

= The Falcon and the D 'ohman =

" The Falcon and the D 'ohman " is the season premiere of the twenty @-@ third season of the American animated sitcom The Simpsons . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on September 25 , 2011 . In the episode , the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant hires a new security guard named Wayne and Homer soon becomes friends with him . " The Falcon and the D 'ohman " also reveals the fate of the relationship between the characters Ned Flanders and Edna Krabappel that was initiated in the previous episode of the series , " The Ned @-@ Liest Catch " , that aired in May 2011 .

Actor Kiefer Sutherland guest starred in the episode as the voice of Wayne . This was the third time he appeared on The Simpsons . The episode also features a guest appearance by American chef and Top Chef judge Tom Colicchio as himself in a segment in which Marge dreams about being a contestant in a show similar to Top Chef . " The Falcon and the D 'ohman " has received mixed reviews from television critics , with criticism directed at the plot and the cultural references featured . However , a reference in the episode to the computer animated re @-@ enactments of news stories done by the Taiwan @-@ based Next Media Animation has been particularly praised .

= = Background = =

" The Falcon and the D 'ohman " features a reference to the previous episode of the series , the twenty @-@ second season finale " The Ned @-@ Liest Catch " that aired on May 22 , 2011 . In that episode , the characters Ned Flanders and Edna Krabappel start dating . The episode ends with Homer and Marge Simpson giving viewers a link to the official The Simpsons website , TheSimpsons.com , and encouraging them to go on the website and vote over the 2011 summer on whether Ned and Edna should stay together . The result of the poll was revealed in " The Falcon and the D 'ohman " ? a majority had voted for the couple to remain in a relationship . According to executive producer Al Jean , the poll was " very strong in one direction " . In an interview before the result was presented , Jean guaranteed that the poll was authentic and that the writers would not undo the viewers ' decision , adding " What our fans have joined together , let no writer tear asunder . "

= = Plot = =

Comic Book Guy opens the season premiere by telling the viewers that there will be hints in the episode as to the conclusion of the romance between Ned and Edna . After the revised introduction , where Homer sneaks late into work , sings to the tune of The Police 's " Walking on the Moon " , and marks up his time card to make it seem like he was on time and had put in some overtime hours , Homer is surprised to find that a new security guard named Wayne has been hired at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant . He repeatedly tries to befriend Wayne , only to be coldly shunned at every attempt . Meanwhile , while making crackers for Bart and Lisa , Marge daydreams that she has become a contestant on a cooking show called Master Chef . The show is judged by Tom Colicchio and he praises her crackers , awarding her the prize of a new kitchen . However , when Marge stops daydreaming and gives the crackers to her children , they tell her they do not like them because they do not like change .

One day while Wayne is walking home in the rain and hail , Homer sees Wayne and he reluctantly agrees to let Homer drive him to Moe 's Tavern for a drink . While Wayne is in the bathroom , Snake Jailbird dramatically crashes through the door on his motorcycle to rob everyone . As soon as Wayne comes out , he soundly beats up Snake . The story spreads quickly and a news segment that features an interview with Wayne by Kent Brockman and a computer animated Taiwanese dramatization of the incident soon airs on television . It is discovered that Wayne is a highly trained former CIA black ops agent , who decided to go into hiding in Springfield . He is plagued by recurring flashbacks from his previous missions , which cause him to act or shout them out , as evidenced when he unintentionally attacks Mr. Burns , the boss of the power plant , which results in

Wayne being fired .

Homer allows Wayne to stay in Bart 's treehouse because Wayne can no longer afford his apartment . One night , Wayne speaks loudly about a past mission in his sleep , causing the couples in the nearby houses to lose sleep . Ned and Edna are one of these couples , and they are shown holding each other in bed . News of what happened to Mr. Burns is leaked onto YouTube and is seen by one of Wayne 's gangster enemies , Viktor , in Kiev , Ukraine . Apparently , Wayne accidentally killed Viktor 's wife with a stray bullet on a previous mission . Thus , the Ukrainian gangster and his henchmen kidnap and torture Homer as bait to lure Wayne . Wayne tracks Homer down through tracking devices he unknowingly ate , frees him and kills all of the Ukrainian gangsters . Afterwards , Wayne decides to leave Springfield , but not before giving Homer the fist pound Homer wanted when they first met . However , Marge suggests that Wayne get a job at the Springfield Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) , and he does . At the DMV , he has a flashback to the time he was a prisoner in North Korea and was forced to write a ridiculous musical play paying tribute to Kim Jong @-@ il . During the closing credits of the episode , Ned and Edna thank the fans for voting for their relationship to continue .

= = Production = =

" The Falcon and the D 'ohman " was written by Justin Hurwitz and directed by Matthew Nastuk . The storyline of the episode resembles David Cronenberg 's film A History of Violence . " The Falcon and the D 'ohman " features several references to popular culture . For example , in a sequence at the beginning of the episode , Homer sings about working at the power plant to the melody of The Police 's song " Walking on the Moon " . According to Chris Ledesma , music editor on The Simpsons , the staff was " very fortunate to have obtained the original master tracks from The Police without vocals . This is a rare instance . When we need to do our own lyrics to an established hit song , [composer Alf Clausen] usually arranges and records a ' sound @-@ alike ' that tries to capture all the spirit and nuance of the original so that the audience immediately identifies the track , but allows us to add our own vocals . " The episode also made frequent use of the sequence " Dance of the Knights " from the ballet Romeo and Juliet by Sergei Prokofiev . The sequence had to be licensed , as it was under copyright in most parts of the world .

