= Mother Simpson =

" Mother Simpson " is the eighth episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on November 19 , 1995 . After faking his own death to get a day off of work , Homer reunites with his mother Mona , whom he thought had died 27 years ago . It was directed by David Silverman and was the first episode to be written by Richard Appel . Glenn Close makes her first of six guest spots as Homer 's mother .

= = Plot = =

Mr. Burns has all of his employees clean up a highway maintained by his company . Not wishing to waste his Saturday , Homer fakes his death so that he does not have to take part . He uses a replica of himself and throws it into a waterfall which gets severely broken and eventually goes into the turbines to which everyone thinks Homer killed himself . The next day , news of Homer 's " death " spreads , and after getting many flowers and sympathy cards , as well as a tombstone , Marge finds out and orders Homer to go to the Springfield Hall of Records to get the " misunderstanding " sorted out . While sorting out the problem , Homer gets into an argument with a clerk who claims that Homer 's mother is still alive , in spite of Homer 's belief that she died while he was young . Homer visits what he believes is her grave , only to discover that it belongs to Walt Whitman . Nearby , he sees his own grave and falls into it . A woman approaches and chastises Homer for falling into her son 's grave . Homer realizes that the woman is his mother , Mona , and the two have an emotional reunion after 27 years apart .

Homer takes Mona home to meet the family and she bonds with Lisa , being on the same intellectual level . While the two are sitting on the front steps , a police car drives by and Mona runs inside the house , making Lisa suspicious . She shares her suspicions with Bart , who had raided Mona 's purse and found several driver 's licenses with different names ; Lisa suspects that Mona is a con artist . Meanwhile , Homer and Marge are wondering why his mother left him for 27 years and the two decide to confront Mona , who decides to tell them the truth .

In a flashback to 1969, Mona is a housewife who still lives with Homer 's father Abe. While Abe is watching the 1969 Super Bowl, Mona becomes inspired by Joe Namath 's long hair. She joins a group of hippies who protest Mr. Burns ' germ warfare laboratory, who is deliberately trying to poison everyone in Springfield. They detonate an " antibiotic bomb " inside the lab, killing all the germs and curing lab security guard Clancy Wiggum 's asthma. Angry about the destruction of his " precious germs ", Burns runs to the lab, but is trampled by the fleeing hippies. Mona goes back to help him, and Burns manages to identify her as one of the perpetrators, forcing Mona to leave her family and go into hiding.

Mona reveals that she sent Homer a care package every week , although he never received them , and they go to the post office to claim them . There , Burns recognizes her and calls the FBI . The FBI and Burns manage to track Mona down and invade the Simpson home . However , Homer and Mona manage to escape thanks to a tip @-@ off from Wiggum , who is grateful to Mona for curing his asthma , and thereby allowing him to join the police force . Mona is once again forced to go into hiding and she and Homer say goodbye . After Mona leaves , Homer remains well into the night , sitting on his car and watching the stars .

= = Production = =

The idea for " Mother Simpson " was pitched by Richard Appel , who decided to do something about Homer 's mother , who previously had only been mentioned once . Many of the writers could not believe that an episode about Homer 's mother had not previously been produced . Part of the fun of an episode about Homer 's mother for the writers was that they were able to solve several little puzzles , such as where Lisa 's intelligence came from . The ending shot with Homer gazing at the sky was decided at the table read , but the drawing at the end was inserted by David Silverman because it was felt that the scene was so touching that no other lines were needed . As a result , no

promos were aired over the credits during the original airing of the episode. Bill Oakley has admitted that he always gets teary @-@ eyed when he watches the ending.

