

= Make Room for Lisa =

" Make Room for Lisa " is the sixteenth episode of The Simpsons ' tenth season . It first aired on the Fox network in the United States on February 28 , 1999 . In the episode , while visiting the Smithsonian expedition , Homer Simpson meets a businesswoman who convinces him to build a cell phone tower in the Simpsons house , making it take up Lisa 's room . Lisa is forced to share Bart 's room , but the stress of living in the same room as Bart gives her stomach aches . Homer and Lisa decide to visit a New Age store , where the owner convinces them to go on a spiritual journey by lying in a sensory deprivation tank for a prolonged amount of time .

" Make Room for Lisa " was written by Brian Scully and was the first full The Simpsons episode Matthew Nastuk directed , having received a co @-@ director credit for " D 'oh @-@ in ' in the Wind " , for which he directed one scene . The episode 's subplot , which revolves around Marge listening in on phone calls using a baby monitor , was inspired by former showrunners Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein , who also listened to private phone calls with a monitor . The episodes contains references to the American sitcom All in the Family , and advises children to be accepting of their parents . On its original broadcast , the episode was seen by approximately 7 @. @ 6 million viewers , finishing in 52nd place in the ratings the week it aired . Following the home video release of The Simpsons - The Complete Tenth Season , " Make Room for Lisa " received mixed reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

Homer participates in a KBBL @-@ sponsored drinking contest at P.J. O 'Harrigan 's , an Irish pub , and wins the trophy and title of " Sir Drinks @-@ A @-@ Lot " . Once sober , Marge reminds Homer of his promise to spend one Saturday a month with the children . Much to Homer 's chagrin , Bart traded his turn to choose with Lisa for her dessert , and Lisa suggests that the family go to the traveling Smithsonian Institution exhibit . Homer attempts to punish Bart for giving his turn to Lisa by forbidding him to have any dessert , but this backfires when Bart makes another deal to give his turn to Lisa in exchange for her dessert again , much to Homer 's discomfort . They arrive at the exhibit , which is sponsored by a cell phone company called OmniTouch , has Abraham Lincoln 's hat , Fonzie 's jacket , Archie Bunker 's chair , and the Bill of Rights , which is ruined when Homer reads it with chocolate @-@ covered hands . In an attempt to lick it clean he licks off the section that forbids cruel and unusual punishment . Homer is unable to pay the \$ 10 @, @ 000 repair bill and so Omnitouch installs a cellular transmitter on the roof of his house , with the control equipment in Lisa 's room . Lisa moves in with Bart , but she is overwhelmed when Bart has made up rules and noises distract her from her homework .

When Lisa develops stomach aches , she visits Dr. Hibbert , who suggests he could prescribe ' harsh Antacids ' but says herbal tea could also work . Lisa wants the tea but Homer , scoffs at the tea and demands the antacids . While leaving the office Lisa has had enough and snaps at her father for belittling everything she believes in . When Lisa sees how she upset him , she says that they are just too different and will eventually drift apart . To make things up to her , Homer takes her to a local New Age store which introduces Homer and Lisa to water @-@ filled sensory deprivation tanks , where they experience their own spiritual journey . On her journey , Lisa sees herself from Homer 's perspective , reprimanding him for snoring during a ballet recital . Lisa realizes that despite his boorish personality , Homer loves Lisa enough to take her to events and places that he does not personally like just so she can be happy . Meanwhile , a pair of repo men start to clean out the store despite the lease not being up for months , taking the tank that Homer is in . Homer 's " journey " becomes a real one , as his tank falls out of the back of the van . Mistaken by the Flanders ' as a coffin , they bury him , only for the tank to fall through the soil and into a pipe where it is washed up onto the beach . Chief Wiggum finds it and returns it to the store . Lisa decides to go and do something they both enjoy . But they end up at a demolition derby together , even though Homer is the only fan .

Meanwhile , Maggie 's baby monitor receives transmission from the cellular tower . Rather than

report this to Omnitouch , Marge becomes obsessed with eavesdropping on private calls . Eventually Bart and Milhouse play a prank on Marge by making her think that an escaped convict was attempting to break into the house . Marge smashes the baby monitor on Milhouse 's head when he opens the door , knocking him out , but when Marge scolds Bart for the prank , he rebukes that it was a fair punishment for eavesdropping , to which Marge reluctantly agrees .

= = Production = =

" Make Room for Lisa " was written by Brian Scully and was the first full episode Matthew Nastuk directed for The Simpsons . Nastuk had previously received a credit for " D 'oh @-@ in In the Wind " , which he directed one scene for . " Make Room for Lisa " was also the second episode about Homer and Lisa that Scully wrote for the series , the first one being " Lost Our Lisa " from the previous season . " Make Room for Lisa " was first broadcast on the Fox network in the United States on February 28 , 1999 . When writing the episode , the Simpsons writing staff debated what to do with Lisa after her room had been rebuilt . Brian Scully eventually pitched that Lisa and Bart would have to share a room together , as it would , according to staff writer Matt Selman , comment on the feeling of having to share a room with a sibling , and how it would " incredibly suck . " The writers then wrote the episode around that plot point .

