

Principal Skinner Story Pitch

By Bill Oakley & Josh Weinstein

- It's the morning of the big show & tell and Bart still doesn't have anything.
- Marge has some lousy suggestions
- At the last minute, Bart decides to bring the dog.
- At school, all the kids are incredibly excited that there's a dog in school.
- Everyone is constantly petting the dog, not paying any attention to anything else. No one pays any attention to the other show and tells.
- Groundskeeper Willie is also excited and we see him peering in the window excitedly. He makes some lame excuse to come into the classroom.
- The dog is also excited about all the attention it's getting.
- Mrs. Krabappel says the dog can stay if it's good, but kids won't stop looking at the dog, waiting for him to do something.
- So finally, Mrs. Krabappel puts Santa's Little Helper in the coat room in the back of the class. Everything seems fine.
- In that room, there's an open heating vent. We see that part of the vent goes to the kitchen and a delicious odor keeps wafting in and tempting the dog. The dog crawls into the vent.
- A while later the students start to hear loud metalling thumping and distant barking coming from the vents in the classroom. They run to look and the dog is gone.
- We cut to Lisa's classroom and we see the dog peering into the class from the overhead heating vent and barking happily. All the students point and get very excited.

- We follow the dog as he runs about, looking into other classes, the teacher's lounge, etc.
- By this time, the whole school has gotten very excited about the dog in the vents. The teachers futilely try to keep order. The dog, hearing all the excitement becomes very excited and begins to run about and bark even more.
- Skinner and Willie have an emergency meeting, Willie has some crazy suggestions, and they finally decide the only way to get the dog out without hurting him is to send Willie in after him. Willie goes into the vents with the school blueprints.
- There's a tense "Alien" parody as Willie roams cautiously through the vents trying to find the dog.
- The students go nuts as they hear barking and Willie running around and yelling.
- The school goes out of control and Skinner gets very agitated.
- Willie finally finds the dog in an area of the vents high above the gymnasium, the fire department has to come in to rescue them. Superintendent Chalmers is also on the scene.
- Skinner decides to send the kids home early. He's a wreck.
- Chalmers suggests that Skinner take a rest, he hasn't had a vacation in years and has never taken a sick day. Skinner decides maybe that's a good idea.
- The next morning at home, Homer is enthralled with the idea that the students got to go home early because of the dog. He wants to take the dog to work, but Marge is against it -- the dog has had too much excitement. He sneaks the cat out instead.
- At work, the petrified cat instantly runs under Homer's desk and won't come

out. No one cares that there's a cat at work.

- Skinner has an assembly where he tells the students he's going to take a sabbatical. While he's gone, the chairman of the PTA will fill in for him...Ned Flanders.

ACT TWO

- There's a PTA meeting where Flanders announces that while he's Principal, the Sergeant-at-Arms will fill in for him...Homer. Homer did not know he was Sergeant-at-Arms.

- A few scenes of the school under Ned. Krabappel and Hoover think he's kind of a fruitcake. Ned doesn't plan any big changes, just wants to hold the fort down while Skinner's gone.

- That afternoon, Bart is very surprised to see Skinner in the Quik-E-Mart, wearing jeans and a sport shirt. It's very disturbing to see Skinner out of the school context.

- Skinner tells Bart that he's pretty happy about his sabbatical -- he's been waiting 20 years for the opportunity to write the Great American Novel. He tells Bart his idea, which is 20 years out of date.

- It's hard for Skinner to stop thinking about the school and wants to know from Bart what's happening in his absence.

- A scene at home with Marge and Homer. He's doesn't know what he's supposed to do as head of the PTA.

- Willie comes in to see Flanders, hat in hand. He explains that he did not get along with Skinner and feels that's why he never got promoted out of his maintenance job. He wonders if Ned will give him a shot at an administrative job. Ned promotes him to a minor post.

- Meanwhile, Bart gets in trouble and has to go see Principal Flanders. He's sure that since Flanders is his neighbor, etc., that he'll be a pushover. He's

wrong. Ned gives him a reasonable, but firm, punishment. Bart is really burned up by this.

- That night, Bart complains to Homer, who hates the idea of Flanders having any control over his family. He tells him to ignore the punishment.
- Bart also sees Skinner, and blows the whole thing out of proportion.
- Skinner's intrigued and Bart begins to hang out a little with him. Maybe he goes to his house.
- At school, Bart gets in more trouble for ignoring Flanders' punishment.
- The next time Bart hangs out with Skinner, he really lays into Flanders and makes it seem like he's ruining the school. Skinner becomes very alarmed and says decisive action has to be taken.
- Skinner comes into the school and he sees Willie working at a desk in coat and tie. This is the last straw.
- He storms into Flanders office and does some very rash thing, maybe grabbing the microphone and making an announcement to the school or storms into the cafeteria or something.
- Chalmers is there with Flanders and sees/hears the whole thing. From Skinner's point of view, things are crazy. From everyone else's point of view, Skinner's crazy.
- Chalmers fires Skinner on the spot.

ACT THREE

- Skinner sees Bart and doesn't want to talk to him, either because he's ashamed or angry at Bart for giving him false information.
- Bart starts to feel guilty about the whole thing.

- Meanwhile, the matter of Bart's punishment is still not settled. And Flanders will remain principal until Skinner's replacement is found.

- Flanders calls Homer and Marge in to talk about Bart's disciplinary situation. Homer is very rude and can't stand the idea of him bossing him or Bart around.

- Homer tries to stir trouble up at the PTA over Flanders but can't really explain why Flanders is bad.

- Skinner is dejected. He's devoted his whole life to the school, his novel is going nowhere, he feels completely useless. Maybe he applies for other jobs, but they just don't work out.

- Out of anger, Homer uses his position of power to thwart Flanders' every move. He becomes a real thorn in Flanders' side.

- Bart finally confesses to Marge that he was responsible for Skinner getting fired. Marge feels they have to talk to Chalmers right away and Bart has to tell him what he did, so Skinner can have his job back.. Homer likes this too, because he wants Flanders out.

- Meanwhile, at the school, things are falling apart because of the tense situation. Everybody knows what the solution is, and frankly, Flanders didn't count on being Principal for this long and wants to return to his other job.

- Everyone goes to see Chalmers. If Bart just explains what he did, everything will be fine. He tells Chalmers. Chalmers says that does not explain why Skinner would be foolish enough to listen to a ten year old boy with a serious disciplinary problem. Everyone else chimes in, including Willie, who knows that it may mean the loss of his job, but it's the best thing for the wee ones.

- This really isn't a big thing to Chalmers. If everyone really wants this "Skimmer" back, fine, he's got forty other schools in his district to worry about.

- Homer and Bart go to tell Skinner the good news. At Skinner's house,

Skinner's mom says they're too late. He's decided to recapture the only thing that ever gave him pleasure besides the school -- he's re-enlisted in the army.

- Homer and Bart have to drive to the Army base to get Skinner. It is surprisingly easy for them to sneak in. They find Skinner on maneuvers and he is overjoyed to hear the good news.

- The next week, Skinner's back at school and everything's back to normal. Bart and Milhouse are acting up and are sent to the principal's office. Milhouse emerges with a stiff punishment. Bart goes in and comes out a second later with no punishment at all. Milhouse asks why. Bart says he found a little something at the post office that came in very handy. He shows him a wanted poster of Skinner, which reads "AWOL, Wanted for Desertion, Cpl. Seymour Skinner."

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