

= Blame It on Lisa =

" Blame It on Lisa " is the fifteenth episode of the thirteenth season of the American animated sitcom The Simpsons . In the episode , the Simpson family goes to Rio de Janeiro , Brazil in search of a Brazilian orphan named Ronaldo whom Lisa has been sponsoring . Lisa used to receive a letter from Ronaldo every month , but that recently stopped and according to personnel at the orphanage , he is missing . As the Simpsons search through Rio de Janeiro , Homer is kidnapped and in order to free him the family must pay a ransom of 50 @,@ 000 dollars , which they do not have . Lisa soon discovers that Ronaldo has been working in a flamingo costume on the children 's television series Teleboobies , which is the reason he left the orphanage . Ronaldo finally meets up with the Simpsons and gives them the 50 @,@ 000 dollars they need to rescue Homer .

Written by Bob Bendetson and directed by Steven Dean Moore , " Blame It on Lisa " features several references to popular culture , including a parody of the Brazilian children 's television host Xuxa and an allusion to the film A Trip to the Moon . When it originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on March 31 , 2002 , it was seen by around eleven million people . In 2010 , the episode was released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray along with the rest of the episodes of the thirteenth season .

" Blame It on Lisa " was controversial in Brazil because of its inclusion of clichés and stereotypes , and because the Brazilian culture was inaccurately mixed with the cultures of surrounding Latin American countries . Riotur , the tourist board of Rio de Janeiro , planned on suing Fox for damaging the international image of the city , which they thought was incorrectly portrayed as having rampant street crime , kidnappings , slums , and a rat infestation . James L. Brooks , executive producer of The Simpsons , soon issued an apology to Rio de Janeiro .

= = Plot = =

As Homer and Bart are watching The Itchy & Scratchy Show , Marge tells them that the telephone company has charged the family hundreds of dollars for making phone calls to Brazil . Homer and Marge decide to visit the company , thinking there has been a mistake . They meet with customer service representative Lindsey Naegle , who cuts off the family 's phone service after Homer tells her that he refuses to pay the bill . Homer attempts to connect illegally to the phone lines , but only succeeds in getting electrocuted at least 5 times and , when he regains consciousness on the couch , is told that he was found " smoldering in the bushes " . When Lisa finds out the reason the family no longer has phone service , she confesses that she has actually made calls to Brazil . She has been sponsoring an orphan named Ronaldo in the country and she used to receive a letter from him once every month until recently . Lisa called Ronaldo 's orphanage to find out what had happened and she was told he is missing . She shows her family a tape recorded by Ronaldo that she received after her first donation , in which Ronaldo thanks Lisa and tells her that with her money he has purchased a pair of dancing shoes for himself and the orphanage has been able to buy a door . Touched by the tape , the Simpsons decide to travel to Brazil to solve the mystery behind Ronaldo 's disappearance , leaving Maggie with Patty and Selma .

When the family arrives in Rio de Janeiro , they discover that they can get anywhere they want by joining a conga line . After dancing their way to the hotel , Bart turns on the television in their room and watches a children 's show called Teleboobies which Marge criticizes because of its sexual undertones . The Simpsons then head out to search for Ronaldo . First , they travel to the slums in Rio de Janeiro . According to Lisa , " The government just painted them bright colors so the tourists would not be offended . " In the slums , the family sees thousands of rats painted in various colors . They then reach Ronaldo 's orphanage , but the nun working there has no idea where he has gone . Later that day , as the Simpsons are having dinner at a restaurant , Lisa shows a map on which she has marked all the places Ronaldo likes to visit . She splits the map in two , giving one piece to Homer and Bart and keeping one piece for her and Marge . Homer and Bart first search through Copacabana Beach and then a market , where they are robbed by children , while Marge and Lisa visit a samba school . However , both duos are unsuccessful in finding Ronaldo so far . To get to

their last location , Homer and Bart take a taxi and are kidnapped at gunpoint by the taxi driver . However , Bart is able to get away and tell the rest of the family .

The taxi driver and his companion hold Homer hostage deep into the rainforest . They force Homer to make a phone call to Marge , telling her that if the family provides 50 @,@ 000 dollars to the kidnappers , he will be released . However , the Simpsons do not have enough money so they go looking for Homer instead . Walking through the streets of Rio de Janeiro , they run into a parade that features a Teleboobies float with characters from the show . Lisa is surprised to discover that Ronaldo is working inside the costume of the dancing flamingo from Teleboobies ? a well @-@ paid job he got after learning to dance with the shoes he bought with Lisa 's donation money . Ronaldo tells Lisa that he stopped writing to her because he did not know which state she lives in , since it was the orphanage that used to send his letters . Later , Ronaldo gives the Simpsons the money they need to save Homer . Meanwhile , Homer shows the kidnappers a scrapbook he made of his kidnapping memories . Apparently , he has developed Stockholm syndrome . The family and the kidnappers then meet up high over a valley near the Sugarloaf Mountain in two separate cable cars . The Simpsons toss the kidnappers their money , and when Homer jumps into his family 's cable car , the cables break , sending the family crashing into the mountainside and rolling down to the ground . They all survive unharmed , but Bart is then eaten whole by an anaconda . The episode ends with Bart dancing inside the snake to carnival music .

