

= Too Short a Season =

" Too Short a Season " is the 16th episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : The Next Generation . It first aired on February 8 , 1988 , in broadcast syndication . The teleplay was written by Michael Michaelian and D. C. Fontana , based on a story by Michaelian , and the episode was directed by Rob Bowman .

Set in the 24th century , the series follows the adventures of the crew of the Starfleet starship Enterprise @-@ D. In this episode , the Enterprise transports the elderly Admiral Mark Jameson (Clayton Rohner) to deal with a hostage negotiation on the planet Mordan IV . Jameson took a drug to reverse his aging , and must defuse the situation with a former adversary .

During re @-@ writes of the script by Fontana , various elements introduced by Michaelian were changed , including the ending . Guest stars included Michael Pataki , who had appeared in the Star Trek : The Original Series episode " The Trouble with Tribbles " . Reviews were mixed , with particular criticism directed at the acting of Clayton Rohner as Admiral Jameson .

= = Plot = =

The Federation starship Enterprise , under the command of Captain Jean @-@ Luc Picard (Patrick Stewart) , brings aboard the elderly Admiral Mark Jameson and his wife Anne (Marsha Hunt) on request of Karnas (Michael Pataki) , the Governor of Mordan IV . Karnas warns that a dissident terrorist group has taken a Federation Ambassador and his staff hostage , and demand to speak to a negotiator . Jameson had negotiated a previous settlement on Mordan IV . As the ship travels to Mordan IV , they find that Jameson is becoming stronger and more able to move about on his own , and is no longer showing signs of the terminal Iverson 's Disease he was known to have before he was beamed aboard . The crew discovers that Jameson has been taking an array of drugs to reverse the aging process over the last two years , and only recently has taken an overdose of the drugs to prepare himself for the negotiations . Jameson begins to appear younger and full of energy , but has frequent pains as a result of the overdose . By the time they are nearing Mordan , Jameson now appears as a young adult .

As they approach the planet , Jameson begins audio communication with Karnas to learn more of the situation , but soon discovers that it is Karnas himself that has taken the Federation staff . Karnas reminds Jameson that his treachery during their last encounter on Mordan IV resulted in years of war . Against the advice of Picard , Jameson devises plans to rescue the hostages by transporting the away team , now including the captain , to the tunnels beneath Karnas ' mansion , where Jameson believes the hostages are being held . Picard privately confronts Jameson about Karnas ' motives . Jameson reveals that in the past , Karnas had captured a Federation starliner in revenge for the death of his father by another local tribe . Jameson had negotiated for the passengers ' release by giving Karnas what he demanded , a supply of Federation weapons . However , Jameson , in his interpretation of the Prime Directive , also supplied the warring tribes with an equal number of weapons . Jameson had thought this would only lead to a short @-@ lived skirmish , and had not expected a war that would last over forty years . Jameson is now insistent on correcting his past mistake and thus took the reverse aging drug in order to be at his best .

In orbit , the Enterprise crew and Jameson beam down into the tunnels beneath Karnas ' manor , but find that their arrival was anticipated and face off against armed guards . Jameson collapses during the fight , and the crew beams back to the Enterprise , where they discover Jameson was not shot but instead the reverse aging drug is destroying his body . Karnas demands to see Jameson or he will kill a hostage every 15 minutes . Picard opts to beam himself , Dr. Crusher (Gates McFadden) , Jameson , and eventually Jameson 's wife Anne directly to Karnas ' office . Though Karnas initially refuses to believe that the young man is Jameson , Picard shows him the images of his reverse aging over the last few days after which Jameson reveals a scar on his wrist inflicted by Karnas years ago . Karnas prepares to fire on Jameson to get his revenge , but decides to get his revenge by watching Jameson suffer and die horribly from the drug instead . Jameson dies shortly afterward in his wife 's embrace . Karnas agrees to let the hostages go , and to allow Jameson to be

buried on Mordan IV at Anne 's request .

= = Production = =

Writer Michael Michaelian originally pitched a story idea based on andropause , sometimes referred to as " male menopause " . He wrote a treatment and first draft script involving reverse aging . D. C. Fontana later explained that the terrorist MacGuffin (an ambiguous but central plot point) was not quite right . Fontana was brought in to overhaul the ending , and explained that a " lot of what I put in at the end was also in Michael 's story and drafts , but approached with a different emphasis " . One significant alteration she made was to change the plot from involving actual terrorists to a trap that the crew must defuse . The original ending also had the two opposing parties on the planet sit down for peace talks with Jameson surviving the effects of the de @-@ aging drugs . He would have been reduced in age to fourteen and could no longer remember his wife .

