

# Doomwatch

## 1970 – 1972

Archive = Existing & are available

Missing = recordings lost

This series was a sort of docudrama, part science fiction and part fact, with the premise of a government department set up to question the ethics and validity of technological and scientific advances. Devised by Kit Pedlar and Gerry Davis (who had written and edited many episodes of Dr Who, and created the Cybermen), the department was headed by Dr Spenser Quist, and was nearly always at odds with business or government, with Quist ready to prove a point. John Paul played Quist throughout the three seasons, and was helped by Dr John Ridge (Simon Oates), Tobias Wren (Robert Powell), Colin Bradley (Joby Blanshard) and Pat Hunnisett (Wendy Hall).

Although the fashion has definitely dated, the stories themselves still hold up extremely well - I first viewed them on UKGold a few years ago - with many of the storylines as valid now as they were on original transmission. It is a shame that the series suffered, like so many others, when the BBC video tape library was purged in the 70s. Out of a total of 38 episodes produced, there are only 24 still in existence. The third and final season is the least represented in the archives, with only 3 shows surviving, but by the time the show had made it this far, the storylines were becoming less plausible. This season contained the episode Sex and Violence, which fell foul of the censors due to actual footage of an execution, and has never been broadcast in the UK (despite a planned transmission on UK Gold) and The Devil's Demolition which was never completed.

In 1972, Tigon produced a feature film of the same name that starred Ian Bannen and Judy Geeson, with John Paul and Simon Oates reprising their characters, albeit with secondary billing. There was also a feature length pilot episode for a proposed new series broadcast on Channel 5 on Tuesday 7th December 1999 at 9pm, however, nothing seems to have come of that. Running for 2 hours, Trevor Eve played the lead character and Philip Stone played an elderly Dr Quist.

Two videos were released by the BBC containing two shows each, but these have long been deleted. However, Revelation Films have obtained the DVD rights and one is already available, with another due out very shortly.

### First Season

This comprised of 13 episodes broadcast between 9th February and 11th May 1970 . 8 episodes from this series currently exist.

The Plastic Eaters	When an aircraft bound for San Pedro in South America crashes, Quist's newly formed department, christened Doomwatch, investigates. The cause of the crash is an electrical short circuit, a result of all the plastic on the plane melting. Toby Wren, a new arrival, is despatched to the crash site to investigate whilst John Ridge looks into the goings on at a laboratory in Beeston.	Archive
Friday's	Genetic engineering, and test tube babies, are at the	Missing

Child	root of this investigation.	
Burial at Sea	A luxury liner is found afloat at sea with one of the passengers dead, and it appears that the dumping of chemical waste is the cause.	Missing
Tomorrow, the Rat	Intelligent, carnivorous, rats begin to attack humans - another result of tampering with genetics.	Archive
Project Sahara	Dr Robson joins the team to carry out tests on a spray that kills all plantlife - The Sahara Spray, however, Quist is ordered by the ministry, without explanation, to suspend Robson and Wren. It seems the computerised security system has become over-zealous and over-powerful.	Archive
Re-entry Forbidden	The first nuclear powered rocket, Sunfire One, enters orbit with the first British astronaut on board. He re-programs the rockets course incorrectly and fails to see the error indicator, with the result that the capsule splashes down. Quist is asked to check the astronauts suitability for future missions, as one slip could turn the rocket into a nuclear bomb.	Archive
The Devil's Sweets	On the way to work, Pat Hunnisett takes a free promotional chocolate, and her colleagues at the office, investigating the sharp increase in smoking, are amazed when Pat lights a cigarette for the first time in five years. Is there a link between Checker Board cigarettes and the chocolate?	Archive
The Red Sky	Whilst Quist is on holiday in Cornwall, he hears about the death of Captain Gort, who threw himself off the nearby cliffs, after scrawling the phrase 'the flames of hell' in his lighthouse home. When the sky turn red and Quist suspects that the cause is excessive noise.	Archive
Spectre at the Feast	When Quist arranges a conference of the world's top scientists to discuss the dangers of pollution, many of the delegates fall ill, a result of food poisoning, or is it?	Archive
Train and De-Train	Ellis, Wren's old tutor, appears to be responsible for the mass extermination of wildlife in Somerset, but, in fact, Ellis is slowly being pushed out of his job by American 'de-training' methods. Suspicion then falls on his employers.	Missing
The Battery People	When the tough ex-miners in South Wales village start drinking gin instead of the traditional beer, secretly turn to cock-fighting, and shun their wives, the Doomwatch team are called in to investigate. It would appear that there is a hormone inbalance and Quist and Co. try to find the cause.	Archive
Hear No Evil	In an attempt to combat unofficial strikes a company decide to manipulate their employees lives using the	Missing

	latest scientific advance. When this extends to their private lives as well, Quist is forced to turn their own methods against them.	
Survival Code	An object is washed up near Byfield Regis pier on the South Coast is thought to be a weather detection device and is stripped down by two locals for spare parts, but the reality is far more sinister - a plane crashed in the sea nearby carrying three nuclear devices on board.	Missing

## Second Season

Comprising of 13 episodes broadcast between 14th December 1970 and 22nd March 1971, the entire series exist in the BBC archives.

