

= 22 Short Films About Springfield =

" 22 Short Films About Springfield " (captioned on @-@ screen as " Twenty @-@ Two Short Films About Springfield ") is the twenty @-@ first episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on April 14 , 1996 . It was written by Richard Appel , David S. Cohen , Jonathan Collier , Jennifer Crittenden , Greg Daniels , Brent Forrester , Dan Greaney , Rachel Pulido , Steve Tompkins , Josh Weinstein , Bill Oakley and Matt Groening , with the writing being supervised by Daniels . The episode was directed by Jim Reardon . Phil Hartman guest starred as Lionel Hutz and the hospital board chairman . The episode looks into the lives of other Springfield residents in a series of linked stories and originated from the end segment of the season four episode " The Front " . The episode is a loose parody of Pulp Fiction , which gave the staff the idea of a possible spin @-@ off from The Simpsons . The title is a reference to the film Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould .

= = Plot = =

The episode is a series of short skits , each showing a brief slice of life in Springfield after Bart wonders if anything interesting happens to Springfield 's citizens :

- 1 . Bart and Milhouse spit and squirt condiments from a highway overpass onto cars , then go to the Kwik @-@ E Mart .
- 2 . There , Apu leaves his shop for four minutes to briefly attend a party at his brother Sanjay 's house .
- 3 . Bart gets gum in Lisa 's hair without noticing , and Marge tries to get it out by putting a variety of foods on her head .
- 4 . Smithers suffers an allergic reaction to a bee sting while bike riding with Mr. Burns , who makes him pedal the bike to the hospital ; however , Mr. Burns is taken inside instead .
- 5 . Dr. Nick comes under criticism from the medical board for his unorthodox medical procedures , called " nonsensical diagnosis " , only to treat Abraham Simpson with an electric light socket , saving his career .
- 6 . Moe gets robbed by Snake after Barney gives him \$ 2 @,@ 000 to pay for a portion of his \$ 14 billion bar tab .
- 7 . " Skinner & The Superintendent " : Skinner hosts lunch for Superintendent Chalmers and when his roast is burned , he pretends that the smoke from his oven is steam from the " steamed clams " he is preparing for them . He then attempts to disguise food from Krusty Burger as his own cooking , emerging from the kitchen carrying hamburgers and insisting that he said that they were having " steamed hams " (apparently local Albany dialect for hamburgers) . He then tries to cover up the kitchen being on fire by claiming that it contains an Aurora Borealis . Later , his mother is heard screaming , and a fire engine races to the house .
- 8 . Homer accidentally traps Maggie in a newspaper vending box , and ends up uprooting the box (with Maggie inside) and placing it in her bedroom .
- 9 . Chief Wiggum , Lou and Eddie discuss the similarities and differences between McDonald 's and Krusty Burger , such as the former 's Quarter Pounder with Cheese .
- 10 . Bumblebee Man 's house is destroyed upon arriving home after a horrible day at work , causing his wife to leave him .
- 11 . Snake runs Wiggum over and the two begin to fight . They roll into Herman 's shop , who captures them at gunpoint .
- 12 . Reverend Lovejoy urges his pet Old English Sheepdog to use Ned Flanders ' lawn as a toilet .
- 13 . Various townspeople - including Flanders , Groundskeeper Willie , the Sea Captain , Otto , Dr. Hibbert , Sideshow Mel , Lionel Hutz , and Üter - advise Marge and Lisa on how to remove the gum stuck in Lisa 's hair .
- 14 . " Cletus the Slack @-@ Jawed Yokel " : Cletus offers Brandine some shoes he found on a telephone line .
- 15 . Milhouse has to use the bathroom in Comic Book Guy 's Android 's Dungeon and has to

purchase a comic book first , but ends up leaving before he can use it . He then goes with his father to Herman 's store , where he accidentally knocks Herman out with a flail , saving his father , Snake , and Wiggum .

16 . Jake cuts the gum out of Lisa 's hair , leaving her with a different hairstyle .

17 . Nelson laughs at Lisa 's new haircut , at Mrs. Glick tripping and falling head @-@ first into a trash can , and at an extremely tall man in a small VW Beetle car , who gets out and humiliates him to teach him a lesson .

18 . Bart and Milhouse conclude that life is interesting in their town after all .

19 . Lastly , " The Tomfoolery of Professor John Frink " is almost seen , but the episode ends before Frink can begin his story .

= = Production = =

The episode 's principal idea came from the season four episode " The Front " , which featured a short scene entitled " The Adventures of Ned Flanders " at its conclusion . The scene had no relevance to the main plot of the episode and was designed solely to fill time . The staff loved the concept and attempted to fit similar scenes into other episodes , but none were short enough to require one . Show runners Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein decided to make an entire episode of linked short scenes involving many of the show 's characters , in a similar style to Quentin Tarantino 's Pulp Fiction . The title " 22 Short Films About Springfield " was decided upon from the start of the episode 's production , even though there are not actually twenty @-@ two stories in it . Originally there were more scenes , but several of them had to be cut out for time . To decide who would write each of the segments , all of the writers chose their top three favorite characters and put them into a hat , the names were drawn out and the writers were assigned their parts . Oakley wrote the Superintendent Chalmers story , Weinstein did the Comic Book Guy and Milhouse scene , David Cohen penned the Reverend Lovejoy sketch , as well as the deleted Krusty scene . Brent Forrester wrote the Krusty Burger scene , while Rachel Pulido , whose first Simpsons episode this was , wrote the Bumblebee Man one . Richard Appel wrote a deleted " elaborate fantasy segment " revolving around Marge , the only remnant of which is her cleaning the sink during the first Lisa scene , and also did a scene with Lionel Hutz that was dropped as well .