Clayton Rohner was cast as Admiral Mark Jameson . Prior to filming , Rohner and director Rob Bowman worked together on weekends on the characterisation of Jameson . Bowman criticised the style of the script , describing it as " sit @-@ and @-@ tell " . He also had a variety of problems with the wheelchair used in this episode which cost \$ 10 @,@ 000 to construct . It was referred to by plot designer Joe Longo as the " big albatross " , and when a wheelchair was required for the Deep Space Nine episode " Melora " they instead created a much simpler version . Karnas was played by Michael Pataki , who had previously portrayed the Klingon Korax in The Original Series episode " The Trouble with Tribbles " .

Make @-@ up supervisor Michael Westmore had previously used makeup to age DeForest Kelley in the season premiere " Encounter at Farpoint " , but " Too Short a Season " proved a unique challenge as four stages of make @-@ up were required to show Admiral Jameson de @-@ aging . The initial stage to show Jameson at his oldest , involved Rohner wearing a bald @-@ cap and wig plus latex prosthetics applied to his eyes , forehead , throat and jowls . That stage took up to four hours to apply to the actor . Westmore found himself worn out by the volume of work during this episode , as at the time the make @-@ up team on the series included just him and Werner Keppler . On the second day of shooting the first stage make @-@ up , Westmore arrived after Rohner had been in make @-@ up for three hours only to find that he was only half finished . Keppler and Westmore rushed to get him so as not to delay the filming of the episode . Bowman later criticised the make @-@ up used on Rohner , describing it as sub @-@ par . Westmore said that " if I was working on a film , and had several months to test Clayton 's make @-@ up beforehand , it probably would have turned out more to my liking . With less than a week to work with , I don 't think it turned out too badly . "

" Too Short a Season " marked the last time a cityscape would be built as a model for the show until the sixth season episode " Birthright " . They were instead replaced with matte paintings . Phasers from The Original Series and movies , along with a staff from " The Last Outpost " were used to decorate Karnas ' office .

CURIOSITY ? Seems that humans in 24th Century do not bother about accessibility . At least Galaxy class ships were not constructed under this concern . The first hint to it is when Admiral Mark Jameson is beamed up and you start to ask yourself how his wheelchair will get out from there since the transport ' stage ' is one tall step above the floor . Certainly the wheelchair would have to be carried down by two crewmen . The second hint is that clearly the narrow doors (to the quarters , for instance) aren 't wide enough to allow his large chair to pass .

= = Reception = =

" Too Short a Season " aired in broadcast syndication during the week commencing February 14 , 1988 . It received Nielsen ratings of 10 @.@ 9 , reflecting the percentage of all households watching the episode during its timeslot . This was the highest ratings received by the series since " The Big Goodbye " four episodes earlier .

Several reviewers re @-@ watched the episode after the end of the series . Keith DeCandido

reviewed the episode for Tor.com in June 2011 . He said that he liked the episode , but not because it was a typical Next Generation episode , saying that it was instead " a story about an old man who has been carrying guilt for four decades over something stupid he did in his youth , and he tries to recapture his youth in a move of even greater stupidity " . He described the return of Michael Pataki to Star Trek as " triumphant " but thought that Clayton Rohner was " simply horrible " , and that Marsha Hunt " creates no impression whatsoever " . He summed up the episode saying that it was a " missed opportunity " , and gave it a score of 5 / 10 . James Hunt watched the episode in January 2013 for the website Den of Geek . He felt that the episode had a good story at the core but highlighted the " rather dubious make @-@ up and over @-@ acting " . His main criticism was that Jameson was " fundamentally unlikeable " , and the lack of a Subplot in the episode .

Zack Handlen watched the episode for The A.V. Club in May 2010 , and also found that the character of Jameson was " thoroughly unlikable " . He described Rohner as " acting like a Muppet when he 's supposed to be elderly and weak , then laying on the over @-@ heated angst once his youth is restored " . Overall he felt that the main characters were sidelined in the episode , and so it was difficult to be involved in what went on . He gave the episode a grade of C + . Michelle Erica Green reviewed the episode for TrekNation in June 2007 . She said that the plot seen in " Too Short a Season " involving an " Evil Admiral " was one which had been more commonly seen on The Original Series such as Commodore Decker in " The Doomsday Machine " . She too criticised the makeup used on Rohner , but said that his acting became more " modulated , but then both Karnas and the actor playing him seem over @-@ the @-@ top by comparison " .

= = Home media release = =

The first home media release of " Too Short a Season " was on VHS cassette , appearing on July 1 , 1992 in the United States and Canada . The episode was later included on the Star Trek : The Next Generation season one DVD box set , released in March 2002 , and then released as part of the season one Blu @-@ ray set on July 24 , 2012 .