

= The Springfield Connection =

" The Springfield Connection " is the 23rd episode of the sixth season of The Simpsons . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on May 7 , 1995 . After watching Snake Jailbird cheat Homer out of US \$ 20 in a Three @-@ card Monte con game , Marge successfully chases Snake and knocks him out with the lid of a garbage can . The experience of foiling a crime exhilarates her , and she decides to join the Springfield Police . Marge completes her police training and joins a beat as a police officer . She becomes disillusioned with her work after witnessing her friends committing crimes and being exposed to police corruption and resigns from the force .

The episode was written by Jonathan Collier with input from David Mirkin , and directed by Mark Kirkland . The episode 's story was inspired by executive producer Mike Reiss ' wife , who had debated becoming a police officer . " The Springfield Connection " drew on influences from the 1980s police drama Hill Street Blues and the 1971 film The French Connection , and includes references to McGruff the Crime Dog and the theme music to Star Wars .

Reviews in The Sydney Morning Herald and DVD Movie Guide were favorable , and the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide cited Marge 's police training as the highlight of the episode . Contributors to compilation works analyzing The Simpsons from philosophical and cultural perspectives have cited and discussed the episode . Marge 's experiences in the episode are compared to the character Rita from the stage comedy Educating Rita by Willy Russell in a literary analysis of the play .

= = Plot = =

Homer and Marge , on the way back from an orchestra performance , pass through a seedy part of town . Marge cautions Homer , but gets enticed by Snake 's Three @-@ card Monte game . Snake cheats Homer out of \$ 20 . Marge exposes the con , and Snake takes off . Marge and Homer chase after him , but Homer fails to catch up . Marge manages to knock Snake unconscious using a garbage can lid . The incident gives her a sense of exhilaration , she finds that her everyday routine is dull and boring , and she decides to spice up her life by joining the Springfield police force . Homer is less than enthused about her becoming a cop , but she assures him that he will remain " man of the house " . Marge reports for police recruit training and performs well in the various tests , eventually becoming part of the force .

On her first day , Chief Wiggum assigns Marge to Junkyville and Bumtown . On her beat , after encountering Lionel Hutz rummaging in a dumpster , she visits the Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart , where Apu tries to bribe her . On her day off , she orders Bart to wear safety equipment when skateboarding . Lisa tries to encourage Marge to attack the roots of social problems but she changes the subject with a McGriff the Crime Dog puppet . That night , Homer and his friends (Lenny , Carl , Moe , and Barney , who are joined by Herman) , play a game of poker . Marge comes in and tells them gambling is illegal , and Homer 's friends and Herman beat a hasty retreat .

Marge becomes unenthusiastic about her job , as everyone seems to be breaking the law - especially Homer , who has parked illegally along a disabled parking area and bought liquor for the underage bullies . Marge arrests Homer by writing him a parking ticket . While hosting another poker game and complaining about the drawbacks of Marge 's new job , he finds Herman running a jean @-@ counterfeiting operation in the Simpsons ' garage . As Herman and his henchmen are about to beat him up , Marge bursts in . As she is cuffing the rest of the minions , Herman takes Homer hostage and runs to Bart 's treehouse , with Marge in hot pursuit . Herman tries to escape using a pair of counterfeit jeans as a rope , but they rip and he falls to the ground . Wiggum informs Marge that they can 't hold Herman due to the evidence " mysteriously disappearing " , with Wiggum and the cops openly stealing the jeans for themselves . Marge gets fed up with the obvious " corruption " on the force and finally quits .

= = Production = =

" The Springfield Connection " was written by Jonathan Collier and directed by Mark Kirkland . According to Collier , the inspiration for the episode was former Simpsons executive producer Mike Reiss ' wife . At one point , she had seriously decided that she wanted to become a police officer but it did not happen . The joke where the police officers laugh at Marge for a long time was pitched by David Mirkin and features a " crazy twist " at the end where Wiggum says " welcome aboard . " Mirkin liked the joke so much that he repeated it again at the end of the episode . Marge uses a " McGriff the crime dog " hand puppet who says " Help me bite crime " . The hand puppet is a homage to McGruff the Crime Dog ? the producers had wanted to use the real McGruff , but could not get permission to use the character . The idea to have a counterfeit jeans ring was pitched because at the time there had been an explosion in the jeans market , and David Mirkin thought it was right to satirize it .

When the Korean animators were animating the sequence with Marge in the gun training course , they did not know how to correctly animate the " shell com [ing] out of the gun " because guns were illegal in Korea . They had to consult with the American animators , who advised them to watch movies so they could properly animate the guns . The original design for Marge 's police uniform had Marge 's hair standing up (as it normally is) with the hat on top . Director Mark Kirkland found that it made for awkward staging in scenes , so they altered the design to have her hair pulled down . David Mirkin later stated that if the design had been used , he would have asked for it to be changed because they were trying to depict Marge as a serious cop .