Near the beginning of the episode , Homer takes part in , and wins , KBBL 's drinking contest . In the next scene , Homer is seen fallen out of his car , and waken up by Marge . The scene was inspired by Scully 's brother Mike Scully , who , during a date , saw his date 's father " drunk and passed out " on her lawn , in the same pose as Homer in the scene . The episode 's subplot revolves around Marge , who listens to phone calls by picking up their frequencies with a baby monitor . The storyline was based on former Simpsons showrunners Bill Oakley and Josh Weinstein , who also used to pick up listen to other people 's phone calls through airwave signals . At one point in the episode , Marge overhears a conversation between Moe Szyslak and Lenny Leonard . Originally , the conversation would be between two women , but the writers thought it would be " too cliché " to show women gossiping , and changed it to Moe and Lenny instead . While inside the isolation tank , Homer gets bored and starts singing " Witch Doctor " by Armenian @-@ American singer David Seville . According to Mike Scully , the Simpsons staff had to pay the song 's record company \$ 100 000 for the rights to use the tune in the episode . The episode features a " prototype " of what would become the recurring character Lindsey Naegle , who is voiced by American actress Tress MacNeille .

= = Themes and cultural references = =

Throughout the series , Homer and Lisa 's relationship is problematic , as Homer often struggles to understand Lisa , who in many ways is a little girl but who is also smarter than him . Karma Waltonen and Denise Du Vernay analyzed " Make Room for Lisa " in their book *The Simpsons in the classroom : Embiggening the Learning Experience with the Wisdom of Springfield* . They wrote that in the episode , Homer and Lisa 's relationship is badly damaged after Homer allows Lisa 's room to be turned into a cell phone tower . When the two enter sensory @-@ deprivation tanks , Lisa has several hallucinations , including one in which she becomes Homer . This experience shows Lisa how she appears from Homer 's point of view , and makes her realize that her treatment of Homer is hurtful , as he often participates in activities with her that he does not enjoy . The episode ends with Homer and Lisa watching a demolition derby , which Lisa enjoys because she is spending time with Homer . The episode advises children to be accepting of their parents , who " do the best [they] can " to raise them .

The American sitcom *All in the Family* has provided much influence for the comedy in *The Simpsons* , as John Alberti writes in his book *Leaving Springfield : the Simpsons and the possibility of oppositional culture* . He wrote that the series influence on *The Simpsons* is " acknowledged quite openly in the program itself , " and used a scene in " Make Room for Lisa " as an example . The scene shows Homer , Bart and Lisa visiting the Smithsonian Exhibition , where a jacket worn by

Fonzie , a character from another 70 's series , Happy Days , receives more attention from visitors than the Bill of Rights . It does however catch the attention of Homer , who picks it up and reads it while sitting in a wing chair owned by Archie Bunker , a character from All in the Family . Homer is accosted by two security guards , who assault him using , according to Alberti , " the kind of language we have learned to accept from the erstwhile occupant of that chair [Bunker] . " Homer and the two guards have the following exchange :

Alberti opines that , rather than denying All in the Family 's influence on The Simpsons , the series writers " mockingly embrace [s] it " by having Homer visually likened to Bunker as he sits on his chair . Alberti also noted that one of the security officer 's use of the word " pinko " , a term used for a person who is regarded as sympathetic towards communism , is " ironic " as it was used by Bunker , whose chair Homer is sitting in . When the other officer complains about citizens " hiding behind the Bill of Rights " , Homer shields himself from the officers blows with the actual manuscript , making the officer 's previous statement literal .

= = Reception = =

In its original American broadcast on February 28 , 1999 , " Make Room for Lisa " received a 7 @. @ 6 rating , according to Nielsen Media Research , translating to approximately 7 @. @ 6 million viewers . The episode finished in 52nd place in the ratings for the week of February 22 ? 28 , 1999 , tied with a new episode of the CBS documentary and news program 48 Hours . On August 7 , 2007 , the episode was released as part of The Simpsons - The Complete Tenth Season DVD box set . Mike Scully , George Meyer , Ian Maxtone @-@ Graham , Ron Hauge , Matt Selman and Mike B. Anderson participated in the DVD 's audio commentary of the episode .

Following its home video release , " Make Room for Lisa " received mixed reviews from critics . Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood of I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide described the episode as having " two distinct halves , although the second far outweighs the first . " They added that Homer 's adventure in the sensory deprivation tank was " inspired , " in its " almost Keystone Kop humour as he gets from point A to point B and so on , finally getting back to point A none the wiser . " They concluded their review by calling the episode " classic . " Colin Jacobson of DVD Movie Guide gave the episode a mixed review , and described its main plot as " feeling a bit stale . " He felt that there were already several episodes dedicated to Homer and Lisa 's problematic relationship , and that " Make Room for Lisa " " doesn 't do much to expand that theme . " However , he described the episode 's subplot as " interesting , " and wrote " Marge 's fascination with intercepted cell phone calls amuses . " He concluded his review by describing the episode as " pretty average . " DVD Town 's James Plath gave the episode a mixed review as well , calling it " okay . " Digital Entertainment News ' Jake MacNeill described it as a " retread " of earlier episodes , and considered it to be one of the season 's worst episodes .