

= The Bob Next Door =

" The Bob Next Door " is the twenty @-@ second episode of The Simpsons ' twenty @-@ first season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on May 16 , 2010 . Bart becomes convinced that their new neighbor is Sideshow Bob in disguise , but after a trip to the Springfield Penitentiary they find a distressed Bob still incarcerated . Eventually Bart discovers that Bob has surgically swapped faces with their neighbor and still plans to kill him , although he is ultimately defeated .

The episode was written by John Frink and directed by Nancy Kruse . The episode guest stars Kelsey Grammer as Sideshow Bob Terwilliger . The episode 's plot is based on the film Face / Off . " The Bob Next Door " received positive reviews from critics ; most agreed that it was a funny return for Sideshow Bob and an improvement over " Funeral for a Fiend " and " The Italian Bob " .

= = Plot = =

A financial crisis in Springfield causes the sale of many houses and the release of all low @-@ level criminals from Springfield Penitentiary , including a man named Walt Warren . Walt purchases a house next door to the Simpson family (where The Winfields and Ruth and Laura Powers used to live) , and he immediately charms the neighborhood . However , Bart is convinced that Walt is Sideshow Bob in disguise , because they have the same voice . He tries several times to find proof , but fails . Marge convinces him otherwise by taking him to visit the penitentiary , where they see Bob locked in a padded cell , wearing a straitjacket and writing " Bart Simpson Will Die ! " on the walls . A reassured Bart decides to go to a baseball game with Walt . However , Bart 's initial instincts prove right when " Walt " removes his small shoes to show his long feet folded inside , revealing himself to be Sideshow Bob . Bob restrains Bart in the car and gags him with duct tape , planning to take him to Five Corners , a location where five states meet , to kill him .

Meanwhile , the real Walt Warren escapes prison while bearing Bob 's hair and face and comes to the Simpsons ' home . At first , everyone thinks Bob has escaped prison , but Walt 's short feet (which was also used as a clue in " Krusty Gets Busted " to clear Krusty 's name for robbing the Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart) reveal his true identity . Walt explains that he and Bob were cellmates and , prior to Walt 's release , Bob drugged him and performed a transplant to switch their faces . The transplant left Walt unable to talk properly , and his garbled speech led the guards to put him in the padded cell . He wrote his message on the wall as a warning , but it was misinterpreted as a threat . Walt and the Simpsons immediately go after Bob , knowing that Bart 's life is in danger . Meanwhile , a waitress at a roadside diner becomes infatuated with Bob @-@ as @-@ Walt until Bob 's new face peels off . Amidst a distraction outside the diner , Homer , Marge , and Lisa travel to Mexico in search of Bart while Walt gets away and continues to Five Corners to save Bart.

At Five Corners , Bob intends to kill Bart in such a way that the crime takes place in five separate states , thus making it impossible to prosecute . Bart stalls by repeatedly jumping into the same state as Bob until Walt arrives . Walt and Bob struggle over the gun , but just before Bob can fire on either Walt or Bart , Chief Wiggum and the Springfield Police Department arrive to arrest Bob , having been tipped off by Bart . Bob jumps into the other states in order to escape their jurisdiction , only to be promptly confronted by police from each state , and he is taken into custody by officers with a strong New Jersey accent . His house is bought by Ned Flanders ' cousin Ted , and Homer groans at the realization that he now lives next door to two Flanders families . The Sideshow Bob leitmotif first introduced in the episode " Cape Feare " plays over the credits .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by John Frink , his second writing of the season after " Stealing First Base " . It is also his third Sideshow Bob writing credit after " The Great Louse Detective " and " The Italian Bob " . The episode was directed by Nancy Kruse , her second director 's credit for the season after " The Devil Wears Nada " . It features the return of recurring guest voice Kelsey

Grammer to voice recurring character Sideshow Bob , making it his 12th vocal appearance . The episode was originally slated to air on January 14 , 2010 , along with " Once Upon a Time in Springfield " and The Simpsons 20th Anniversary Special ? In 3 @-@ D ! On Ice ! .

= = Cultural references = =

The plot of " The Bob Next Door " is based on the movie Face / Off . The opening couch gag also features Harold from the 1955 children 's book Harold and the Purple Crayon . Bart tries to tempt Walt to sing " Three Little Maids from School Are We " from The Mikado ; the same song was also used in an earlier episode , " Cape Feare " , which also featured Sideshow Bob . Later in the show , when Sideshow Bob reveals his true identity , he exclaims he is now " able to sing all the Gilbert & Sullivan I damn well please " , followed by him pulling a Japanese fan out of the glove box and singing the opening notes of " Behold The Lord High Executioner " , another number from The Mikado , to Bart 's horror . Marge and Homer tell Bart that a lot of people have voices like Sideshow Bob 's , such as " Frasier on Cheers , Frasier on Frasier or Lt. Cmdr. Tom Dodge in Down Periscope . " Both of these characters were played by Sideshow Bob 's voice , Kelsey Grammer . When Sideshow Bob steps on the rake it is a call back to the famous scene from " Cape Feare " in which he steps on multiple rakes .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on the Fox network on May 16 , 2010 , " The Bob Next Door " was viewed by an estimated 6 @.@ 258 million households and got a 2 @.@ 9 rating / 9 % share in the 18 ? 49 demographic , rising 9 % from " Moe Letter Blues " . It came second in its time slot after the season finale of Survivor : Heroes v. Villains and became the second highest @-@ rated show in Fox 's " Animation Domination " programming block after a new episode of Family Guy , according to the Nielsen Media Research .

The episode received positive reviews . Robert Canning of IGN gave it an 8 @.@ 5 rating , stating that it was " Great " and " Overall , this was a great return to form for an appearance from Sideshow Bob . The vengeful character has been let down by recent episodes , but ' The Bob Next Door ' has reminded us what makes Bob so much fun . " Canning later named " The Bob Next Door " the best episode of the season tied with " The Squirt and the Whale " . TV Fanatic gave the episode four out of five and stated that they enjoyed the plot twists but thought the jokes were unfunny , remarking that " the episode just didn 't have the same humor as say , ' Cape Feare ' . "

John Teti of The A.V. Club gave the episode a B + , which tied it for the best grade of " Animation Domination " after American Dad ! . He stated that " The showdown at Five Corners played out just like ' Cape Feare , ' complete with rake gag , which is not a bad thing . If The Simpsons intends to self @-@ plagiarize (and it obviously does) , that 's a good episode to copy . " Sharon Knolle of AOL TV said , " I 'd say overall this ep ranks with some of the better Sideshow Bob eps , if not the very best . Certainly , it beats the heck out of ' The Italian Bob ' and ' Funeral for a Fiend . ' "