

= The Parent Rap =

" The Parent Rap " is the second episode and official premiere of the thirteenth season of The Simpsons . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on November 11 , 2001 . In the episode , Bart and his father , Homer , are sentenced by the cruel judge Constance Harm to be tethered to each other as a result of Bart stealing Police Chief Wiggum 's car . Eventually , Homer 's wife , Marge , is fed up with the punishment and cuts the rope , which instead leads to Judge Harm sentencing them to have their heads and hands locked up in wooden stocks .

The episode was written by George Meyer and Mike Scully , who also served as the show runner for the episode , and Mark Kirkland worked as the director . The writers based the story on ? a couple of incidents ? in real life in which troublesome children , through alternative sentencing , were tethered to their parents . The episode marks the first appearance of the infamous and notoriously cruel Judge Constance Harm , who is played by actress Jane Kaczmarek . When it was first broadcast , ? The Parent Rap ? was watched by 14 @.@ 4 million viewers , making it the second most watched show of its timeslot that night . After its release on DVD and Blu @-@ ray , however , the episode garnered mixed reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

When Homer makes Bart and Milhouse walk to school , the boys get into trouble and are arrested for stealing Chief Wiggum 's squad car . Milhouse gets off but when Bart comes to the bench , Judge Snyder takes a vacation and Judge Constance Harm takes over and lays down the law . She holds Homer responsible for Bart 's deeds and sentences him and Bart to be tethered together . The two are against it at first , but after a while , the two begin to bond . Marge finally gets fed up with the punishment , when Bart has to stay in the room when she and Homer make love , and cuts the tether . Only now , Bart and his parents get brought back before Judge Harm . Homer and Marge have their heads and hands locked up in old @-@ fashioned wooden stocks . Not being able to bear the punishment any longer , they break free and decide to get back at the judge . When the plan goes awry , they accidentally sink the judge 's houseboat and are once again brought into court .

Bart asks Judge Harm to go easy on his parents and accepts responsibility for his own actions . Judge Harm 's harsh expressions briefly softens and she admits she appreciates him being responsible for his actions . However , she also realizes that she must still lay down the law . Just before she is ready to bang her gavel and punish Bart to serve five years in juvie , Judge Snyder comes back from his fishing trip just in time to stop her verdict . He declares a verdict of " boys will be boys " , dismissing the case and sending an irate Judge Harm on her way when she tried to complain about him being too lenient .

Afterwards , Marge asks the family not to break the law for an entire year , a promise Homer instantly breaks when he unintentionally runs over Hans Moleman , and turns up the radio to keep the family from hearing him whimper in pain .

= = Production and cultural references = =

? The Parent Rap ? was co @-@ written by George Meyer and Mike Scully , and Mark Kirkland served as the director for the episode . It was first broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on November 11 , 2001 . The title of the episode is a reference to The Parent Trap . Even though " Treehouse of Horror XII " - the first episode of the thirteenth season - had aired the previous week , " The Parent Rap " was considered the official premiere of the season . ? The Parent Rap ? was the last episode written in its production line . ? As I recall , we got toward the end of the season and we had to write another episode in a hurry ? , said Meyer in a DVD audio commentary for the episode . Judge Constance Harm is a parody of Judge Judy .

The writing staff contributed a rough outline for the episode , and Meyer and Scully went into one of the writer 's room and ? basically , kind of locked [themselves] in for five days ? writing the episode . Meyer and Scully both thoroughly enjoyed the writing process of the episode ; ? It really came

together easily ? , stated Meyer , ? ... because we had known each other so long and were comfortable with each other 's style ? . Ian Maxtone @-@ Graham , one of the writers for The Simpsons , commented that the draft Meyer and Scully had written was ? awfully good ? .

The episode was based on ? a couple of incidents ? that the writers had heard about in which troublesome children , through alternative sentencing , were tethered to their parents . The scene in which Homer and Marge get spanked by Springfield 's citizens as part of their punishment was also based on an alternative sentencing , in which the sentenced had to wear certain shirts or signs that indicated whether they , for example , had not paid taxes . The scene in which Bart accidentally drives away with Chief Wiggum 's police car was based on one of Scully 's friends in high school , who stole a still running police car parked at a Dunkin ' Donuts while the police were in the store .

The episode featured the first appearance of Judge Constance Harm , portrayed by American actress Jane Kaczmarek . The character 's name was conceived by Meyer , who had always thought that Constance was a scary name .

The episode makes a reference to Blue Öyster Cult 's hit song ? (Don 't Fear) The Reaper ? , which also plays during the episode 's end credits , and inspired the title of a later episode . Meyer later got to meet the band , who said that they were ? stoked ? to be referenced in a Simpsons episode .

= = Release = =

In its original American broadcast on November 11 , 2001 , ? The Parent Rap ? was seen by approximately 14 @.@ 4 million viewers , according to Nielsen Media Research . The episode received a 6 @.@ 9 rating / 16 share among adults between ages 18 and 49 , making it the second most watched television show of the night in its demographic , losing the number @-@ one spot to Malcolm in the Middle . The episode was listed among the 15 most watched shows in its demographic that week .

Following the episode 's broadcast , as well as the home video release of thirteenth season of The Simpsons , ? The Parent Rap " received generally mixed reviews from critics . Writing for NY Daily News , Eric Mink gave the episode a mixed review . " To be sure , the show has its moments " , wrote Mink , " But there 's not much zip here , and the show has , of all things , a warm @-@ and @-@ fuzzy ending ... ' The Simpsons ' and warm @-@ and @-@ fuzzy is not a healthy combination " . Nate Boss of Project @-@ Blu described the episode as ? filler ? and praised the episode 's concept , but criticized how the episode was executed . Colin Jacobsson of DVD Movie Guide also gave the episode a mixed response , and wrote that ? ' Rap ' starts with a clever ? if absurd ? concept ? , but ? does little to churn good comedy out of its theme ? , and concluded by calling the episode ? disappointing ? . Writing for Obsessed With Film , Adam Rayner described the episode as ? woefully weak ? and ? an example of the farcical that the series would fall deeper and deeper into ? . He did , however , praise the episode for being original . Jennifer Malkowski , reviewing the season for DVD Verdict , was more positive towards the episode . Giving the episode a rating of B + , Malkowski listed ? The Parent Rap ? among episodes in the season where ? We see wacky scenarios force Homer to bond with his family , to a rather heartwarming effect ? . Ron Martin of 411Mania was also favorable , calling the episode ? decent ? .