You Killed Toby Wren	The death of Toby Wren, killed trying to defuse the device at Byfield Regis pier, leave Quist wrestling with his conscience.	Archive
Invasion	Chemical weapons stored in the area of a village begin to leak into the water supply. The military descend and the inhabitants are evacuated when two cavers go missing.	Archive
The Islanders	The inhabitants of the tiny pacific island of St. Simon are evacuated when there are tremors in the area, but once in London, the islanders find they are the butt of jokes and curios. More importantly, they are not accustomed to society and the results can be deadly.	Archive
No Room for Error	Doomwatch is approached by Dr Fay Chantry, when a new 'wonder drug' that the company she works for is beginning to kill rather than cure.	Archive
By the Pricking of My Thumbs...	Sixteen year old Stephen Franklin has an obscure genetic defect - an extra Y chromosome - which makes him appear to be a freak.	Archive
The Iron Doctor	A thinking computer leads to the death of a patient at an intensive care unit.	Archive
Flight into Yesterday	Whilst at a conference in Los Angeles, Quist is called back by the Minister and succumbs to jet-lag, or does he? It all seems to convenient that the one man who knew how to handle the large businesses is out of action when they decide to act.	Archive
The Web of Fear	Following an outbreak of Yellow Fever, the Scilly Isles are closed. Originally thought to be a case of flu, the Doomwatch team suspect that an experiment into vaccines has got out of control.	Archive
In the Dark	Patrick Torughton is the guest in this episode. Whilst visiting the south coast to investigate mustard gas	Archive

	dumped in the sea during the war, Quist learns that a respected colleague, McArthur, is living nearby. However, his friend is only being kept alive by machines, and soon even these won't be able to prolong it further.	
The Human Time Bomb	The lack of housing called for a drastic solution, high-rise flats, but the impact on the well-being of the residents was not considered, and when deaths occur, Doomwatch come in to investigate.	Archive
The Inquest	Marion duffy died from Rabies, and at her inquest, the recommendation that all dogs withing a 5 mile radius be destroyed is met with uproar.	Archive
The Logicians	A break-in at Beresford Chemicals is blamed on industrial sabotage, but the police have no clues as to how the sophisticated electronic security system was breached and vital papers stolen - vital to Jack Priestland, the Managing Director. His son, Malcolm, a mathematical genius taught by computers is not considered.	Archive
Public Enemy	A young boy and then a man both have their lungs burnt out and the link is Carlingham Alloys. It seems that their waste disposal and ventilation systems are polluting the local area, but when Doomwatch come in to investigate, the workforce are not too happy that their jobs are being threatened.	Archive

### Third Season

This series was supposed to be a further 13 episodes, but production of the last episode was aborted and 1 remains unbroadcast. The 11 episodes to be broadcast, were between 5th June and the 17th August 1972. Only three of this series (including Sex and Violence) exist.

Fire and Brimstone	Ridge takes things into his own hands when he finds the world's pollution levels to much to bear and steals phials of anthrax with a threat to destroy humanity.	Missing
High Mountain	Doomwatch is assessed after the recent actions of Ridge and Quist finds himself invited to a large country estate in Scotland where he is offered an influential job, provided he toes the line.	Missing
Say Knife, Fat Man	'Say Knife' is a provoking threat. 'Fat Man' was the codename of the first atom bomb. The two together mean a group of student activists steal plutonium rods for a home made bomb.	Missing
Waiting for a Knighthood	It is decided that Ridge, due to his actions, cannot return to Doomwatch, but Quist believes that lead in paint found in Ridges garage is responsible for	Archive

	disturbing his mind. When a man suffering from the same symptoms as Ridge kidnaps a ministers son the dangerous chemical process is headline news.	
Without the Bomb	Quist and Bradley investigate the effect that pheromones can have on the behaviour of a person when a new brand of lipstick is launched containing them to make the wearer irresistible to men.	Missing
Hair Trigger	Investigations into a research unit where epileptics and patients with personality disorders are given temporal lobotomies show up the treatments side effects - a single phrase can turn them into killers.	Archive
Deadly Dangerous	To highlight the use of DDT in developing countries, Ridge has an Indian family flown into the centre of London, but the effects are disastrous as one has malaria.	Missing
Enquiry	Security is paramount where new weapons are concerned, and even more so when they are chemical. This is what happens when a laboratory is not as secure as it is thought to be.	Missing
Flood	Under certain circumstances, once a century, it is possible for the level of the Thames to rise to such heights that the Capital will flood. This is just that time.	Missing
Cause of Death	Ridge devotes his life to taking care of his sick father, but when he dies in hospital under the care of Dr Cordell, a man pro-euthanasia for geriatrics, Ridge's suspicions are aroused.	Missing
The Killer Dolphins	The US navy are training dolphins to act as underwater saboteurs to attach explosives to the hull of ships. But killing is also part of their training, as Quist soon finds out when he investigates.	Archive
Sex and Violence	Due to actual footage of an execution being used in the production of this episode, it has never been broadcast in the UK	Archive
The Devil's Demolition	This episode was never completed as production was aborted.	Not existing

### Series Credits

The series was produced by Terence Dudley (assisted by Glyn Edwards), scripts edited by Gerry Davis and Scientific advice from Dr. C.M.H. Pedler. Music was composed by Max Harris.