

= Much Apu About Nothing =

Not to be confused with Much Apu About Something

" Much Apu About Nothing " is the 23rd episode of The Simpsons ' seventh season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on May 5 , 1996 . In the episode , a referendum is created that will require all illegal immigrants from Springfield to be deported . After learning that his friend Apu Nahasapeemapietilon will be deported , Homer decides to help Apu prepare for a United States citizenship test so that he can become a legal citizen .

The episode was written by David S. Cohen , and directed by Susie Dietter . Joe Mantegna guest stars in the episode as Fat Tony . The title of the episode is a parody of William Shakespeare 's play Much Ado About Nothing . Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from fans and television critics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 8 @. @ 2 , and was the fourth highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

The phrase " Won 't somebody please think of the children " was used by character Helen Lovejoy for the first time in this episode .

= = Plot = =

On an ordinary day , a brown bear strolls onto the streets of Springfield , frightening the town . The bear is eventually subdued by the police , who tranquilize it ( despite the bear being relatively docile ) . Homer convinces Springfield that something needs to be done to protect them from bears , and the town takes their complaint to Mayor Quimby , who gives in easily . Soon , the Bear Patrol is created . Homer is then shocked to see taxes have been raised five dollars to maintain the patrol , and this warrants another visit by the town to the Mayor 's office . To appease them , Mayor Quimby blames the high taxes on illegal immigrants . He then creates Proposition 24 , which will require all illegal immigrants in Springfield to be deported .

Springfield starts to harass and hate all immigrants . At the Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart , Apu confides in Homer that he is an illegal immigrant . Apu explains that if Proposition 24 passes , he will have to leave the United States , as his visa expired many years earlier . Apu is forced to go to Fat Tony to obtain a false United States citizenship , and on Fat Tony 's advice , he starts acting American , by doing things like speaking with an American accent . However , feeling guilty and embarrassed about taking the fraudulent route and forging documents ( Apu is shown remembering his parents bidding him farewell , telling him to " make us proud , son , " as he set forth his journey to the USA , for his education and eventual Ph.D ) , he realizes he has disgraced his parents by turning his back on his Indian heritage , and tears up the fake passport .

After Homer sees how devastated was Apu about being deported , he changes his mind about the immigration proposition and vows that he and his family will help Apu . Lisa discovers that Apu will not have to leave if he can pass a United States citizenship test . Homer agrees to be Apu 's tutor to help prepare for the exam . Apu demonstrates excellent knowledge of the United States , but Homer is a terrible tutor and replaces Apu 's knowledge with false information . Apu falls asleep while studying Homer 's notes , but forgets it all when he wakes up which Lisa says is good . Apu then goes to take the test , and because he originally knew a lot about the history of the United States , he passes the test and becomes a citizen of the United States . At a congratulatory party , Homer tells his guests how terrible it would be if immigrants were deported , explaining they make the United States thrive . He inspires them to vote no on Proposition 24 , but it still passes , with 95 % of voters voting yes . After the ballot is passed , the only person deported is Groundskeeper Willie .

= = Production = =

" Much Apu About Nothing " was written by David S. Cohen and directed by Susie Dietter . Joe Mantegna guest stars in the episode as Fat Tony . Much of the inspiration for the episode came from news reports of bears roaming streets in Southern California around the time when the episode was in production . Cohen said that when a bear swims in somebody 's pool or goes in somebody 's

garbage can , it becomes a popular news item in California . The show runner of The Simpsons at the time , Bill Oakley , commented that the news reports often create an anti @-@ bear hysteria , and that is one of the inspirations for the episode .

Another inspiration for the episode came from California 's Proposition 187 , which proposed the rescinding of employment rights and benefits from illegal immigrants . Cohen decided to name the referendum " Proposition 24 " because 24 was the number he had on his Little League Baseball uniform . Cohen commented that " the main theme of the episode is illegal immigration and anti @-@ immigration sentiment , which is a big issue here in California . So both the intro with the bear and the main theme are yanked from the California headlines . "

The final script of the episode was " very close " to Cohen 's first draft . " I was looking at the old drafts and this episode probably changed as little as any script I 've written from the original inception to the final aired version , " Cohen said . Oakley commented that some writer 's scripts get rewritten many times but Cohen 's " usually do not get rewritten that much because they are so good " . Oakley added that Cohen has a very distinctive comedy style so there are certain jokes in the episode that " just really sound like Cohen " .

Something Oakley and his partner Josh Weinstein wanted to do while they were show runners of The Simpsons was to explore side @-@ characters , such as Apu , " a little deeper " . Apu 's origin is revealed in this episode , and Oakley is proud of being the one who suggested that . Another character that was explored deeper in their period as show runners was Ned Flanders in the episode " Hurricane Neddy " .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode 's title is based on William Shakespeare 's play Much Ado About Nothing . The original title for the episode was going to be " The Anti @-@ Immigrant Song " , in reference to Led Zeppelin 's song " Immigrant Song " . A sign held by a protester outside the Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart says " The only good foreigner is Rod Stewart ! " , a reference to the British singer . Brad Bird , an American director who has worked as executive consultant and director on The Simpsons , can briefly be seen in the crowd that complains to Mayor Quimby . One of the signs outside the citizenship exam reads " Homer Say Get Out " a reference to " Frankie Say Relax " T @-@ shirts that were sold following the release of Relax ( song ) .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast , " Much Apu About Nothing " finished 49th in the ratings for the week of April 29 to May 5 , 1996 , with a Nielsen rating of 8 @. @ 2 . The episode was the fourth @-@ highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files , Beverly Hills , 90210 and Melrose Place .

Since airing , the episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson commented positively on the episode , and said that " if any show 's taken a more unusual path to a story about xenophobia , I 've not seen it . " He praised the bear scenes , which he thought was the episode 's most " amusing " part . The review continued , " The parts with the immigrants are also good , especially since they make their point deftly . Add to that the hilarious sound of ' American Apu ' and this is a strong program . " Jennifer Malkowski of DVD Verdict considered the best part of the episode to be when Homer tries to teach Apu American history , noting that you should watch for Homer 's " relevant and complex " diagram of a stovepipe hat . The website concluded its review by giving the episode a grade of B + . The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , wrote : " One of the most outspoken , and certainly angriest of episodes succeeds as a savage satire on the scapegoating of immigrants . Homer has never been so frighteningly dumb , although he does come through with a rousing liberal speech . " The episode is The Simpsons creator Matt Groening 's third favorite episode of the show . The episode received a negative review from Dave Foster of DVD Times . He considered " Much Apu About Nothing " to be one of the

season 's most " tiring " episodes , " mostly because Apu is not a strong enough character to focus an episode on no matter how much writer David Cohen develops him " . Foster commented that the episode deals with a political issue which is " difficult to broach in twenty minutes and is therefore reached and sewn up in a rather haphazard manner " .

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 ? "

In the episode , after the creation of the Bear Patrol , bear sightings decrease to zero , so Homer concludes that the Bear Patrol must be working . Lisa attempts to demonstrate Homer 's logical fallacy by the example of a tiger @-@ repellent rock , but it goes over his head . Scott Anthony of the Harvard Business Review describes this scene as a " classic example " of the informal fallacy of assuming that correlation implies causation . Mike Moffatt also called it " the best all @-@ time discussion of faulty reasoning " .