



It's been awhile since I've visited one of the deadliest counties in the U.K. and apparently there has been a switch of Barnaby's. Long time show star John Nettles has exited the show and producers have brought in Neil Dudgeon (Life Of Riley) as Tom Barnaby's cousin DCI John Barnaby, of course taking on his cousins old boy wonder, Ben Jones (Jason Hughes). Four episodes later and here are my thoughts.

Set 21 of Midsomer Murders features four episodes; Death In The Slow Lane, Dark Secrets, Echoes of the Dead, and The Oblong Murders. Each episode serves as a good portion of time for fans to get comfortable with Neil Dudgeon as he awaits the arrival of his wife, dodges nosy neighbors, and gets a bit of chemistry going with DS Ben Jones.

Death In the Slow Lane features a private school hosting a best in show competition for classic cars as a means of collecting for charity. It all goes sideways when a former racer is found sitting inside of his racecar, an apparent suicide. Or was it? As the case opens up the baddies come out of the woodwork and people begin to drop like flies. Is it the school master, a student, an outsider? A pretty good episode in introducing DCI John Barnaby and getting a good laugh at the awkwardness between himself and DS Ben Jones.

If Dark Secrets is any indication as to where the show is heading, yikes. The trouble I had with this episode is that it was too whimsical. I felt like I was watching a hybrid episode of Keeping Up Appearances meets Murder She Wrote. The characters were silly, even when being malicious, and I was always one step ahead of the plot. I think it's Neil Dudgeon's somewhat cartoonish facial features that make him not quite so believable, for now, in his part.

Echoes of the Dead was a pretty good episode. Lots of townies involved in the slew of suspicion cast on the small town where a serial killer might be on the loose. The reveal was a bit loose but the story held up well as bodies multiplied and people began acting strangely.

Finally The Oblong Murders closes out the set. I particularly liked this episode. Jones goes undercover into what he and John believe may be a cult were a young woman, who was once a follower, has vanished. Her parents have made up a stink ever since, forcing Barnaby and Jones to take action. It was a good amount of screen time for Jason Hughes, who I never recalled being such a crooked copper in the past. Definitely an episode to see.

All in all the set was decent. I'm still getting used to Dudgeon but I think in time fans like myself will come around. He's not horrible, he's just not quite Nettles, yet. As always final judgment is yours. Enjoy.

Tags: [British](#) [1]
[Crime](#) [2]
[Mystery](#) [3]
[detective](#) [4]

Source URL: <http://www.shakefire.com/review/midsomer-murders-set-21>

Links

[1] <http://www.shakefire.com/tags/british>
[2] <http://www.shakefire.com/tags/crime>
[3] <http://www.shakefire.com/tags/mystery>
[4] <http://www.shakefire.com/tags/detective>