

Judge John Deed returns to BBC One

“The law itself is a major character in *Judge John Deed*,” says BAFTA award-winning writer and producer GF Newman. And in this series there is more emphasis on the workings of the law than previously. But, Newman points out, the personalities and relationships that keep audiences rapt are not neglected. “The storylines focus on the law in tandem with the developing – and in some cases deteriorating – relationships of the characters.”

The ongoing battle between Deed (Martin Shaw) and the establishment continues unabated, but it takes a sinister twist when, unable to topple the judge, Deed’s adversaries go after Jo (Jenny Seagrove). Things look bad for Jo when she ends up facing a disciplinary tribunal. But when Deed tries to haul her out of trouble, Jo resents his intervention.

Reaching an all-time low, Deed seeks professional help. Yet, when the therapist begins to peel back the layers, Deed deals with the resultant feelings of vulnerability in a way which can only further estrange him from Jo.

However, Deed remains true to his beliefs about justice and refuses to bend to pressures from “the brethren” (fellow judges). Newman says: “As appointees of the establishment, judges tend to want to please their peers. But, perversely, Deed is prepared to be alienated by them.”

Newman feels that this theme is a true reflection of a trend in Britain’s judiciary system. “The path Deed treads is now being taken more and more in real life,” he suggests. “As the Government becomes more authoritarian, judges tend to want to express their independence. We are seeing this increasingly in the area of sentencing.

“We have common law in this country,” he continues, “which is tried and tested over time and judges’ rulings become precedents. In this way, judges have always been allowed to use their own common sense. Therefore, the more the

Government legislates and circumscribes the law, the more judges will rebel.”

Deed’s ex-wife, George Channing (Caroline Langrishe), continues to be a guiding force in Deed’s life. She has a great deal of affection for him and tries to warn him about the forces of reaction opposing him.

New to the series is High Court Judge Sir Monty Everard (Simon Ward). As President, Sir Monty is senior to Deed and has been brought in to exert some control over him and try to keep him in line. Newman says: “Monty represents the establishment and gives Deed a very good run for his money; there is considerable antagonism between them. In fact, Monty tries to wipe Deed off the map. Although he is aggressive and forceful in office, Monty is dominated by his fierce wife, Vera (Joan Blackham).”



Cast and production credits

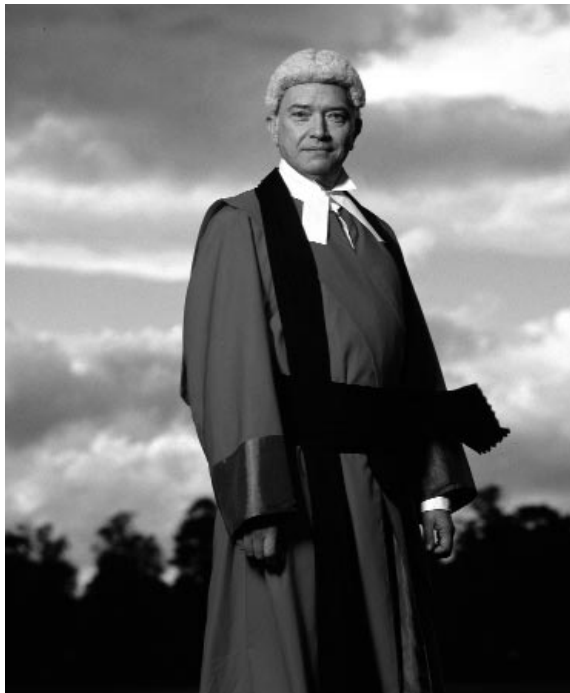
Cast

Judge John Deed Martin Shaw
Jo Mills Jenny Seagrove
George Channing Caroline Langrishe
Sir Monty Everard Simon Ward
Charlie Deed Louisa Clein
Row Colemore Christopher Cazenove
Sir Joseph Channing Sir Donald Sinden
Rita "Coop" Cooper Barbara Thorn
Sir Ian Rochester Simon Chandler

Production credits

Executive producers: Mal Young and Ruth Caleb
Writer/producer GF Newman
Director (Ep 1 & 2) Andy Hay
Director (Ep 3) David Kerr
Director (Ep 4) GF Newman
Production executive Camilla Griffith-Jones
Associate producer Alison B Matthews
Script editor Ben Bickerton
Make-up designer Linda Morton
Costume designer Colin Lavers
Publicist Premier PR

Martin Shaw plays Judge John Deed



Martin Shaw never doubted that *Judge John Deed* would prove to be a ratings and critical success. He says: "I'm absolutely delighted, but not surprised. It always had that buzz of excellence about it – even more so now. It's the only thing I've worked on that has got better, series by series. The key to its success is undoubtedly good writing and the continuity of cast and crew that we've enjoyed.

