

= Fear of Flying (The Simpsons) =

" Fear of Flying " is the eleventh episode of The Simpsons ' sixth season . It was first broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on December 18 , 1994 . In the episode , Homer is banned from Moe 's Tavern and struggles to find a new bar . When he destroys a plane after being mistaken for a pilot at a pilots @-@ only bar , the airline buys the Simpsons ' silence with free tickets . The family discovers that Marge is afraid of flying .

The episode was directed by Mark Kirkland , and written by David Sacks . It features numerous guest stars , including Anne Bancroft as Dr. Zweig . Additionally , Ted Danson , Woody Harrelson , Rhea Perlman , John Ratzenberger , and George Wendt appear as their characters from Cheers . It received positive reception from television critics , and acquired a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 6 . The authors of I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide commented positively on the episode , as did reviews from DVD Verdict and DVD Movie Guide .

= = Plot = =

After pulling a harmless prank on Moe , Homer is banned from His Tavern , ironically after Moe laughed off life @-@ threatening ones that Lenny , Carl and Barney pulled on him . Looking for another place to drink (including the Cheers bar) , Homer eventually settles for an airline pilots ' bar , but is mistaken for a pilot (despite confessing that he 's not really a pilot) and is put in the cockpit of an airplane , which he promptly wrecks after raising the stationary plane 's landing gear . In exchange for his silence of the mistake they 've made , the airline gives the Simpson family free tickets to anywhere they desire in the continental United States . However , the idea of plane travel fills Marge with anxiety as she has a fear of flying , and after numerous failed attempts to get out of the trip , she eventually has a panic attack on the plane , following which the trip is postponed .

Marge does not want to talk to anybody about her fear , and Lisa worries that Marge 's decision to keep her feelings bottled up will cause them to " come out in other ways " . When Marge begins to show signs of her lingering flight @-@ related trauma by insisting the cat and the dog are living in sin , cooking giant feasts , and shingling the roof in the middle of the night , Lisa convinces Marge to undergo treatment with therapist Dr. Zweig . Homer , however , grows increasingly paranoid about Marge 's therapy , believing that Zweig will blame Marge 's trauma on him , and encourage her to leave him .

Zweig uncovers the roots of Marge 's fear : the moment she realized her father was not a pilot , but an apron @-@ wearing flight attendant , a job that was mostly reserved for women at the time . Her shame is eased when Zweig assures her that male flight attendants are now very common and that her father could be considered a pioneer . Marge also brings up memories of her grandmother poking her in the eye as a baby while playing airplane , a toy plane catching fire , and having a plane fire at her and her mother , but Zweig just ignores them . Before the therapist begins to question Marge 's marriage , Homer immediately takes Marge away and Marge manages to thank Zweig for helping her . Marge is finally cured of her fears , but when she and Homer attempt to fly on a plane again , the plane crashes into a lake .

= = Production = =

" Fear of Flying " was directed by Mark Kirkland , and written by David Sacks . The story of the episode came about when Sacks came into the writers ' room with an idea for an episode where Marge goes to a therapist " for one reason or another " . Sacks and the other writers then structured the rest of the plot around that storyline . Anne Bancroft was called in to voice Zweig . Before Bancroft recorded her part , the animators based Zweig 's design on a temp track from cast member Tress MacNeille as the therapist . After Bancroft had recorded her part , Zweig was redesigned to fit with Bancroft 's voice . They added split glasses and a streak of silver in her hair to give her a more mature look .

After Homer was kicked out of Moe 's Tavern , it was originally planned for a cat to come to Homer ,

and then have it enter the bar . The result is the barflies loving the cat , and depressing Homer even more . According to David Silverman , the fact that it looked depressing was the reason why it was deleted , and replaced with a more humorous approach with him chasing a poodle .

