

= Bart Gets Hit by a Car =

" Bart Gets Hit by a Car " is the tenth episode of The Simpsons ' second season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on January 10 , 1991 . At the start of the episode , Bart is hit by Mr. Burns ' car . Prompted by ambulance @-@ chasing lawyer Lionel Hutz and quack doctor Dr. Nick Riviera , the Simpsons sue Mr. Burns , seeking extensive damages for Bart 's injuries . Hutz and Dr. Nick exaggerate Bart 's injuries so they can gain sympathy at the trial . Marge is against the whole thing and grows concerned with the fact that Homer is asking Bart to lie .

" Bart Gets Hit by a Car " was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Mark Kirkland . The episode 's plot was based on Billy Wilder 's 1966 film The Fortune Cookie . Much of the ending of the show was pitched by executive producer James L. Brooks , who felt the episode needed a more emotional ending . The episode includes the debuts of three recurring characters , Lionel Hutz , Dr. Nick and the Blue @-@ Haired Lawyer . The Devil also appears on the show for the first time . Recurring guest star Phil Hartman makes his first appearance as Hutz . The show 's then @-@ script supervisor Doris Grau also voices a character in the show for the first time .

In its original broadcast , " Bart Gets Hit by a Car " received a Nielsen rating of 14 @.@ 5 , finishing the week ranked 32nd . The episode received generally positive reviews .

= = Plot = =

While skateboarding one day , Bart crosses a road where he is hit by Mr. Burns ' car . Bart has an out @-@ of @-@ body experience as he ends up on the escalator to heaven . He then ends up in Hell after spitting over the side of it and ends up meeting the Devil . He floats back into his body as it was not his time yet . Bart wakes up in a hospital room , surrounded by his family and a strange man . The man introduces himself as attorney Lionel Hutz , and suggests that the Simpsons sue Mr. Burns . Marge refuses the offer and tells Hutz to leave at once . However , Bart 's injuries are minor : a bump on the head and a broken toe . Because of this , Homer is hesitant to sue his boss . Later , Mr. Burns tries to avoid a potential lawsuit by offering Homer \$ 100 . Homer is hesitant to accept the offer because it barely covers Bart 's medical bills , so Burns , who is an extortionist , throws him out . After the meeting , Homer goes to see Lionel Hutz , who promises him a cash settlement of \$ 1 million . To stack the odds in his favor , Hutz takes Bart to see Dr. Nick Riviera , a quack doctor who claims that Bart has extensive injuries on Bart 's x @-@ ray and claims it as trauma . However , Marge is skeptical of Dr. Nick 's real medical qualifications and attempts to decry him for exaggerating Bart 's condition , by immediately confronting Hutz for his action and tells him that Dr. Hibbert has been their family physician for years and knows Bart is fine . At the house , Hutz coaches Bart on what to say on the witness stand during the trial , encouraging him to exaggerate his condition . Meanwhile , Marge and Lisa state their opinion that they were against suing Burns and encourage Bart to tell the truth .

At the trial , both Bart and Mr. Burns tell inaccurate versions of what happened . The jury shows sympathy for Bart , but Marge and Lisa are angry at this . They are still convinced that Hutz made him lie and Homer did nothing to help stop it . Things seem to be looking up for both Homer and Hutz . After the trial , Mr. Burns yells at his lawyers , ordering them to bring Homer and Marge to his house . At his mansion , Burns offers Homer a \$ 500 @,@ 000 settlement and leaves them to discuss it . Feeling guilty for lying , Marge pleads with Homer to drop the case and accept the money . He objects to her request and demands to know why he should accept the settlement . Marge reveals that she was against suing Mr. Burns from the start and would have been happy with settling the case by having him apologizing for the incident and paying for Bart 's medical bills . Homer refuses , insisting that Burns knows he will lose the trial and will have to pay the family \$ 1 million . Marge admits she dislikes the situation for what it has become , including the " phony doctors " . Mr. Burns overhears this , withdraws his offer and sends them on their way out .

The next day at the trial , Mr. Burns ' lawyer calls an unprepared Marge to the stand . When asked about her opinion on Dr. Nick , she is hesitant to talk stating that she does not talk about anyone that they have nothing nice to say about them . Mr. Burns ' lawyer asks Marge again and reminds

her that she is under oath . In her testimony , she denounces Dr. Riviera as a fake and outlines how limited Bart 's injuries actually were . Marge also denounces Hutz by revealing that he made Bart lie about his injuries and being in intense pain , when he was really fine . She gives the hardships resulting from the accident a dollar value of \$ 5 (the same sum they would 've paid Bart to take out the trash) . Homer watches in disbelief and betrayal as the case slips away . Marge 's testimony destroys Hutz 's case and the Simpsons get nothing , although Bart receives good treatment for his injuries .

