

= Krusty Gets Kancelled =

" Krusty Gets Kancelled " is the twenty @-@ second and final episode of The Simpsons ' fourth season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on May 13 , 1993 . In the episode , a new show featuring a puppet named Gabbo premieres in Springfield and competes with Krusty the Clown 's show . Krusty 's show is soon cancelled , and Bart Simpson decides to help Krusty get back on the air by staging a comeback special .

John Swartzwelder wrote the episode and David Silverman served as director . Following the success of " Homer at the Bat " , the writers wanted to try a similar guest star heavy episode , except with celebrities instead of baseball players . The episode proved quite difficult as many of the actors asked to guest star declined at the last minute and the comeback special portion was nearly scrapped . Johnny Carson , Hugh Hefner , Bette Midler , Luke Perry and the Red Hot Chili Peppers (Flea , Anthony Kiedis , Arik Marshall and Chad Smith) all guest star as themselves and appear on Krusty 's special . Elizabeth Taylor and Barry White , both of whom guest starred in previous episodes this season , make cameo appearances .

= = Plot = =

One afternoon while watching television , Homer and Bart see a highly distracting commercial for something named " Gabbo " . The advertisement is the start of a viral marketing campaign around Springfield to build interest in whatever " Gabbo " is . Finally , " Gabbo " is revealed to be a ventriloquist 's dummy . Ventriloquist Arthur Crandall announces that Gabbo 's new program will air in direct competition with the established Krusty the Clown Show on each afternoon at 4 p.m. Gabbo 's catchphrase ? " I 'm a bad wittle boy " ? instantly charms his intended audience , and this has a negative impact on Krusty and his show . The clown vows to withstand the competition from the new program , but Gabbo 's cutthroat tactics quickly attract Krusty 's audience . Krusty tries to fight back with a dummy of his own , but due to its gruesome appearance and poor condition , it falls apart , and scares off many of the children in the audience . Even The Itchy & Scratchy Show abandon Krusty , move to the Gabbo Show , and are replaced with the strangely incomprehensible Eastern European cartoon " Worker and Parasite " (in the style of Priit Pärn) with characters resembling them . Eventually , Krusty 's ratings hit rock bottom , and then his show is cancelled .

Left without work and without having built a nest egg , Krusty falls on hard times and begins suffering from depression . Meanwhile , Bart and Lisa , all along unimpressed with Gabbo , decide to try to help Krusty . When Bart sneaks into the studio where they are filming Gabbo , he overhears Gabbo referring to children of Springfield as " S.O.B. ' s " while the cameras are switched off . He manages to distract the cameraman and turns the cameras back on as Gabbo continues this rant . This adversely affects Gabbo 's reputation , and Kent Brockman reports it on the news . But he repeats the same " S.O.B. ' s " gaffe , is fired from his job , and Gabbo escapes unscathed . Meanwhile , Krusty is still down in the dumps without a job . After visiting his house and seeing photos of Krusty 's celebrity friends , Bart and Lisa suggest he host a comeback special . They begin recruiting major celebrities to appear on Krusty 's special : Bette Midler , Johnny Carson , the Red Hot Chili Peppers , Hugh Hefner , and Luke Perry (Krusty 's " worthless half @-@ brother ") . They also try to recruit Elizabeth Taylor , but her agent declines the invitation before they can speak to her .

Bart and Lisa return to Krusty to declare their success , only to find him morbidly obese from drinking several milkshakes after believing them to be weight @-@ loss shakes . Fortunately , the entire Simpson family helps get him back into shape before the special airs .

Krusty 's comeback special features his reunion with Sideshow Mel , Perry getting shot out of a cannon , the Red Hot Chili Peppers singing " Give It Away " in their underwear , Carson lifting a 1987 Buick Skylark over his head and Krusty and Midler singing " Wind Beneath My Wings " . The show is a great success and Krusty 's career gets back on track . While watching the special at home , Taylor remarks to herself that she should fire her agent . Afterwards , everyone heads to Moe 's for an after party , where they toast Krusty and watch Carson as he plays the accordion while

balancing Grampa and Jasper on a bench on his head .