The episode 's first draft was 65 pages long and needed to be cut down to just 42 , so numerous scenes were cut for time or because they did not fit into the overall dynamic of the episode . To solve this problem , a scene before the second act break , where the townspeople go to the Simpsons house to provide advice of how Lisa can get the gum out of her hair , was created to include every character that did not appear anywhere else during the course of the episode . Weinstein and writing supervisor Greg Daniels was responsible for ordering and linking together the episodes , and director Jim Reardon had the challenge of segueing between each section in a way that did not make the change seem abrupt . Those that were hard to link were put before or after an act break or were given a theme song , one of which was cut from the Apu story , but was included as a deleted scene on the DVD .

Bill Oakley wrote the Chalmers scene because he is his all time favorite character from the show . The main reason he loved him was that , until Frank Grimes was created for the season eight episode " Homer 's Enemy " , Chalmers was the only character that " seemed to operate in the normal human universe . " In previous episodes , Skinner and Chalmers ' scenes together revolved around one joke : Skinner tells Chalmers an unbelievable lie , but Chalmers believes him anyway . So , their scene in this episode is made up of a string of thirteen interconnected lies . The dialogue between him and Skinner was something that had never been done before , in that it is just a long relaxed conversation with nothing important being said at all .

In the Mr. Burns story , every single word he yells at Smithers is real and used correctly . To maintain accuracy , the writers used a 19th @-@ century slang thesaurus to look up words . Many of the Spanish words used in Bumblebee Man 's segment are easily understood cognates of English and not accurate Spanish ; this was done deliberately so that non @-@ Spanish speakers could understand the dialogue without subtitles . The very tall man was a caricature of writer Ian Maxtone

@-@ Graham , and the barber was based on one from the Tracey Ullman shorts . The crowd on the street who laugh at Nelson includes caricatures of Matt Groening , Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein . Oakley wrote in the script that the street was filled with Springfield 's biggest idiots and so the animators drew him , Weinstein and Groening into the scene .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode contains numerous references to Quentin Tarantino 's Pulp Fiction . Like the film , the episode 's plot is episodic , though the stories are interconnected . The policemen 's conversation about McDonald 's parallels the famous " Royale With Cheese " discussion , and the music played during the segment 's beginning was also taken from the film . The story involving Chief Wiggum and Snake is a direct parody of the " Gold Watch " segment of the film . Snake runs over the donut @-@ carrying Wiggum at a red light , like Butch did to Marcellus Wallace , before crashing into a fire hydrant and beginning an on @-@ foot chase . The two run into Herman 's Military Antique shop , where Herman beats , ties up and gags the two , then waits for " Zed " to arrive , exactly as Maynard does in Pulp Fiction . The writers were pleased that Herman already existed as otherwise they would have had to create another character just for this scene . The episode 's title is a reference to the film Thirty Two Short Films About Glenn Gould .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " 22 Short Films About Springfield " finished tied for 73rd in the weekly ratings for the week of April 8 @-@ April 14 , 1996 with a Nielsen rating of 6 @.@ 9 . It was the seventh highest rated show from the Fox Network that week . On March 12 , 2002 , the episode was released in the United States on a DVD collection titled The Simpsons Film Festival , along with the season eleven episode " Beyond Blunderdome " , the season four episode " Itchy & Scratchy : The Movie " , and the season six episode " A Star is Burns " .

The episode is Bill Oakley 's personal favorite episode , but it is hated by two prominent figures within the running of the show . That said , the episode is frequently cited as a popular one amongst the show 's fans on the internet . Entertainment Weekly placed the episode 14th on their top 25 The Simpsons episode list , praising the episode 's structure and finding the Pulp Fiction references " priceless " . Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , called it " an untypical episode , and a very good one , " naming the Skinner and Chalmers story as the best . IGN named " A Fish Called Selma " the best episode of the seventh season , but found that " 22 Short Films About Springfield " was " good competition " for the crown . Empire named the episode 's Pulp Fiction parody the seventh best film gag in the show , calling Wiggum and Snake bound and gagged with red balls in their mouths " the sickest visual gag in Simpsons history " . The episode is the favorite of British comedian Jimmy Carr who called it " a brilliant pastiche of art cinema " .

= = = Legacy = = =

The episode sparked the idea amongst the staff for a spin @-@ off series entitled Springfield Stories or simply Springfield . The proposed show would focus on the town in general , rather than the Simpson family . Every week would be a different scenario : three short stories , an adventure with young Homer or a story about a background character that was not tied in to the Simpson family at all . The idea never came to anything , as Groening realized that the staff did not have the manpower to produce another show as well as The Simpsons . The staff maintains that it is something that they would still be interested in doing , and that it " could happen someday . " " 22 Short Films About Springfield " also helped inspire the Futurama episode " Three Hundred Big Boys " .