

= Marge Be Not Proud =

" Marge Be Not Proud " is the eleventh episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 17 , 1995 . In the episode , Marge refuses to buy Bart the new video game Bonestorm , so he steals it from a local discount store . Bart ends up being estranged from his mother when he gets caught , and fearing that he has lost her love , he decides he must regain it .

The episode was written by Mike Scully and directed by Steven Dean Moore . Scully got the inspiration for it from an experience in his childhood when he shoplifted . Lawrence Tierney guest starred in the episode as Don Brodka . Since airing , the episode has received mostly 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 the week it aired .

= = Plot = =

Christmas is approaching , and Bart wants nothing more than the new , must @- @ have video game Bonestorm . However , Marge refuses to buy it , due to the violence and potential distraction from Bart 's schoolwork . Discouraged , Bart makes attempts to buy the game himself but with no luck and upon discovering Milhouse has the game , Bart visits the local Try @- @ N @- @ Save discount store where Jimbo Jones and Nelson Muntz convince him to steal a copy of the game . On his way out of the store , Bart is caught by the store 's strict security guard , Don Brodka , who leave 's Homer and Marge a message about the incident and tells Bart to leave and never return or risk spending " Christmas in juvenile hall " .

Despite Bart 's efforts to keep the shoplifting a secret , Marge takes the family to the same store to get their annual Christmas picture taken (still unaware of Bart 's shoplifting) . Bart tries to avoid detection and trouble , but is spotted by Brodka , who shows a disbelieving Marge and Homer the security tape of Bart shoplifting . Disappointed by Bart 's actions and concerned that she may be mothering him too much , Marge decides that he is old enough to make his own decisions and becomes distant with him . Bart is left out of family activities , such as decorating the Christmas tree and making snow statues , and he ends up spending time with Milhouse 's mom for motherly comfort . When Milhouse 's mom has had enough of this and fearing he has lost Marge 's love , Bart decides he must regain it .

Bart then returns home with a bulge in his coat . Marge confronts him , believing he was shoplifting again , and she finds Bart has hidden a picture of himself bought as a Christmas present for her . Marge is overjoyed , and in gratitude for receiving this early Christmas gift , gives Bart his ? the new game that a store salesman told her " all the kids want " , the golf simulator Lee Carvallo 's Putting Challenge . Though profoundly underwhelmed , Bart looks into his mother 's expectant face and thanks her .

= = Production = =

Mike Scully , the writer of the episode , based it on experience in his childhood . Scully was twelve years old when he paid a visit to the Bradlees discount department store in West Springfield , Massachusetts . A " bunch of guys " were shoplifting at the store and they " pressured " Scully into doing it as well . He ended up getting caught outside , and " had one of the most traumatic moments " of his life . " To this day it still terrifies me , " Scully said . He jokingly told Variety , " It 's great to be paid for reliving the horrors of your life . "

The episode was directed by Steven Dean Moore . The show runner of The Simpsons at the time , Bill Oakley , thinks this is one of the most " beautifully " directed episodes of the show . He called the " hand @- @ colouring " very " vivid " and " bright " . The episode is the first Christmas episode the producers had done since the first episode of the show , " Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire " . Oakley said that nobody in the writing staff wanted to " try on Christmas " because it was " so famous " as being the first episode .

Lawrence Tierney guest starred in the episode as Don Brodka . Another former show runner , Josh Weinstein , called Tierney 's appearance " the craziest guest star experience we ever had " . In addition to yelling at and intimidating employees of the show , Tierney made unreasonable requests such as abandoning his distinctive voice to do the part in a southern accent and refusing to perform lines if he did not " get the jokes " . Despite this , Oakley and Weinstein thought Tierney did a good job . Weinstein said , " He certainly delivered and he 's one of my favorite characters we have had [on the show] . " After Tierney 's death , the episode " The Old Man and the Key " was dedicated to him .

" Marge Be Not Proud " originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 17 , 1995 . The episode was selected for release in a 1999 video collection of selected episodes , titled : Bart Wars . Other episodes included in the collection set were " Mayored to the Mob " , " Dog of Death " , and " The Secret War of Lisa Simpson " . The episode was again included in the 2005 DVD release of the Bart Wars set . The episode was included in The Simpsons season 7 DVD set , which was released on December 13 , 2005 . Oakley , Weinstein , Scully , Moore , and Silverman participated in the DVD 's audio commentary .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Marge Be Not Proud " finished 47th in the ratings for the week of December 11 to December 17 , 1995 , with a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 5 . The episode was the fourth highest @- @ rated show on the Fox network that week , following a boxing match , Fox NFL Sunday , and The X @- @ Files .

Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from 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 , wrote : " A Christmas special in all but name , and a touching look at the relationship between Marge and her growing Bart. " Dave Foster of DVD Times said that " thanks to the keen eye of the writers and the rarely shown good side of Bart , this episode works very well as both an amusing insight to the way a child ? s mind works and as a strong relationship building episode between Bart and Marge . " DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson said that despite being one of the " sappier " episodes at times , it " still packs some terrific laughs " . Jacobson commented that he " absolutely lost it when Homer ? s drawing of a robot grilling a hot dog was seen - it ? s funnier if you see it - and Lawrence Tierney ? s guest turn as the store detective adds hilarious grit to the show . " He added that the episode does not " fall into the classic " category , " but it offers more than enough entertainment to satisfy . " Jennifer Malkowski of DVD Verdict considered the best part of the episode to be when a depressed Bart makes a snowman from the dirty , leftover snow under the car . She called the scene " amazingly pathetic " . The website concluded its review by giving the episode a grade of B. In 2011 , Richard Lawson of The Atlantic Wire cited it as the best Christmas episode of The Simpsons , noting that " it 's very sweet and there are some funny videogame jokes . " He added that the episode " features a terrific guest starring voice performance from the late Lawrence Tierney . " The author Charlie Sweatpants , author of the online book Zombie Simpsons : How the Best Show Ever Became the Broadcasting Undead and creator of the blog Dead Homer Society , claims that it is the " one bad episode " in season 7 , due to being an example of a very special episode ; however , he claims that it is only bad by the " towering " standards of the earlier seasons .