Glenn Close , who was directed by Josh Weinstein , was convinced to do the episode partially because of James L. Brooks . Mona Simpson was designed in a way so that she would somewhat resemble Homer in her face , such as the shape of her upper lip and her nose . There were several design changes because the directors were trying to make her an attractive older and younger woman , but still be Simpson @-@ esque . The inspiration for the character comes from Bernardine Dohrn of the Weather Underground , although the writers acknowledge that several people fit her description . Mona Simpson 's crime was intentionally the least violent crime the writers could think of , as she did not harm anyone and was only caught because she came back to help Mr. Burns . The character was named after Richard Appel 's wife at the time , the novelist Mona Simpson . When Mona gets in the van , her voice is done by Pamela Hayden because Glenn Close could not say " d 'oh!" properly and thus they used the original temp track recorded by Hayden .

The design of Joe Friday is based on his design in " Dragged Net!", a parody of Dragnet that was done in Mad Magazine in the 1950s. Mona becoming a radical after seeing Joe Namath 's sideburns is a parody of how many 1960s films have a sudden transformational moment and play music such as " Turn! Turn! " and there was much discussion among the writers as to what that moment should be. The song originally intended to be taped over Mr. Burns' cassette of " Ride of the Valkyries" was " Wake Me Up Before You Go @-@ Go ", but it was too expensive to clear, so ABBA? s " Waterloo" was selected instead.

= = Cultural references = =

" Mother Simpson " draws upon a number of references to 1960s popular culture . Three songs from the 1960s appear in this episode : " Sunshine of Your Love " by Cream , " Blowin ' in the Wind " by Bob Dylan and the Jimi Hendrix cover of " All Along the Watchtower " . Mona Simpson is seen reading Steal This Book by Abbie Hoffman . Mona mentions that she worked a number of jobs while on the run , including " marketing Jerry Rubin ? s line of diet shakes , proofreading Bobby Seale ? s cookbook , and running credit checks at Tom Hayden ? s Porsche dealership . " Rubin , Seale and Hayden were three liberal radicals from the 1960s . Rubin did indeed have a line of diet shakes , and Bobby Seale did write some cookbooks . However , Tom Hayden never owned a Porsche dealership .

The radicals use a Spiro Agnew alarm clock , which is based on a real item . When Mr. Burns drives a tank towards the Simpson house , he is wearing oversized headgear . This is a reference to a public relations stunt by Michael Dukakis in 1988 . When Mr. Burns plays a tape of "Ride of the Valkyries" , it has been recorded over by Smithers with "Waterloo" by ABBA , a reference to Smithers 'implied homosexuality (ABBA are gay icons) and to the helicopter beach attack scene in Apocalypse Now , in which "Ride of the Valkyries" is famously played . Maggie is shown dancing in her diaper and covered in slogans in a parody of the filler scenes of Laugh @-@ In in which Goldie Hawn and other female cast members like Ruth Buzzi and Jo Anne Worley danced in a bikini with slogans and drawings painted on their bodies . The two FBI agents are Joe Friday and Bill Gannon from Dragnet . Bill Gannon is voiced by Harry Morgan , the man who played Gannon in the original series .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Mother Simpson " finished 45th in ratings for the week of October 30 - November 5 , 1995 , with a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 0 , equivalent to approximately 9 @.@ 6 million viewing households . It was the fourth highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following Beverly Hills , 90210 , The X @-@ Files and Melrose Place .

" Mother Simpson " is one of Oakley and Weinstein 's favorite episodes; they have called it a perfect combination of real emotion, good jokes and an interesting story. In 1996, " Treehouse of Horror VI " was submitted for the Emmy Award in the " Outstanding Animated Program (For

Programming less than One Hour) " category because it had a 3D animation sequence , which they felt would have given it the edge . Pinky and the Brain eventually went on to win . Bill Oakley feels that had this episode been submitted , it would have easily won . The joke about Homer apparently being familiar with Walt Whitman is one of David Silverman 's favorite jokes .

Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide praised the episode , calling it " Gag @-@ packed , and very touching " . The Quindecim , a college newspaper , published a top 25 The Simpsons episodes list and placed " Mother Simpson " in 19th place . IGN.com ranked Glenn Close 's performance as the 25th best guest appearance in the show 's history . In 2008 , Entertainment Weekly named Close one of the 16 best Simpsons guest stars .