

= Homer 's Odyssey (The Simpsons) =

" Homer 's Odyssey " is the third episode of the first season of The Simpsons . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on January 21 , 1990 . In this episode Homer becomes a crusader for citizen safety in Springfield , and is promoted to his current position as Nuclear Safety Inspector for the entire power plant . It was written by Jay Kogen and Wallace Wolodarsky and was the first Simpsons script to be completed , although it was the third episode produced .

= = Plot = =

Mrs. Krabappel takes Bart 's class on a field trip to the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant , where everybody watches as Homer crashes an electric cart into a cooling vent and is fired . Homer searches for a new job without success . Feeling like a failure , he writes a suicide note to his family and decides to end his life by attaching a boulder to himself and jumping off a bridge .

Lisa finds Homer 's note and alerts the family . They hurry to the bridge to save him , but they are almost run over by a speeding truck . Homer pulls them to safety just in time , and he is suddenly filled with a new reason to live : to place a stop sign at the dangerous intersection . After successfully petitioning the city council , Homer embarks on a public safety crusade that involves placing speed bumps and warning signs throughout the town .

Unsatisfied with his own efforts , Homer takes on the biggest danger in Springfield , the nuclear power plant . After Homer rallies people to his cause , Mr. Burns decides to end the furor he is creating by offering him a new position as the plant safety inspector , along with a higher salary . Homer , torn between his principles and his livelihood , tearfully tells his followers that they must fight their battles alone from this point on and takes the job .

= = Production = =

Waylon Smithers made his first appearance in this episode , although he can be heard over a speaker in The Simpsons series premiere " Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire " . In his first visual appearance , he was mistakenly animated with the wrong color and was made an African American by Gyorgi Peluci , the color stylist . David Silverman has claimed that Smithers was always intended to be " Mr. Burns ' white sycophant , " and the staff thought it " would be a bad idea to have a black sub @-@ servient character " and so switched him to his intended color for his next episode . Smithers ' skin tone was later explained as an " extreme tan " .

Blinky the Three @-@ Eyed Fish makes a brief cameo in this episode ; he later becomes of importance in episode four of the second season , " Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish " . Also notable is that Marge was originally called Juliette in this script as a homage to Romeo and Juliet . Homer 's middle initial , J , is mentioned for the first time in this episode . According to Matt Groening , it was a reference to Bullwinkle J. Moose . Additionally , the following characters made their first appearances in this episode : Otto Mann , Chief Wiggum , Jasper Beardley , Sam & Larry , Mr. & Mrs. Winfield and Sherri and Terri .

The episode 's title comes from the Greek epic poem Odyssey , traditionally attributed to the legendary poet Homer . On the bus , Bart sings " John Henry was a Steel Driving Man " , an American folk @-@ song about a 19th @-@ century hero of the working @-@ class , building railroads across the West Virginia mountains .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Homer 's Odyssey " finished twenty @-@ eight in ratings for the week of January 15 ? 21 , 1990 , with a Nielsen rating of 14 @.@ 9 , equivalent to approximately 13 @.@ 7 million viewing households . It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , beating Married ... with Children .

Since airing , the episode has received mixed reviews from television critics . Warren Martyn and

Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide stated that " the story rather fizzles out at the end , but there are many good moments , especially in the power plant . " Colin Jacobson at DVD Movie Guide said in a review that the episode is " possibly the best of the [first six] shows " and further commented that the episode " suffers a little from an odd tone , as the characters hadn ? t become settled . Still , it seems surprisingly clever and witty "

In September 2001 , in an DVD review of the first season , David B. Grelck gave the episode a rating of ½ / 5 and calls it " the first season at its worst " and continues that it was " notable for introducing Mr. Burns and (a strangely African @-@ American) Smithers , but otherwise boring and preachy . "

= = Home release = =

The episode was released first on home video in the United Kingdom , as part of a VHS release titled The Simpsons Collection , in which it was paired with the sixth episode of the season , " Moaning Lisa " . In the United Kingdom , it was once re released as part of VHS boxed set of the complete first season , released in November 1999 .

In the United States , the episode would finally see the home video release as a part of The Simpsons Season One DVD set , which was released on September 25 , 2001 . Groening , Archer , Kogen , and Wolodarsky participated in the DVD 's audio commentary . A digital edition of the series ' first season was published December 20 , 2010 in the United States containing the episode , through Amazon Video and iTunes .