The staff was able to get the central cast of the American sitcom Cheers , with the exception of Kelsey Grammer , to reunite and guest star in the episode . The staff could not arrange the script to allow time in the episode for Grammer , who already had a recurring role on The Simpsons as Sideshow Bob , to voice Frasier Crane . Ted Danson guest starred as Sam , Woody Harrelson as Woody , Rhea Perlman as Carla , John Ratzenberger as Cliff , and George Wendt as Norm .

= = Cultural references = =

Homer enters the Cheers bar in a scene which is a parody of a typical episode of the comedy series Cheers . All of the speaking characters are voiced by the actors who played them in Cheers . Ironically , Frasier Crane remains silent despite being played by Simpsons veteran Kelsey Grammer , the voice of Sideshow Bob . Marge 's dream sees her in the role of Mrs. Robinson from Lost in Space , while Homer plays Dr. Smith . The scene where Marge and Jacqueline Bouvier duck down when a biplane shoots at them in a cornfield is a parody of Alfred Hitchcock 's film North by Northwest .

Homer 's Mount Lushmore caricature resembles Eustace Tilley , the mascot of The New Yorker . Homer 's line about getting out of Springfield is lifted from It 's a Wonderful Life , while Homer 's all @-@ time favorite song is revealed to be " It 's Raining Men " by The Weather Girls . When Abe Simpson is left behind on the plane , his slapping his hands on his face and yelling is a reference to Home Alone . This is the second time Home Alone has been parodied on The Simpsons . The first was " Homer Alone " , a reference to the title .

As Homer is looking for a place to drink , he tries a lesbian bar , the She She Lounge . However , he soon realizes that " this lesbian bar doesn 't have a fire exit " . He then leaves , saying " Enjoy your deathtrap , ladies ! " . This is a reference to a famous Greenwich Village gay bar , the Stonewall Inn . This mafia @-@ owned and -run bar " had no rear exit , so if there had been a fire on a weekend night , hundreds of customers would have had to escape through a single narrow passage leading to the front door . " The films Homer rents are Hero , Fearless , and Alive , the latter of which Marge watches . All of them involve plane crashes .

When Marge leaves Dr. Zweig 's office , she says , " Whenever the wind whistles through the leaves , I 'll think , Lowenstein , Lowenstein ? " . This is a reference to The Prince of Tides ; the psychiatrist is Dr. Lowenstein .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Fear of Flying " finished 48th (tied with Dateline NBC) in the ratings for the week of December 12 to December 18 , 1994 , with a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 6 . The episode was the third highest rated show on the Fox network that week , beaten only by Beverly Hills , 90210 , and Married ... with Children . Since airing , the episode has received many positive reviews from fans and television critics . In July 2007 , Simon Crerar of The Times listed the Cheers cast 's performance as one of the thirty @-@ three funniest cameos in the history of the show .

Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , said it was " a good Marge @-@ centric episode with plenty of clever set pieces ? the tributes to Cheers and Lost in Space are fantastic " , and noted that " Marge 's father looks suspiciously like Moe " . Ryan Keefer at DVD Verdict said that " with the cast of Cheers appearing (except for Grammer , ironically) and a funny spoof of North by Northwest , the episode is much better than you would expect " , and gave it a B + .

Colin Jacobson at DVD Movie Guide said in a review of the sixth season DVD that it was " another show I didn 't recall fondly but that works exceedingly well . I hadn 't realized how many quotes I 've stolen from this one : the name ' Guy Incognito ' , the dog with the puffy tail , ' a burden coupled with a hassle ' . The show makes little sense in regard to continuity since Marge has flown during

prior shows , but it ? s consistently very funny and entertaining . " The Phoenix named Anne Bancroft one of the twenty best guest stars to appear on the show .

= = Merchandise = =

The episode was selected for release in a 1999 video collection of selected episodes titled : The Simpsons Go To Hollywood . Other episodes included in the collection set were " Flaming Moe 's " , " Krusty Gets Kancelled " , and " Homer to the Max " . " Fear of Flying " was again included in the 2003 DVD release of the same set . It was included in The Simpsons season 6 DVD set , which was released on August 16 , 2005 , as The Simpsons ? The Complete Sixth Season .