= = Background = =

" Blame It on Lisa " was written by Bob Bendetson and directed by Steven Dean Moore as part of the thirteenth season of The Simpsons (2001 ? 2002) . For the scenes taking place in Brazil , the animators based much of their work on photographs taken by a staff member who had previously visited the country . This episode is not the first in which the Simpsons travel to a location outside of the United States . Throughout the series , they have visited Australia , Canada , China , France , Israel , Japan , Ireland , and the United Kingdom . Their visit to Brazil in " Blame It on Lisa " was later referenced in the eighteenth season episode " The Wife Aquatic " (2007) , in which the family makes a trip to an island called Barnacle Bay that they discover has been devastated by overfishing . Lisa says to Bart : " This is the most disgusting place we 've ever gone , " to which Bart asks : " What about Brazil ? " Lisa corrects herself , responding : " After Brazil . "

Several references to popular culture are included in the episode . The title " Blame It on Lisa " refers to the 1984 film Blame It on Rio , which also takes place in Brazil . As Homer and Bart walk on Copacabana Beach , the famous 1939 song " Aquarela do Brasil " (also known as " Brazil ") is played . Teleboobies is a parody of the children 's television series Xuxa that attracted complaints because of the revealing outfits worn by the host , Brazilian actress and singer Xuxa . The name " Teleboobies " is a reference to the British television series Teletubbies . The Itchy & Scratchy cartoon that Homer and Bart watch at the beginning of the episode parodies Georges Méliès ' 1902 film A Trip to the Moon ; Itchy and Scratchy are playing golf when Itchy hits Scratchy 's head with his golf club , sending his head crashing into the Man in the Moon as the rocket does in the film . According to showrunner Al Jean , the staff members of The Simpsons asked American golfer Tiger Woods to do a guest appearance in this cartoon , but they were turned down .

= = Release = =

In its original broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on March 31 , 2002 , " Blame It on Lisa " received a 6 @.@ 3 Nielsen rating and was seen by approximately eleven million people . The episode finished forty @-@ third in the ratings for the week of March 25 ? 31 , 2002 , tying with a new episode of the comedy series George Lopez and the news program 48 Hours . In addition , it became the highest @-@ rated program on Fox that week . On August 24 , 2010 , " Blame It on Lisa " was released on DVD and Blu @-@ ray as part of the box set The Simpsons ? The Complete Thirteenth Season . Staff members Steven Dean Moore , Al Jean , Matt Groening , Matt Selman , Tim Long , John Frink , Don Payne , Joel H. Cohen , Matt Warburton , David Silverman , and Mike

B. Anderson participated in the DVD audio commentary for the episode .

Bendetsen was nominated for a Writers Guild of America Award in the animation category for his work on the episode , but lost to Ken Keeler , the writer of the Futurama episode " Godfellas " . Reception of " Blame It on Lisa " from television critics has been mixed . Casey Broadwater of Blu @-@ ray.com cited it as the best episode of the season . DVD Movie Guide 's Colin Jacobson argued that it was not as funny as some of the other episodes that have poked fun at nations . He added that the episode " musters the occasional laugh , and like much of [season thirteen] , it ? s not a bad show , but it ? s not a memorable one either . " DVD Verdict 's Jennifer Malkowski cited the scrapbook Homer made of his kidnapping memories as the highlight of the episode .

= = = Reaction in Brazil = = =

" Blame It on Lisa " was met with negative reception in Brazil shortly after its broadcast in the United States . According to The Washington Post , " an immediate media frenzy was born " as the episode started receiving coverage in local newspapers and news programs on Brazilian television . An article published in the Houston Chronicle on April 8 , 2002 stated that critics in the country were upset by the inclusion of clichés and stereotypes not related to Brazil , such as Brazilians having Spanish accents and wearing mustaches . The general Brazilian perception was that the episode mixed up their culture with that of surrounding Spanish @-@ speaking Latin American countries . Alex Bellos , The Guardian 's correspondent in Brazil , commented that one of the things upsetting the Brazilians was the many inaccuracies featured in the episode , such as the conga and the macarena being popular dances in Brazil ; the conga is actually a Caribbean dance , and the macarena does not come from Brazil nor is it frequently performed there .

On April 6 , 2002 , it was reported by the Brazilian media that Riotur , the tourist board of Rio de Janeiro , was planning on suing Fox for damaging the international image of the city . Riotur stated that Rio de Janeiro was portrayed in " Blame It on Lisa " as having rampant street crime , kidnappings , slums , and a rat infestation , and it was thought that this would discourage foreigners from visiting the city . Over a period of three years up to the airing of " Blame It on Lisa " in the United States , Riotur had spent US \$ 18 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 on a campaign to attract tourists to Rio de Janeiro . The tourist board now saw this as a waste of money since they believed the campaign was undermined by the portrayal of the city in the episode . Riotur 's planned lawsuit was supported by the Brazilian government , with president Fernando Henrique Cardoso stating that the episode " brought a distorted vision of Brazilian reality " .

Martin Kaste , South America correspondent for National Public Radio , reported on April 9 , 2002 that since their announcement that they were going to sue Fox , the Riotur officials had been told by their lawyers in the United States that it would be difficult to sue the episode there because of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution , which protects parodies . The Simpsons executive producer James L. Brooks soon issued a statement saying : " We apologize to the lovely city and people of Rio de Janeiro . And if that doesn 't settle the issue , Homer Simpson offers to take on the president of Brazil on Fox 's Celebrity Boxing . " Spokespersons for Fox told the press that they had not received nearly as much criticism with previous episodes that poked fun at other nations . Showrunner Al Jean has said in an interview that " Every other place has had a good sense of humor . Brazil caught us by surprise . " When " Blame It on Lisa " eventually aired in Brazil in December 2002 , there was a statement at the beginning noting that Fox is not responsible for the vision of the producers behind the episode .

A later episode , " You Don 't Have to Live Like a Referee " , has the family visiting Brazil again .