

= Justice ( Star Trek : The Next Generation ) =

" Justice " is the eighth episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : The Next Generation . The episode first aired in broadcast syndication on November 9 , 1987 . Directed by James L. Conway , writer John D. F. Black originally pitched the story , but after Worley Thorne and Gene Roddenberry modified it , Thorne wrote the script . Because of the changes to the story , Black chose to receive his credit under the pseudonym Ralph Wills .

Set in the 24th century , the series follows the adventures of the Starfleet crew of the Federation starship Enterprise @-@ D. In this episode , Wesley Crusher ( Wil Wheaton ) is sentenced to death after inadvertently breaking the law on an alien planet . Captain Jean @-@ Luc Picard ( Patrick Stewart ) must deal with the powerful and mysterious protector of the planet while deliberating whether to violate the Prime Directive to save Wesley 's life .

This was the first episode of The Next Generation to feature multiple shots filmed on location , with scenes filmed in Van Nuys , Los Angeles , and the Huntington Library in Pasadena , California . " Justice " was the second most viewed episode of the first season , with 12 @. @ 7 million viewers . The episode received a mostly negative response , with critics pointing to issues with the quality of the acting and the predictability of the plot .

= = Plot = =

The USS Enterprise arrives for shore leave at the newly discovered planet of Rubicun III . A small advance party from the ship are sent down to meet with the Edo , the native people of the planet . Captain Jean @-@ Luc Picard ( Patrick Stewart ) sends Wesley Crusher ( Wil Wheaton ) as part of the away team to evaluate the planet on behalf of the young people on board the Enterprise . Upon their arrival , they are greeted by Rivan ( Brenda Bakke ) and Liator ( Jay Loudon ) in a very comfortable way , triggering Lt. Worf ( Michael Dorn ) to determine it a " nice planet " , while Wesley leaves the adults to play with the native children . On the Enterprise , Lt. Commander Data ( Brent Spiner ) reports something unusual orbiting the planet , but nothing appears on the viewscreen . He sends out a communications signal which reveals another vessel in orbit . A small ball of light enters the bridge and communicates with Picard through Data in a booming voice warning him not to interfere with the Edo , calling them " his children " . The intruder then incapacitates Data .

On Rubicun III , the Edo explain to Lt. Tasha Yar ( Denise Crosby ) and Worf that capital punishment is used to enforce their laws . The away team rush to warn Wesley , only to discover he has accidentally broken a greenhouse whilst playing catch with the Edo children . An Edo attempts to give Wesley a lethal injection for this infraction of the law , but Yar and Worf draw their phasers . On the ship , the sphere leaves Data 's body and departs . Picard , upon hearing of the situation with Wesley , transports to the surface . He meets with representatives of the Edo in a council chamber and explains that Earth no longer practices capital punishment . Some Edo interpret this stance as an attempt by the Federation to push their superiority and suggest that Picard should mount a rescue effort for the boy . He says he cannot , quoting the Prime Directive .

Picard asks about the mysterious vessel in orbit and discovers that the Edo worship it as a god . He returns to his ship with Rivan and Counsellor Deanna Troi ( Marina Sirtis ) . Rivan sees the strange ship from orbit and confirms it is the Edo 's god . She is transported back to the surface when the ship threatens the Enterprise for taking her away from the planet . Data reveals that , while he was in communication with the entity , it will protect the Edo as if they were its children . After considering their options , Picard returns to the planet 's surface and announces that he is willing to risk the wrath of the entity . He orders the transportation of Wesley to the Enterprise , but the entity does not allow the transporters to operate . Picard pleads with the Edo god that laws must allow for exceptions to ensure justice , and after this statement the transporters go back online and allows the away team to return . Upon leaving the planet , Picard communicates with the entity to inform it that they are leaving and will remove recently placed colonists at a nearby star system under the entity 's jurisdiction . With that , the entity disappears and the Enterprise departs .

== Production ==

John D. F. Black 's original pitch featured a story about capital punishment . His idea was based on a film treatment detailing the colony planet of Llarof where capital punishment is handed down as a sentence for any offense except against those who are immune from the law . In the treatment , a security officer is killed by a local law enforcement officer , who is then killed himself by his partner for unjustly killing the Enterprise crewman . The planet would have had a rebel faction who wanted to overthrow the laws , which Picard refused to back initially whilst citing the Prime Directive . A second draft featured a rebel leader executed for treason . Black explained the premise of a society that developed laws to prevent terrorism and anarchy : " Let 's say that what we do is kill everybody who is a terrorist or suspected of being a terrorist . Now the people who have killed everybody , what do they do ? "

The idea was re @-@ written by the show 's creator Gene Roddenberry and writer Worley Thorne . It was Roddenberry and Thorne who created the godlike entity and sexed up the Edo . James L. Conway directed the episode , having just finished the MacGyver episode , " Jack in the Box " . Josh Clark , who plays a Conn officer in " Justice " , later appears as Lt. Joe Carey in all seven seasons of Star Trek : Voyager .

" Justice " is the first episode of Star Trek : The Next Generation filmed mostly on location , and the first of any scenes on location other than those set in the holodeck in " Encounter at Farpoint " . Scenes shot at the Tillman Water Reclamation Plant in Van Nuys , Los Angeles , were located under the flight path for the Van Nuys Airport . The noise from overhead planes was so loud , the actors were required to re @-@ record their lines in the studio . Filming for the scene where Wesley crashes into the greenhouse occurred on the grounds of the Huntington Library in Pasadena , California .

== Reception and home media ==

" Justice " first aired in broadcast syndication on November 8 , 1987 . It received Nielsen ratings of 12 @.@ 7 million , placing it in third place in the timeslot . It ranked the second highest viewed episode of the first season , after the premiere " Encounter at Farpoint " , which was seen by 15 @.@ 7 million viewers .

Several reviewers re @-@ watched the episode after the end of the series . Castmember Wil Wheaton watched " Justice " for AOL TV in December 2006 . He observed problems with his acting and the plot development , particularly where Picard transports the Edo woman to the Enterprise . Wheaton felt Picard 's actions were a clear breach of the Prime Directive which was otherwise at the heart of the episode . On the other hand , he thought the episode showed a proper dynamic between Picard and the bridge crew , and he believed it tackled a real ethics problem in a manner more frequently seen in the 2004 Battlestar Galactica television series . Wheaton gave the episode of " Justice " a grade of B + .

Keith DeCandido reviewed the episode for Tor.com in May 2011 . He said the episode " collapses under the weight of its own ridiculousness " , and he criticized the Edo as caricatures . DeCandido thought that the plot involving Wesley was predictable , but that the scripting for Picard helped to cement him as a " great character " . He gave the episode a score of two out of ten .

James Hunt reviewed the episode for Den of Geek in November 2012 . He liked the central idea , but said it was typical of the poor quality of the early episodes of the series . Hunt also thought multiple plot details were not addressed , such as the origin of the alien entity and the reason for the Edo 's fear of it . Jamahl Epsicokhan for his website Jammer 's Reviews , said that the episode featured " yet another Trek @-@ cliched Infinitely Superior Life Form " , and featured a debate which was " more obtuse than enlightening " . He gave it a score of one out of four .

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

