

= The Springfield Files =

" The Springfield Files " is the tenth episode of The Simpsons ' eighth season . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on January 12 , 1997 . The episode sees Homer believe he has discovered an alien in Springfield . It was written by Reid Harrison and directed by Steven Dean Moore . Leonard Nimoy guest stars as himself and David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson guest star as Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully , their characters on The X @-@ Files . The episode serves as a crossover with The X @-@ Files and features numerous references to the series . The story came from former showrunners Al Jean and Mike Reiss , who returned to produce this episode while under contract at Disney . It received mostly positive reviews from critics ; Jean and Reiss won an Annie Award for producing it .

= = Plot = =

Leonard Nimoy begins the episode hosting a show about alien encounters . He talks about an encounter in a town called Springfield .

At Moe 's on a Friday night , Homer drinks ten beers , and after insisting he takes a breathalyzer test where Homer reaches " Boris Yeltsin " level , Moe declares that he is drunk and will not let him drive . Homer decides to walk home , but takes a wrong path and ends up in the woods . In a clearing , he sees a glowing thin @-@ boned alien . Although the alien says " Don 't be afraid " , Homer panics and runs home screaming .

The rest of the family do not believe Homer 's story , believing it to be a drunken hallucination , and his attempts to report the alien sighting to the local police are dismissed . Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully of the FBI hear of the sighting and go to investigate . After receiving no results from their psychological tests of him (which involved Homer making a polygraph explode and jogging on a treadmill (which served no purpose other than Scully wanting Homer to lose weight) , Homer fails to provide any proof that he actually did see an alien , including bringing the agents to the clearing where he saw the alien , which only succeeds in coming across a lost and confused Grampa . Homer is ridiculed by most of the neighborhood ; even Marge refuses to believe in his claims and demands he forget about it , but Bart admits that he does believe what Homer is saying . The next Friday night , the pair camp out in the forest . The alien arrives and promises peace , but Homer scares it away when he accidentally steps on their camp fire and screams in pain . Fortunately , Bart captured the entire incident on tape , and Homer thanks him , cheering for the evidence of the alien in their hands .

Leonard Nimoy tells the viewers goodnight . He is then reminded that the show still has ten minutes left by an off @-@ screen Squeaky Voiced Teen , at which point he runs to his car and leaves . The Squeaky Voiced Teen takes over the narrating duties .

Following the successful capture of the alien 's existence , Homer and Bart present it to the media . Although Bart 's tape is only three seconds long and is mostly static , everyone in town finally believes Homer , including Marge , who apologizes to Homer for doubting him . Lisa , on the other hand , refuses to believe this and maintains that there should be a more logical explanation . Friday comes again and everyone , including Leonard Nimoy and Agent Scully , goes to the forest . Sure enough , the alien appears again , promising love . The townspeople begin to riot , and charge at the alien . Lisa and Waylon Smithers stop them just in time , showing that the " alien " is actually Mr. Burns . Smithers explains that Burns receives longevity treatment once a week in order to cheat death for a further seven days ; this leaves him twisted and disoriented , as well as giving him a soft , high pitched voice as a result of a vocal cord scraping . Back to his normal self , Burns reveals that his green glow is due to many years of working in his nuclear plant , and then renounces his promises of peace and love and instead says that he now intends to bring fear , famine and pestilence , shortly before receiving another booster injection from Dr. Nick . He instantly reverts to his " alien " self ; he begins to sing " Good Morning Starshine " , with the entire crowd (including Mulder , Scully , and Chewbacca) joining in as the sun rises over the clearing . Squeaky @-@ voiced Teen closes the episode by telling the viewers to watch the skies (he momentarily

mispronounced it as skis) .

= = Production = =

The episode was produced by Al Jean and Mike Reiss , who had served as showrunners of seasons three and four . They returned to the show to produce this and several other episodes while under contract at The Walt Disney Company . The episode was written by Reid Harrison and directed by Steven Dean Moore . It had one of the longest episode gaps between its conception to the time it was finished . The idea was first conceived at a story retreat . Jean found a copy of TV Guide while in the bathroom , with The X @-@ Files on the cover . Feeling a crossover would be a good idea , he came back into the room , told Reiss his idea , and the pair pitched it . None of the other staff wanted to do it , so Reiss and Jean decided to do it themselves . Before the episode was produced the script was sent to Chris Carter , the creator of The X @-@ Files , who said that it was an " honor " to be satirized by The Simpsons . Al Jean was worried that the episode was not funny , as at the table reading there were only a few of the writers present and as such , the script got no laughs at all . It took a long time to come up with an ending , and an explanation for the alien . Originally it was just going to be left as a mystery . Mulder and Scully 's office was designed to be exactly the same as the one used in The X @-@ Files . After it had been finished , Fox sent the episode out for a critical review , which was " really great " . The scene with the " Homer is a dope " T @-@ shirts originally had an extra line : " I told you , we 're sold out ! " , thus filling in the plot error in the actual episode in which Homer asks for some T @-@ shirts , despite just being told that they were sold out . The scene after Homer 's first encounter with the alien , in which he runs through a field writing " Yahhh ! " in the grass was written by David M. Stern , and added in after the original read through .

