

= Two Dozen and One Greyhounds =

" Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " is the 20th episode of The Simpsons ' sixth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on April 9 , 1995 . The episode was written by Mike Scully and directed by Bob Anderson . Frank Welker guest stars as Santa 's Little Helper and various other dogs . In the episode , Santa 's Little Helper has puppies with a dog that he met at the greyhound racetrack . When the Simpsons cannot take care of the puppies any longer , they decide to sell them ; however , the puppies do not want to be separated . Montgomery Burns steals the puppies from the Simpsons , and decides to make a tuxedo out of them . Before he can do so , however , Bart and Lisa Simpson save the puppies from Mr. Burns , and ultimately convince him never to wear fur again .

The episode is inspired by Dodie Smith 's 1956 novel The Hundred and One Dalmatians and Walt Disney Pictures ' 1961 animated film adaptation One Hundred and One Dalmatians . The producers decided to have Mr. Burns communicate his horrific plan of making a tuxedo from the puppies through a song after determining that it would be a " fun and light " way to convey his plan of killing the greyhounds . " Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " received a generally positive reception from television critics . During the week of its original American broadcast , the episode finished 55th in ratings , with a Nielsen rating of 7 @. @ 3 . Several reviews considered the episode to be one of their favorites of the series , and especially praised Mr. Burns ' appearances .

= = Plot = =

The Simpsons ' dog , Santa 's Little Helper becomes very excited and runs away from home to the dog racing track , where he falls in love with a female greyhound named She 's the Fastest . She is given to the Simpsons after her owner notes that she will no longer race after falling in love . One day , She 's the Fastest gives birth to 25 puppies . Eventually , the puppies become difficult to manage , and Homer and Marge Simpson attempt to sell them to people more capable of giving them adequate care . After seeing the puppies unwilling to separate , however , people begin to leave . Suddenly , Montgomery Burns arrives and offers to let them live in his mansion . After the Simpsons choose not to sell the puppies to him , he steals them when they are not looking .

Bart and Lisa Simpson track the puppies to Mr. Burns ' mansion , where they spy on him through a window . They see him treating the puppies well by giving them a bath . When one of the puppies stands on his hind legs , Mr. Burns picks him as his favorite of the bunch . Burns inexplicably claims that the puppy reminds him of actor Rory Calhoun , and names him " Little Monty " . After the bath , Mr. Burns walks into the next room , loads a gun , and sings a musical number called " See My Vest " (a parody of " Be Our Guest " from the 1991 film Beauty and the Beast) while demonstrating his wardrobe of fur clothing to his personal assistant , Waylon Smithers . After his performance , Burns prepares to kill all of the puppies , except for Little Monty , to make a new tuxedo for his wardrobe .

After learning about Mr. Burns ' plan , Bart and Lisa sneak through the window and attempt to escape with the puppies down a laundry chute using Bart 's socks . However , Mr. Burns is waiting for them at the bottom . As Mr. Burns is about to kill the dogs , Bart grabs Little Monty from Mr. Burns ' hands and places him with the other puppies , hoping that Mr. Burns will not kill the dogs if he can not determine which is Little Monty . When Mr. Burns tells Little Monty to stand up , though , he does . As Mr. Burns bends down to pick up Little Monty , Bart reels a clothesline with some socks hanging from it , causing all of the puppies to stand up . Mr. Burns can not tell which is Little Monty , so he prepares to shoot them all . However , the standing dogs are too cute for him to kill and , emotionally touched , he promises to never wear fur or kill any animals that can do an amusing trick . Mr. Burns buys all of the puppies from the Simpsons and successfully raises all of them into world @-@ class championship racing dogs , winning him millions , to Homer 's dismay over the Simpson 's missed fortune @-@ making opportunity .

= = Production = =

= = = Inspiration , writing , and music = = =

" Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " was written by Mike Scully and directed by Bob Anderson . The Simpsons writers Al Jean and Mike Reiss came up with the original idea for the episode . The idea came to them after watching the 1961 Disney film One Hundred and One Dalmatians . David Mirkin , the episode 's show runner , later jokingly said that Jean and Reiss liked to steal ideas from Disney , and pointed to an episode in season eight that they wrote as proof , titled " Simpsoncalifragilisticexpiala (Annoyed Grunt) cious " , which was based on the 1964 Disney film Mary Poppins . Mirkin thought that it was great that they could take stuff from Disney and do darker versions on The Simpsons " in a completely legal way " .

Groening was happy with the episode because it felt like a callback to the first episode of The Simpsons , " Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire " , and because it features references to One Hundred and One Dalmatians . The Disney film thrilled Groening as a kid , and was one of the reasons for why he was first interested in animation and cartooning . In One Hundred and One Dalmatians , the puppies watch cartoons on television several times ; the idea of a cartoon within a cartoon thrilled Groening , and said that this idea inspired him to create The Itchy & Scratchy Show , a fictional television show within the Simpsons universe .

Mr. Burns says in the episode that the puppy that stands up only on its hind legs reminds him of Rory Calhoun , an American actor who lived from 1922 to 1999 . The Simpsons writer George Meyer came up with the joke , but Groening argued against it because he did not think the audience would know who Calhoun was . The writers decided to keep it in anyway , because it was later expanded into a key part of the episode 's ending . Several years later , Groening stated that he was proven correct after pointing to discussions on the Internet about the episode asking who Calhoun was .

As Bart and Lisa sneak away to Mr. Burns ' mansion , they see him loading a gun and singing a musical number called " See My Vest " , in which he proclaims his intention to kill the puppies to make a tuxedo out of them . When the staff discussed how they could gloss over the horrifying things Mr. Burns would do to the dogs , one of the writers suggested that if they communicated his plan through a song , it would stay " fun and light " . Scully , who agreed that the idea was good , came in the following day with complete lyrics that he wrote for " See My Vest " , which was a parody of the song " Be Our Guest " , sung by Jerry Orbach in the 1991 film Beauty and the Beast . Mirkin loved Scully 's work on the parody song , commenting , " The rhymes are really clever . It 's one of our very best songs [on The Simpsons] . " He also liked the fact that songs could be used in episodes of The Simpsons without the episodes turning into musicals , saying , " We 'll just do one song and that 's plenty . We have fun with that and then we 're out . "

= = = Animation and voice acting = = =

Even though animals in cartoons often behave with " semi @-@ human awareness " , Groening said he preferred animals in cartoons to behave exactly the way they do in real life , claiming that this was how animals were depicted in " Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " . Mirkin said there were some exceptions for gags , but most of the time they tried to keep the animals acting realistically . The animal noises for the episode were performed by Frank Welker , who was praised by Mirkin on the DVD audio commentary for the episode , saying , " He can do anything , and it fits perfectly . You forget you 're listening to a guy , and he 's a pleasure to work with . " Welker was also praised by Groening , who said Welker was unbelievably good at doing animal noises .

The staff had a " big fight " with the Fox network censors over the scene in which Santa 's Little Helper mates with a female greyhound named She 's The Fastest . The writers were originally worried about the idea , but Mirkin knew that they could shoot it in a certain way to show the dogs having sex without being explicit . In the scene 's final version , the dogs are only seen from the shoulders up ; the crew 's animatic showing the scene in full was later released on DVD . Anderson noted that during the episode 's censor screening , there was a giant laugh at the depiction .

= = Cultural references = =

The overarching plot of the episode , as well as its title , was inspired by the Disney film One Hundred and One Dalmatians , which deals with a large number of puppies similar to " Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " . Besides the film , less obvious references to Disney @-@ animated films are made throughout the episode . The song " See My Vest " sung by Mr. Burns is a parody of " Be Our Guest " , which is sung by Lumiere (voiced by Jerry Orbach) in the film Beauty and the Beast . The scene in which Santa 's Little Helper and She 's the Fastest are presented with a plate of spaghetti at Luigi 's Italian restaurant parodies Lady and the Tramp .

The scene in which the greyhounds watch television is similar to the dalmatians of One Hundred and One Dalmatians . Instead of watching What 's my Crime ? like the dalmatians do in the film , the greyhounds watch the television series Models , Inc . The clerk that performs a mind @-@ meld on Santa 's Little Helper is a reference to the Vulcan mind @-@ meld ability in Star Trek ; the same music from the mind @-@ meld scenes in Star Trek are played during the scene . At one point , Santa 's Little Helper looks wistfully out the window of the Simpson family 's car , and then morphs out of the car window in reference to a similar scene in Terminator 2 : Judgment Day ; music from that film plays in the background . Four of the puppies are named Jay , David , Paul and Branford , a reference to late @-@ night talkshow hosts David Letterman and Jay Leno and their respective bandleaders Paul Shaffer and , at the time , Branford Marsalis .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " finished 55th in ratings for the week of April 3 ? 9 , 1995 , with a Nielsen rating of 7 @. @ 3 . The song " See My Vest " from the episode , sung by Mr. Burns , was later released on the album Songs in the Key of Springfield in 1997 . The Daily Bruin complimented the song 's lyrics as witty , and claimed that by listening to the song , memories of the episode came to mind . They noted how the musical piece revealed Mr. Burns ' essence of character , and that it also commented on some disturbing elements of humankind . MSNBC compiled a list of " TV ? s top 10 scariest characters " , placing Mr. Burns at number one . In the list , they noted , " Burns is terrifying because he will do absolutely anything , and since it 's a cartoon , he just might , " pointing to " Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " and his plans to make the puppies into a tuxedo as proof .

The episode was generally well received by television critics . In a review by the Toronto Star , Ben Rayner commented that " Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " was one of his favorite episodes of the series , and concluded that Mr. Burns ' " tour de force " performance was particularly captivating . The Toronto Star later produced a list of the best and worst The Simpsons episodes , in which they considered " Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " one of the best episodes of the series and concluded that the musical number was one of the best scenes involving Mr. Burns . In a review for the sixth season DVD of The Simpsons , IGN 's Todd Gilchrist found Burns ' performance to be memorable , commenting that he " flirts with copyright infringement with his rendition of ' See My Vest ' " . Michael Price of IGN also considered Burns ' performance to have reached a level of excellence comparable to " The Monorail Song " in " Marge vs. the Monorail " .

In a review for The Simpsons season six DVD , review website DVD Verdict gave the episode a grade of B ? . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson appreciated the spoofs of Disney films , and also complimented " the most bizarre references to Rory Calhoun imaginable " , concluding that the combination of these elements formed a " fine show " . In a review for the Toronto Star , Ben Rayner enjoyed " Two Dozen and One Greyhounds " , calling it one of the classic episodes of the series .