

= Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish =

" Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish " is the fourth episode of The Simpsons ' second season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on November 1 , 1990 . In the episode , Bart catches a three @-@ eyed fish in a river downstream of the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant . This causes the plant to become inspected , and in order to prevent it from being shut down , Mr. Burns decides to run for governor . After a hard campaign which sees Burns rise from being universally despised to running neck and neck with popular incumbent Mary Bailey , it is decided that Burns will have dinner with a random employee the night before the election . Homer is chosen , much to Marge 's chagrin .

The episode was written by Sam Simon and John Swartzwelder , and directed by Wes Archer . It was the first episode produced for season two and was intended to air as the season premiere , but was replaced with " Bart Gets an " F " " due to Bart 's popularity in the early 1990s . The episode features cultural references to several American films , mostly the 1941 film Citizen Kane , with Burns in the role of the character Charles Foster Kane . Mary Bailey shares her name with George Bailey 's wife in the 1946 film It 's a Wonderful Life .

Journalists have described the episode as a satire on both American politics and environmentalism . It won an Environmental Media Award in 1991 for being the best television episode of the year with an environmental message . Since the episode first aired , the three @-@ eyed fish Blinky has been mentioned several times in news articles regarding nuclear waste and mutation . The episode was positively received by television critics for its satire on American politics . It acquired a Nielsen rating of 15 @.@ 8 , and was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network the week it aired .

= = Plot = =

Bart and Lisa go fishing downstream of the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant , and Springfield Shopper reporter Dave Shutton pulls up just as Bart catches a three @-@ eyed fish , much to both the kids ' and Shutton 's surprise . The fish , nicknamed Blinky by the media , makes headlines around the state , and incumbent governor Mary Bailey calls in a government inspection team to investigate nuclear waste coming from the plant that could have caused the fish to mutate . After the inspection , the plant 's owner , Mr. Burns , is presented with a list of 342 violations , which would cost \$ 56 million to rectify . Distraught , Burns talks to plant employee Homer , who half @-@ heartedly suggests Burns run for governor against Bailey so that he could change the standards and prevent the plant from being shut down . Burns instantly pounces on the idea .

Burns 's political advisers break the news to Burns that he is greatly despised by many people while Bailey is beloved by all . To compensate for this , they force Burns to try being friendly and even smile . Burns makes a television commercial discussing Blinky with an actor portraying Charles Darwin , who claims Blinky is an evolutionary step and not a mutated fish . Combined with a promise to lower taxes and a smear campaign against Bailey , Burns ties with her in the polls . On the night before the election , Burns 's advisers suggest that Burns have dinner at the home of a middle @-@ class family as an opportunity to put himself in the lead . Burns scans his employees for the most average man he can find , and Homer is chosen .

The impending dinner with Burns divides the Simpson household . Homer supports Burns , while Marge and Lisa oppose him . Before the dinner arrives , Burns 's advisers prepare the family for the event , even giving them pre @-@ written questions to ask in lieu of conversation . Lisa becomes disillusioned by it all , but Marge tells her not to worry . To everyone 's surprise , Marge serves Blinky for dinner . Burns tries to act as if it does not bother him , but is not able to keep from spitting it out . The cameras flash as the bite flies through the air , and by the time the chunk hits the floor the press is gone and his gubernatorial campaign dissolves . Bailey wins the election and , despite Burns saying that Homer 's dreams will be unfulfilled for as long as he is alive , the Simpson family happily get together again .

= = Production = =

The episode was written by Sam Simon and John Swartzwelder , and directed by Wes Archer . Blinky had previously made a brief appearance in the season one episode " Homer 's Odyssey " , in which he was seen swimming in the lake outside of the plant . The writers liked the design of the fish and decided to devote an episode to him . While the idea of Blinky was completely fictional at the time , a three @-@ eyed fish was caught in 2011 in Córdoba , Argentina near a local nuclear power plant . The fish was a seawolf and did not resemble Blinky besides the three eyes . The fishermen sent the fish to a radiation test , to determine whether the mutation came from being exposed to the water from the nuclear power plant .

Mary Bailey and Springfield Shopper reporter Dave Shuttan made their first appearance on the show in this episode . Dave Shuttan , voiced by Harry Shearer , was named after a friend of Swartzwelder . Dave Shuttan 's roles have since become less relevant and have been reduced to cameos and appearances in crowd scenes . Mary Bailey would later appear briefly in episodes such as " Bart vs. Lisa vs. the Third Grade " and " The Seven @-@ Beer Snitch " .

