEGAL DISCLAIMER : Mr. Simpson 's opinions do not reflect those of the producers , who don 't consider the Grammy an award at all . "

= = Release = =

The episode originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on January 23 , 2000 . It was viewed in approximately 11 @. @ 3 million households that night . With a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 2 , the episode tied Becker (CBS) for the 14th place (compared the season average of 37) in the ratings for the week of January 17 ? 23 , 2000 . The episode was the third highest @- @ rated broadcast on Fox that week , following a NFC Championship post @- @ game show and Malcolm in the Middle . On September 14 , 2004 , the episode was released in the United States on a DVD collection titled The Simpsons Gone Wild , along with the season one episode " Homer 's Night Out " , the season ten episode " Sunday , Cruddy Sunday " , and the season thirteen episode " Homer the Moe " . On October 7 , 2008 , " The Mansion Family " was released on DVD again as part of the box set The Simpsons ? The Complete Eleventh Season . Staff members Mike Scully , George Meyer , Ron Hauge , Matt Selmán , Tim Long , Michael Polcino , Donick Cary , and Pete Michels participated in the DVD audio commentary for the episode . Deleted scenes from the episode were also included on the box set .

" The Mansion Family " has received generally mixed reception from critics . Susan Dunne of The Hartford Courant described it as " debauched but hilarious . " While reviewing the eleventh season

of The Simpsons , DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson commented on " The Mansion Family " , writing that " Although The Simpsons started out as moderately reality based , pretty much any grounding was gone by [the point this episode aired] . That doesn ' t mean the show fails to depict funny bits , especially during the dark humor of Burns ' hospital visit . Nonetheless , [the episode] occasionally goes too far to the side of silliness ; those gags are hit or miss . "

In a review of the episodes featured on The Simpsons Gone Wild , PopMatters critic Stephen Haag wrote that " none of these episodes will end up in the Simpsons Hall of Fame " , and that " The Mansion Family " is " hardly a classic episode , but Lord knows there are plenty worse from season 11 (paging ' Bart to the Future ') . " He further commented that " if anything , this episode should be included in the ' batshit @-@ crazy endings ' DVD , " referring to the ending scenes with the Chinese pirates . David Packard of DVD Verdict was more positive in his review of The Simpsons Gone Wild , writing that " The Mansion Family " is " another all @-@ around hilarious episode , with a nice swipe at the Grammy Awards , the Simpsons family running amok in the mansion and enjoying all it has to offer , and Burns ' various tests at the Mayo Clinic (my favorite gag is when Burns is slid into an MRI machine , only to hear the thing grind to a halt with an error message reading ' Clear body jam in Area 1 . ') " "