

= Simpson Tide =

" Simpson Tide " is the nineteenth episode of The Simpsons ' ninth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on March 29 , 1998 . After being fired from the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant , Homer decides to join the United States Navy Reserve . The episode was the second and last to be written by Joshua Sternin and Jeffrey Ventimilia and was the final episode directed by Milton Gray .

It guest starred Rod Steiger as Captain Tenille and Bob Denver as himself , with one @-@ time The Simpsons writer Michael Carrington making an appearance as the Drill Sergeant . This was the last episode Al Jean and Mike Reiss executive produced together , although Jean became show runner again in season 13 .

= = Plot = =

While lying on the couch at home , Homer sees a recruitment advertisement on television for the Naval Reserve and decides to enlist . Moe , Barney , and Apu decide to join him . Meanwhile , Bart purchases an earring , which an outraged Homer confiscates .

Homer and the others are placed on a nuclear submarine . When the captain goes to check on a problem in the torpedo hatch , Homer is left in charge . An enemy submarine approaches , and Homer gives the order to fire a torpedo . However , the captain is in the torpedo tube and is fired at the other submarine . The other sub fires back at them and Homer gives the order to retreat . The submarine ends up in Russian waters and is seen by the United States government as an attempt to defect . This event creates a political schism between the USA and Russia , leading to the revelation that the Soviet Union in fact never truly dissolved . Nuclear war is anticipated until the US Navy drops depth charges on Homer 's sub , aiming either to destroy it or force it to surface . The consequent explosion causes a pinhole leak in the submarine 's wall . Homer uses Bart 's earring to plug the leak and saves the submarine .

The vessel surfaces and Homer is taken to be court @-@ martialled . Homer 's punishment ends up being a mild dishonorable discharge .

= = Production = =

" Simpson Tide " was one of two season nine episodes that was executive produced by Al Jean and Mike Reiss , who together were the showrunners for the third and fourth seasons . Although Jean would later return to run the show the following season , it was the last episode that Reiss received an executive producer credit for . Joshua Sternin and Jeffrey Ventimilia , the episode writers , were working on Jean and Reiss 's show The Critic at the time , and pitched an episode where Homer joins the Naval Reserve . Although the episode is partly based on the film Crimson Tide , the original episode pitch was made before the film was released . After the release of the film , the writers decided to start incorporating things from the movie in the script . In the original draft , Bart sneaked on board the submarine with Homer . They were trying to do it " for the comedy of it " , but could not get the draft to work , so it was cut . It was difficult for them to figure out how to get the captain off of the sub and they eventually decided to have him shot out of the torpedo tube , which in the DVD commentary , Al Jean says that Steiger claimed that he really did get stuck in a torpedo tube once .

The Navy drill instructor , along with the announcer to " Exploitation Theater " , was voiced by Michael Carrington , who had written the season four episode " Homer 's Triple Bypass " and previously voiced Sideshow Raheem . Bob Denver voices himself in the episode and was directed by Mike Reiss . Rod Steiger guest stars as the captain and was directed by Al Jean .

= = Cultural references = =

Many parts of the episode , including the title , refer to the 1995 film Crimson Tide . The captain of the submarine is based on Captain Frank Ramsey , a character in the film who was portrayed by

Gene Hackman . The opening couch gag is a recreation of the Rocky and Bullwinkle animated bumper seen at the end of each Bullwinkle short . The music accompanying it is also adapted from the original music in the bumper . Homer mentions that he and his friends joining the Navy is similar to The Deer Hunter , and the Russian roulette scene from the film is later parodied . Right before the submarine submerges , the song " In the Navy " is played and the Village People can be seen dancing . Homer dreams of being on " the planet of the doughnuts " , which is reminiscent of the film Planet of the Apes . When aboard the submarine , Homer refers to one of the crew members as Mr. Sulu , a reference to the character in Star Trek : The Original Series . Bart sings a portion of the song " Do the Bartman " and Ralph Wiggum comments that it " is so 1991 " , which was when the song was released . Grampa Simpson claims that he attacked John F. Kennedy on the PT @-@ 109 when Kennedy stated " Ich bin ein Berliner " , leading to Grampa mistaking him for a Nazi .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Simpson Tide " finished 29th in ratings for the week of March 23 ? 29 , 1998 , with a Nielsen rating of 9 @.@ 2 , equivalent to approximately 9 @.@ 0 million viewing households . It was the second highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files .

Michael Schiffer , one of the writers of the film Crimson Tide , is said to have enjoyed this episode . Mike Reiss considers the sequence where Russia returns to being the Soviet Union to be " the nuttiest the show has ever been " . 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 " a fairly straightforward episode where the biggest laugh comes from Homer being able to talk to penguins and Bart trying to impress his classmates by doing The Bartman . "