

= The PTA Disbands =

" The PTA Disbands " is the 21st episode of The Simpsons ' sixth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on April 16 , 1995 . In the episode , Edna Krabappel calls an emergency strike on behalf of the Teachers ' Union of Springfield Elementary , to protest against Principal Skinner 's miserly school spending . Students react in their own manner to the strike : Lisa becomes obsessed with a desire to be graded , while Bart enjoys the extra time he has during the day . Bart arranges to keep the teachers union and Principal Skinner at an impasse , but becomes frustrated with substitute teacher arrangements and resolves to force negotiations forward . The situation is resolved when Krabappel and Skinner agree to rent space in classroom closets to the Springfield Prison .

The episode was written by Jennifer Crittenden and directed by Swinton O. Scott III , with David Mirkin as show @-@ runner . The episode includes cultural references to a number of books highlighted by Edna Krabappel as having been banned by other schools ? including William Shatner 's TekWar , Steal This Book by Abbie Hoffman , and The Theory of Evolution by Charles Darwin . The episode received favorable mention in books on The Simpsons and media reviews , and was cited by academicians , who analyzed portions of the episode from physics and psychology perspectives . During a 2004 strike by voice actors for The Simpsons during salary negotiations , media sources cited an iconic quote from Homer to Lisa in the episode about the teachers ' strike .

= = Plot = =

After a failed attempt at a school field trip , which appears to have caused the apparent abandonment and brutal beating of the student Üter , Edna Krabappel calls an emergency strike on behalf of the Teachers ' Union of Springfield Elementary , to protest against Principal Skinner 's miserly spending on school supplies and activities .

As the teachers ' strike results in the closing of the school , the various student characters respond to the sudden turn of events in their own ways : Lisa becomes increasingly obsessive in her desire to be graded , Milhouse is forced by his parents to take private tutoring lessons ( which improve his education ) , Jimbo Jones finds himself immersed in the intricacies of daytime soap operas with his mother , Dolph and Kearney become easily bored with video games , and Bart revels in his newfound afternoon freedom and annoys many Springfield citizens by imitating other people to make them angry or hurt each other . In particular , Bart does what he can to keep the union and Principal Skinner at odds with each other . The two sides are at an impasse ; the union wanting a restoration of funding and Skinner maintaining that even with the spending reductions he has made , government budget cuts have squeezed the school dry .

After some prompting from an exasperated Marge Simpson , the parents of Springfield eventually decide to take matters into their own hands , and recruit volunteers from the community to take over as temporary teachers . This turns out to be even worse for the students than before the strike , especially as Marge becomes Bart 's new teacher after Skinner learns he has chased away previous substitutes including Moe and decided he needed use her to keep Bart in line . Jasper becomes Lisa 's new teacher and gets his beard stuck in a pencil sharpener , which makes her worried about not being able to get into her dream school Vassar College . Due to Marge 's excessive mothering of Bart , he grudgingly resolves to force the strike negotiations forward . Together with Milhouse , he tricks both Krabappel and Principal Skinner into entering Skinner 's office , which he then locks behind them . After spending several hours trapped together " like prisoners " in their own school , the two are mutually inspired with an idea to create extra revenue for more school spending . Things return to normal with the old teachers in charge , but with the school cloakrooms having been rented to the Springfield Prison . Each classroom now features several full prison cells at the back , which have the added benefit of keeping the more troublesome students in line . Snake Jailbird makes a deal with Bart to get him out of prison , promising him to " make it worth your while " , to which Bart responds shortly afterwards " I 'm listening " .

## == Production ==

The episode was written by Jennifer Crittenden . She came in to the writers ' room and pitched the idea that there should be a teachers ' strike in an episode . Then @-@ show runner David Mirkin thought the episode had a lot of potential , and much of it is based on his experience as a child with schools running out of money . Despite the title of the episode , at no point does the PTA ( Parent @-@ Teacher Association ) actually disband . The title was suggested by Mirkin and was intended to poke fun at Crittenden , who thought the most exciting part of the teachers going on strike would be that the PTA might disband . In addition to this , Mirkin added a character to the episode who , on thinking the PTA has disbanded , jumps panicking out of a window . He jumps back in the same window when Flanders tells him the PTA has not disbanded .

The episode was directed by Swinton O. Scott III . In the opening shot of the episode , the bus that the children travel in to the field trip had to vibrate up and down to give the impression that it did not have bumpers and that it was falling apart . Scott said it was difficult to animate the scene because of the vibrating and the backgrounds panning . Milhouse 's tutor in the episode is based on the American actor Tony Randall .

