

= Homer vs. the Eighteenth Amendment =

" Homer vs. the Eighteenth Amendment " is the eighteenth episode of The Simpsons ' eighth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on March 16 , 1997 . Prohibition is enacted in Springfield and Homer helps fight it by illegally supplying alcohol to the town . It was written by John Swartzwelder , and directed by Bob Anderson . Dave Thomas guest stars as Rex Banner and Joe Mantegna returns as Fat Tony .

= = Plot = =

A prohibitionist movement emerges in Springfield after Bart is accidentally intoxicated during a St. Patrick 's Day celebration . The municipal government discovers alcohol has actually been banned for two centuries , and moves to enforce the law , prompting Moe to disguise his bar as a pet shop . With the town becoming impatient with the police 's incompetence , Chief Wiggum is replaced by Rex Banner , an officer of the U.S. Treasury Department .

In the meantime , Homer figures out a way to keep Moe 's bar operating , by becoming a bootlegger . One night , he and Bart sneak out to the city dump to reclaim the beer that was disposed of when the Prohibition law was enacted . He then sets up shop in his basement pouring the beer into the finger holes of bowling balls . Using an intricate set of pipes under the Bowl @-@ A @-@ Rama , he bowls the balls into Moe 's . Upon discovering it , Marge actually finds it a very good idea ( since Homer is actually using his intellectual faculties and that he 's making enough money to support the family ) , though Lisa doesn 't , prompting Homer , Marge , and Bart to send her to her room . The media realizes someone 's allowing Springfield 's underground alcohol trade to flourish , and they give the still @-@ unknown Homer the nickname " Beer Baron " . Rex Banner fails to catch the Baron and resorts to stopping people in the street to demand if they are the Beer Baron ; he even arrests Ned Flanders who pleads guilty to drinking only root beer .

When his supply of liquor runs out , Homer begins to distill his own homemade liquor . However , his stills start to explode . He is then confronted by a desperate ex @-@ Chief Wiggum . In an attempt to rekindle Wiggum 's career , Homer allows the former Police Chief to turn him in . The punishment that awaits him is expulsion from the town ( and presumably death ) by an archaic catapult , showing how anachronistic the law really was . Marge tells everyone that this law and punishment make no sense and it 's meaningless to punish Homer , especially for their freedom to drink . Rex Banner steps up to lecture the town on the reasons why the law must be upheld . While he lectures the assembled Springfield citizens , Wiggum has him catapulted and gets his job back . The town clerk then finds out that the Prohibition law was actually repealed a year after it was put in place , and so Homer is released . Within five minutes Fat Tony is only too happy to oblige when Mayor Quimby asks him to flood the town with alcohol once more , and Springfield salutes its qualities as Homer announces , " To alcohol ! The cause of ... and solution to ... all of life 's problems . "

= = Production = =

The main plot of the episode is based on the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution , in which alcohol was banned in the United States . As The Simpsons has many episodes that have stories and jokes related to alcohol , the writers thought it was strange that they had never done an episode related to Prohibition , and that the idea seemed " perfect . " The episode features a vast amount of Irish stereotyping at the St. Patrick 's Day celebration . This was a reference to when Conan O 'Brien was a writer for the show and was of Irish descent , and his use of Irish stereotypes . Various writers were very concerned about Bart getting drunk . This was why he drank the beer through a horn , to show that it was only accidental . This was a toned down version of what was in John Swartzwelder 's original script . Originally Chief Wiggum 's first line was " They 're either drunk or on the cocaine " , but it was deemed too old @-@ fashioned . The discovery of " more lines on the parchment " was a simple deus ex machina to get Homer freed and

to end the episode .

When Homer first enters Moe 's " Pet Shop " the man that tips his hat to him outside was a background character used in the early seasons . The riot at the beginning of the episode was taken from footage from the end of the season 6 episode " Lisa on Ice " and updated . The line " To alcohol ! The cause of ... and solution to ... all of life 's problems , " was originally the act break line at the end of act two , but was moved to the very end of the episode .

= = Censorship = =

During the riot , a scene where an Irish mob blow @-@ up a British chip shop named " John Bull 's Fish & Chips " was censored on British television . The episode first aired while the conflict in Northern Ireland known as The Troubles was ongoing and four years after the Shankill Road bombing in which ten people were killed by a Provisional Irish Republican Army ( IRA ) bomb which exploded prematurely in a chip shop .

= = Cultural references = =

The episode parodies the series The Untouchables , with the character of Rex Banner based on Robert Stack 's portrayal of Eliot Ness , and the voice of the narrator being based on that of Walter Winchell . Barney leaving flowers outside the Duff brewery is , according to show runner Josh Weinstein , a reference to people leaving flowers at the grave sites of various Hollywood figures , with him specifically citing Rudolph Valentino and Marilyn Monroe as examples of this trend . It may also be a direct reference to the Poe Toaster . The shot of the diner is a reference to Edward Hopper 's Nighthawks painting . A sign in Moe 's Bar says " No Irish Need Apply " a reference to Anti @-@ Irish sentiment . One of the persons on the float " The Drunken Irish Novelists of Springfield " bears a resemblance to Irish writer James Joyce .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Homer vs. the Eighteenth Amendment " finished 39th in ratings for the week of March 10 ? 26 , 1997 , with a Nielsen rating of 8 @.@ 9 , equivalent to approximately 8 @.@ 6 million viewing households . It was the second highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files .

The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , called it " A nice episode in which Homer actually devises a clever plan to keep the beer flowing . " The Toronto Star described the episode as one of Bob Anderson 's " classics . " The Daily Telegraph also characterized the episode as one of " The 10 Best Simpsons TV Episodes . " Robert Canning gave the episode 9 @.@ 8 / 10 calling it his favorite episode of the series .

Homer 's line " To alcohol ! The cause of ... and solution to ... all of life 's problems " was described by Josh Weinstein as " one of the best , most truthful Simpsons statements ever . " In 2008 , Entertainment Weekly included it in their list of " 24 Endlessly Quotable TV Quips " .