

= The Computer Wore Menace Shoes =

? The Computer Wore Menace Shoes ? is the sixth episode of The Simpsons ' twelfth season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 3 , 2000 . In the episode , Homer buys a computer and creates his own website to spread gossip . However , when Homer starts writing conspiracy theories about flu shots , he gets sent to an island where people who know too much are imprisoned .

" The Computer Wore Menace Shoes " was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Mark Kirkland . The current title of the episode is a reference to the 1969 film The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes , but the episode is not related to the film in any other way . The episode 's third act features many references to the 1967 science fiction series The Prisoner .

The episode features Patrick McGoochan as Number Six , the main character from The Prisoner . In its original broadcast , the episode was seen by approximately 9 @. @ 1 million viewers , finishing in 28th place in the ratings the week it aired . Following its broadcast , the episode received mixed reviews from critics ; commentators were divided over the episode 's third act .

= = Plot = =

After finding out that all of the nuclear plant 's staff members had been informed of the plant 's maintenance via e @-@ mail , Homer decides to buy a computer . After he gives up on learning how to use it , Lisa sets up the computer . Homer eventually catches on and starts his own webpage , which contains copyrighted material from other pages . To avoid getting sued , Homer calls himself " Mister X " . Late at night , unable to sleep until someone visits his page , Homer hears a rumor from Bart started by either Nelson Muntz or Jimbo Jones that Mayor Quimby spent the street repair fund on a secret swimming pool . He posts this rumor on his page , which is seen by several of Springfield 's citizens .

Mayor Quimby is the subject of a city @-@ wide scandal when a barrage of reporters find a luxurious pool along with many scantily dressed women in Quimby 's office . Homer keeps his anonymity while posting more rumors and finds out Mr. Burns plans to sell plutonium to terrorists and is later arrested by the CIA . Eventually , Mr. X wins the Pulitzer Prize for his journalistic achievements , despite nobody knowing who he is . When he hears that the prize money will be given to starving children , Homer reveals that he is Mr. X.

However , this ends up alienating Homer from the rest of the town , as nobody feels comfortable confessing their secrets now that they know Homer 's Mr. X , and his fame soon plummets . To boost his popularity , Homer begins posting outrageous stories on his webpage . His fame back , Homer celebrates by going to a fake Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart , and ends up getting kidnapped .

Homer wakes up on the " Island " , a place where the inhabitants are people who have been exiled from society for harboring dangerous secrets . Homer learns from the organization 's leader , Number Two , that a story he wrote about flu vaccinations containing mind @-@ control serum was true . The mind control drug is calibrated to drive people into a frenzy of shopping , which is why flu shots are administered shortly before Christmas . While Homer is trapped on the Island , he is replaced by a doppelgänger who looks identical to him but speaks with a thick German accent .

Number Six , who is trapped on the Island for inventing the bottomless peanut bag , tells Homer about a makeshift boat he spent thirty @-@ three years making , which Homer steals and escapes the Island with , popping the Rover that emerged from the water to trap him . When he gets home , Homer tries to send out a message to the police through his computer , but is stopped by Number Two taking over the computer and is caught by his doppelgänger .

Homer fights his double and defeats him by kicking him in the crotch . His family is happy the real Homer is back , but then a fake Santa 's Little Helper spouts a gas that drugs the entire family . The episode ends with everyone in the family enjoying their strange , new life on the " Island " ( with Marge even saying that after getting used to the druggings , the Island itself is actually a " pretty nice place " ) .

= = Production = =

" The Computer Wore Menace Shoes " was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Mark Kirkland . It was first broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on December 3 , 2000 . Originally , the episode was about Homer becoming Matt Drudge , the creator and an editor of the news aggregation website the Drudge Report , which Swartzwelder is a fan of . At that point , the episode was called " Homer the Drudge " . The chalkboard gag was written by staff writer Don Payne , and the couch gag was conceived by producer Laurie Biernackie .

Because it was accidentally commissioned without his approval , the animators had to apologize to Scully . When he looked at the couch gag however , he was pleased with it and ordered the animators to " go with it " . At one point in the episode , Homer wins a Pulitzer Prize for his achievements in journalism . According to Kirkland , none of the animators knew what the prize looked like and had to do some research in order to make it accurate .

The third act of " The Computer Wore Menace Shoes " is a pastiche of the 1967 science fiction television series The Prisoner . In order to " get the feel " of The Prisoner , the writers watched its opening sequence , which summarizes the story of the series . Kirkland , who had seen a couple of episodes as a child , watched several episodes of the series with The Simpsons ' animators in order to make " The Computer Wore Menace Shoes " resemble it . They were also influenced by 1960 's modernism and furniture designs from the 1971 science fiction film A Clockwork Orange .

