

= Judge John Deed =

Judge John Deed is a British legal drama television series produced by the BBC in association with One @-@ Eyed Dog for BBC One . It was created by G.F. Newman and stars Martin Shaw as Justice Sir John Deed , a High Court judge who tries to seek real justice in the cases before him . It also stars Jenny Seagrove as the barrister Jo Mills QC , frequently the object of Deed 's desire . A pilot episode was broadcast on 9 January 2001 , followed by the first full series on 26 November 2001 . The sixth and last series concluded on 18 January 2007 . The programme then went on an indefinite break after Shaw became involved in another television programme , and he and Seagrove expressed a wish for the format of the series to change before they filmed new episodes . By 2009 , the series had officially been cancelled .

The factual accuracy of the series is often criticised by legal professionals and journalists ; many of the decisions taken by Deed are unlikely to happen in a real court . The romanticised vision of the court system created by Newman caused a judge to issue a warning to a jury not to let the series influence their view of trials ? referring to an episode where Deed flouts rules when called up for jury service . A complaint was made by a viewer about one episode claiming biased and incorrect information about the MMR vaccine , leading the BBC to unilaterally ban repeats of it in its original form . All six series (with the exception of the two banned episodes from Series Five) have been released on DVD in the UK .

= = Premise = =

Sir John Deed (played by Martin Shaw) is a recently appointed High Court judge who actively seeks justice in the cases before him , while at the same time trying to rekindle an old romance with former pupil Jo Mills QC , who regularly appears in his court . Deed is described by creator and writer G.F. Newman as a character who " speaks out against all the petty rules and bureaucracy that frustrates us all but that most of us don 't speak out against " . Because of Deed 's unorthodox actions , he is often hampered in his pursuit of justice by several more conventional @-@ minded characters , including his ex @-@ wife , barrister Georgina " George " Channing QC (played by Caroline Langrishe) ; her father Appeals Court Judge , Lord Justice (Sir Joseph) Channing (played by Sir Donald Sinden) , fellow High Court Judges Mr Justice (Sir Monty) Everard (played by Simon Ward) and Mr Justice (Sir Michael) Niven (played by Trevor Bowen) , the Permanent Secretary to the Lord Chancellor 's Department (LCD , later Department of Constitutional Affairs) Sir Ian Rochester (played by Simon Chandler) ; and later the Home Secretary Neil Haughton MP (played by Nick Reding and later Aneirin Hughes) .

Other recurring characters include Deed 's rebellious , animal rights activist daughter Charlie (played by Louisa Clein) , who is initially a law student but later progresses to the courts ; Deed 's police friend , deputy assistant commissioner Row Colemore (played by Christopher Cazenove) ; and his clerk , Rita " Coop " Cooper (played by Barbara Thorn) , who is often on hand to temper some of his more radical ideas . Rita " Coop " was involved in many scenes of the show and was shown frequently in Judge John Deed advertisements . The first three series of the programme have a self @-@ contained structure , with a trial reaching its conclusion by the end of an episode . In later years , the series added a serialised format , with stories running over a number of episodes and a greater focus on the personal lives of characters other than Deed , with the main case concluding in each episode .

= = Production = =

Newman devised his new series to highlight what he believed to be an out @-@ of @-@ touch judiciary and show " solutions " (a style that is different from , yet paradoxically similar to his previous work , such as his 1970s series Law and Order , which was heavily critical of the police , with Judge John Deed being heavily critical of the corrupt Establishment) . Newman wrote the series intending to give the audience an exploration of the law without patronising them or getting

caught up in an explanation of legal proceedings . A full series was commissioned before the pilot was broadcast . The series has been credited with renewing the " cop genre " by moving the story from a " maverick detective " to a high court judge , though as a comparison to Newman 's previous work , a Guardian writer called it " rather soft " and doubted , from seeing the pilot , whether it would provoke questions in the House of Commons like Law and Order did , while the show went on to provoke much hostility from many vested interests which it revealed to be corrupt or negligent .