"I receive more letters about *Judge John Deed* than anything else I've ever done. And they are all along the lines of saying thank you for making an intelligent drama that's not patronising and one that makes you think.

"I admire his intellect and his sense of fair play and I like him as a person," Shaw says of Deed. "I do sometimes disagree with his judgements, but I'm not a learned judge; the series is impeccably researched and I'm just an amateur! But I'm fascinated by the law and think it's a wonderful drama in itself.

"Deed is similar to me in that he refuses to be bullied. He takes an intellectual stance because he believes in the sanctity of the law."

Deed faces a series of challenges in the new series. "As always, the professional challenge is to stand up to those who would manipulate him and don't like him being as independent as he is," says Shaw. "His personal challenge comes from trying to find the root of his problem with women. He's definitely a womaniser. He realises that it's an obsession which doesn't give him the satisfaction he craves. So he goes into therapy – with mixed results. He is finally starting to recognise that his behaviour towards women is not balanced!"

But the highlight for Martin was the rare chance to perform alongside his son, Luke, who appears in Episode 3. "It's the first time we have been in a scene together. It was great – extraordinary! But I did feel quite self-conscious for a few minutes."

Jenny Seagrove plays Jo Mills



“Jo has got a lot stronger in this series,” says Jenny Seagrove. “She is pulling away from John’s influence. She still loves him, but because she is so angry with him she’s having to grow up and be less of a ‘pupil’.

“The anger she feels towards him is also helping her to find her own voice – which she needs in this series because she’s being got at from all sides. The CPS, the police, the judiciary – they are all trying to discredit her and the judge.

“Jo is the only person who stands up to Deed; she doesn’t back down. And he really loves her. She is his perfect mate, both sexually and intellectually. But he needs the excitement of the chase – and the conquests.”

Does Seagrove identify with any part of Jo’s character? “Almost everything!” she says. “Jo fights for causes and gets emotionally involved. So do I. I am passionate about animal welfare and the environment.

“But,” she continues, “she’s better at confrontation than I am. She has had to learn to stick up for herself. She’s a parent and she’s in a business run by men so she has had to learn how to be aggressive in a positive way.”

Simon Ward plays Sir Monty Everard

New to this series is the pompous new Presider, Sir Monty “Legover” Everard. Sir Monty is senior to Deed and has been brought in by the establishment to try to impose some control over him.

From the outset, there is considerable antagonism between them. Deed is a conundrum and an irritation to Sir Monty. “Everything Deed does annoys Monty,” says Simon Ward. “His political views, his ethics, his morals: they are all appalling.

“Above all else, Monty has total faith in ‘the brethren’, which causes him a huge problem when it comes to Deed. Deed is a brother. But, brother, what a brother! Deed certainly isn’t ‘one of us.’”

Although Sir Monty holds an immensely powerful position and is aggressive in public, he is dominated

by his wife, Vera (Joan Blackham). “Monty is basically a very flawed human being,” laughs Ward, “married to a terrifying wife!”

Of Sir Monty’s failings, Ward jokes: “I want to be a good judge. I hate it when Sir Monty makes bad decisions. But Monty must have been a good judge once – or he would never have been made Presider!”

Simon Chandler plays Sir Ian Rochester

As Permanent Secretary in the Lord Chancellor’s department, Sir Ian is responsible for the smooth running of the UK legal system and acts as a go-between between the Government and the Courts. “He keeps the wheels turning,” says Simon Chandler.

