

= Lisa 's Date with Density =

" Lisa 's Date with Density " is the seventh episode of The Simpsons ' eighth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on December 15 , 1996 . It was written by Mike Scully , and directed by Susie Dietter . It sees Lisa develop a crush on Nelson Muntz , which eventually leads to Lisa and Nelson dating . It also was among the first episodes to feature Milhouse 's crush on Lisa , an element of the series ( along with Lisa 's vegetarianism ) to have spun off from " Lisa 's Wedding " .

= = Plot = =

At Springfield Elementary School , Superintendent Chalmers visits Principal Skinner to show off his newly purchased 1979 Honda Accord . However , he becomes distraught when he discovers the car 's hood ornament missing . Principal Skinner orders a search of every student 's locker , and it is discovered that Nelson Muntz is the culprit . As punishment , Nelson is forced to return all stolen items to their owners and help Groundskeeper Willie with his jobs around the school .

Mr. Largo catches Lisa looking outside at Nelson during a music lesson , and as a result is given detention . After school , she continues to watch Nelson and develops a crush on the bully .

Lisa tries to let Nelson know how she feels about him by getting Milhouse to pass a love note to him in class . However , the plan backfires , with Nelson seriously injuring Milhouse ( this is not seen , but Milhouse is seen being loaded into an ambulance ) , thinking the note came from him . Lisa admits that she wrote the letter and although Nelson seems indifferent about the matter he begins by visiting her house . Lisa is resolved to turn Nelson from a trouble maker into a sweet , sensitive young man . She changes his appearance by giving him new clothes and hairstyle . Later , Lisa and Nelson share their first kiss during their date at the Springfield Observatory .

However , the influence of Nelson 's friends Jimbo , Dolph and Kearney proves to win out when they convince him to come along with them and throw rancid coleslaw at Principal Skinner 's house . Skinner immediately phones the police , and the four flee . Nelson takes refuge with Lisa , proclaiming his innocence . Lisa believes him , until Nelson unwittingly lets the truth slip . Lisa realizes that Nelson is always going to be who he is and ends their relationship , much to the relief of an overjoyed Milhouse .

Meanwhile , Chief Wiggum arrests a scam artist for telemarketing fraud . Homer witnesses the arrest and sees the discarded autodialer in a nearby trash bin . Homer takes the autodialer home to use for tele @-@ panhandling .

Homer ends up annoying all of Springfield with his " Happy Dude " scam , and soon enough Chief Wiggum catches him . Instead of confiscating the autodialer and taking Homer into custody , he shoots it then gives Homer a citation and asks him to bring the autodialer with him ( although full of lead ) to his court hearing , otherwise there would be no case and Homer would be let off the hook . In the closing credits , however , Homer has recorded a new message telling everyone he scammed he is sorry and that if they can forgive him to send more money .

= = Production = =

The idea of Lisa dating Nelson had been around for a while , with several different versions being pitched . The writers wanted a " silly " Homer story to balance the episode out , and the idea of using the telemarketing scam for this had also been around for a while . By this time , the show had begun to have episodes revolving around secondary characters . This was the first episode to revolve around Nelson , and was done to partly explain why Nelson acts the way he does . The words to Nelson 's song were contributed by Mike Scully 's daughters . The scene in which Milhouse passes Lisa 's note to Nelson was written by Bill Oakley , with the line " He can 't hear you , we had to pack his ears with gauze " being George Meyer 's line . There was a debate as to how injured Milhouse could look without it looking disturbing , and the drop of blood coming from his nose was decided to be enough . Milhouse liking Vaseline on toast was based on a child from Josh Weinstein 's school

days who everyday would get on to the bus with a piece of toast , which had Vaseline on it .

= = Cultural references = =

A majority of the story is a reference to the film *Rebel Without a Cause* . Lisa remarks Nelson is " like a riddle wrapped in an enigma wrapped in a vest , " a reference to " a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma " ; this was Winston Churchill 's opinion of Russia at the outbreak of the World War II .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " Lisa 's Date with Density " finished 63rd in ratings for the week of December 9 ? 15 , 1996 , with a Nielsen rating of 7 @. @ 4 , equivalent to approximately 7 @. @ 2 million viewing households . It was the fifth @- @ highest @- @ rated show on the Fox network that week , following *The X @- @ Files* , *Melrose Place* , *Beverly Hills , 90210* and *Party of Five* .

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 " impressive " how " even after Nelson has beaten him [ Milhouse ] up for apparently making a pass , [ Milhouse ] will still do anything for uncaring Lisa . " Josh Weinstein called it one of the most " real " episodes , commenting that every character in the episode , from Superintendent Chalmers to Lisa , acts like a real person throughout . The medic 's line " He can 't hear you , we had to pack his ears with gauze " is one of Matt Groening 's favorites . Marge 's line " When I first met your father , he was loud , crude and piggish . But I worked hard on him , and now he 's a whole new person , " is one of Susie Dietter 's favorites , as it explains why Marge is still married to Homer despite his actions .

This is also one of several episodes that has been performed live by the cast in front of an audience .