= = Cultural references = =

The Leonard Nimoy segments are a send @-@ up of the paranormal documentary series In Search Of ... , which Nimoy hosted .

In addition to the appearances of Mulder and Scully , the episode features several other references to The X @-@ Files .

Mulder 's FBI badge has a picture of himself only wearing a speedo on it ; this is a reference to a scene in The X @-@ Files episode " Duane Barry " in which David Duchovny wore just a speedo .

Also , in the scene where Scully gives Homer a lie detector test , The Smoking Man is in the background .

At one point , Mulder begins a lengthy monologue (leading Scully to roll her eyes and walk away) including a reference to " the unsolved mysteries of Unsolved Mysteries . "

The Budweiser Frogs appear in the swamp , chanting their names , " Bud ... Weis ... Er . " They are then eaten by an alligator who growls " Coors ! " .

Homer 's suggestion that he and Bart fake an alien encounter and sell it to the Fox network is an allusion to the Alien Autopsy hoax.As Homer recounts his experience to Chief Wiggum , he recalls the alien having a sweet , heavenly voice and appearing every Friday night " like Urkel " , from the ABC / CBS sitcom Family Matters .

Homer , when asked by the agents about his pre @-@ sighting activities , falsely describes an evening in which he with members of the gentlemen 's club played a game of backgammon while discussing Wittgenstein . Such reference alludes to the Cambridge Moral Sciences Club , an elite club where Wittgenstein dominated in discussions to the extent of provoking fellow philosopher , Karl Popper , by brandishing a red @-@ hot poker at him (according to Popper) .

There are also numerous film references .

Marvin the Martian , Gort from The Day the Earth Stood Still (1951) , Chewbacca , ALF , and one of the Kang and Kodos siblings make up the FBI line @-@ up .

The music played by the Springfield Philharmonic comes from Psycho (1960) .

The narration sequences are based on Plan 9 from Outer Space (1959) .

In one chapter title , the phrase " All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy " being printed out ad infinitum is a reference to The Shining (1980) .

Mr. Largo conducts five of his students in playing the famous five @-@ note tones from Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977) with marching band instruments .

Homer recounts seeing Speed (1994) , but believes it was called " The Bus That Couldn 't Slow Down " .

Milhouse plays a Kevin Costner 's Waterworld arcade game , moving just a few steps before having to insert another forty quarters , a reference to the budget overrun on Kevin Costner 's 1995 film Waterworld .

= = Reception = =

In its original broadcast , " The Springfield Files " finished 26th in ratings for the week of January 6 ? 12 , 1997 , with a Nielsen rating of 11 @.@ 7 , equivalent to approximately 11 @.@ 3 million viewing households . It was the third @-@ highest @-@ rated show on the Fox network that week , following The X @-@ Files and the series premiere of King of the Hill .

Al Jean and Mike Reiss won the Annie Award for Best Individual Achievement : Producing in a TV Production for their work on the episode . The authors of the book I Can 't Believe It 's a Bigger and Better Updated Unofficial Simpsons Guide , Warren Martyn and Adrian Wood , said that it was " a very clever episode , with the line @-@ up one of the best visual gags in ages . " IGN.com ranked Leonard Nimoy 's performance in this episode , and " Marge vs. the Monorail " , as the 11th @-@ best guest appearance in the show 's history . Total Film 's Nathan Dittum ranked Duchovny and Anderson 's performances as the fourth @-@ best guest appearances in the show 's history . Skeptical Inquirer reviewed the episode positively , stating that " It 's rare that a popular , prime @-@ time network television show turns out to be a " slam dunk " for skeptics . " Critic Chris Knight speculated that if The X @-@ Files is one day forgotten , those who see this episode will probably still appreciate the scene with ALF , Chewbacca , and Marvin the Martian .