

= Homer the Whopper =

" Homer the Whopper " is the season premiere of The Simpsons ' twenty @-@ first season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on September 27 , 2009 . In the episode , Comic Book Guy creates a new superhero called Everyman who takes powers from other superheroes . Homer is cast as the lead in the film adaptation . To get Homer into shape , the movie studio hires a celebrity fitness trainer , Lyle McCarthy , to help him . Homer gets into great shape and is really excited , but when McCarthy leaves to train another client , he starts over @-@ eating again and ultimately this leads to the film 's failure .

The episode was written by Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg , who are " obsessed " fans of the show , and directed by Lance Kramer . " Homer The Whopper " was intended to be a commentary on how Hollywood treats superhero films . Rogen also guest stars in the episode as the character Lyle McCarthy , making him the second guest star to both write an episode and appear in it ; Ricky Gervais was the first . " Homer the Whopper " has received mixed reviews from television critics and acquired a Nielsen rating of 4 @. @ 3 in its original broadcast .

= = Plot = =

Bart and Milhouse convince Comic Book Guy to publish a comic book he wrote titled Everyman , in which the title character can absorb superpowers from the characters of comic books he touches . The comic becomes an instant hit , and many Hollywood studios become interested in making it into a movie . Comic Book Guy agrees to let Everyman become a movie , but only if he can pick the star . When Comic Book Guy sees Homer , he considers Homer perfect for the role , as he wants Everyman to be played by a middle @-@ aged fat man . But the studio executives realize that audiences want a physically fit actor for the role , so they hire celebrity fitness trainer Lyle McCarthy to get Homer into shape . After a month , Homer becomes fit and the movie begins production .

Soon afterward , however , McCarthy leaves Homer for another client . Without McCarthy to keep him in shape , Homer starts eating again and gains all the weight back . Homer can no longer fit into his costume or even his trailer , and the movie begins to go over budget . The studio executives and Comic Book Guy worry that the film will not be successful . The final version of the movie features scenes with the fat Homer and the physically fit Homer merged , upsetting and confusing the audience . After the premiere of the film , McCarthy returns and offers to get Homer into shape again , which Homer accepts . The studio executives offer to let Comic Book Guy direct the sequel , on the condition that Comic Book Guy lie to the fans and say he liked the film . Though pleased by the offer , Comic Book Guy rejects it and openly criticizes the movie online , and thus it becomes a box office failure and Everyman is never adapted again .

= = Production = =

Seth Rogen and Evan Goldberg , writers of the film Superbad , are " obsessed " fans of The Simpsons . After learning that The Simpsons executive producer James L. Brooks was a fan of Superbad , they decided to ask the producers of the show if they could write an episode . In 2006 , Ricky Gervais , co @-@ creator of The Office , received credit for writing the season 17 episode " Homer Simpson , This Is Your Wife " . Rogen and Goldberg " thought if [Gervais] got to write one , maybe [they] could try . " They were invited to The Simpsons writers room , where they pitched several episode ideas . One was accepted , and they wrote an outline with the help of some feedback from the regular writers .

Rogen commented that he and Goldberg wanted to show with the episode how Hollywood generally ruins superhero films . He said that " the whole joke is that Homer is cast to play a guy who 's an everyman and they try to make him into this physically fit guy . " Rogen also noted that the plot mirrors the situation he was in while working on the film The Green Hornet , when he had to lose weight and do physical training for his role . Show runner Al Jean commented that the writers tried not to repeat the comic book film theme from the " Radioactive Man " episode . Instead they

decided to parody the fact that almost every comic book has been turned into a film . Jean commented that that scene in the episode in which the studio executives " are trying to think up an idea that hasn 't been done really is what they are doing these days [in real life] . "

The table read took place in August 2008 , and production on the episode began soon after that . Rogen later said that " we sat down for a read @-@ through and three hours later I 'm in a studio improv @-@ ing with Homer Simpson , it was the single greatest day of my life . " Rogen also guest stars in the episode as the character Lyle McCarthy , making him the second guest star to both write an episode and appear in it ; Gervais also appeared in the episode he wrote . The Simpsons creator Matt Groening also makes an appearance in the episode .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast in the United States on September 27 , 2009 , " Homer The Whopper " was watched in 8 @.@ 31 million homes and acquired a 4 @.@ 3 Nielsen rating / 12 % share . The rating was down seven percent from the previous season 's premiere , which was viewed in 9 @.@ 3 million homes the night it aired .

Since airing , " Homer The Whopper " has received mixed to positive reviews from television critics . Steve Fritz of Newsarama called the episode " amazing " and commented that the " overall comic book theme was perfect . " Reviewers for TV Guide cited Matt Groening 's cameo , the dinner table scene , Homer trying to lose weight at the Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart , and the opening scene where Bart questions Comic Book Guy about Spider @-@ Man as the highlights of the episode .

Robert Canning of IGN was positive about " Homer The Whopper " , giving it an 8 @.@ 6 / 10 rating . He commented that the first act of the episode was the strongest , while the others were weaker . Canning believed the reason for this was that the viewers have already seen Homer " struggle with his weight countless times , and Rogen 's trainer , though funny much of the time , will likely never be remembered as a classic guest role . " He added , however , that Rogen and Goldberg are able to find " a few new angles with the weight jokes , so it 's not a complete loss . " Overall , Canning thought " Homer The Whopper " was a good start to the twenty @-@ first season , and although the plot may not be very original , the writers added " freshness to the proceedings . " The A.V. Club 's Todd VanDerWerff did not think the script was as good as Gervais ' , but commented that Rogen and Goldberg " managed to make a mostly amusing season premiere . " He added that he thought the Hollywood satirizing featured in this episode had been overused on the show , but " the specificity of what the [episode] was making fun of ? trainers who help stars slim down (in this case , helping Homer slim down) ? went a long way toward making the episode palatable . " VanDerWerff concluded that while the episode " didn ? t try anything new [...] , [he] had fun with it all the same . "