Sets were constructed on the soundstages at Bushey , Hertfordshire for the courtroom , Deed 's chambers and the main characters ' houses . Exterior court scenes were filmed at the Crown Court in Aylesbury . Location filming was also done at West Herts College for scenes in " My Daughter , Right or Wrong " (2006) and at various locations , including The Hague City Hall , (as film location for the International Criminal Court building in The Hague) for " War Crimes " (2007) . The robes worn by Deed in the sixth series were authentic ones from Stanley Ley , a specialist legal outfitters , and cost £ 7 @, @ 600 . Theme music was composed for the series by Debbie Wiseman . The music , entitled " Judge John Deed " , was performed by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and is described as a " stunning march @-@ like theme that echoed throughout each of the programmes supplying pageantry to the Judge 's sometimes @-@ nefarious activities " . It was released commercially on Wiseman 's compilation album , Something Here , and as a single piece on online music retailers . From 2005 to 2007 , television promotions for the series have been accompanied by the piano hook from " Sinnerman " by Nina Simone .

29 episodes were produced ; the pilot , three series of four episodes , two series of six episodes and one series of two two @-@ part serials . All episodes were written and produced , and occasionally directed , by Newman . At the time the sixth series concluded , the future of the series was in doubt ; the BBC had announced an intention to use Martin Shaw in a range of new projects and it was apparent that the one @-@ off adaption of Alan Hunter 's Inspector Gently novels (starring Shaw as the eponymous inspector) would be commissioned for a full series . Jenny Seagrove clarified the situation , stating that the producers wanted to continue but she and Shaw were " taking a sabbatical " until the formula of the series was changed , implying that its future lay in the multi @-@ part format introduced in series six . In April 2009 , Shaw told BBC Breakfast that the series had been officially cancelled by the BBC because of financial cutbacks across the corporation . The six years the series was broadcast makes it the longest @-@ running BBC legal drama .

= = Broadcast = =

Judge John Deed regularly formed the backbone of the BBC One winter schedule . The pilot and first series were broadcast on Tuesday evenings at 8 p.m. , with the second , third and fourth series moving to Thursday evenings (8 : 30 p.m. for the first two and 8 p.m. for the latter , though one episode in series three was postponed for over a month) . The fifth series moved to Friday nights , and the sixth was shown two nights a week , with the first part of the story on Tuesday nights and concluding the following Thursday . This series was also the first to be simulcast on BBC HD . Occasionally , due to a clash with regional programming , it has aired at different times on BBC One Scotland ; series two was delayed for sometimes over a week while series three began a half @-@ hour earlier . Series five had a six @-@ day delay .

Ratings for the series peaked with its first episode at 9 @. @ 1 million but it continued to regularly draw in around 6 million viewers for later episodes . The series has been shown internationally by , amongst others , Canvas (Belgium) , BBC Canada and BBC Prime . In 2004 , Variety reported an American remake was set to be produced for NBC ; Michael Chernuchin was to produce the series , which would follow a federal court judge in Washington , D.C. who would preside over terrorism and civil rights cases . There have been no further developments since the announcement was made in 2004 .

= = Reception = =

== Depiction of law ==

Judge John Deed presents a fictionalised version of the English legal system . The British Film Institute 's Screenonline notes that " Almost every week , Deed is seen presiding over cases being prosecuted by his ex @-@ wife or defended by his on @-@ off girlfriend (with occasionally help from his daughter) " , highlighting how unlikely it would be for a real judge to have so many conflicts of interest in his court . It also notes that Deed 's faults , such as his affairs with his therapist and with Francesca Rochester , prevent him from being " a completely idealised heroic figure " , and the fact that because all of his family and friends practise law , he is firmly entrenched in the legal system that he is constantly fighting against . Deed has been accused of hypocrisy , particularly for using his connections to bail Charlie after she destroyed GM crops in " Exacting Justice " . There is a belief in some legal circles that , although Judge John Deed is arguably the most unrealistic of contemporary legal dramas , viewers see Deed as an aspirational character taking on a corrupt establishment . Despite being picked apart by legal professionals , the cast and Newman were invited to the annual dinner of the Association of Women Barristers in 2006 as part of a drive to raise the profile and attract new members to the group .

