

= Whacking Day =

" Whacking Day " is the twentieth episode of The Simpsons ' fourth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on April 29 , 1993 . The episode revolves around the fictional holiday " Whacking Day " , celebrated annually , in which the citizens of Springfield drive snakes into the town square , then club them to death . The episode was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Jeffrey Lynch ; Barry White , who had expressed a wish to appear in the show , guest stars as himself . It was pitched by George Meyer , who wanted to create an episode against the mistreatment of snakes (the episode ended up winning a Genesis Award) . The episode includes the first appearance of Superintendent Chalmers , and it features an Itchy & Scratchy parody of Oliver Stone 's film JFK .

= = Plot = =

During an inspection by Superintendent Chalmers , Principal Skinner lures Bart , Jimbo , Kearney , Dolph and Nelson into a utility basement with the promise of free mountain bikes and locks the door . Bart escapes through a ventilation shaft and takes Groundskeeper Willie 's tractor for a joyride , crashing into Chalmers . Rather than giving him detention , Skinner instead expels Bart. After Bart is quickly expelled from a new private Christian school , Marge decides to homeschool Bart.

Meanwhile , Kent Brockman announces that Springfield 's annual " Whacking Day " is approaching . Each year on May 10 , the people of Springfield drive snakes to the center of town and beat them to death . The tradition appalls Lisa , who finds no support from any of the adults of the town , including Reverend Lovejoy who lies about Whacking Day being supported by the Bible . Barry White arrives to begin the festivities , but is disgusted and quickly leaves when he discovers what the holiday is about .

After Marge takes Bart on a fieldtrip to Fort Springfield , Bart discovers that the origins of Whacking Day , which supposedly involved Jebediah Springfield , is a lie because it conflicts with a major Revolutionary War battle he took part in , and suggests to Lisa that they lure the snakes to safety by playing music with a lot of bass and putting the stereo speakers to the ground . White , who just happens to have been walking by , agrees to help by singing " Can 't Get Enough of Your Love , Babe " , attracting hundreds of snakes into the house .

The pursuing crowd arrives , but they are soon turned around on the subject of Whacking Day by Bart 's newfound knowledge . It turns out that the day was actually invented in 1924 as an excuse to beat up the Irish . Skinner is impressed with Bart 's efforts and welcomes him back to the school , but then realizes in horror that the bullies are still in the utility basement . While the bullies are spending the time talking about their feelings , Skinner and Willie race to the school with the mountain bikes to avoid a potential lawsuit .

= = Production = =

Writer George Meyer , who was very " animal conscious " , was interested in writing an episode related to an annual ritual held in a Texan town , where the townspeople would beat rattlesnakes with sticks . Meyer did not have time to pen the episode himself , so the idea was given to John Swartzwelder . The subject matter of " beating snakes " worried the staff who thought that many would deem it cruel , even though the episode 's message is against the mistreatment of snakes . The episode 's first act was one of the shortest the staff had ever written at that time , roughly ten pages in length , but with no ideas to expand , they left it as it was . Due to this , the main plot does not start until the beginning of the second act , as the writers could not come up with much material for it .

In order to speed up animation , director Jeffrey Lynch " begged " storyboard artists Kevin O 'Brien and Steve Markowski to help him with the episode . The three spent months on the episode . Barry White wanted to guest star on the show , so he was written into the plot . He sang " Can 't Get Enough of Your Love , Babe " specially for the episode , rather than using a recorded version .

The song Grampa was supposed to sing in his flashback , showing how he posed as a German cabaret singer in World War II , was " Lili Marlene " by Marlene Dietrich . The staff could not get the rights to it because , according to the people who own the song , " everybody makes fun of it " . Much of the flashback was pitched by Conan O'Brien . The episode marks the first appearance of Superintendent Chalmers . The staff wanted to introduce a boss for Skinner , and Wallace Wolodarsky pitched his name . Much of the dialogue and interactions between Skinner and Chalmers were ad libbed by Harry Shearer and Hank Azaria .

= = Cultural references = =

The untitled Itchy & Scratchy short , with " guest director " Oliver Stone , is a parody of the scene where Jack Ruby shoots Lee Harvey Oswald in Stone 's film JFK : someone is heard to shout , " Oh God ! Get his gun ! " as the screenplay draws to a close . The song " O Whacking Day " uses the same tune as the Christmas carol " O Tannenbaum " , known in English as " O Christmas Tree " . Additionally , Bob Woodward is shown to be the author of the book The Truth About Whacking Day . In one scene , Marge encourages Bart to read Johnny Tremain , a novel which won the Newbery Medal in 1943 .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Whacking Day " finished tied for 25th in the weekly ratings for the week of April 26 ? May 2 , 1993 with a Nielsen rating of 12 @. @ 2 . It was the highest rated show from the Fox Network that week . For " consciousness @-@ raising on behalf of animal issues " , the episode was awarded the Genesis Award for " Best Television Prime Time Animated Series " in 1994 . Jeffrey Lee Puckett of The Courier @-@ Journal cited " Whacking Day " as " the series ' richest episode " . He wrote : " In 22 remarkable minutes , ' Whacking Day ' skewers the quality of America 's educational system , self @-@ aggrandizing politicians , greed , the mob mentality , sexuality in the age of political correctness and the whole notion of political correctness , and makes a hero of Barry White . " Chris Vognar of The Dallas Morning News noted the episode was one of the fourth season 's best episodes in his review of the DVD . The show 's creator Matt Groening considers Homer 's " I am evil Homer " fantasy to be one of the greatest moments in the show 's history . Andrew Martin of Prefix Mag named Barry White his fifth favorite musical guest on The Simpsons out of a list of ten .

A 2003 article in the The Journal News reported that records show genuine " Whacking Days " having taken place in Eastchester , New York from 1665 onwards : " That one day every spring be chosen for the destroying of rattle snakes . " The article quoted show runner Al Jean as saying : " I agree with the premise of the episode : leave the snakes alone . They didn 't hurt anybody . " In North Queensland , Australia since 2009 , citizens have held an annual " Toad Day Out " , where thousands of cane toads (which , unlike rattlesnakes , are an invasive and highly @-@ destructive species not native to Australia) are collected up and humanely destroyed . The event was inspired by the episode .