

= The Day the Violence Died =

" The Day the Violence Died " is the eighteenth episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on March 17 , 1996 . It was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Wesley Archer . Kirk Douglas guest stars as Chester J. Lampwick , Alex Rocco as Roger Meyers Jr . , Jack Sheldon as an anthropomorphic constitutional amendment , Suzanne Somers as herself , and Phil Hartman as Lionel Hutz . The end of the episode features Lester and Eliza , versions of Bart and Lisa Simpson that appeared in The Tracey Ullman Show in the 1980s .

In the episode , Bart meets Chester J. Lampwick , who claims and successfully proves that he is the creator of Itchy from The Itchy & Scratchy Show . Lampwick sues Itchy and Scratchy Studios , the owner of the Itchy and Scratchy characters , which he claims stole his idea . After the studio awards Lampwick a US \$ 800 billion settlement , it is forced into bankruptcy and shuts down . When The Itchy & Scratchy Show is replaced by a parody of Schoolhouse Rock ! ' s " I 'm Just a Bill " segment , Bart and Lisa try to bring the show back . They find a legal precedent that could help their cause , but before they can act , other kids save the day instead .

The episode finished 47th in ratings for the week of March 11 ? 17 , 1996 with a 9 @. @ 2 Nielsen rating . It was the highest @- @ rated show on the Fox network that week . The episode received a generally positive reception from television critics . DVD Movie Guide and the Los Angeles Daily News enjoyed the episode 's focus on The Itchy & Scratchy Show . Criticism of the episode focused on its observations of generic television shows .

= = Plot = =

During a parade honoring The Itchy & Scratchy Show , Bart meets an elderly homeless person , Chester J. Lampwick , who claims to be the creator of Itchy . He insists Roger Meyers , the supposed creator of the characters Itchy and Scratchy , stole the idea from him and proves this claim to Bart with his animated short Manhattan Madness from 1919 . The film , however , is suddenly destroyed by the projector . To shelter Lampwick , Bart lets him live at his house . However , the Simpson family want Lampwick to leave , but Bart does not want him to live on the streets . Suddenly coming up with an idea to properly compensate Lampwick for creating Itchy , Bart and Chester go to Roger Meyers Jr . , CEO of Itchy & Scratchy Studios , and ask him for \$ 800 million . They are quickly thrown out .

Lampwick then decides , with the help of Bart and lawyer Lionel Hutz , to sue Itchy and Scratchy Studios . His case is not solid , until Bart remembers that he saw an original animation cel created by Lampwick for sale by Comic Book Guy and tricks Homer to give him the money . Buying the cel , Bart shows its inscription , proving that Lampwick is the creator of Itchy . Roger Meyers Jr. then admits that his father stole Itchy from Lampwick , but still rebuffs him by saying that animation is based on plagiarism . The judge rules in favor of Lampwick and orders Meyers to pay Lampwick the \$ 800 million , which was apparently the entire corporation ' s welfare . While Bart is happy that Lampwick is no longer poor , he is sad when he realizes that by helping Lampwick , he has helped take The Itchy & Scratchy Show off television because the studio is bankrupt and forced to close down .

When Bart and Lisa discover that The Itchy & Scratchy Show has been replaced by a parody of Schoolhouse Rock ! ' s " I 'm Just a Bill " segment , they search for a way to resurrect the cartoon . They find a legal precedent that could help , but discover that two other kids , Lester and Eliza , have beaten them to it . Discovering that the post office mascot Mr. Zip had been ripped off from Itchy & Scratchy Studios , Lester and Eliza helped secure a large cash settlement from the government for Itchy & Scratchy Studios . Despite being happy that Itchy & Scratchy are back on the air , Bart and Lisa leave , disturbed that their spotlight has been stolen . Later that day as Marge tries to comfort her kids , Lester skateboards by the Simpson household and glares at Bart through the window (as if telling Bart , this was his fault for helping Lampwick bankrupt Myers and shut down the studio) .