Another cultural reference appears in one of Wayne 's flashbacks , in which he is seen receiving special training against enemies such as Chucky of the Child 's Play film series and basketball player Kobe Bryant . The Taiwanese dramatization of Wayne 's fight with Snake at Moe 's Tavern parodies the humorous computer animated re @-@ enactments of news stories done by the Taiwan @-@ based Next Media Animation . One YouTube clip that Viktor sees is a reference to The Gregory Brothers , the creators of the popular online Auto @-@ Tune the News series , in that a news segment featuring a lady who has lost her cat has been autotuned into a song . Marge 's dream of becoming a contestant in a cooking competition parodies the American reality competition series Top Chef . American chef Tom Colicchio , who is a judge on that show , guest starred in " The Falcon and the D 'ohman " as himself .

Canadian actor Kiefer Sutherland guest starred in " The Falcon and the D 'ohman " as the security guard Wayne . This was the third episode of The Simpsons that he appeared in , the first being the 2006 episode " G.I. (Annoyed Grunt) " (playing a colonel) and the second being the 2007 episode " 24 Minutes " (playing his character Jack Bauer from the television series 24) . As noted by Rick Porter of the website Zap2it , Sutherland 's appearance in " The Falcon and the D 'ohman " makes him " one of the relatively few Simpsons guest stars who 've appeared more than once and voiced different characters rather than recurring residents of Springfield . " Other guest stars to have done this are Albert Brooks , Jon Lovitz , and Phil Hartman , all of whom have played one @-@ time characters and recurring parts . The character Wayne is partly based on Sutherland 's 24 character Jack Bauer , who , according to Christopher Hooton of Metro , is also a " po @-@ faced anti @-@ terrorism agent constantly finding his loved ones kidnapped by megalomaniacs . " After the episode had aired in the United States , the Ukrainian press reported that the mafioso Viktor bears a resemblance to the Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich .

= = Release = =

The episode originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on September 25 , 2011 , as the premiere of the twenty @-@ third season of The Simpsons . It was watched by approximately 8 @. @ 08 million people during this broadcast . It received a 3 @. @ 9 Nielsen rating in the demographic for adults aged 18 ? 49 (up three percent from the last season 's premiere) , and a ten percent share . The Simpsons became the second highest @-@ rated program in the 18 ? 49 demographic in Fox 's Animation Domination lineup that night , finishing with a higher rating than The Cleveland Show and American Dad ! but a lower rating than Family Guy . The Simpsons was , however , the most @-@ watched show in the lineup in terms of total viewers .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Since airing , " The Falcon and the D 'ohman " has received mixed reviews from critics . The plot of the episode has been criticized by some reviewers . Kyle Lemmon of Under the Radar gave the episode a three out of ten rating , concluding that " this new episode is rarely grounded in any kind of reality . The best examples of The Simpsons center the situational humor in somewhat plausible scenarios within the town . I guess after so many years , they 've completely run out of ideas . " Similarly , Television Blend 's Jesse Carp wrote that the plot shows " essentially what is wrong with the show and why I stopped watching . Because of the endless amount of material needed to keep a series running for twenty three years , they have to resort to outlandish plots and endless cameos to stay interesting . The best episodes , ... definitely have some absurd elements but they 're all firmly grounded in a fairly real world of Springfield , USA and its colorful cast of characters . I 'd like to see more of that . I miss them . "

The cultural references featured in the episode have attracted both criticism and praise . The parody of Next Media Animation has been commended by several reviewers . Hayden Childs of The A.V. Club commented that the episode " features a couple of quite funny sight gags , like the fresco on Moe 's ceiling and the delightful Taiwanese dramatization of certain events " , but further wrote that the " rest of the jokes and references clang away without being too funny or too insulting , and that is probably the best that any viewers can ask of The Simpsons in its advanced age . " Television Blend 's Steve West commented that the episode was the worst of the Animation Domination lineup that week and further elaborated that the cultural references " are always a year behind , and the smart writers who used classic American culture to bring wit to the series have been replaced by those who want to mimic South Park and Family Guy . They fail miserably , and it 's gotten so bad that I now no longer care about the relationship between Marge and Homer . "

Matt Roush of TV Guide wrote more positively about the episode , noting that " Fox 's eternal The Simpsons kicks off a night of all @-@ new animation , welcoming Kiefer Sutherland in a very clever guest role as a security guard trying without much success to escape his violent past . A nod to Taiwanese animation is just one of the highlights in this homage to 24 @-@ style mayhem . " Similarly , Umika Pidaparthi of CNN 's The Marquee Blog commented that " there were a lot of light laughs in this episode , like when Wayne walks through the Ukrainian part of Springfield (Tsarbucks , anyone ?) . Pop culture references like the Taiwanese animation of the robbery were hilarious . I was disappointed , though , to see that Marge 's daydream about being on Top Chef didn 't become a side story . " Mike Hughes of the Lansing State Journal commented that the episode was " inconsistent , but [had] great moments " , and that it was " much better than Fox 's other season @-@ openers " that premiered on the same day .