

= The Man in the Blue Flannel Pants =

" The Man in the Blue Flannel Pants " is the seventh episode of the twenty @-@ third season of the American animated sitcom The Simpsons . It first aired on Fox in the United States on November 27 , 2011 , and was seen by around 5 @.@ 6 million people during this broadcast . In the episode , Homer becomes an account manager for Mr. Burns after successfully hosting a viral marketing event for Krusty the Clown . Meanwhile , Lisa is teaching Bart how to read classic novels like Little Women . Homer 's new job affects his family as he becomes more distant and in the end he has to choose between his family or his new job . The episode 's title references The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit .

The episode was written by Jeff Westbrook and directed by Steven Dean Moore . It functions mainly as a parody of the television show Mad Men , and features the guest voices of Mad Men actor John Slattery and creator Matthew Weiner . Critics found the episode to be average in quality , receiving criticism for the wasted opportunities with the Mad Men parody .

= = Plot = =

The Simpson family host a tastemaker party at their home to promote Absolut Krusty , Krusty the Clown 's own brand of vodka . Mr. Burns takes notice of the party 's success and decides to promote Homer to " Account Man " for the Springfield Nuclear Plant . Robert Marlowe , a seasoned account veteran , takes Homer under his wing and shows Homer what the high life is like in the corner office . The job changes Homer into a sad individual , who drinks in the dark and complains about the meaninglessness of his job . When Homer 's long hours at the office become the norm and Homer becomes distant from his family , a family vacation with Marge and the children help him realize that family always comes before work . Meanwhile , Lisa introduces Bart to a new literary world which sparks his interest in reading classic novels . In the beginning , Bart struggles with reading and suggests that he should just get a job where he does not have to read . Lisa insists and Bart eventually learns to read properly . When the bullies watches him reading a classic novel at school , they force him to read Little Women to them .

Meanwhile , both Marge and Mr. Burns want Homer to go on the same rafting trip . Homer starts with being on his family 's raft , and then swims back and forth between that and Mr. Burns 's raft . Marge discovers that he has double booked the weekend while both rafts float near a waterfall , and is upset that he chose to do work on a family outing . Homer can only save one raft , and he saves the one containing his family . As Mr. Burns and the executives are about to go over the waterfall , Marlowe rides up on a motorboat and carries Mr. Burns to safety , while the executives fall over the edge . Homer goes over the waterfall by himself , but is completely unharmed and finds gold . Later , at their house , Homer tells Marge that he is a safety inspector again . Fireworks go off outside , and it is revealed that they were caused by a fire at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant , presumably because Homer failed at his job .

= = Production = =

" The Man in the Blue Flannel Pants " was written by Jeff Westbrook and directed by Steven Dean Moore . It featured John Slattery , Matthew Weiner , and Kevin Michael Richardson as guest voices . Weiner is the creator , writer , and showrunner of the television show Mad Men , in which Slattery portrays the character Roger Sterling . The entire A @-@ Plot of the episode was a parody of Mad Men . Homer transforms into the lead character from Mad Men , Don Draper , and Slattery 's character Robert Marlowe shares similarities with Roger Sterling . Weiner 's role in the episode was a brief cameo as one of the businessmen on the rafting trip with Mr. Burns . The lead actor of Mad Men , Jon Hamm , did not appear in the episode , but previously appeared in the season 22 episode " Donnie Fatso " as a different character . " The Man in the Blue Flannel Pants " even recreated a scene from Mad Men , in which a lawnmower runs loose in an office . In an interview with IGN in 2011 , the showrunner of the episode , Al Jean , named Mad Men as one of the two television

shows he always makes time to watch .

The music in the episode was edited by Chris Ledesma . In his own blog , he explains that this episode required very little musical scoring . In some cases , the musical score is used to take away focus from the scenes that did not work as well as planned . If the episode on the other side is well @-@ scripted and features strong performances from the voice cast , then the music becomes a distraction . Ledesma thought that the " episode offers a nice balance of dialogue and music . " Of the music that was used , the theme from the 1965 film *Moment to Moment* , which was scored by Henry Mancini , was featured during the montage of Homer working at his new job . The episode ends with a piece of music , which is the music composer Alf Clausen 's version of the Mancini theme . In total five minutes of music was used for the episode .

The episode featured several references to the character Mr. Burns 's old age . When Burns is requesting a song from the discjockey , he asks for " anything by Prince ... Wilhelm , of Prussia ? " . Prince Wilhelm of Prussia was second in line to the German throne and lived from 1906 to 1940 . Instead , the discjockey plays " Come Josephine in My Flying Machine " from 1910 . Other Mr. Burns quotes include " How ironic . I survive the Titanic by making a raft out of steerage passengers ... and now this . " and the RMS Titanic sank in 1912 .

= = Release = =

The episode originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on November 27 , 2011 . It was watched by approximately 5 @.@ 61 million people during this broadcast . The show received a 2 @.@ 6 Nielsen rating in the demographic for adults aged 18 ? 49 , which was a 4 % drop from the previous episode " The Book Job " , and a six percent audience share . It was preceded by *The Cleveland Show* and became the highest @-@ rated program in Fox 's Animation Domination lineup that night in terms of total viewers , finishing higher than *Family Guy* (5 @.@ 50 million) , *American Dad !* (4 @.@ 48 million) , *The Cleveland Show* (3 @.@ 67 million) , and *Allan Gregory* (3 @.@ 18 million) . The episode did however not rate higher than *Family Guy* in the 18 ? 49 demographic . Seven days after the initial airing , the episode had a 19 @.@ 2 % increase in the 18 ? 49 demographics from DVR viewings , raising the overall ratings to 3 @.@ 1 . The overall viewership increased with 15 @.@ 7 % to 6 @.@ 49 million viewers . For the week of November 21 ? 27 , 2011 , " The Man in the Blue Flannel Pants " finished in 21st place in the ratings among all network prime @-@ time broadcasts in the 18 ? 49 demographic .

Since airing , " The Man in the Blue Flannel Pants " has been generally received as being average in quality by television critics . The A.V. Club 's Hayden Childs gave the episode an overall rating of B- and found that the episode " wasn't particularly funny but neither was it particularly bad . " She praised the episode for " a strong storyline " and " elements that often crop up in the better episodes , like a focus that does not stray too far from the Simpson family and a B @-@ plot that works " . Despite this , she felt that the " jokes are so low @-@ key and mild that the episode zooms by without raising a single chuckle or smirk . " Similarly , Jason Hughes of AOL TV commented that " [w] hile it was a charming enough episode , there were no stand @-@ out moments of clever satire or unexpected twists . " *Ology* 's Josh Harrison was slightly more negative and thought the episode was " charming but a bit of a comic flop " . He concluded that the episode was nothing special and gave the episode a rating of six out of ten .

On the *Mad Men* parody , Childs found comedic potential in Homer 's transformation into Don Draper , but concluded that this was " where the episode could have gotten very funny very fast , but it doesn't bring any of these jokes home . " She further elaborated that " Don Draper is a sad character , true , but there is some real comic potential in his pretensions and vanity . The writers are tapping into this aspect of his characterization to a small degree , but they aren't really satirizing it . " Hughes was not impressed with the *Mad Men* parody and sarcastically stated that the spoof was " so sharp , you 'll swear it 's 2008 " .