

= Homer 's Triple Bypass =

" Homer 's Triple Bypass " is the eleventh episode in the fourth season of The Simpsons . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 17 , 1992 . In the episode , Homer Simpson suffers a heart attack when Mr. Burns shouts at him at work . Dr. Hibbert tells Homer that he needs a triple bypass , but the Simpson family resorts to a discount surgeon after learning how expensive the operation would be in a regular hospital . The episode was written by Gary Apple and Michael Carrington and directed by David Silverman .

= = Plot = =

After being warned by Marge about his unhealthy eating , Homer starts to feel chest pains . After several more instances of the chest pains , Homer has a heart attack .

Homer is sent to the hospital , where Marge visits him . Dr. Hibbert informs Homer that he needs a triple bypass , which will cost him \$ 30 @,@ 000 . Upon hearing this , Homer has another heart attack , which increases the price to \$ 40 @,@ 000 . Marge and Homer try to figure out a way to pay for the operation .

Homer goes to The Merry Widow Insurance Company , but is denied when he has a heart attack before signing the policy . Unable to afford surgery at the hospital , Marge and Homer see a commercial for Dr. Nick Riviera , an incompetent surgeon who will perform any operation for \$ 129 @.@ 95 . Leaving no other alternative , Homer decides to go for the cheaper service .

During the operation , Dr. Nick realizes that he does not know what to do , mostly due to a video detailing the procedure being taped over with a show called People Who Look Like Things . Lisa , who is watching the operation in the amphitheater , uses her knowledge of cardiology to guide Dr. Nick . The surgery is successful , and Homer makes a full recovery .

= = Production = =

" Homer 's Triple Bypass " was not written by a member of the show 's regular staff , but instead Gary Apple and Michael Carrington . They were brought in as freelance writers because the show was suffering from a depleted writing team after the third season ended and the remaining members did not bother to do the episode .

Carrington would provide voice work for later episodes , such as " I Love Lisa " (as Sideshow Raheem) , " Homer and Apu " (as the head of the Kwik @-@ e @-@ Mart) , and " Simpson Tide " (as Homer 's drill instructor) . The idea for the episode came from James L. Brooks , who pitched the idea of Homer having a heart attack . However , the writers disagreed with such a heavy topic as this .

They decided to have a scene where Lisa and Bart visit Homer before his surgery and were unsure of how to do it , so they approached Brooks . Brooks made up the entire scene on the spot . Originally , the surgery was supposed to be performed by Dr. Hibbert , but it was later changed to Dr. Nick . In the original airing of the episode , Dr. Nick 's phone number was the number of a real legal clinic , whose lawyers made them change it to 1 @-@ 600 @-@ DOCTORB .

The episode 's production staff decided that David Silverman would be able to make the episode funny , so he was selected to direct it . He went " all out " and did his best to make Homer 's grimaces as humorous as possible , to keep the episode at least somewhat lighter in tone . Silverman added some special touches : for example , when Homer has an out of body experience , his foot was still touching his body to signify that he was not dead . A doctor acted as a medical consultant for the episode .

The episode was to have concluded with Homer eating a pizza in his hospital bed following the operation , and with Marge asking a nurse where the pizza had come from . This reflects the earlier flashback scene where Grampa Simpson watches Homer as an infant , chewing on a slice of pizza in the hospital . The scene was replaced with the family cheering Homer on while he is in intensive care .

= = Cultural references = =

The opening sequence of the episode is a parody of American television show COPS ; it was not in the original animatic and added later because the episode was too short to fit in its required 22 @-@ minute length . When Homer is performing a sock @-@ puppet show to Lisa and Bart , he uses Akbar and Jeff , both of whom are characters from Matt Groening 's weekly comic strip Life in Hell . Homer follows behind the house that was the birthplace of Edgar Allan Poe , which was placed in the episode by David Silverman . During this scene Homer starts to hear a heartbeat , a reference to Poe 's " The Telltale Heart " . The scene where Homer sings in a church as a boy is based on the film Empire of the Sun .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Homer 's Triple Bypass " finished 16th in ratings for the week of December 14 ? 20 , 1992 , with a Nielsen rating of 14 @.@ 3 , equivalent to approximately 13 @.@ 2 million viewing households . It was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , beating Married ... with Children .

Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , authors of I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , called it " a cautionary tale that gives Dr Nick his biggest chance to shine . " They also praised the " cloud goes up , cloud goes down " line . IGN noted that the episode " introduced fans to one of the show 's more endearing background players , Dr. Nick . " Krusty 's line " this ain 't make @-@ up " is one of Matt Groening 's favorite lines from the show .