

= The Call of the Simpsons =

" The Call of the Simpsons " is the seventh episode of The Simpsons ' first season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on February 18 , 1990 . It was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Wesley Archer . Albert Brooks made his first guest appearance on The Simpsons in this episode as the voice of Cowboy Bob .

In this episode , Homer decides to purchase an RV and the Simpsons set off for a vacation in the wilderness . After accidentally driving it off the edge of a cliff , the family find themselves trapped in the woods . As Homer and Bart try to find a way back to civilization , Homer gets himself covered in mud and is mistaken for Bigfoot by a naturalist . The news about the encounter spreads quickly and Bigfoot hunters converge on the woods to capture Homer . Meanwhile , Maggie finds herself separated from the family and raised by bears .

= = Plot = =

Homer , envious of Ned Flanders 's new motor home , goes to Bob 's RV Round @-@ up to buy one of his own , but because of his poor credit rating , he is only qualified for a smaller dilapidated one , much to his family 's disgust . Thrilled with the new RV , Homer takes his family on an excursion . Driving on remote back roads and ignoring Marge 's suggestion to turn back on the main road , the Simpsons find themselves teetering over a precipice . The family escapes the RV before it plummets over the cliff , leaving themselves stranded in the wilderness .

Homer and Bart set out for help , unaware that Maggie is tagging along , while Marge and Lisa stay behind . Separated from Homer and Bart , Maggie is soon adopted by a family of bears . Meanwhile , Homer and Bart plummet into a raging river where they lose their clothes , but hide their nakedness with leaves and mud . Marge and Lisa make themselves comfortable by a campfire , while the boys freeze in the wilderness . The next day , Homer tries to steal honey from a beehive , only to be attacked by the bees , but evades them by jumping into a mud pit . A nature photographer takes a picture of Homer covered in mud , mistaking him for Bigfoot , and soon the forest is inundated with Bigfoot enthusiasts and reward seekers .

Marge , having been rescued along with Lisa by park rangers , identifies the monster in question as her husband and causing quite a controversy . Cold , hungry , and exhausted , Homer and Bart stumble upon the cave housing Maggie and the bears . Homer is soon captured and taken to a lab for testing . The authorities allow Homer to return home after scientists agree that he is " either a below @-@ average human being or a brilliant beast . " While watching the news coverage of the whole debacle , Homer worries about the insults he 'll receive from his co @-@ workers , until Marge consoles him , calling him " my brilliant beast . "

= = Production = =

The episode was written by John Swartzwelder and directed by Wesley Archer . A plot twist that involved Homer being carried away to an eagle nest and being raised as a baby eagle was suggested for this episode by executive producer James L. Brooks , but they ended up going with Maggie being raised by bears instead . The sequence with Marge and Lisa by the bonfire was originally longer and included a conversation between the two about boys , but it was cut from the episode . In the original script , Homer and Bart were not talking in the scene where they concealed their private parts with mud and moss , but Sam Simon thought it would be " too funny to leave as a stage direction " and they added dialogue to the scene .

Albert Brooks guest starred in the episode as the voice of Cowboy Bob . He was not sure if he wanted to be identified with a cartoon show or not at the time , like many of the other early guest stars on The Simpsons , and was therefore credited as A. Brooks in the ending credits . This episode was a satire of the Bigfoot specials that had aired on the Fox network at the time when this episode was written . A lot of resources were spent on the backgrounds in the episode , trying to make them look realistic with many observational details such as trees , rocks , fences and the way

the cars were positioned . Burger King figurines were made out of the camping designs of the Simpsons family in this episode .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on February 18 , 1990 , " The Call of the Simpsons " finished third place in the ratings for that day , with a Nielsen rating of 14 @. @ 6 and a 22 percent audience share . The episode was nominated for an Emmy Award in 1990 in the category " Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Comedy Series or a Special " . IGN.com named Albert Brooks ' guest performance in this episode , along with his four other appearances on The Simpsons , the best guest appearance in the show 's history .

" The Call of the Simpsons " received mixed reviews from critics . Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , the authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , both criticized and praised the episode saying : " This episode is a bit less than the sum of its parts . The early stuff at the RV Round @-@ Up is much better than the main camping story , although there 's some nice Marge @-@ Lisa bonding , and who could resist Maggie and the bears ? " In a DVD review of the first season , David B. Grelck gave the episode a rating of 1 @. @ 5 / 5 , adding " the surrealism of Homer as bigfoot is a major misstep . This type of gag would be very different today , if done at all . " Jon Bonné at MSNBC called the episode " a perfect example of the first season 's bizarre and fruitful balance between edgy humor and softly @-@ drawn neuroses " and stated that " it was this combination that made Groening 's shorts for the Ullman show so compelling , and ultimately what made it possible for The Simpsons to break the molds of network television . " Colin Jacobson at DVD Movie Guide said in a review that " while [the episode] doesn 't offer the continuous highs of the best Simpsons , it 's a generally solid show " and added that " the episode uses a wackier tone than usual for this era , but it works , and the program is consistently fun " .