

= Das Bus =

" Das Bus " is the fourteenth episode of The Simpsons ' ninth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on February 15 , 1998 . In an extended parody of Lord of the Flies , Bart , Lisa and other children from Springfield Elementary School are stranded on an island and are forced to work together . Meanwhile , Homer founds his own Internet company . It was written by David S. Cohen and directed by Pete Michels . Guest star James Earl Jones narrates the final scene of the episode .

= = Plot = =

The Springfield Elementary School Model United Nations club is going on a field trip . On the bus , Bart , Nelson , Ralph , and Milhouse are playing a game by racing fruit down the aisle . Milhouse rolls a grapefruit that gets stuck under the brakes . When bus driver Otto attempts to press down on the pedal , it squirts juice into his eyes , causing him to lose control and drive the bus off a bridge .

Otto attempts to swim for help but ends up being swept away by the current and picked up by Chinese fishermen . The students swim to a nearby tropical island , where Bart tries to tell the children that being stranded on an island is fun . Reality soon sets in when the island is found to be largely barren and the children lack survival skills . With no food found on the island and no adult supervision , the children rely on snack food retrieved from the sunken bus by Bart. They awaken the next morning to find the snacks all gone . Suspecting Milhouse because of his pot @-@ belly and nacho cheese breath , the students put him on trial and he blames the loss on a mysterious island " monster " .

Back at home , Homer discovers that Ned Flanders has his own home @-@ based Internet business , and decides he wants to start his own company . His business is later dismantled by Bill Gates and his goons .

As there is insufficient evidence to prove Milhouse ate all the food , he is acquitted . The other students are not happy with this verdict and attempt to kill Milhouse , along with Bart and Lisa , who tried to intervene . The other students end up chasing them into a cave , where it is revealed that Milhouse 's " monster " is actually a wild boar . On one of the boar 's tusks is an empty bag of chips , revealing that it was the actual culprit for eating the snacks . The kids kill the boar and eat it ( except for Lisa , who adheres to her vegetarianism ) . The episode concludes with a comically obvious deus ex machina ending , narrated by James Earl Jones :

= = Production = =

The couch gag was suggested by Dan Castellaneta 's niece . The film True Lies was the inspiration for the bus crashing against the bridge . To get the fisherman 's Chinese correct , Cohen called his friend . When the Chinese actors came , the actors felt Cantonese would be more appropriate for the fisherman than Mandarin , so it was changed . Moe was picked to rescue the children , because the writers thought it was funny .

= = Cultural references = =

Most of the episode 's plot , namely a group of children trapped on an island and the breakdown of law , order and civility , is a reference to William Golding 's 1954 novel Lord of the Flies , but unlike the book , the children on the island are a limpidity . The title comes from the 1981 film Das Boot , although it would be " Der Bus " in German . When the children are squabbling in the classroom , Principal Skinner restores order by banging his shoe on the desk . Skinner 's actions are a reference to the shoe @-@ banging incident by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev at the UN in 1960 . When escaping from the other children , Bart , Lisa and Milhouse have to swing across a gap on a vine ; Milhouse goes across first , but refuses to throw the vine back in a reference to the opening scene of the 1981 film Raiders of the Lost Ark , where the same thing happens to Indiana Jones .

## == Reception ==

In its original broadcast , " Das Bus " finished 17th in ratings for the week of February 9 ? 15 , 1998 , with a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 9 , equivalent to approximately 9 @. @ 6 million viewing households . It was the third highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files and King of the Hill .

In a 2006 article in USA Today , " Das Bus " was highlighted among the six best episodes of The Simpsons season 9 , along with " Trash of the Titans " , " The Last Temptation of Krust " , " The Cartridge Family " , " Dumbbell Indemnity " , and " The Joy of Sect " . The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , called it a " fantastic episode " , adding : " Ignore the Internet business side , and wallow in the cleverness of the children trapped on the island . Bart has never been cleverer , Nelson more menacing , and Milhouse more geekish . Great stuff with a delightful ending that is so witty and obvious , that it 's annoying you never imagined they 'd get away with it . "

The episode has become study material for sociology courses at University of California , Berkeley , where it is used to " examine issues of the production and reception of cultural objects , in this case , a satirical cartoon show " , and to figure out what it is " trying to tell audiences about aspects primarily of American society , and , to a lesser extent , about other societies " . Some questions asked in the courses include : " What aspects of American society are being addressed in the episode ? What aspects of them are used to make the points ? How is the satire conveyed : through language ? Drawing ? Music ? Is the behavior of each character consistent with his / her character as developed over the years ? Can we identify elements of the historical / political context that the writers are satirizing ? What is the difference between satire and parody ? "