

= Worst Episode Ever =

" Worst Episode Ever " is the eleventh episode of The Simpsons ' twelfth season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on February 4 , 2001 . In the episode , Bart and Milhouse are banned from The Android 's Dungeon after stopping Comic Book Guy from buying a box of priceless Star Wars memorabilia for \$ 5 . However , when Comic Book Guy suffers a massive heart attack after Tom Savini 's show , he hires Bart and Milhouse as his replacements while he leaves his job to make friends .

" Worst Episode Ever " was written by Larry Doyle and directed by Matthew Nastuk . The series ' staff found it hard to make Comic Book Guy seem likable , since he is usually portrayed as sarcastic and unfriendly . The episode features actor and makeup artist Tom Savini as himself . In its original broadcast , the episode was seen by approximately 10 million viewers , finishing in 27th place in the ratings the week it aired . Since its broadcast , the episode received positive reviews from critics , and Hank Azaria won a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Voice @-@ Over Performance for his performance as Comic Book Guy in the episode .

= = Plot = =

Bart and Milhouse go out to spend \$ 50 that Bart won when he bet Homer that he could not eat a spoonful of rotten baking soda that Lisa dug out of the back of the refrigerator . But they get into trouble at the The Android 's Dungeon when , after talking Martin Prince 's mom out of selling Martin 's rare and invaluable Star Wars items to Comic Book Guy for only five dollars , they are banned for life from Comic Book Guy 's store .

When they hear that special effects artist Tom Savini is to appear at The Android 's Dungeon , they plot to sneak in , but are rebuked at the door . During the interview , Savini repeatedly plays tricks on Comic Book Guy , which causes him to get irate , and as he rages at Savini and everyone else in the comic book store , he suffers a heart attack . Dr. Hibbert tells Comic Book Guy that he needs to take a break from running the store and to leave it in the care of friends . Since he actually doesn 't have any friends , Comic Book Guy leaves the store in Bart and Milhouse 's care . The store becomes wildly successful under the management of the two boys , only to lose much of its newfound prosperity after Milhouse goes overboard in ordering a shipment of two thousand comics depicting " Biclops " , a superhero with thick glasses , which flops spectacularly .

After arguing , the boys unintentionally discover a secret stash of illegal video clips . Bart and Milhouse charge admission for viewing such clips as a " good version " of The Godfather Part III , a clip of Mr. Rogers drunkenly yelling at the director of his show , a secret government plan to use Springfield as a testing zone for nuclear missiles , and Ned Flanders ' alerting the police that Homer released a radioactive ape in his house . The scheme works until Chief Wiggum conducts a raid on the store . Despite this , the boys manage to keep the profits from their time managing the store . Meanwhile , Homer has been helping a recovering Comic Book Guy look for a friend , but his attempts fail until he meets Agnes Skinner . Comic Book Guy and Agnes become romantically involved . However one night while they are kissing in bed , Chief Wiggum charges Comic Book Guy for his pirated videotapes . Bart and Milhouse , freed from running the Android 's Dungeon , decide that they had fun , but it was time to go back to school . The episode ends with a radioactive ape ordering Ned around .

= = Production = =

" Worst Episode Ever " was written by Larry Doyle and directed by Matthew Nastuk . It was first broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on February 4 , 2001 . The episode was originally called " The Fiver " , a reference to a scene in the episode that was eventually removed . The episode title was then changed to " Worst Episode Ever " , a title which the staff were amused by . According to Doyle , " Worst Episode Ever " is the first episode in which Comic Book Guy has a major role . Because Comic Book Guy is usually sarcastic and unfriendly , the series ' staff found it

hard to make the character seem likable . For example , Hank Azaria , who plays Comic Book Guy among other characters in the series , had a difficult time trying to make the character sound sincere . " Comic Book Guy only ever pronounces things sarcastically " , Azaria said in the DVD commentary for the episode . " It was hard to find a way to sound believable and have him say sincere things . It took a lot of different takes . " Executive producer and former showrunner Mike Scully said , " It 's tough when you take a character like Comic Book Guy or Krusty or Moe , to make them suddenly sympathetic and vulnerable . You have to cheat the character a little bit to open them up emotionally a little more . "

In a scene in the episode , Ralph is seen entering the adult section of The Android 's Dungeon . When he is off screen , Ralph can be heard saying " Everybody 's hugging " . In the DVD commentary for the episode , Azaria stated that the line is one of his favorite jokes in the series . Originally , Ralph 's line would be " She 's hungry " , but it was eventually removed from the episode . The episode features American actor and makeup artist Tom Savini as himself . Savini accepted the role because he is friends with Dana Gould , a former staff writer on The Simpsons . In the DVD commentary for the episode , Doyle said that Savini was " really fun " when he visited to record his lines . In a scene in the episode , a crow is seen tearing apart an issue of " Biclops " . The voice of the crow was recorded from a real crow , even though the staff usually use main cast members Dan Castellaneta and Nancy Cartwright to imitate animal noises . The general officer in the government film called " Secret Nuclear Defense Plan " was voiced by Azaria .