“Sir Ian is a civil servant, not part of ‘the brethren’. But he has huge influence,” he continues. “Sir Ian approved of the choice of Sir Monty as Presider because he thought he could control Monty and therefore control Deed. But it doesn’t work out because Monty is too reactionary.

“Sir Ian is very much ‘The Establishment’. He pulls strings behind the scenes in order to get certain cases heard by specific judges. Politicians and his big business friends use him to get things going their own way.

“Some cases he absolutely does not want Deed to hear because he knows he will show leniency. And he’s furious when he discovers that Monty has handed Deed a controversial case against a mobile phone company because he knows Deed won’t bow to the pressures of industry and Government.”

Caroline Langrishe plays George Channing

Deed’s ex-wife, George, spends more time in the courtroom in this series than previously. She is the



Cast interviews

QC defending the stressed directors of a mobile phone company. “I’m strutting my stuff in wig and gown – opposite Jo and in front of Deed. Pretty heady stuff!” says Caroline Langrishe.

“It comes naturally to George to defend the capitalists against the nice little people!” she laughs. “George is a bit of a tyrant; she’s very, very confident and I think that comes from a combination of her background, class and education and her high-powered job. She’s utterly ruthless at work and therefore very successful. Fortunately, she has one saving grace, which is her wit.

“And, despite the fact that she is ruthless, she’s very straight. If George suspects anything underhand is going on, that’s just not acceptable to her – especially not if it’s close to home. That’s why she tips Deed off when she sees that he’s about to be got at. She knows he is a decent man and they have a very ‘grown-up’ divorce.”

Synopses

Episode 1 – Health Hazard

Sir Ian Rochester (Simon Chandler) is furious when the vainglorious new Presider, Sir Monty “Legover” Everard (Simon Ward), miscalculates and hands Mr Justice Deed (Martin Shaw) a controversial case against a mobile phone company. Unable to wrest the case back, Sir Ian turns his malign attention to Jo Mills (Jenny Seagrove) in order to defeat Deed.

As a result, Jo is brought up before a disciplinary hearing for having an improper relationship with Deed and is forced to cut her ties with him. Deed turns up unexpectedly at the hearing, being chaired by Everard, who is forced to accept the word of a high court judge, despite the evidence to the contrary. Sir Monty will have to wait to exact his revenge.

Episode 2 – Judicial Review

When Sir Monty Everard grants a political benefactor a non-custodial sentence, Deed flies into a rage and publicly accuses him of corruption. Pushed into a corner, Everard bites back. Jo Mills takes the brunt of his ill will and is ostracised by the legal profession.

Jo pleads with Deed to give up his fight. Finally, he agrees to see a therapist, Rachel Crawcheck (Amita Dhiri), with unnerving results. But Deed still refuses to back down until the over-lenient sentence is appealed. Finally he out-manoeuvres Sir Ian Rochester and saves Jo’s career.

Episode 3 – Conspiracy

Jo Mills is prosecuting an MP accused of attempted murder. The MP had been investigating deaths in the arms industry, and Row Colemore (Christopher Cazenove) floats the idea that the charge has been fabricated in order to shut him up.

Judge John Deed is still seeing his therapist, Rachel Crawcheck, and the emotional revelations continue to unnerve him. But, when he and Rachel end up in bed together, it ends his therapy – along with his chances of a relationship with Jo.

Deed discovers that Row is part of a conspiracy to acquit the MP so that he can continue his damaging investigation in order to aid a take over by a rival arms company. Friendship notwithstanding, Deed starts proceedings against Row and his putative boss for attempting to pervert the course of justice.

Episode 4 – Economic Imperative

Single mother Diana Hulse (Lara Cazalet) pursues her case against the mobile phone company for causing her terminal brain tumour. Despite their strong relationship, Jo Mills is shocked when Diana asks her if she’ll take on her little boy once she dies.

Meanwhile, Sir Ian Rochester conspires with the Trade Secretary, who is uncomfortably close to the phone company. They want to discredit Deed, who’s hearing the case. Child pornography is found in Deed’s computer. When Diana dies, the phone company refuses to settle, believing Deed is washed up.

But, with just moments to spare, a computer expert helps Deed deal with the evidence as Sir Ian and Sir Monty Everard approach with security guards to seize his computer.