= = Production = =

During their tenure as executive producers of The Simpsons , Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein tried to include one episode related to The Itchy & Scratchy Show in every season . " The Day the Violence Died " , written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Wes Archer , was The Itchy & Scratchy Show @-@ related episode for the seventh season , and became a vehicle for jokes about animation . After completing the episode , Oakley commented , " This episode is one of the craziest episodes ever , I would dare say . It is so packed with references and inside jokes and the ending is so bizarre that a lot of people didn 't understand it . " The episode was considered polarizing . In one of its jokes , Bart asks Homer for a large sum of money and Homer immediately pulls out his wallet . Oakley described the scene as " very controversial " among the show 's producers ; Matt Groening , the creator of The Simpsons , in particular did not like it .

In Swartzwelder 's original script , the " Amendment to Be " segment was a cartoon that was consciously a parody of the humor style of The Simpsons , but the producers felt that it was not funny . As a result , it was replaced by the " Amendment to Be " cartoon , which is a parody of the " I 'm Just a Bill " segment of the educational television series Schoolhouse Rock . Worried about potential lawsuits , the lawyer of The Simpsons made the animators change the design of the senator in the segment . The end of the episode features Lester and Eliza , different versions of Bart and Lisa , who save Itchy & Scratchy Studios . Bart and Lisa typically solve problems in the show , but the writers decided to try something different and have a new pair of characters take their positions . Lester 's design is a slightly altered version of Bart 's design in The Tracey Ullman Show and is voiced by Tress MacNeille , who normally voices Bart on temporary tracks .

American actor Kirk Douglas guest stars in the episode as Chester J. Lampwick . William Hickey , not Douglas , was the producers ' first choice for the role , who they described as " famous for being a grouchy , mean old man " . Oakley and Weinstein , who often search for " the absolutely perfect voice " when looking for guest stars rather than simply using celebrities , felt that Hickey 's gruff raspy voice would be perfect for the role , but he turned them down . In Nancy Cartwright 's autobiography My Life as a 10 @-@ Year @-@ Old Boy , she comments that the episode 's script was a " gem " and recalls that Kirk Douglas ' recording session , directed by Josh Weinstein , was fraught with interruptions . He refused to wear the earphones supplied to him in the recording studio , saying they hurt his ears , so he was unable to hear Weinstein from his booth . Cartwright directed Douglas , who was in a hurry and said that he would do two takes per line at the most . However , despite reading his lines all at once , he only had trouble with one scene ; the scene in which Lampwick tells Bart he created Itchy & Scratchy required three takes , as Douglas continuously misread the line " I changed all that " as " I charged all that " . Cartwright managed to get him to do a third reading of the line by pretending to sneeze during his second take .

In his script , Swartzwelder randomly paired David Brinkley and Suzanne Somers together as the parade commentators . The producers were unable to get Brinkley to play his part , so he was instead voiced by Harry Shearer . However , they were successful in getting Somers to voice herself . Alex Rocco returned to voice Roger Meyers , Jr . He had previously voiced the character in the episode " Itchy & Scratchy & Marge " , and while the character had reappeared in several episodes , in those instances he was voiced by Hank Azaria . The episode also stars Pamela Hayden and Tress MacNeille , and Phil Hartman as lawyer Lionel Hutz .

= = Cultural references = =

Roger Meyers , Sr. being cryogenically frozen is a reference to the myth that Walt Disney was frozen . When Roger Meyers Jr. pleads his case in court , he mentions that several animated television series and characters were " plagiarized " from other series and characters : " Animation is built on plagiarism ! If it weren 't for someone plagiarizing The Honeymooners , we wouldn 't have The Flintstones . If someone hadn 't ripped off Sergeant Bilko , there 'd be no Top Cat . Huckleberry Hound , Chief Wiggum , Yogi Bear ? Hah ! Andy Griffith , Edward G. Robinson , Art Carney . " The

Manhattan Madness cartoon in " The Day the Violence Died " is based on one of the first animated cartoons Gertie the Dinosaur . The original name of Itchy on the film reel , " Itchy the Lucky Mouse " , is a direct reference to one of Walt Disney 's first cartoon characters " Oswald the Lucky Rabbit " , created by Disney and Ub Iwerks . The cartoon also features a caricature of US President Theodore Roosevelt . The " Amendment To Be " segment is a parody of the educational show Schoolhouse Rock , and more specifically " I 'm Just a Bill " , and refers to the Flag Desecration Amendment . Jack Sheldon , who sang the original song in " I 'm Just a Bill " , voices the song in the " Amendment to Be " segment .

