

## = The City of New York vs. Homer Simpson =

" The City of New York vs. Homer Simpson " is the first episode of The Simpsons ' ninth season . The 179th episode of the series overall , it was originally broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on September 21 , 1997 . The episode features the Simpson family traveling to Manhattan to recover the family car , which was taken by Barney Gumble and abandoned outside the World Trade Center , therefore gaining numerous parking tickets and a parking boot .

Writer Ian Maxtone @-@ Graham was interested in making an episode where the Simpson family travels to New York to retrieve their lost car . Executive producers Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein suggested that the car be found in Austin J. Tobin Plaza at the World Trade Center , as they wanted a location that would be widely known . Great lengths were taken to make a detailed replica of the borough of Manhattan . The episode received generally positive reviews , and has since been on accolade lists of The Simpsons episodes . The " I 'm Checkin ' In " musical sequence won two awards . Because of the World Trade Center 's main role , the episode was taken off syndication in many areas following the September 11 attacks , but has come back into syndication in recent years .

## = = Plot = =

At Moe 's Tavern , Moe informs Homer and his friends that one of them must be a designated driver , and Barney loses the choosing draw . After Barney drives the drunken men home in Homer 's car , Homer allows him to use it to drive himself home , expecting Barney to return it the following morning . In his distressed state , Barney disappears with the car . Two months later , Barney returns to Moe 's Tavern , unable to recall where he left the car . Homer later receives a letter from the New York City government , which informs him that his car has been found parked in the World Trade Center plaza . Homer reveals to the family that he had once been to New York before when he was 17 years old and had a horrible experience . Marge and the children persuade Homer to go retrieve the car and he reluctantly agrees .

When the family arrives in Manhattan , they decide to split up . Upon arrival at his car , Homer discovers it has been issued many parking tickets and has been wheel clamped . While waiting for a parking officer to come remove the clamp , Homer drinks an excessive amount of crab juice from a food vendor and needs to urinate , but is afraid to leave his car behind . After several hours of holding it in , he finally goes to the restroom at the South Tower 's indoor observation deck , but discovers that it is out of order and must use the one at the top of the North Tower . While he is doing that , the officer arrives at the car and finding no one present , issues another ticket and leaves ; Homer 's subsequent " D 'oh ! " echoes across the city . Meanwhile , the rest of the family tours the Statue of Liberty , Little Italy , Chinatown , and the Empire State Building . Bart leaves the group to visit the offices of Mad magazine , and is in awe when he sees Alfred E. Neuman . The family attends a Broadway musical about the Betty Ford Clinic , and then take a carriage through Central Park to where they are planning to meet Homer .

Upon returning to the car , Homer realizes he must make it to Central Park to find his family and leave before it gets dark . Ignoring the wheel clamp , he tries to accelerate and in the process destroys the car 's fender . Homer stops by a road construction crew and steals a jackhammer so he can use it to remove the clamp . The car is free from the clamp , but further damaged as a result . Homer races to Central Park and reunites with his family . While driving back to Springfield , the family reflects on their wonderful time , while Homer 's hatred for New York remains .

## = = Production = =

Writer Ian Maxtone @-@ Graham , a former resident of New York , had conceived the idea of having the family travel to the city to locate their missing car and believed it to be " a classic Manhattan problem " . Bill Oakley , who had visited the World Trade Center when the construction of the towers was completed in 1973 , suggested parking the car in the plaza of the buildings . Josh

Weinstein observed that , " When we realized that there was a plaza between the two towers , we knew it was a perfect spot to have Homer 's car . "

The animators were told to make a detailed replica of the city . David Silverman was sent to Manhattan to take hundreds of pictures of the city and areas around the World Trade Center . When he returned , Lance Wilder and his team spent time creating new scenes and backgrounds , incorporating small details such as signs and hundreds of extras that would correctly illustrate the city . Oakley and Weinstein were pleased with the final results , and both noted that the buildings , streets , and even elevator cabins were detailed closely to their real life counterparts . In the final scene , as the family is seen driving away from New York on the George Washington Bridge , the credits roll with the " camera " gradually pulling back from a view of the car , to a view of the side , and then on to a panorama view of the city ; as if the whole sequence was being shot from a helicopter . To achieve this effect , a computer model of the bridge pulling out was made and then printed out . With the print outs , photocopies were made traced onto the animation cels . The process took a long time and was expensive , as the use of computer animation was not widespread when the episode was produced . Director Jim Reardon wanted to replicate films that ended in a similar way , and commented , " I remembered that every movie located in New York would pull back if you were leaving town on a bridge . " Shortly before the episode aired , the production staff contacted Fox to make sure they would not run commercials during the credits .

