

= Sideshow Bob 's Last Gleaming =

" Sideshow Bob 's Last Gleaming " is the ninth episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on November 26 , 1995 . In the episode , Sideshow Bob becomes disturbed when he hears the other inmates laughing at the inane antics of Krusty the Clown 's television show and decides to rid the world of television . He escapes while on work duty at a local Air Force Base , which is being cleaned for an annual air show . He steals a 10 @-@ megaton nuclear weapon and threatens to detonate it unless Springfield gives in to his demand to shut down all television broadcasts .

The episode , the fifth of the series to feature Sideshow Bob , was written by freelance writer Spike Feresten . Although he received credit for the episode , the writing staff completely rewrote the episode and very little of Feresten 's original script was left in the finished version . It was the first episode of The Simpsons to be directed by Dominic Polcino , who described it as being very difficult to direct . R. Lee Ermey , known for his role in Full Metal Jacket , guest stars as Col. Leslie " Hap " Hapablap while Kelsey Grammer reprises his role as Sideshow Bob .

The episode is a parody of " ' 60s @-@ era nuclear war movies " and contains several references to Cold War films including Twilight 's Last Gleaming , Dr. Strangelove and Fail @-@ Safe . In its original broadcast , the episode finished 49th in ratings for the week of November 20 ? 26 , 1995 , with a Nielsen rating of 8 @.@ 7 and a 13 % share of the audience .

= = Plot = =

While watching The Krusty the Clown Show , Homer asks what happened to Sideshow Bob , Krusty 's former sidekick . Bart and Lisa remind their father of Bob 's attempts to frame Krusty , kill Selma , rig an election and kill Bart. Meanwhile , at Springfield Minimum Security Prison , Sideshow Bob is disturbed when he hears the other inmates laughing at the inane antics of Krusty 's television show . He believes that television is a fountain of " mindless drivel " and wants to rid the world of it . Bob hatches a plan and escapes while on work duty at a local Air Force Base , which is being cleaned for an annual air show . He impersonates Air Force colonel Leslie " Hap " Hapablap in order to gain access to a restricted area of the hangar , where he finds a 10 @-@ megaton nuclear weapon .

The air show begins , with the Simpson family in attendance , but the signal on the big screen is interrupted by Bob . Bob announces that life would be better without television and so he threatens to detonate the nuclear bomb unless Springfield gives in to his demand to shut down all television broadcasts . Upon hearing the announcement , everyone flees the airfield in panic except for Bart and Lisa , who get separated from their parents during the crowd 's mad rush to evacuate . National Guardsmen frantically search the base for Sideshow Bob to no avail . All out of options , Mayor Quimby decides to give in to Bob 's ultimatum ? despite Krusty the Clown 's objections . In accordance with Bob 's demands , television transmitters are destroyed and studios hastily plan farewell programs . Bob , who was televising his demands from a stolen Duff Blimp , celebrates the success of his plan .

Krusty , refusing to submit to Bob 's demands , takes refuge in a civil defense shed in the desert . He uses the emergency broadcast system to transmit a heavily improvised show . Bob finds out about this and becomes outraged . Bart and Lisa find their way into the cockpit of the Duff Blimp , where Bob , having lost his patience thanks to Krusty , tries to detonate the bomb . However , the bomb turns out to be a dud (there was a label inside the bomb saying " Best Before November 1959 ") and does not blow up . The police eventually find Bob , thanks to Lisa , who uses the controls inside the blimp to print a message on its electronic ticker outside . When Chief Wiggum tries to arrest Bob , Bob deflates the blimp and kidnaps Bart. Bob steals the original Wright Brothers aircraft , which had been an exhibit at the air show . He then reveals to Bart that he plans to start out a kamikaze attack into the civil defense shed where Krusty is hiding . However , the plane ends up merely bouncing harmlessly off the shack . The authorities quickly arrest Bob and take him into custody while Bart is reunited with his family .