= = Production = =

The idea of The Krusty the Clown Show being cancelled was pitched by writer John Swartzwelder . The rest of the writers decided this would be an opportunity to include a group of celebrity guest stars . They had done a similar episode the year before called " Homer at the Bat " which starred nine Major League Baseball players and had hoped to emulate its success . At that point , the writers had a list of celebrities that had wanted to do a guest spot on the show and decided to use this episode to burn through some of them . However , the episode was described by executive producer Mike Reiss as " a nightmare " because several guests pulled out at the last minute and the script had to be changed several times . One of the goals for the episode was to have an ex @-@ President of the United States . They wrote " very respectful but cute " parts for each then @-@ living ex @-@ president (Nixon , Ford , Carter , and Reagan) at the time , but they all turned them down . Only Ronald Reagan responded , sending a politely worded reply .

All of the guest stars were recorded over a period of several months . One of the writers ' goals was to get a musical act to appear , but several performers , including The Rolling Stones and Wynonna Judd , turned the role down (although the Stones did eventually appear in Season 14 's " How I Spent My Strummer Vacation ") . The Red Hot Chili Peppers finally accepted , and were directed by George Meyer who told them to ad @-@ lib many of their lines . The celebrity aspect of the episode was almost canceled because the producers were unable to get an obligation before the record deadline . Johnny Carson appears in the episode , and it was one of the few televised appearances he made after he retired from The Tonight Show . He recorded his lines the night after the 44th Primetime Emmy Awards . The original role pitched for Carson was one where he visited the Simpson family 's house and mooched off them . Carson felt this role was too degrading , so instead the writers took the opposite route and portrayed him as extremely versatile and multi @-@ talented . Bette Midler 's condition for guest starring was that the show promoted her anti @-@ littering campaign . Elizabeth Taylor guest starred as herself and also recorded a part as Maggie in " Lisa 's First Word " on the same day . Luke Perry was one of the first guest stars to agree to their part .

The short cartoon " Worker and Parasite " is a reference to Soviet cartoons . To produce the animation , director David Silverman xeroxed several drawings and made the animation very jerky . The scene where Krusty sings " Send in the Clowns " was very tricky for the animators because it involves two shots of the same scene from different angles . Parts of the scene were animated by Brad Bird .

= = Cultural references = =

Folk singer Judy Collins ' 1975 rendition of the song " Send in the Clowns " is parodied in the episode , and Krusty sings the altered lyrics : " Send in those soulful and doleful , schmaltz @-@ by @-@ the @-@ bowlful clowns " in a musical number of his comeback special . Gabbo 's name comes from the 1929 film The Great Gabbo . He was originally designed to be more square , but the second design was made to be " a demented Howdy Doody " . His voice was based on Jerry Lewis . The sequence with Gabbo 's song contains several references to the 1940 film Pinocchio . Krusty mentions that he beat Joey Bishop . Bishop was an entertainer who had his own show , The Joey Bishop Show , which ran opposite of The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson . Bette Midler 's serenading Krusty is a reference to the way Bette sang to Johnny Carson on the penultimate episode of Carson 's The Tonight Show . The scene in which Krusty instructs the Red Hot Chili Peppers to change the lyrics to the song " Give It Away " is a reference to Ed Sullivan instructing The Doors to change the lyrics to the song " Light My Fire " . The poses of the Red Hot Chili Peppers in the scene are based on the movie The Doors . Flea , the bassist of the Red Hot Chili Peppers , is mistakenly seen playing a guitar during the performance of " Give It Away " . Several scenes in Krusty 's special are based on Elvis Presley 's ' 68 Comeback Special . The musical piece that Hugh Hefner plays on the wine glasses is from Peter and the Wolf and was composed by

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Krusty Gets Kancelled " finished 24th in ratings for the week of May 10 ? 16 , 1993 , with a Nielsen rating of 12 @.@ 3 , equivalent to approximately 11 @.@ 5 million viewing households . It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , beating Married ... with Children .

