

TV's Homer Simpson Gets a Chiropractic Referral

Matt Groening's "The Simpsons" has been entertaining people on Sunday evening television since 1990.

If longevity is the yardstick, "The Simpsons" is the most successful prime-time series on TV. The writing, often trenchant and funny, is laced with acerbic wit and parodies the current political and social happenings.

The show has poked fun at numerous people, and about every institution and profession imaginable. On January 17, it was chiropractic's turn. The episode, "Pokey Mom," had as a subplot Homer's visit to the MD for back pain. Here is most of the chiropractic dialogue from the program. (*Note: At press time, MPG clips of the episode were available at http://members.nbc.com/insandiego/simpson_episode.htm.)*

MD: Your spine is more twisted than Sinbad's take on marriage.

Homer: So, just give me some drugs and surgery.

MD: I'd love to, but to be honest, modern medicine has a lousy record of treating the back. We spend too much time on the front.

Homer: Yeah, there's some neat stuff on the front.

MD: I'm going to send you to my chiropractor.

Homer: Hey, I thought real doctors hated chiropractors.

MD: Well, that's our official stance, but between you and me and my golf clubs, they're miracle workers.

Homer goes to Dr. Steve the chiropractor, lies down on the adjusting table and immediately falls asleep. Dr. Steve awakens him:

Homer: Less yackin,' more crackin.'

Dr. Steve: We don't actually crack backs. It's merely an adjustment...OK, you're going to hear a loud cracking sound.

Homer: Hey, it feels a little better.

Dr. Steve: I thought it might. Now I need to see you three times a week for many years.

Home again, Homer hurts his back racking leaves and complains that Dr. Steve didn't help his back. Bart, his son, asks if he had been doing the exercises Dr. Steve prescribed. Homer, of course, hadn't followed the DC's instructions.

Meanwhile, Homer falls backward over his trashcan and dents it. The fall relieves his pain.

Bart: The trashcan must have unkinked your back.

Homer: That's not a trashcan, it's Dr. Homer's miracle spine-o-cylinder, patent pending.

Homer opens a clinic in his garage, treating patients, mostly friends from the local tavern, with the spinocylinder.

Patient: You think you can fix my sciatica?

Homer: I don't know what that is, so I'm going to say "yes."

His bedside manner is unorthodox. He tells the patient to go "limp." As he pushes the patient over the trashcan, which is on its side, he intones:

Homer: One, two, better not sue.

Patient: Hey it worked! My searing leg pain is now a gentle numbness.

Dr. Steve then appears at Homer's clinic.

Dr. Steve: Simpson, you're not a licensed chiropractor. You're taking patients away from me and Dr. Stephanie.

Homer: Boy, talk about irony. The AMA tries to drive you guys out of business; now you're doing the same to me. Think about the irony.

Dr. Steve grabs Homer around the neck.

Dr. Steve: You've been warned. Stop chiropracting!

But Homer continues to treat patients. Two strangers appear at the clinic.

Stranger: Excuse me, is this El Clinico Magnifico?

Homer: Ah, you saw our bus ad.

Stranger: We'd like to invest in your spinal adjusting device.

Homer: Hmm, we might be able to do business.

The strangers suddenly grab the trashcan. Homer pushes a button to lower the garage door, but the strangers throw the trashcan out and limbo under the door as it closes.

Homer: Hey, wait a minute. No investor could bend like that.

Patient: They're chiropractors!

Outside, the chiropractors pummel the trashcan with spines, toss the damaged can aside, and drive off.

Homer: They'll pay for what they did to my can.

Patient: Forget it, Homer. It's Chirotown.