The cartoon " Itchy and Scratchy Meets Fritz The Cat " is a reference to the 1972 animated film Fritz the Cat that depicts drug use and sexual situations openly . Fritz the Cat was also the first animated movie to be rated X , before the NC @-@ 17 rating existed . The first Itchy & Scratchy cartoon entitled " Steamboat Itchy " , which originally appeared in " Itchy & Scratchy : The Movie " , is a reference to Steamboat Willie , the first Mickey Mouse sound cartoon to be released , and Joseph P. Kennedy , father of former United States President John F. Kennedy , is listed as one of the cartoon 's producers . The episode 's title alludes to the line " the Day the Music Died " from Don McLean 's 1971 song " American Pie " .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " The Day the Violence Died " finished 47th in the ratings for the week of March 11 ? 17 , 1996 , with a Nielsen rating of 9 @.@ 2 . The episode was the highest rated show on the Fox network that week . " The Day the Violence Died " received generally positive reviews from television critics . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson enjoyed the episode and called it a " hoot " , praising Harry Shearer 's impression of David Brinkley . " It 's hard to top the original Itchy cartoon ? where else can you see a cartoon mouse kill both an Irishman and Teddy Roosevelt ? " said Jacobson , further complimenting the episode 's twist ending : " For once , when Bart and Lisa team up to do the right thing , it backfires badly . " He also applauded the casting of Kirk Douglas as a guest star , and ended the review by calling the episode a " winner " . Total Film 's Nathan Ditum named Douglas the 18th best guest star on The Simpsons .

DVD Movie Guide claimed that any show focused on The Itchy & Scratchy Show is " hard to beat " and the Los Angeles Daily News considered this a " cause for joy " . Jennifer Malkowski of DVD Verdict said that the best part of the episode is during The Itchy & Scratchy Show copyright trial , when lawyer " Lionel Hutz stalls for time by calling all of his surprise witnesses again : a ventriloquist and his dummy , Santa Claus with a broken leg , a caricature of John Swartzwelder , Ralph Wiggum , and the fattest twins in The Guinness Book of World Records . " Malkowski concluded her review by giving the episode a grade of B- . The episode was considered a classic by The Rockford Register Star , which enjoyed the " perfect parody of the old ' Schoolhouse Rock ' cartoon , ' I 'm Just a Bill . ' " DVD Movie Guide " loved " the first The Itchy & Scratchy Show cartoon , " Itchy & Scratchy Meet Fritz the Cat " . In the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Unofficial " Simpsons " Guide by Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , they comment that " The Day the Violence Died " is " a great episode , with some clever observations on ideas and copyright , and a superb ? and sinister ? twist ending featuring the return of both Bart and Lisa from their days on The Tracey Ullman Show . "

Criticism of the episode stemmed from its observations of generic television shows . Dave Foster of DVD Times commented that it features " clever inside jokes , a few astute gags at the expense of the often ridiculous situations found in sitcoms as well as some keen insights on the oft @-@ debated TV violence issue " but that " its played @-@ out observations on how generic shows can be are often too adept making this one tough to fully appreciate with the same affection as the other well @-@ realised scripts found in this season . " Columbia University offered a course that analyzed The Simpsons during the September 2005 school term . In one of the classes , entitled " The Simpsons ' Self @-@ Referentiality " , students viewed " The Day the Violence Died " , and later considered one of the episode 's most memorable quotes to be : " Bart : ' Lisa , if I ever stop loving violence , I want you to shoot me . ' Lisa : ' Will do . ' " .