During the first season of The Simpsons , Bart quickly became one of the most popular characters on television in what was termed " Bartmania " . Due to the success of the first season , the Fox network decided to switch The Simpsons ' timeslot in hopes that it would steal ratings from NBC 's " powerhouse " line up . The show was moved from its 8 : 00 p.m. EST Sunday night slot to the same time on Thursday , where it would compete with NBC 's The Cosby Show , the number one show at the time . " Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish " was the first episode produced for the second season , but " Bart Gets an F " aired first because of Bart 's popularity and the producers wanted to premiere with an episode involving him in hopes of stealing viewers from The Cosby Show .

= = Cultural references = =

The name of the episode comes from the slogan in a political advert used in Herbert Hoover 's presidential campaign in 1928 , " A Chicken In Every Pot " , which the advert later amplifies with " And a car in every backyard , to boot . " .

Several parts of the episode are inspired by the 1941 film Citizen Kane , all with Mr. Burns in the role of Charles Foster Kane . The campaign rally scene where Burns speaks in front of a giant poster of himself is a reference to a scene from that film . The scene where Burns trashes the Simpson family 's dining room after the dinner is similar to the scene in which Kane destroys his ex @-@ wife 's room .

Mary Bailey shares her name with George Bailey 's wife in the 1946 film It 's a Wonderful Life .

Burns hires an actor to portray the nineteenth @-@ century scientist Charles Darwin to help in his claim that the three @-@ eyed fish was the result of evolution . Darwin was a naturalist who presented compelling evidence that all species of life have evolved over time from common ancestors , through the process he called natural selection .

The clip of Burns driving a military tank in his campaign montage is similar to a clip featured in Michael Dukakis 's 1988 United States presidential campaign , in which he can be seen driving a tank .

A re @-@ run of the episode that aired on June 25 , 1992 , included a new chalkboard gag in the opening credits that featured Bart writing " It 's potato , not potatoe " on the chalkboard . This is a reference to a spelling blunder by the then @-@ Vice President of the United States Dan Quayle , who corrected a student 's correct spelling of " potato " to " potatoe " at an elementary school spelling bee in Trenton , New Jersey , on June 15 , 1992 .

= = Themes and impact = =

Journalists have described " Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish " as a satire on American politics . Joanne Ostrow , a reviewer for The Denver Post , said only a cartoon could get away with " such pointed satire " of American political campaigning and advertising that is

featured in the episode . She compared it to the " counter @-@ cultural posture " television shows such as Second City Television and Saturday Night Live took in the mid @-@ 1970s : " In those days , this sort of alternative viewpoint was kept out of prime time . [ In The Simpsons case ] , it 's still relegated to the ( distant ) fourth network , but at least the time is prime . " Jeremy Kleinman of DVD Talk wrote : " The writers of The Simpsons have often come across as unabashedly liberal and this episode is no exception as political / social commentary takes a step closer to the foreground during this episode . " Al Jean , current show runner of The Simpsons , has himself admitted in an interview that the show is of a " liberal bent " . In the DVD commentaries , creator Matt Groening and the majority of people who work on the show state several times that they are very liberal , but some , such as John Swartzwelder ( one of the writers of this and many other The Simpsons episodes ) , are libertarian . The show portrays government and large corporations as callous entities that take advantage of the common worker . Thus , the writers often portray authority figures in an unflattering or negative light . In The Simpsons , politicians are corrupt , ministers such as Reverend Lovejoy are indifferent to churchgoers , and the local police force is incompetent .

The episode also features an environmentalism theme . This theme is present in the nuclear power plant 's polluting of Lake Springfield , which causes the fish of the lake to become mutated . University of the Sciences in Philadelphia physics and mathematics professor Paul Halpern discussed the episode in his book What 's Science Ever Done for Us ? : What the Simpsons Can Teach Us About Physics , Robots , Life , and the Universe . He comments : " Considering the fact that [ Charles Darwin 's theory of ] natural selection takes generations and that successful varieties must sustain a survival advantage over others , the only way Mr. Burns can prove his assertion [ that the fish is the next step in evolution through natural selection ] is by tracking Blinky over time to see if the third eye allows the mutant fish to find food more quickly or dodge predators . " Mark Meister and Phyllis M. Japp discuss the environmental theme of the episode in their book Enviropop : Studies in Environmental Rhetoric and Popular Culture . The authors think human pollution is characterized in the episode as an improvement on nature , and human progress is viewed as an " integral " part of human evolution . They add : " These references articulate specific criticism of current environmental regulations , specifically the lax enforcement of the regulations concerning the dumping , safe storage , and disposal of nuclear waste . Furthermore , this episode condemns the manipulation of political and economic power to disguise ecological accountability and to shift blame for environmental problems . " The authors also say the episode comments on the lack of adherence to safety standards for the plant , and criticizes the " apathetic acceptance " of unforced environmental inspections . In addition , they comment that the episode " explicitly criticizes media spin @-@ doctors who distort the impacts of ecological degradation caused by wealthy corporations such as the nuclear power plant . "

On February 13 , 1991 , a local group in Albany , New York , fought the government 's plan to create a nuclear waste dump in their neighborhood . It was staged by Citizens Against Radioactive Dumping ( CARD ) at the monthly meeting of the Low @-@ Level Radioactive Waste Siting Commission in Albany . Here four children dressed up as Homer , Marge , Bart , and Lisa , and presented a three @-@ eyed fabric fish , which looked like Blinky , to the commission . In addition to that they performed a rap song , which explained the plot of the episode .

