

= The Lastest Gun in the West =

" The Lastest Gun in the West " is the twelfth episode of The Simpsons ? thirteenth season . It first aired on the Fox network on February 24 , 2002 . In the episode , Bart , after being chased by a vicious dog , runs into a retired Western star named Buck McCoy , who soon becomes Bart 's idol . After McCoy shows the Simpsons some of the films he starred in , the family decides to help him get back into acting .

The episode was directed by Bob Anderson and written by John Swartzwelder , who based the script on a story idea pitched by fellow Simpsons writer Ron Hauge . The episode features Dennis Weaver as the retired Western actor Buck McCoy , as well as Frank Welker as the vicious dog , and Karl Wiedergott as an alcoholic resembling Walter Brennan . When it was first broadcast , " The Lastest Gun in the West " was seen by 5 @. @ 9 % of the American population between ages 18 and 49 . It has since been negatively received by fans and has garnered mixed reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

When a vicious dog chases Bart , he takes refuge in the garden of a house belonging to former Western actor Buck McCoy . Buck shows Bart a trick to calm the dog down , making it friendly towards him , and Bart begins to hero @-@ worship Buck . Naturally , Homer learns about Bart 's new idol and demands he worship him instead .

To help him out , Bart gets Buck a job on Krusty the Clown 's show , but Buck gets drunk and makes a fool of himself on air , crushing Bart. Seeing this , Marge and Homer decide to help Buck overcome his alcoholism , so they clean out Buck 's house and enroll him in an Alcoholics Anonymous program . Despite making progress , Buck is not restored to hero @-@ status for Bart , but Homer has an idea .

Homer plans a bank robbery , but when he , Buck and Bart arrive at the bank , a robbery led by Snake is already underway . Buck leaps into action , subdues the bank robbers and becomes a hero in Bart 's eyes once again . Bart acknowledges everything Homer has done and declares him to be a hero as well . At the end Bart gets chased by the vicious dog again .

= = Production = =

? The Lastest Gun in the West ? was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Bob Anderson . It was first broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on February 24 , 2002 .

= = = Writing = = =

The idea for the episode was pitched by Simpsons writer Ron Hauge , who thought it would be interesting to see an episode in which Bart would run into a retired Western film star in the neighborhood and " think he was the coolest guy in the world " , although the actor had seen better days . Hauge suggested that Swartzwelder , who is an avid Western fan , would be the appropriate writer for the episode . Swartzwelder also pitched the plot idea about the angry dog who chases Bart in the episode .

= = = Animation = = =

The design for Buck McCoy was primarily based on Dennis Weaver , who portrayed him in the episode , as well as aspects of other western actors such as Roy Rogers and John Wayne . McCoy 's costume in the fictional television show McTrigger was based on the attire worn by the main character in real @-@ life television series McCloud . The design for the dog went through several different model changes until the Simpsons staff settled on the " very angry bull @-@ terrier design " seen in the episode . A scene in the episode shows McCoy showcasing an array of films he starred

in to the Simpson family through a movie projector . In order to achieve the strobe light effect done by the projector , the animators painted every other frame white and then blank .

= = = Casting = = =

The episode features American actor Dennis Weaver , famous for his role in the television show Gunsmoke , in a guest role as the Western actor Buck McCoy . Al Jean , the show runner for the episode , stated in the DVD commentary that Weaver was very funny , a ? terrific guy ? , and that it was an honor to meet him . Karl Wiedergott , an actor who usually fills in for unavailable male cast members during table reads for The Simpsons episodes , portrayed an alcoholic resembling Walter Brennan . The dog was played by voice artist Frank Welker .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode title , which is often wrongfully referred to as " The Latest Gun In the West " , is a pun based on the term " the fastest gun in the west " . A scene in the episode shows McCoy auditioning for a spot in the Krusty the Clown show . To showcase his skills , McCoy shoots a Krusty cardboard cutout in the crotch . The scene is a reference to an incident on The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson , in which Ed Ames hit a mannequin in the crotch while demonstrating a tomahawk throw . Carson 's quips during the incident are referenced in Krusty 's line " Ooh , right in the panhandle . " Carson can also be seen in one of the clips before Krusty 's show in the episode , along with poet Robert Frost . The inside of McCoy 's house is loosely based on the inside of Will Rogers ' house in Will Rogers State Historic Park . " McTrigger " , the last TV series McCoy starred in , is a parody of the American television police drama McCloud , in which Weaver played the lead ; McCoy claims the series was eventually retooled into Room 222 . In one scene , Homer shows Bart a poster of himself dressed as Farrah Fawcett .

= = Release = =

In its original American broadcast on February 24 , 2002 , " The Lastest Gun In the West " , along with a rerun of Malcolm in the Middle , put Fox in second place for the night among adults between ages 18 and 49 . According to Nielsen Media Research , the episode received a 5 @. @ 9 rating , meaning it was seen by 5 @. @ 9 % of the population in said demographic . On August 24 , 2010 , the episode was released as part of The Simpsons : The Thirteenth Season DVD and Blu @-@ ray set .

Following its television broadcast , " The Lastest Gun in the West " received a lot of negative feedback from The Simpsons fans . The Simpsons staff ? who , according to Jean , are susceptible to criticism ? were surprised by the amount of scorn the fans showed towards the episode . Jean , who thought the episode was " great " , stated in the DVD commentary for the episode that he " [has] never been able to quite figure [why the fans disliked the episode] out " , and speculated that , since Westerns have not been popular since the 1960s , " they [The Simpsons fans] just don 't care about them at all . "

Following the home video release of the thirteenth season of The Simpsons , reviews of " The Lastest Gun in the West " were mixed . On the negative side , describing the episode as a " clunker " , Jennifer Malkowski of DVD Verdict stated that the episode is " frightfully thin " and criticized the premise as being " lazy " . Nate Boss of Project : Blu criticized the premise as well , writing that the episode was " just a couple jokes thrown together " rather than a complete story . Writing for Blu @-@ ray.com , Casey Broadwater described the episode as being " just plain dull " . On the other hand , Colin Jacobson of DVD Movie Guide praised the episode as " offer [ing] good laughs " and wrote that , while the episode was not " brilliant " , it was overall " an enjoyable experience . " Giving the episode a positive review as well , Ron Martin of 411Mania described the episode as being " easily one of the best of the season " .