

= Hurricane Neddy =

" Hurricane Neddy " is the eighth episode of The Simpsons ' eighth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 29 , 1996 . It was written by Steve Young , directed by Bob Anderson and features a cameo by Jon Lovitz as Jay Sherman from The Critic . In this episode , " Hurricane Barbara " viciously strikes Springfield but , by pure chance , the house of Ned Flanders is the only one destroyed . As a result , he begins to lose his faith in both God and the townspeople around him , especially Homer , as he suffers a nervous breakdown .

= = Plot = =

In midst of a quiet afternoon , the wind starts to pick up , which leads Lisa to find out that a hurricane is on the way . Lisa warns Homer , but he is skeptical since there has been no record of a hurricane ever hitting Springfield . Lisa reminds her father that the records only go back to 1978 , " when the Hall of Records was mysteriously blown away " . The evening news confirms that " Hurricane Barbara " is close , resulting in panicked citizens storming the Kwik @-@ E @-@ Mart and Homer attempting to secure the Simpson home . The hurricane strikes and after a few treacherous hours , the storm ends and the family cautiously leaves the basement . Initially , they are thankful to see that their home is untouched and Marge comments that everything works out if one has a little faith .

Meanwhile , next door Ned emerges from a heap of rubble and sees that his house was destroyed , along with everything else he owned except the family gravestones , while all the houses around his are intact . Ned is relieved that his family escaped serious injury , but it turns out to be little solace since he does not have home insurance , as he considers insurance a form of gambling . The Flanders family is forced to move into the Rescue Center in the church basement , although they appear to be the only family to be affected to that extent . Ned is further discouraged after learning that his business , the Leftorium , was looted following the hurricane . Distraught with annoyance , Ned begins to believe that God is punishing him and , seeking answers , he goes to read the Bible in the church but receives a paper cut . Interpreting it as further punishment , he sits down and laments that he is falling apart , even after doing everything the Bible says , " even the stuff that contradicts the other stuff . "

The following day , Marge arrives at the church and takes the Flanders family back to their house , completely rebuilt by the people of Springfield . Overjoyed , Ned inspects the house , but becomes increasingly dismayed as he discovers its extremely shoddy construction . Immediately after the inspection , the house collapses . Ned tries to calm down , knowing that the townspeople tried their best , but is unable to contain his rage and finally snaps , lashing out at all the residents of Springfield , and directing his most vehement invective at Homer ( who believes he got off easy because he wasn 't yelled at ) . Ned then drives himself to Calmwood Mental Hospital to seek psychotherapy .

While in the asylum , Ned is visited by his childhood psychiatrist , Dr. Foster , who tells Ned about his childhood life - as a completely out @-@ of @-@ control brat raised by beatnik parents who did not believe in discipline . As a result , the young Ned went through the University of Minnesota Spankalogical Protocol , which involved eight months of continuous spanking . The treatment worked so well that it rendered him unable to express any anger at all , and all Ned 's repressed anger built up inside him until he erupted .

Dr. Foster enlists Homer to help Ned learn how to appropriately express emotions , as he is the person who Flanders harbors the most resentful feelings towards . After several failed scripted insults , Homer manages to get Ned to open up about some of his repressed dislikes , finally admitting he hates his parents , after which he immediately feels better . Upon hearing this , Dr. Foster declares Flanders cured and he is immediately released . Outside the hospital , Ned is greeted by the townsfolk of Springfield including the rest of the Simpsons and his family , who cheer him . Ned promises that from now on , if anyone does something he does not like , they will hear about it , which Dr. Foster tells him is very healthy . Ned then adds , " And if you really tick me off , I

'm gonna run you down with my car . " Homer responds by laughing and saying , " Ned , you so crazy ! " as he and Ned begin to laugh , before the end credits begin with a crazy clockwork version of The Simpsons theme .

= = Production = =

Steve Young , a writer for the Late Show with David Letterman , was brought in as a freelance writer to write this episode . The writers wanted to explore what made Flanders tick and examine what made him act the way he does . The original idea came from George Meyer , who had also wanted an episode about Flanders ' faith being tested . One of the key story points came from his friend Jack Handey , a writer for Saturday Night Live who wanted to do a sketch about a down on his luck shoemaker who is visited by a bunch of elves who help him , but make very bad shoes . Likewise , it inspired the idea that the neighbors would rebuild Flanders ' house , but do a bad job and provoke an outburst .

A caricature of John Swartzwelder can be seen shutting the door of a room in Calmwood Mental Hospital . Later in the episode , during the scene where the townsfolk are welcoming Ned back , someone can be seen holding a sign that says " Free John Swartzwelder . " During the sequence where Flanders yells at the town , a man with a ponytail and wearing a white shirt who is a caricature of Bob Anderson can be seen .

= = Cultural references = =

The scene at the beginning of the episode , in which the people of Springfield mob the Kwik-E-Mart , is based on the events of the 1992 Los Angeles riots . Todd is wearing a Butthole Surfers shirt ; however the censors only allowed " Buttho Surfers " . Jay Sherman from The Critic , who had previously appeared in " A Star Is Burns " , can also be seen in the mental hospital repeatedly saying his catchphrase , " It stinks " . The small door at the end of the hallway in Flanders ' rebuilt house echoes the improbably small hallway in the film Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory . Several scenes from the mental hospital were taken from the 1975 movie , One Flew Over the Cuckoo 's Nest .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Hurricane Neddy " finished 18th in ratings for the week of December 23 ? 29 , 1996 , with a Nielsen rating of 8 . 7 , equivalent to approximately 8 . 4 million viewing households . It was the second highest rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X-Files .

Marge 's line , " Dear God , this is Marge Simpson . If You stop this hurricane and save our family , we will be forever grateful and recommend You to all our friends , " was cited by journalist Mark Pinsky as an example of how " Simpson family members are both defined and circumscribed by religion . " Journalist Ben Rayner speculated that some fans , whom he called " nerds , " would want an explanation of " how Barney fit through that tiny door to the ' master bedroom ' in the rebuilt Flanders family home . "