

= The Homer They Fall =

" The Homer They Fall " is the third episode of The Simpsons ' eighth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on November 10 , 1996 . After Homer Simpson realizes he has a bizarre medical condition that renders him unable to be knocked out , he decides to embark on a career as a boxer with Moe Szyslak as his manager . It was written by Jonathan Collier and directed by Mark Kirkland . The episode guest stars Michael Buffer as himself and Paul Winfield as Lucius Sweet .

= = Plot = =

The Simpsons visit a high @-@ tech gadget store and Bart buys a gimmicky utility belt from Comic Book Guy for \$ 4 . He shows off its features to his classmates until he is beaten up by Dolph , Jimbo and Kearney , who steal the belt . In response , Homer decides to talk with the bullies ' fathers at Moe 's Tavern , but he is also beaten ; however , they are unnerved when they cannot even knock Homer down , and are then chased away by a shotgun @-@ wielding Moe .

Moe is impressed by Homer 's ability to absorb severe punishment and suggests he take up boxing , with Moe ? a former boxer himself ? as his trainer and manager . Marge is annoyed by the idea , but a medical test diagnoses Homer with a rare genetic abnormality effectively rendering him near @-@ invulnerable to knockout punches . However , while training , it is discovered that Homer is a weak puncher , and is extremely out of shape . Moe strategizes that Homer should stand still in the ring and let his opponents exhaust themselves trying to knock him out , and then knock them down with a tap . Marge insists that Homer get a physical by a competent doctor , hoping he won 't pass the requirements for a boxing license . However , Homer easily passes the state requirement to box , wrestle or " be shot out of a cannon " , as the state Springfield is in had apparently been founded by circus freaks .

Homer does well in his first fights , mainly because he 's competing in Springfields " hobo fight " circuit , against opponents almost as out of shape as he is . At every match , he follows Moe 's advice and starts to gain widespread attention , eventually becoming the top ranked fighter in the Springfield Hobo Boxing Association . Moe 's former boxing manager , Lucius Sweet visits Moe and announces that the current Heavyweight Champion , Drederick Tatum is being released from prison and is ready for a comeback fight , and Sweet wants Tatum to fight Homer . Tatum has become infamous for scoring one @-@ punch knockouts in his opening move , resulting in matches to which last only a few seconds . Lucius hopes that due to Homer 's fame as a human punching bag , he will at least be able to endure a few rounds before being bludgeoned unconscious . Moe , despite knowing full well that Tatum is far too strong for a fighter of Homer 's ability , still wants to take his last shot at the big time and promises Sweet that Homer will last three rounds with Tatum .

Tatum is paroled and the media begins hyping the fight . The odds against Homer are 1000 ? 1 and everybody believes that Homer will lose . Even Homer himself visualizes that the only way he could win is if a heart defect fells Tatum before entering the ring . Marge makes Moe promise her that the moment Homer is in any danger , he will throw in the towel . But after Marge leaves , Moe throws away the towel in a garbage can .

The fight starts and it is soon obvious that Homer cannot withstand Tatum 's fearsome barrage and is in danger of being knocked out within six seconds . Homer decides to fight back , but misses completely . Moe , seeing Homer get destroyed , flees . As Tatum readies himself to deliver the final blow , Moe flies in using the Fan Man 's paramotor and carries Homer away , saving him . Outside the arena , Marge thanks Moe for saving Homer and Tatum shows respect for the love Moe showed for Homer . Sweet declares that Moe will always be a loser , but still gives him a check for \$ 100 @,@ 000 . Moe starts up the Fanman 's paramotor and flies off into the night , during the credits he is seen helping people around the world with the paramotor .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Jonathan Collier , who is a huge boxing fan . Knowing that the people on the internet would " give them grief " , the writers went to a lot of effort to explain how Homer would be able to challenge for the Heavyweight Title . A lot of the scenes involving Homer fighting hobos were pitched by John Swartzwelder . Lucius Sweet is a parody of Don King , voiced by Paul Winfield who had previously played King in HBO 's 1995 biopic Tyson . In the script , Sweet was described as " A Don King type who looks and sounds exactly like Don King . " The similarity is even pointed out by Homer with the line " He is exactly as rich and as famous as Don King ? and he looks just like him , too ! " King was asked to guest star , but turned the part down . Drederick Tatum is a parody of Mike Tyson . The name came from George Meyer , who went to high school with a boy named Drederick Timmins , which Meyer thought was a cool name . Tatum 's having done time in prison is a reference to the fact that , at the time of the episode 's production , Tyson had just recently been released from prison after serving three years for rape . Homer is named " The Southern Dandy " as a reference to the old @-@ time boxers and wrestlers who had similar nicknames .

In preparation for this episode , Mark Kirkland watched several boxing films and is satisfied with how it turned out . Whenever designing rooms , Kirkland tries to show a bare lightbulb because he feels that it makes things more depressing . In the scene in Moe 's office , there is a brief shot of a poster advertising " Szyslak Vs . Oakley " and " Kirkland Vs . Silverman , " referring to then @-@ executive producer Bill Oakley and Simpsons directors Mark Kirkland and David Silverman . The scene where Tatum is walking to the ring surrounded by shady characters , one of whom appears to be cross @-@ eyed , is based on a real life photo of Tyson .

Jimbo 's , Dolph 's , and Kearney 's fathers make their first and only appearances in the history of the show .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode opens with a parody of Bonanza . The montage of Homer fighting various hobos was based on a similar montage in Raging Bull . The music is " The Flower Duet " from the opera " Lakmé " by Léo Delibes . During the montage , there is a brief parody of the George Bellows painting " Dempsey and Firpo " . The " Fan Man " is based on James Miller , a fan famous for parachuting into arenas during big events . Homer 's walk @-@ out music is " Why Can 't We Be Friends ? " by War and Tatum 's is " Time 4 Sum Aksion " by Redman . The song heard over the end credits is a rendition of Barbra Streisand 's " People , " sung by Sally Stevens .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " The Homer They Fall " finished 29th in ratings for the week of November 4 ? 10 , 1996 , with a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 0 , equivalent to approximately 9 @.@ 7 million viewing households . It was the second highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files .

In response to " Barting Over " , which is about skateboarding , Raju Mudhar of the Toronto Star listed what he thought were " excellent " Simpsons episodes and scenes also related to sports . He included " The Homer They Fall , " writing that Drederick Tatum is " a thinly veiled Mike Tyson parody who 's made cameos over the years . " Similarly , in 2004 ESPN.com released a list of the Top 100 Simpsons sport moments , ranking the entire episode at # 2 , saying " Greatest sports introduction ever : In the Tatum fight , Homer is introduced as the Brick Hithouse ( and is also known as the Southern Dandy ) , and his walk @-@ to @-@ the @-@ ring music is ' Why Can 't We Be Friends ? ' " Drederick Tatum was placed at the eighteenth spot on the list . Conversely , 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 it " the dullest , one @-@ joke episode of the entire series . "