There has been a dispute in recent years over whether Moe refers to Homer 's garage as a " car hole " or " car hold " . Both Mirkin and Hank Azaria , who voices Moe , have confirmed via Twitter that the line is , in fact , " car hole . "

= = Cultural references = =

The title , as well as Herman 's illegal activities , are references to the 1971 film The French Connection . The couch gag , a parody of the gun barrel sequence in the James Bond films shows some similarities to that of Sean Connery 's own gunbarrel sequences . Several references are made to the 1980s police drama Hill Street Blues : the briefing scene at the police station is similar and the background and end credits music , are parodies of the show 's theme . Marge appears on an episode of COPS , and McGriff the dog is a reference to McGruff the Crime Dog , a US police public relations figure . Additionally , Marge 's training sequences features homages to Police Academy (1984) and Speed (1994) . The Springfield Pops play the theme to the Star Wars films at an outdoor venue attended by Homer and Marge , and Homer mistakenly believes that the theme 's composer John Williams is dead , complaining : " Laser effects , mirrored balls ? John Williams must be rolling around in his grave ! " . When Marge tries to climb the wall during training is a reference to the film An Officer and a Gentleman .

= = Analysis = =

Kurt M. Koenigsberger analyzes Homer 's comments about the Springfield Pops rendition of the Star Wars theme in Koenigsberger 's piece : " Commodity Culture and Its Discontents : Mr. Bennett , Bart Simpson , and the Rhetoric of Modernism " published in the compilation work Leaving Springfield : The Simpsons and the Possibility of Oppositional Culture edited by John Alberti . Koenigsberger comments : " The joke in this opening scene involves a confusion of high and popular artistic production : Marge treats the Springfield Pops as ' culture ' and expects that the usually boorish Homer will need to be drawn into the spectacle . " However , Koenigsberger notes that Homer actually regards Star Wars as a " classic " , implying that a " classic " work must have a musical composer that is deceased , and be devoid of light @-@ shows or glitter balls . Koenigsberger uses this example to discuss Homer 's application of " a strategy characteristic of literary modernism " .

In their book Educating Rita by Willy Russell , Rebecca Mahon and Nick Chedra cite Marge 's desire to " enter the world " as an example of their topic called " Into the World " . Mahon and

Chedra note : " Comedy and parody are frequently used in the episode in order to convey the frustrations Marge is forced to deal with ? whether these are based around the corruption of her colleagues , the music used on occasion which parodies former police shows , or even the scene where Marge is forced to arrest her husband . " The authors compare Marge 's experiences to those of the character Rita from the stage comedy Educating Rita by Willy Russell , commenting that both women later regret the decision to " move into the world " .

In the compilation book The Simpsons and Philosophy : The D 'oh ! of Homer edited by William Irwin , Mark T. Conard and Aeon J. Skoble , contributors Gerald J. Erion and Joseph A. Zeccardi cite the episode as an example in their piece titled : " Marge 's Moral Motivation " . Erion and Zeccardi assert that Marge has " virtuous personality traits " which they compare to Aristotle , commenting : " Whether breaking up a counterfeit jeans ring run out of her garage in " The Springfield Connection , " escaping a cult commune in " The Joy of Sect , " or standing up to a Poe @-@ ssessed " Treehouse of Horror , " Marge is rarely short on courage . " They also note that " .. Marge 's crime @-@ stopping vigilantism in " The Springfield Connection " and her dangerous escape from the Movementarian commune in " The Joy of Sect " demonstrate that she is genuinely brave , but not foolhardy . "

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " The Springfield Connection " finished 58th in ratings for the week of May 1 ? 7 , 1995 , with a Nielsen rating of 7 @.@ 9 . It was the 4th highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following Beverly Hills , 90210 , The X @-@ Files and Melrose Place .

Robin Oliver rates the episode " thumbs up " in a review in The Sydney Morning Herald , where she says of The Simpsons series : " this encouragingly funny show knows how to tug at the heartstrings " . Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood comment on the episode in their book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide : " .. the highlight of this episode has to be Marge 's training , especially her sharpshooting on the firing range . " In a review of the sixth season of The Simpsons , Colin Jacobson of DVD Movie Guide writes that the episode surpasses the quality of the previous " ' Round Springfield " : " After the dull ' ? Round ' , Season Six rebounds with the pretty good ' Connection ' . I can ? t quite figure out how Marge stays in such good shape , but her escapades as a cop are funny , and the episode works best when she arrests Homer . I especially like his refusal to remain silent . "