Since the episode 's initial airing , Blinky has been mentioned several times in news articles regarding nuclear waste and mutation . A reporter for the Lincoln Journal Star compared Blinky to a rainbow trout with two mouths caught in Lincoln , Nebraska , in 2005 . The fish was mentioned in a National Review article discussing a legislation which would make it illegal to import , possess or release alive into California any live transgenic fish : " Sounds like someone watched one too many episodes of The Simpsons with Blinky , the three @-@ eyed fish that swims by the nuclear @-@ power plant . " Matt Smith of SF Weekly compared Blinky to a type of fish found in San Francisco Bay , which , according to a study by the University of California , Davis , had a shrunken brain and misshapen body that had been caused by the dumping of toxic chemicals into the bay . In an article about the now closed nuclear weapons production facility Rocky Flats Plant , Brian Park of The Rocky Mountain Collegian joked that after its closure , " years of clean up ensued and now the area is a wildlife refuge ; no word yet if Blinky has been spotted . " Barbara Taormina of the North Shore

Sunday wrote in her article about the new liquefied natural gas ( LNG ) pipeline in Massachusetts Bay : " Will Blinky , the mutant three @-@ eyed fish from The Simpsons be showing up in Massachusetts Bay ? Probably not , but local environmentalists are worried that digging for the new LNG pipeline may stir up radioactive waste dumped decades ago . " In his article about the nuclear power plant operator Exelon , Thomas M. Anderson of Kiplinger wrote : " The thought of more nuclear power may conjure up images of the Three Mile Island accident or Blinky [ ... ] , but a growing number of policymakers and even environmentalists are coming to appreciate the advantages of atomic energy . "

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish " finished nineteenth in the ratings for the week of October 29 ? November 4 , 1990 , with a Nielsen rating of 15 @.@ 8 , equivalent to approximately 14 @.@ 7 million viewing households . The Simpsons was the highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , but was beaten by The Cosby Show which got a 20 @.@ 2 rating . The episode won an Environmental Media Award in the " Best Television Episodic Comedy " category , which has been awarded every year since 1991 to the best television episode with an environmental message . It was The Simpsons first Environmental Media Award , but the show has won six more since then .

The episode has received mostly positive reviews from television critics since airing . 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 the episode a " superb example " of political satire , " demonstrating the lengths people will go to to win votes . Marge , of course , sees straight through Burns and uses Blinky the three @-@ eyed fish to demonstrate his lack of conviction . " Phil Rosenthal of the Los Angeles Daily News called the episode a " wonderful stab " at American politics and the " media machine that drives it " , and added : " The message is so subtle , the makers of The Simpsons might deny it is there at all for fear of turning off a portion of its audience . Truth is , you may very well be so busy laughing and taking in the fine details , such as the references to Citizen Kane , to notice . " Hal Boedeker of The Miami Herald said the episode took " some well @-@ aimed satirical jabs at American politics and the publics ' short attention span . The episode has the wit of the best of All in the Family , and benign mother Marge becomes a force for good , in the Edith Bunker tradition . " Virginia Mann of The Record called the episode " terrific " , though she believed its social and political " overtones " were more likely to appeal to adults than children . Tom Shales of the Washington Post described the episode as " a bull 's @-@ eye political satire " .

Doug Pratt , a DVD reviewer and Rolling Stone contributor , thought the episode 's story was " nicely composed , so you don 't have to recognize the Citizen Kane references to appreciate the effort , but it adds to the fun . " He also noted that it begins the exploration of Mr. Burns " in earnest , the first of many characters who will receive elaborate coverage as the series advances . " Jeremy Kleinman of DVD Talk thought both Lisa 's " tremendous intellect " and Marge 's " moral compass " were " probed " in the episode , and he thought one " clear highlight " of the episode was Burns 's attempts to explain away Blinky 's mutation by turning to an actor portraying Charles Darwin who proceeds to give a speech suggesting that Blinky is merely advanced . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson wrote : " The episode took an unusual approach for an early show , as it focused largely on a secondary character . One could argue that season one 's ' Krusty Gets Busted ' did the same , but ' Two Cars in Every Garage and Three Eyes on Every Fish ' provided a heavier emphasis on Burns than that prior program did Krusty . This helped make it a fairly good episode . It fleshed out Burns ' character a little better and gave us a reasonably entertaining experience . The episode fell short of greatness , but it worked nicely for the most part . " Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly described the episode as " masterful " .