The series ' creative interpretation of the law has led to a misconception by the public of what real law is like (cf . CSI effect) ; in the second Damilola Taylor trial , the presiding judge warned the jury that if they copied Deed 's actions in the then @-@ recent episode " One Angry Man " (2006) , in which Deed investigated a case and interviewed witnesses while sitting on a jury , they would " simply derail the whole process " .

== Critical reaction ==

The 2006 series caused controversy for the misguided information presented in " Silent Killer " (2006) , which suggested a link between TETRA radio emissions and motor neurone disease . Statements were released by the TETRA Industry Group and the MND Association , the latter emphasising that while there is some evidence to suggest a link , it is not a single contributory factor . " Heart of Darkness " (2006) was criticised for portraying a causal link between the MMR vaccine and autism , and the BBC received complaints on the matter . The Editorial Complaints Unit ruled that the episode had contravened the BBC 's " obligation of due impartiality on matters of public controversy " and that the episode would not be repeated in its original form . The episode was cited in From Seesaw to Wagon Wheel , an internal BBC report on impartiality in its output that was published in June 2007 , a section of which highlighted that the name of the Westwake character bore more than a passing resemblance to that of Dr Andrew Wakefield .

Television pundits have criticised the writing of the programme ; Robert Hanks of The Independent calls the scripts " often corny , even painfully so " , using Monty Everard 's line " You 'll come to regret crossing swords with me , sir ! " from " Health Hazard " (2003) as an example . Hanks also wrote about what he called " moral oversimplification " of the storylines ; the same episode featured " a wealthy and self @-@ important businessman ? who had already been banned from talking on a mobile phone while driving ? ran over and killed a mother and her two small children while talking on his mobile phone to his mistress , to whom he was explaining that he had to take his wife to a function at ? the icing on this shabby cake ? Downing Street . He then legged it and subsequently faked mental illness to avoid a trial ; a gambit that might have worked had Deed not cunningly threatened to send him to Broadmoor , at which point the man stood up and started protesting vociferously " . The series is frequently lampooned for its dialogue and unlikely scenarios . Andy Hamilton called the dialogue " the funniest on TV " and David Mitchell selected it as his " TV hell " in the series TV Heaven , Telly Hell . Deed 's " swashbuckling " persona has been satirised on the sketch series Dead Ringers . Despite the criticism given to the programme , the series is praised as being at its best when tackling topical issues , such as the MMR vaccine , human exposure to telephone masts and incestuous relationships .

The production style also rates highly ; writing in The Guardian , Mark Lawson called the pilot "

glossier and more populist than Newman 's earlier work " . Wry reference is made to Deed and Jo 's relationship , with Lawson writing that Deed " is desperate to conduct his own forensic investigation of the body fluids of the attractive defence QC " . Writing on the programme 's accessibility to an audience , Nancy Banks @-@ Smith of The Guardian calls it " talkative in the way television plays used to be when they had something to say . But it is notable that , in a profession famous for obfuscation , Deed uses only the most pellucid English " . Banks @-@ Smith has also drawn attention to the masculine skew the programme has ; " Judge John Deed [?] is catnip to the ladies . These are chappishly called Georgie , Charlie , Jo and ? when Rita defies abbreviation ? Coop " .

= = = Awards nominations = = =

Stephen Roach received the Award of Merit at the 2005 Guild of Television Cameramen Awards for his work on the series . The series was nominated in the Diversity in Drama Production category at the 2006 Screen Nation Awards , though lost to an episode of Doctors .

= = DVD release = =

The first series was released as a 3 @-@ disc set on 8 May 2006 and the second series as a 2 @-@ disc set on 12 February 2007 . The third and fourth series were released on 14 January 2008 in a 5 @-@ disc set . All the DVDs were published by 2 Entertain Video . A series 5 DVD was released on 8 February 2010 , omitting the controversial fifth and sixth episodes . A Series 6 DVD was released on 21 February 2011 , which contained two double length episodes .

The pilot and first series received a North American release on 9 March 2010 .