

= The Jacket (Seinfeld) =

" The Jacket " is the third episode of the second season of the NBC sitcom Seinfeld and the show 's eighth episode overall . In the episode , protagonist Jerry Seinfeld buys an expensive suede jacket and has dinner with the father of his ex @-@ girlfriend Elaine Benes . Elaine 's father Alton (Lawrence Tierney) , a war veteran and writer , makes Jerry and his friend George Costanza (Jason Alexander) very uncomfortable . Elaine is delayed and Jerry and George are stuck with Alton waiting for her at the hotel .

The episode was written by Larry David and Jerry Seinfeld and was directed by Tom Cherones . Most of the episode 's storyline was based on one of David 's personal experiences . For example , Elaine 's father , a published author , was inspired by Richard Yates , author of Revolutionary Road , who Larry David had met while dating his daughter . Tierney 's performance as Elaine 's father was praised by the cast and crew . However , they were taken aback by his eccentric behavior , and it was discovered that he stole a knife from the set and pulled it threateningly towards Jerry . The majority of the episode was filmed on December 4 , 1990 . " The Jacket " premiered on American television on February 6 , 1991 , on NBC , it gained a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 4 / 16 and was praised by critics .

= = Plot = =

When Jerry is shopping for clothes with Elaine , he finds a suede jacket that he likes . He has doubts about buying the jacket because it is very expensive and has a candy stripe lining . He eventually decides to buy it . While Jerry is at home in his living room looking at himself in a mirror with his jacket , Kramer comes in and likes the jacket , he is even more impressed when he discovers the price by reading the label . Kramer persuades Jerry to give him his old leather jacket as he will no longer be using it .

The following night , Jerry , Elaine , and George have dinner with Elaine 's father , writer Alton Benes . While preparing for the dinner , George arrives at Jerry 's apartment with the song " Master of the House " from the musical Les Misérables stuck in his head . George and Jerry are both very nervous to meet Alton because he is such a famous author . When they are about to leave , Jerry puts on his new jacket . George is very impressed and attempts to get Jerry to reveal its cost . Kramer enters the apartment and asks for two minutes ' help guarding his illegally parked car as he carries down some doves that he is looking after for a magician friend . However , they refuse to help because he often underestimates how long things take to do .

George is still singing as they enter Alton Benes 's hotel . Elaine has not arrived yet , so they sit down with her father and nervously order drinks . They have an awkward conversation with him ; Alton asks who is the " funny guy " (Jerry) , to which George says it 's Jerry . Alton then recalls about a funny guy in Korea who got his brains blown out over the Pacific and that " there 's nothing funny about that " . Jerry (frightened) eventually goes to the bathroom , abandoning George (also frightened) , who attempts to compliment Alton about his book , Fair Game . George gets uncomfortable and tells Alton he has to make a phone call . He meets Jerry in the bathroom and both mention how terrified they are because of Alton ; they decide to go home if Elaine does not show up in the next ten minutes . When they return , Alton receives a message from Elaine , who will arrive in thirty minutes , which worries them both .

When Elaine finally arrives , she explains that Kramer promised her a lift if she would wait in his car for two minutes . He returned over twenty minutes later , and the car had been towed for being illegally parked . She was eventually forced to walk to the restaurant . Alton , returning from the bathroom , greets Elaine and tells Jerry and " chorus boy " George that they are going to a Pakistani restaurant five blocks away . On their way out , they notice it is snowing . Jerry knows snow would ruin his suede jacket and asks Alton if they can take a cab , but Alton replies that it is only a few blocks away . George suggests that Jerry could turn the jacket inside out , but because of the candy stripe lining , Alton notices and tells him to turn it back , saying he looks " like a damn fool " and that he 's " not going to walk down the street with me and my daughter dressed like that . " George then

reminds Jerry that the restaurant is only a few blocks away ; Jerry , reluctantly , puts his jacket back to normal .

The next day Kramer notices Jerry 's jacket hanging in the bathroom , badly damaged by the snow . Kramer takes it , chiding Jerry for not turning it inside out . Elaine arrives , and tells Jerry that her father had a good time . She explains how he usually hates everyone but liked Jerry , as he reminded him of a certain " somebody " from Korea ; she then mentions that he thinks George is gay because " he pretty much thinks everyone is gay . " Meanwhile , as Alton drives home , he finds himself singing " Master of the House " as well .