## == Cultural references ==

During their field trip , the bus from Springfield Elementary arrives at the Fort Springfield civil war site and skids into a cannon , knocking one of its wheels off . The cannon then points at the tower leg of a lookout , giving the impression that it will fire at the lookout and destroy it , which is a reference to the opening sequence of the television sitcom F Troop . The lookout was also modeled after the lookout in the show . The scene in which Üter is left behind at the end of the field trip is based on a scene from the 1965 film Von Ryan 's Express .

Edna points at some school books and says : " The only books we have are ones that were banned by other schools . " Skinner says : " Well , the kids have to learn about TekWar sooner or later , " referencing William Shatner 's series of science fiction novels . Other books in the bookshelf include Sexus by Henry Miller , Hop on Pop by Dr. Seuss , The Satanic Verses ( " Junior Illustrated Edition " ) by Salman Rushdie , 40 Years of Playboy by Hugh Hefner , Steal This Book by Abbie Hoffman , and The Theory of Evolution by Charles Darwin .

Bart tells Skinner in the principal 's office that Edna told him that Skinner " folds faster than Superman on laundry day " , a reference to the comic book character Superman . That line is one of The Simpsons animator David Silverman 's favorite lines on the show . Gabe Kaplan is one of Bart 's victims on his substitute list , a reference to Kaplan and his character in the 1975 TV series Welcome Back , Kotter . The character at the bank who tells the angry crowd that their money 's in " Bill 's house , and Fred 's house " is based on James Stewart 's George Bailey character in the bank run scene from It 's a Wonderful Life .

## == Reception ==

In its original broadcast , " The PTA Disbands " finished 69th in ratings for the week of April 13 ? 19 , 1995 , with a Nielsen rating of 7 @.@ 1 . It was the 8th highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week .

In their book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood describe " The PTA Disbands " as " Possibly the best of the school episodes . " In a review of the sixth season of The Simpsons , Colin Jacobson of DVD Movie Guide writes : " I especially like the contrasts between how Bart and Lisa accept the strike . The show doesn ? t quite manage to soar consistently , but it has more than enough to make it positive . " In his review of the episode for TV Squad , Adam Finley comments : " I love how Bart and Lisa both handle the news differently . Bart is thrilled ... Lisa , on the other hand , can 't handle not being graded and evaluated every day , and slowly begins to lose her mind . "

In 2004 , when the voice actors for The Simpsons went on strike requesting additional income , The

Scotsman cited a quote by Homer from the episode : " If you don 't like your job , you don 't strike . You just go in every day and do it really half @-@ assed . That 's the American Way . " The Scotsman asserted " Homer would not approve " of the strike by the voice actors . The voice actors were asking for an increase from US \$ 125 @,@ 000 to \$ 360 @,@ 000 per episode . The same quote by Homer to Lisa was cited by Michael Schneider in Daily Variety , who wrote : " ... insiders note that the actors work just six to seven hours to voice an episode --- which would mean \$ 360 @,@ 000 for a day 's work , a figure that even Everybody Loves Raymond star Ray Romano doesn 't match . "

University of the Sciences in Philadelphia physics and mathematics professor Paul Halpern discusses 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 , and quotes Homer 's admonition to Lisa : " Lisa , in this house , we obey the laws of thermodynamics ! " at the beginning of Halpern 's section on " Mechanical Plots " . Halpern describes Lisa 's efforts to build a perpetual @-@ motion machine while bored during the teachers strike , and comments that though it is absurd in reality to order someone to obey the laws of thermodynamics , he acknowledges that " physicists sometimes don 't know the proper arena within which certain laws apply " . In the July 26 , 2007 issue of Nature , the scientific journal 's editorial staff listed " The PTA Disbands " among " The Top Ten science moments in The Simpsons " , writing : " Lisa gets so bored by a lack of schooling she builds a perpetual motion machine . Homer is not pleased : ' Lisa , in this house we OBEY the laws of thermodynamics . ' "

The episode is cited by Robert M. Arkin and Philip J. Mazzocco in their work " Self @-@ Esteem in Springfield " , in the compilation book The Psychology of The Simpsons . Arkin and Mazzocco note an exchange between Edna Krabappel and Seymour Skinner , where Skinner exclaims to Krabappel : " Oh come on Edna : We both know these kids have no future ! [ All the children stop and look at him ; he chuckles nervously ] Prove me wrong , kids . Prove me wrong . " Arkin and Mazzocco note that this example is seen as an exception , writing : " Generally , however , the Simpsons are right on target in their understanding of the importance of self @-@ esteem and the dynamics involved in the interplay between the social world and positive self @-@ regard . "