The episode features American @-@ born actor Patrick McGoochan as Number Six , the central character in The Prisoner , which McGoochan played . " The Computer Wore Menace Shoes " was the only time McGoochan reprised his role as Number Six . In the DVD commentary for the episode , Payne said that McGoochan was " very funny " , and that all the writers wanted to meet him when he came to record his dialogue for the episode .

McGoohan was reportedly very pleased with his role in the episode ; when his wife Joan McGoochan , who is a real estate broker , helped staff writer Max Pross buy a house , she told him that Patrick McGoochan was as proud of the episode as anything in his career .

= = Cultural references = =

" The Computer Wore Menace Shoes " makes fun of use of the Internet , which was rapidly growing in popularity at the time . " [ ... ] The Internet was just starting to turn into a serious waste of time around this point in history " , staff writer Matt Selman said in the episode 's DVD commentary . The news website that Homer creates is based on the Drudge Report , a news aggregator created by journalist Matt Drudge . The episode was also written at a time when several The Simpsons producers invested in an animated web series ' company called icebox.com , which was co @-@ created by two former The Simpsons writers .

Although the title of the episode is a reference to the 1969 Disney film The Computer Wore Tennis Shoes , the episode itself has " essentially nothing " to do with the film , according to M. Keith Booker in his book Drawn to Television : Prime @-@ Time Animation from The Flintstones to Family Guy . In the episode , the slogan of Homer 's webpage is " All the muck that 's fit to rake " . This is a reference to the American newspaper The New York Times , whose slogan is " All the News That 's Fit to Print " . The word " muck " refers to muckrakers , a term closely associated with reform @-@ oriented journalists who wrote largely for popular magazines after 1900 .

The episode 's third act , which serves as a parody of The Prisoner , features several references to the series . When the secret organization finds out about Homer 's discovery , he is taken to a secret location called the " Island " . The " Island " is modeled after the " Village " , where Number Six is taken in The Prisoner .

While he is in the " Island " , Homer is repeatedly gassed by unexpected objects , a reference to the way Number Six would often be gassed in The Prisoner . " George [ Meyer ] and I used to laugh a lot about how often [ Number Six ] would be gassed by unexpected devices in the show " , Scully said in the episode 's DVD commentary . " And we wanted to cram as many in as we could . " While escaping the " Island " , Homer is chased by a " big balloon " . The balloon is a reference to Rover ,

a floating white ball in The Prisoner that was created to keep inhabitants in the " Village " , which was also featured in the season 9 episode The Joy of Sect . The music heard in the scene is based on The Prisoner 's theme music .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on December 3 , 2000 , " The Computer Wore Menace Shoes " received a 9 @. @ 0 rating , according to Nielsen Media Research , translating to approximately 9 @. @ 1 million viewers . The episode finished in 28th place in the ratings for the week of November 27 @- @ December 3 , 2000 , tying with an episode of the news magazine Dateline NBC and the CBS sitcom The King of Queens . After the episode was released , The Simpsons ' writers created a website called mrxswebpage.com , which was made to resemble Homer 's website in the episode .

This was at a time when many television shows created websites to promote episodes ; earlier that year , Fox created a website called whatbadgerseat.com in conjunction with the season premiere , in which badgers played an important role . On August 18 , 2009 , the episode was released as part of a DVD set called The Simpsons : The Complete Twelfth Season . Mike Scully , Ian Maxtone @- @ Graham , Don Payne , John Frink , Matt Selmán , Tom Gammill , Max Pross , Mark Kirkland and Joel H. Cohen participated in the audio commentary for the episode .

Following its broadcast , " The Computer Wore Menace Shoes " received mixed reviews from critics . Giving it a positive review , DVD Talk 's Jason Bailey described the episode as a " smart piece of social satire " . He especially enjoyed Homer 's part in the episode , and found that his incompetence at handling computers is " comedic gold " . Casey Burchby , another reviewer for DVD Talk , also enjoyed the social satire in the episode , and although he found the parody of The Prisoner " bizarre " , he maintained that it was " bold " .

Writing for DVD Verdict , Mac MacEntire argued that the episode is " hilarious " , provided one has seen The Prisoner . DNA Smith described the episode as " memorable " . The episode is also often considered to be a fan favorite , according to Matt Haigh of Den of Geek . On the other hand , DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson was less impressed with the episode .

In his review of The Simpsons : The Complete Twelfth Season , Jacobson wrote that he enjoyed the episode 's take on " Internet idiocy " . He wrote , " Some parts of it feel dated , but the web features even more ill @- @ informed opinions today than it did nine years ago , so much of it remains timeless and on target . " However , he was critical of the episode 's third act . " The side of the show feels like it was intended to amuse a few fans and it doesn ' t show a lot of real cleverness or wit " , he wrote . He summarized the episode as being decent , but inconsistent .