= = Cultural references = =

Throughout the episode , George sings the song " Master of the House " from the musical *Les Misérables* . *Les Misérables* ran on Broadway for sixteen years , making it one of the longest running musicals in the history of Broadway . In response to George constantly singing " Master of the House " , Jerry tells him about German composer Robert Schumann , who went insane from hearing the same note over and over in his head . George also mentions Bud Abbott , an actor and comedian during the 1940s and 1950s , who was part of the Abbott and Costello duo , with Lou Costello . When Jerry and George discuss their options in the bathroom at the hotel , George suggests that they should leave to which Jerry replies " he 'll clunk our heads together like Moe " ; this a reference to Moe Howard , one of The Three Stooges , who frequently clunked the heads of the other Stooges together .

= = Production = =

" The Jacket " was written by Seinfeld 's co @-@ creators Larry David and Jerry Seinfeld and directed by Tom Cherones . The episode 's storyline was based on one of David 's personal experiences ; when he was dating Monica Yates , she wanted him to meet her father , Richard Yates , a respected novelist . David had just bought a suede jacket , and met Richard Yates at the Algonquin Hotel . Richard was , as David stated in an interview , " ... every bit as intimidating as Alton Benes " . David 's story is similar to what happened in the episode , as , when they headed out to the restaurant , his jacket was ruined by the snow . Additional dialogue at the store where Jerry buys his jacket was cut before broadcast , it featured a reference to Gary Gilmore . The material was later included on the Seinfeld Volume 1 DVD set . " The Jacket " is the only episode in which one of Elaine 's parents appears ; Louis @-@ Dreyfus once suggested Mary Tyler Moore to portray Elaine 's mother , but the character never appeared on the show . The episode also contains the first mention to Elaine 's job as a manuscript reader for Pendant Publishing , in early drafts of the script her job was an optician . Also in early drafts , in the final scene Kramer entered Jerry 's house with a dove on his shoulder .

The episode was first read by the cast on November 28 , 1990 at 10 @.@ 30 AM . It was filmed in front of a live audience on December 4 , 1990 . The episode was filmed at CBS Studio Center in Studio City , Los Angeles , California , where , starting with the season two premiere " The Ex @-@ Girlfriend " , all filming for the second season took place . The final scene in the episode , which showed Alton Benes singing " Master of the House " in his car , was pre @-@ recorded on December 3 , 1990 , as it could not be filmed in front of an audience because it took place in a car .

= = Lawrence Tierney = =

Lawrence Tierney was cast as Alton Benes . He was known for his bad @-@ guy roles in films during the 1940s and 1950s , such as *Dillinger* , *The Hoodlum* and *Born to Kill* . Tierney 's appearance in the episode is one of his only comedic roles . Cast and crew members were very impressed with Tierney 's performance , and intended to make Alton Benes a recurring character . However , they were frightened of him ; during filming it was discovered that Tierney had stolen a butcher knife from the knife block in Jerry 's apartment set . Various cast members remember

Seinfeld encountering Tierney and stating " Hey Lawrence , what do you got there in your jacket ? " . Tierney , realizing he had been caught , tried to make a joke about how he thought taking the knife would be funny , by reenacting a scene from Alfred Hitchcock 's Psycho (1960) , holding the knife above his head and making threatening motions towards Seinfeld . Tom Cherones , Jason Alexander and Julia Louis @-@ Dreyfus saw this happen , and , as Alexander recalled , it " scared the living crap out of all of us . " Cherones stated that , afterwards , Larry David would jokingly threaten to have Tierney back on the show if Cherones did his work badly .

= = Reception = =

On February 6 , 1991 , " The Jacket " was first broadcast in the United States on NBC . It gained a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 4 and an audience share of 16 , this means that 10 @.@ 4 % of American households watched the episode , and that 16 % of all televisions in use at the time were tuned into it . It faced strong competition from the CBS crime drama Jake and the Fatman ; viewers would frequently tune out of Seinfeld to watch the second half of Jake and the Fatman 's . Seinfeld once jokingly stated that this was because the " Fatman " would run in the second half of the show .

The episode gained positive responses from critics . Colin Jacobson of DVD Movie Guide stated " An otherwise mediocre episode , Lawrence Tierney ? s gruff turn as Elaine ? s father helps redeem ' The Jacket ' " . DVD reviewer Jonathan Boudreaux considered " The Jacket " one of season two 's best episodes , along with " The Chinese Restaurant " . Critics Mary Kaye Schilling and Mike Flaherty of Entertainment Weekly graded the episode with a B- , stating " Jerry and George 's torturous hotel @-@ lobby meeting with Mr. Benes is a squirm @-@ inducing joy " .