That night , Homer angrily blames Marge for costing them \$ 1 million . He leaves for Moe 's to drown his sorrows . Marge visits him at Moe 's and asks him to forgive her for her testimony , even though she did the right thing by telling the truth . Homer says that he does not love her anymore , but he looks her in the eyes and realizes he still loves her as much as ever .

= = Production = =

The episode 's plot was based on Billy Wilder 's 1966 film *The Fortune Cookie* , in which Walter Matthau plays a dishonest lawyer who convinces Jack Lemmon 's character to fake an injury for a large cash settlement . While working on the court room scenes , director Mark Kirkland watched *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Verdict* to get ideas for different angles he could use . Although the episode was written by John Swartzwelder , a lot of the ending was pitched by executive producer James L. Brooks . Brooks felt that the episode needed a more emotional ending , so some shots were reworked so that voice @-@ overs could be added .

The episode includes the debuts of three recurring characters , Lionel Hutz , Dr. Nick Riviera and the Blue @-@ Haired Lawyer . Lionel Hutz was designed by Mark Kirkland , who gave him an evil design , but was asked to make him more " bland looking " . He gave him a powder blue suit to make him stand out more . Phil Hartman , who voices Hutz , also guest stars for the first time . He would later become one of the most frequently appearing guest stars , with Hutz and Troy McClure (who was introduced later in the second season) being his most well @-@ known characters .

Dr. Nick Riviera is voiced by Hank Azaria , who used a " bad Ricky Ricardo " impression . The animators modeled Dr. Nick after then @-@ supervising director Gábor Csupó , because they mistakenly believed that Azaria was impersonating him . The Blue @-@ Haired Lawyer , who does not have a proper name , was based on Roy Cohn , who became famous as Senator Joseph McCarthy 's lawyer . His voice , provided by Dan Castellaneta , was also an impression of Cohn . The Devil is also shown for the first time , and he was designed by Mark Kirkland , who originally tried to give him a scary design , but the writers asked him to use a more comedic look .

The show 's then @-@ script supervisor Doris Grau also appears in the show for the first time . She was used because of her unique voice , and appears as a minor character in this episode , but would later become known for voicing Lunchlady Doris .

= = Cultural references = =

The Devil says " Please allow me to introduce myself " , a reference to The Rolling Stones song " Sympathy for the Devil " . In addition , When Bart wakes up from his out @-@ of @-@ body experience , he says , " I did go away , Mom ! I was miles and miles and miles away , writhing in agony in the pits of Hell ! And you were there ! And you and you and you , " a reference to the 1939 film adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* , when Dorothy awakens from her slumber . The design of Hell in the episode references Hieronymus Bosch 's triptych *The Garden of Earthly Delights* , particularly the Hell panel .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Bart Gets Hit by a Car " finished 32nd in ratings for the week of January 7 ? 13 , 1991 , with a Nielsen rating of 14 @.@ 5 and was viewed in approximately 13 @.@ 5 million homes , down from show 's season average rank of 28th . It was the highest rated program

on Fox that week . The episode finished second in its timeslot to The Cosby Show , which aired at the same time on NBC , which had a Nielsen Rating of 17 @. @ 8 .

The episode 's reference to The Wizard Of Oz was named the fourth greatest film reference in the history of the show by Nathan Ditum of Total Film . The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , praised " Bart Gets Hit by a Car " as " An interesting episode in that we begin to see the very dark side of Burns that will develop later , although Smithers is still just a toady . A good introduction for Lionel Hutz and a nice look at Hell , Heaven and the original Snowball " . Doug Pratt , a DVD reviewer and Rolling Stone contributor , concurred , stating that the episode led to " inspired looks at Heaven , Hell , and ambulance @-@ chasing lawyers " . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson lauded the episode for " provid [ing] a lot of great moments , especially in court when we heard the differing viewpoints of the accident offered by Bart and Mr. Burns . ' Car ' worked well and was consistently amusing and lively . " Dawn Taylor of The DVD Journal thought that the best line was Bart 's testimony , " It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon . I was playing in my wholesome childlike way , little realizing that I was about to be struck down by the Luxury Car of Death " .