Ken Keeler , who wrote the lyrics for the " You 're Checkin ' In " musical number , spent two hours in a room alone to write the song . Upon sharing the lyrics with the rest of the production staff , some revisions were made , although little was changed . Bill Oakley was unsatisfied with the part of the musical where the actor claims , " Hey , that 's just my Aspirin ! " , claiming that a better line could have been written .

= = Cultural references = =

The song used during Duffman 's first and subsequent appearances is " Oh Yeah " by Yello , popularized in the final scene of the film Ferris Bueller 's Day Off . The Original Famous Ray 's Pizza shop Homer sees is a parody of independently owned pizza stores that carry the name " Ray " in their name . The musical sequence played during the Flushing Meadows segment is a stylistic parody of the piece Flower Duet from the opera Lakmé by Leo Delibes . When the traveling bus passes by Hasidic Jews , Bart mistakes them for ZZ Top , and when Bart visits Mad magazine 's offices , he sees Alfred E. Neuman , the Spy vs. Spy characters , and cartoonist Dave Berg . The actor in the musical number " You 're Checkin ' In " was based on Robert Downey , Jr . , who was battling a cocaine addiction during the time of the episode creation , just as the character in the musical was . The sequence where Homer races alongside the carriage in Central Park was a reference to a similar scene in the film Ben @-@ Hur . The final scene when the family is crossing the George Washington Bridge uses a version of the song " Theme from New York , New York " , which continues to play throughout the credits .

Several cultural references are made during Homer 's flashback to his previous visit to New York City . During the entire flashback , " The Entertainer " , a piece made famous by the film The Sting , is played . Writer Ian Maxtone @-@ Graham had brought the piece to the attention of director Jim Reardon and asked him to try to fit the piece into the flashback . Maxtone @-@ Graham later commented , " It turned out that the music and the visual gags fit each other perfectly . " In the beginning of the scene , Homer passes by three pornographic film theaters , which are playing " The Godfather 's Parts , II " , " Jeremiah 's Johnson " , and " Five Sleazy Pieces " , plays on the names of The Godfather Part II , Jeremiah Johnson , and Five Easy Pieces . Woody Allen can be seen during the flashback , pouring trash out of his window onto Homer .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " The City of New York vs. Homer Simpson " finished 18th in ratings for the week of September 15 ? 21 , 1997 , with a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 7 , equivalent to

approximately 10 @.@ 5 million viewing households . It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , beating King of the Hill 's season two opener " How to Fire a Rifle Without Really Trying " .

The episode was mostly well received . The song " You 're Checkin ' In " won a 1998 Primetime Emmy Award for " Outstanding Individual Achievement in Music and Lyrics " , and an Annie Award for " Outstanding Music in an Animated Television Production " in the same year . In honor of The Simpsons ' 300th episode milestone in 2003 , Entertainment Weekly ranked the episode at number 13 on the list of their 25 favorite episodes , and AskMen.com ranked the episode at number seven on their top ten ; in both cases it was the second @-@ most @-@ recent installment chosen to co @-@ inhabit the lists . IGN named the episode the best of the ninth season , claiming " this is a very funny episode that started season nine off on a strong note " . Since the release of the season nine DVD box set , the episode has been highlighted by newspaper reviewers to show excellence of the season .

Ian Jones and Steve Williams , writers for British review website Off the Telly , claimed that the episode " ditched all pretence of a plot and went flat out for individual , unconnected sight gags and vignettes " . The two noted that it was their least favorite debut episode for a season of The Simpsons . In a separate article in Off the Telly , Jones and Williams write that the episode " ... wasn 't shown for reasons of taste and has never appeared on terrestrial television in Britain " , referring to a BBC Two schedule of the ninth season , which began October 2001 . It had actually been shown prior to the attacks on Sky One , before being made available on digital terrestrial television as well as satellite and was later shown free @-@ to @-@ air , on Channel 4 .

Due to the prominence of the World Trade Center in the plot , the episode was removed from syndication after the September 11 attacks . By 2006 , the episode had come back into syndication in some areas ; however , parts of the episode were often edited out . One previously such edited item is a scene of two men arguing across Tower 1 and Tower 2 , where a man from Tower 2 claims , " They stick all the jerks in Tower One " . Co @-@ executive producer Bill Oakley commented in retrospect that the line was " regrettable " .