= = Cultural references = =

In order to demonstrate the durability of Radioactive Man # 1000 , Comic Book Guy pours soda on it , which bounces off and instead damages a batch of " lesser " comics . On top of the batch is an issue of Bongo Comics , a comic book written by Matt Groening , creator of The Simpsons . The comedian Gallagher is shown doing his routine with a watermelon during a flashback . While in The Android 's Dungeon , Nelson examines a comic book called The Death of Sad Sack , a reference to both the American comic strip The Sad Sack and the " Death of Superman " story arc . When Homer and Comic Book Guy enter Moe 's Tavern , Moe says " Get out and take your Sacagawea dollars with you " to one of his customers . A Sacagawea dollar is a United States dollar coin which has been minted since 2000 . After he is thrown out of Moe 's Tavern , Comic Book Guy says the word " loneliness " in Klingon , a language used by the fictional Klingons in the Star Trek universe . While arguing with Agnes , Comic Book Guy says " Now I know what ever happened to Baby Jane . " The line is a reference to the 1960 suspense novel What Ever Happened to Baby Jane ? . Martin 's mother tries to sell Comic Book Guy several items relating to the Star Wars film series including Carrie Fisher 's " anti @-@ jiggle breast tape " , George Lucas ' handwritten original script of Star Wars Episode IV : A New Hope and a film of a supposed alternate ending for the series where it is revealed that " Luke 's father is Chewbacca . "

A representative of " Plan Nine Comics " sells two thousand issues of Biclops to Milhouse . This is a reference to Plan 9 from Outer Space , widely considered one of the worst films ever made .

While fighting Milhouse , Bart picks up a robotic toy which unfolds into an axe . Milhouse picks up a similar toy , but it instead unfolds into a watering can . The toys are based on the franchise Transformers . While fighting , Milhouse and Bart fall through a poster that hides a room in The Android 's Dungeon . While the poster depicts American actress Rita Hayworth as the Marvel Comics superheroine She @-@ Hulk , the scene is a reference to the 1994 drama film The Shawshank Redemption , in which the main character escapes a prison by digging a tunnel in his wall behind a poster . One of the tapes that Bart and Milhouse watch shows Fred Rogers intoxicated . Executive producer and current showrunner Al Jean later met Rogers ' wife at a hall of fame , and said that he was " really embarrassed " when he found out that she had seen the episode .

During Homer 's antacid trip after eating the baking soda , the quotes that play out are Johnnie Cochran 's closing argument of " If it doesn 't fit , then you must acquit " during the O.J. Simpson murder trial , part of Richard Nixon 's 1974 resignation speech from the Oval Office following the Watergate scandal with the quote " Therefore I shall resign the presidency ... " , and Neil Armstrong

's " That 's one small step for man ; one giant leap for mankind " during the 1969 Apollo 11 moon walk .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on February 4 , 2001 , " Worst Episode Ever " received a 9 @. @ 8 rating , according to Nielsen Media Research , translating to approximately 10 million viewers . The episode finished in 27th place in the ratings for the week of January 29 @- @ February 4 , 2001 . Later that year , Azaria won the 53rd Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Voice @- @ Over Performance for his role as Comic Book Guy in the episode . When participating in the ceremony , the actors are only allowed to submit one episode each , and that year , Azaria stated that " Worst Episode Ever " was an " obvious " choice for him . It was not the first time Azaria won the award for Outstanding Voice @- @ Over Performance ; in 1998 , he won it for his portrayal of Apu Nahasapeemapetilon in the series . On August 18 , 2009 , the episode was released as part of a DVD set called The Simpsons : The Complete Twelfth Season . Mike Scully , Al Jean , Tom Gammill , Max Pross , Matt Selman , Hank Azaria , Larry Doyle and Chris Kirkpatrick participated in the audio commentary for the episode .

Following its broadcast , " Worst Episode Ever " received mostly positive reviews from critics . Casey Burchby of DVD Talk enjoyed the episode and wrote that it has some " great stuff " in it , including the comic book " Biclops " that Milhouse over @- @ orders . Jason Bailey , another reviewer for DVD talk , applauded the writers for making an episode around a supporting character , and wrote that it is " far from [ the series ' worst episode ] " . Cindy White of IGN described the episode as a " classic " , and in 2006 , Kimberley Potts of AOL put the episode in twelfth place in a list of the series ' 20 best episodes . The episode was also well received by the series ' staff ; in the introduction of The Simpsons Beyond Forever ! : A Complete Guide to Our Favorite Family ... Still Continued , Matt Groening wrote that he particularly enjoyed the episode and that it had a " very special story " . In the DVD commentary for the episode , Doyle said that Milhouse 's line " I 'm a human boy , just like you " is the best line he has ever written . On the other hand , Mac MacEntire of DVD Verdict gave the episode a mixed review . Although he praised the episode 's premise , he argued that the episode was " ill @- @ balanced " and that the subplot took up too much time in the episode . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson criticized the writers for making an episode based around a supporting character , and argued that Comic Book Guy was not featured enough in the episode . " ' Ever ' spends at least as much time with Bart and Milhouse as it does with CBG and Agnes " , he wrote . He concluded that , aside from having a few " good moments " , the episode is overall " pretty meh " .