= = Production = =

Sideshow Bob 's Last Gleaming " was the fifth episode of The Simpsons to feature Sideshow Bob after " Krusty Gets Busted " , " Black Widower " , " Cape Feare " and " Sideshow Bob Roberts " . Executive producers Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein believed that every season of the show should contain an episode featuring Bob . However , Bob had already been in four episodes and the writers were having a difficult time coming up with new ways to include him . The first draft of the episode was written by Spike Feresten , a freelance writer who later became known for his work on Seinfeld . Although he received credit for the episode , the writing staff completely rewrote the episode and very little of Feresten 's original script was left in the episode . Oakley describes the episode as " one of the most arduous rewrites in the history of the show " because much of the dialogue had to be re @-@ written .

" Sideshow Bob 's Last Gleaming " was the first episode of The Simpsons directed by Dominic Polcino . Polcino had worked as an assistant director on the show and had left the show but was offered a chance to be a director . He describes the episode as a " tough one to start with , " especially the scenes with the Wright Flyer . An early version of the script featured a longer scene at the air show that featured Hans Moleman flying an early flying machine . The scene where Milhouse is in a jet pretending to fire missiles at his parents because he 's upset with them , would later inspire the episode " A Milhouse Divided " . In that episode , Milhouse 's parents become divorced .

A character modelled after Fox Network owner Rupert Murdoch briefly appears in a scene set in jail . The censors said that Murdoch could not be shown but Rupert Murdoch himself gave his permission for his caricature to be used . R. Lee Ermey , known for his role in Full Metal Jacket , guest stars as Col. Leslie " Hap " Hapablap . The role was specifically written for him and much of his dialogue was difficult to write . The line " What is your major malfunction ? " is based on dialogue from Full Metal Jacket .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode is a parody of " ' 60s @-@ era nuclear war movies " and contains several references to Cold War films . There were also several references to Dr. Strangelove : the underground compound resembles the War Room from the film ; Professor Frink was redesigned to parody the title character ; The tune that Sideshow Bob whistles while preparing the bomb is " We 'll Meet Again , " as sung by Vera Lynn at the end of the film ; and Krusty 's acting whilst he defends television is based on George C. Scott 's performance as General Buck Turgidson . The appearance of the stereotypical grey alien found in Hangar 18 is a reference to the Megadeth song of the same name .

Another parodied film is the 1964 thriller Fail @-@ Safe by Sidney Lumet : at the beginning of the third act of the episode , we see scenes of everyday life across Springfield , and one by one , with a " zooming " sound effect , they all freeze @-@ frame in anticipation of the (supposedly) imminent nuclear blast ; such was the ending of Fail @-@ Safe . One of the scenes before the supposed nuclear blast shows Maggie picking flowers in a field , with the camera zooming into her eye , and then the minuscule blast occurs . This is a parody of the infamous and controversial Daisy ad used by Lyndon B. Johnson in the 1964 United States presidential election .

The inmate who argues with Sideshow Bob about tabloids and network television has the likeness and Australian accent of Rupert Murdoch .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Sideshow Bob 's Last Gleaming " finished 49th in ratings for the week of November 20 ? 26 , 1995 , with a Nielsen rating of 8 @.@ 7 and a 13 % share of the audience . It was the fourth highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week behind The X @-@ Files , Beverly Hills , 90210 and Melrose Place .

The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons

Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , wrote , " Probably the least satisfying of Sideshow Bob 's gleamings - but there 's enough slapstick and satire to keep things ticking along nicely . " Ben Rayner of the Toronto Star listed " Brother From Another Series , " amongst other Sideshow Bob episodes , as one of the best episodes of The Simpsons , writing " forget Frasier , these are Kelsey Grammer 's best roles . " DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson wrote that " Though it doesn 't compete with the best Bob shows , it has more than a few nice moments . " He added that he enjoyed R. Lee Ermey 's guest appearance as well as the jokes about the Fox network . Jennifer Malkowski of DVD Verdict considered the best part of the episode to be when Milhouse was playing in the fighter jet at the air show . The website concluded its review by giving the episode a grade of B + .