In 2006 , Bette Midler , Hugh Hefner , Johnny Carson , Luke Perry and the Red Hot Chili Peppers were listed at number four on IGN 's list of the best Simpsons guest stars . They all also appeared on AOL 's list of their favorite 25 Simpsons guest stars . In 2007 , Vanity Fair named " Krusty Gets Kancelled " as the ninth best episode of The Simpsons . John Orvet felt , " This is Krusty 's best episode ? better than the reunion with his father , or the Bar Mitzvah episode , which won an Emmy much later on . The incorporation of guest stars as themselves is top @-@ notch , and we get to see the really dark side of Krusty 's flailing showbiz career . Hollywood , television , celebrities , and fans are all beautifully skewered here . " Brien Murphy of the Abilene Reporter @-@ News classed " Krusty Gets Kancelled " as one of his three favorite episodes of The Simpsons , along with " Behind the Laughter " and " The Simpsons Spin @-@ Off Showcase " . Though Jim Schembri of The Age put the episode among his top 10 episodes of the series , he also noted " Unfortunately , this signaled the beginning of the show 's obsession with star cameos . " An article in the Herald Sun placed " Krusty Gets Kancelled " among the top 20 episodes of The Simpsons , and characterized " The sight of Krusty 's feeble attempt to fight back with his own gruesome ventriloquist doll , which falls apart on his lap on air " as the highlight of the episode . In 1997 , TV Guide named " Krusty Gets Kancelled " as the second greatest Simpsons episode and the 66th greatest TV episode . In 2009 , it was named the 24th Greatest TV Episode of All @-@ Time .

In an article about the 2003 DVD release in The Independent , " Krusty Gets Kancelled " was highlighted along with episodes " When You Dish Upon a Star " , " Lisa the Iconoclast " , " Dog of Death " , " Homer Badman " , and " Grampa vs. Sexual Inadequacy " . In a 2004 review of the release of The Simpsons season four on DVD , Andrew Pulver of The Guardian highlighted episodes " Kamp Krusty " and " Krusty Gets Kancelled " as part of " TV art at its peak " . Mike Clark of USA Today also highlighted " Kamp Krusty " and " Krusty Gets Kancelled " as better episodes of the season , along with " A Streetcar Named Marge " and " Lisa the Beauty Queen " . Jen Chaney of The Washington Post described episodes " A Streetcar Named Marge " , " Mr. Plow " , " Marge vs. the Monorail " , and " Krusty Gets Kancelled " as " gems " of The Simpsons ' fourth season . Spence Kettlewell of The Toronto Star described season 4 episodes " Krusty Gets Kancelled " , " Kamp Krusty " , " Mr. Plow " , and " I Love Lisa " as " some of the best episodes " of the series . Forrest Hartman of the Reno Gazette @-@ Journal wrote that the large number of celebrity appearances detracted from the episode , commenting : " The result is a boring hodgepodge of scenes with Bette Midler , Johnny Carson , the Red Hot Chili Peppers and more where we 're supposed to laugh simply because famous people are interacting with Krusty . " The episode is one of co @-@ executive producer Tim Long 's three favorites , including " The Itchy & Scratchy & Poochie Show " and " A Milhouse Divided " .

In 2000 , the episode was released as part of a Twentieth Century Fox boxed set The Simpsons Go Hollywood , commemorating The Simpsons ' 10th anniversary . The set included " some of the series ' best spoofs of movies and TV " , and also included episodes " Marge vs. the Monorail " , " A Streetcar Named Marge " , " Who Shot Mr. Burns " , Parts 1 and 2 , and " Bart Gets Famous " . The episode was included in a 2003 release of The Simpsons Classics on DVD by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment .