

= The Simpsons 138th Episode Spectacular =

" The Simpsons 138th Episode Spectacular " is the tenth episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 3 , 1995 . As the title suggests , it is the 138th episode and the third clip show episode of The Simpsons after " So It 's Come to This : A Simpsons Clip Show " and " Another Simpsons Clip Show " . While the " 138th Episode Spectacular " compiles sequences from episodes throughout the entire Simpsons series like the previous two , it also shows clips from the original Simpsons shorts from The Tracey Ullman Show and other previously unaired material . Like the Halloween specials , the episode is considered non @-@ canon and falls outside of the show 's regular continuity .

The " 138th Episode Spectacular " was written by Jon Vitti and directed by David Silverman , and is a parody of the common practice among live @-@ action series to produce clip shows . It has received positive reviews , and was one of the most watched episodes of the season with a Nielsen rating of 9 @.@ 5 .

= = Synopsis = =

Troy McClure hosts this episode , which highlights individual scenes and sequences from throughout the show and offers never @-@ before @-@ seen outtakes . McClure starts the episode by showing a brief presentation of how The Simpsons series was conceived by Matt Groening , James L. Brooks , and Sam Simon . He goes on to present some clips of the original shorts that aired on The Tracey Ullman Show , including the first one , " Good Night " , in its entirety . Next , a presumed commercial break is introduced with a trivia question about the message that appears when Maggie Simpson is scanned by the cash register during the show 's opening sequence ; the answer is revealed (falsely) to be " NRA4EVER . " The show then returns to McClure , who responds to questions from fan mail by showing clips that contain the answers . The letters include questions on Homer 's growing stupidity , how the cast and crew can create an episode per week , and hints of Waylon Smithers ' homosexuality .

Another commercial break is then introduced with a trivia question , this time concerning which two popular characters have died within the past year ; the answer is revealed to be Bleeding Gums Murphy and Dr. Marvin Monroe , although neither of them were ever popular (and the latter was not actually dead , as revealed in " Diatribe of a Mad Housewife ") . McClure then presents deleted scenes from Simpsons episodes , " Krusty Gets Kancelled " , " \$ pringfield (Or , How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love Legalized Gambling) " , " Mother Simpson " , " Treehouse of Horror IV " , " Homer and Apu " , and " Burns ' Heir " .

McClure also reveals that alternate endings to part two of " Who Shot Mr. Burns ? " were created to prevent the staff on The Simpsons from spoiling the mystery that " all of America was trying to solve [...] this past summer " . These alternate endings , most of which consist of random characters shooting Mr. Burns , conclude with a more elaborate ending in which Smithers is revealed to be the assailant . Troy McClure ends the episode by showing a montage of " hardcore nudity " (scenes of The Simpsons characters naked) , set to the KC and the Sunshine Band song " (Shake , Shake , Shake) Shake Your Booty " .

= = Production = =

As the title suggests , " The Simpsons 138th Episode Spectacular " is the 138th episode of The Simpsons , although it is the 155th episode when placed in production order . It is the third Simpsons clip show , after " So It 's Come to This : A Simpsons Clip Show " and " Another Simpsons Clip Show " . It was written by Jon Vitti , who used the pseudonym " Penny Wise " in the closing credits because he did not want to be credited for writing a clip show . The episode was directed by David Silverman , who also did not want to be credited , and used the pseudonym " Pound Foolish " in the closing credits .

During the early years of the show , Fox network officials forced the Simpsons staff to produce clip

shows in order to save money . Originally , the producers were ordered to produce one clip show per season in order to meet episode limits imposed by the network . Fox network officials reasoned that clip shows could be produced at half the cost of a normal episode , but syndication rights could be sold at full price . The staff , however , felt such a large number of clip shows would alienate fans of the series .

Former show runner Bill Oakley thought the episode was one of the better clip shows of The Simpsons , because it had more original and interesting material than the others . Oakley enjoyed showing deleted scenes from previous episodes and the Simpsons shorts , and particularly enjoyed the montage of couch gags at the beginning of the episode . The staff tried to entertain themselves while producing the clip show , and Oakley said by having the only actor be Phil Hartman as Troy McClure , it was " guaranteed to be fun " .

One of the clips shown in the episode comes from the season four episode " Marge Gets a Job " , in which Smithers has a dream that he is sleeping and Mr. Burns flies through a window into his room . The sequence shows Burns flying towards a happy @-@ looking Smithers . The original clip went on for a few seconds longer , but had to be trimmed down in order to remove portions that showed " Mr. Burns land [ing] in a particular position on Smithers anatomy " . There were also issues with " the lump in his bed " , which the animators said they had drawn as his knee , but the censors had mistakenly believed was an erection .

A deleted scene from the season five episode " Burns ' Heir " is also shown , in which a robotic Richard Simmons dances outside Burns 's mansion to the 1976 song " (Shake , Shake , Shake) Shake Your Booty " . It was cut from " Burns ' Heir " because the writers did not think it was funny , nor did it do well with a test audience , although Oakley thought the animation was terrific . To the production staff 's surprise , the scene would make the audience " erupt with laughter " when screened at animation conventions and college presentations , so they decided to insert it in this episode .

The montage of nude scenes over the ending credits includes the original animation of Homer and Marge snuggling from Grampa vs. Sexual Inadequacy , which was dropped from that episode and reanimated after Fox censors thought it was too explicit .

Due to the amount of interest in the ending of the " Who Shot Mr. Burns ? " episode , David Mirkin wrote several " terrible endings " and recorded several alternate endings with Harry Shearer serving as the only voice actor . Mirkin 's original intention was to fool the production staff and also leak the endings to various media outlets ; much to his surprise , Mirkin failed to successfully fool the staff . Several endings were animated that showed various characters , such as Barney , Moe , and Apu , shooting Mr. Burns , and were presented as part of this episode .

= = = Referenced clips = = =

During the opening credits the episode is advertised as having " twenty @-@ three percent new footage " , while the rest are clips taken from previous episodes . The five shorts used in this episode are " Good Night " , which was featured in its entirety , and portions of " The Perfect Crime " , " Space Patrol " , " World War III " , and " Bathtime " . Some parts of the episode contain montages of only a few seconds @-@ long clips , such as those referring to Homer 's increased stupidity (" Blood Feud " , " Flaming Moe 's " , " Marge vs. the Monorail " , " Deep Space Homer " , and " Treehouse of Horror V ") , or those suggesting Smithers ' homosexuality (" Rosebud " , " Dog of Death " , " Lisa vs. Malibu Stacy " , and " Marge Gets a Job ") .

= = Cultural references = =

The entire setup of Troy McClure presenting the episode is a parody of the practice by live @-@ action series to produce clip shows in general , by celebrating a completely arbitrary milestone and by making exaggerated use of the conventions of traditional highlights shows , such as a grand introduction and relentlessly showbizzy host .

The episode makes references to several films and television shows . The Tracey Ullman Show is

referred to as " the nation 's showcase for psychiatrist jokes and musical comedy numbers " , while the outtakes right before the commercial breaks parodies television series such as Roseanne and Home Improvement (which regularly aired similar outtakes) . The deleted scene from " \$ pringfield " in which Homer plays blackjack with James Bond parodies the 1967 film Casino Royale . The deleted scene from " Burns ' Heir " in which the robotic Richard Simmons is shot through the head and repairs itself parodies the liquid metal T @-@ 1000 in Terminator 2 : Judgment Day (1991) . The episode satirizes the Fox network in particular , as the two specials mentioned in the beginning , Alien Nose Job and Five Fabulous Weeks Of ' The Chevy Chase Show ' , are references to two actual programs that have aired on the network : The Chevy Chase Show (1993) and Alien Autopsy : Fact or Fiction (1995) . Several famous musical themes are used or parodied in the clips , such as when Homer sings the theme song from The Flintstones , and Johann Strauss II 's Blue Danube is heard in the background of one scene . The show 's producers are depicted as animated characters in the introduction : Groening is a bald Southern patriot who wields a gun wearing an eye patch , a reference to the promotional poster of the 1970 film Patton , and his own comic strip Life in Hell ; Brooks is seen as Rich Uncle Pennybags , the tycoon from Monopoly ; and Simon 's appearance resembles Howard Hughes . One of Smithers ' fantasies is a parody of Marilyn Monroe 's famous happy birthday song to President John F. Kennedy , while another one is an allusion to Peter Pan flying through the window . The book that Krusty tries to sell is a reference to Madonna 's book entitled Sex . " NRA4EVER , " the message that appears on a cash register during the opening sequence reference in a trivia question , is a reference to the National Rifle Association .

= = Reception = =

The episode ranked among the ten most heavily viewed episodes of the seventh season . After its initial American airing , the episode received a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 5 , and a Nielsen rank of 48 . The episode has become study material for sociology courses at University of California , Berkeley , where it is used to " examine issues of the production and reception of cultural objects , in this case , a satirical cartoon show " , and to figure out what it is " trying to tell audiences about aspects primarily of American society , and , to a lesser extent , about other societies . " Some questions asked in the courses include : " What aspects of American society are being addressed in the episode ? What aspects of them are used to make the points ? How is the satire conveyed : through language ? Drawing ? Music ? Is the behavior of each character consistent with his / her character as developed over the years ? Can we identify elements of the historical / political context that the writers are satirizing ? What is the difference between satire and parody ? " Considered a spoof of television clip shows , the episode is seen drawing attention to prevailing televisual conventions and reminds viewers that The Simpsons itself participates actively in that same cultural legacy .

The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , thought " the out @-@ takes are up to standard " and contains " a number of great self @-@referential moments " . Simone Knox praised its visual style in her article Reading the Ungraspable Double @-@ Codedness of " The Simpsons " . The episode itself has been described by some critics as a kind of self @-@ imposed benchmark of the show itself , with writer Bill Keveney commenting , " the show picks its own benchmarks , as it did in 1995 " . Knox referred to it as not simply a clip show , " but a ? clip show ? that looks at the series with a sense of hyper @-@ self @-@ consciousness about its own textuality . " DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson said even though the episode is a clip show , it " gussies up the concept with some interesting elements , and keeps repetitive material to a minimum . Instead , it offers lots of then @-@ unseen footage as well as old snippets from The Tracey Ullman Show . It still feels like a cheap way to crank out a new episode , but it ? s one of the better clip shows you ? ll see . " Jennifer Malkowski of DVD Verdict gave the episode a B + grade and commented , " apart from the creative material , what really makes this [episode] shine is the hilarious hosting by Troy McClure . " Dave Foster of DVD Times criticized the episode : " Despite some interesting concepts such as a bored Troy McClure presenting to much amusement and the presence of deleted scenes and Tracey Ullman shorts amongst the clips , this is an episode that tries hard to find a hook but never

quite manages , assuring it 'll never make it into regular rotation on this viewer 's watch . "