# Jeff Pope’s new drama revisits the tragic killing of Jean Charles de Menezes



Jeff Pope, renowned for his gripping true-crime dramas, returns with a new four-part series, Suspect: The Killing of Jean Charles de Menezes, which premieres on Disney+ on 30 April. The drama meticulously recreates the tragic events following the 7/7 London bombings in 2005, focusing on the fatal shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes, a Brazilian electrician mistakenly identified as a suicide bomber and killed by Metropolitan Police firearms officers at Stockwell Tube station on 22 July 2005.

Pope’s deep interest in high-stakes criminal stories has guided his career from reporting on trials for the Ealing Gazette to producing acclaimed dramas such as Appropriate Adult, The Reckoning, and A Confession. Speaking to The Independent, Pope revealed that the initial news of a suspected bomber’s death sparked a widespread, visceral reaction among the public—captured in his memory by the phrase, “Brilliant, they got one of them.” However, extensive research and interviews compelled him to unearth the complexities obscured by the official narrative.

In Suspect, Pope explores a multitude of perspectives, including those of Jean Charles de Menezes (portrayed by Edison Alcaide), the police officers involved, the 21/7 bombers, whistleblowers within the Independent Police Complaints Commission, and senior Metropolitan Police officials such as Cressida Dick, then overseeing the surveillance operation, and Sir Ian Blair, the commissioner at the time. This multifaceted approach illustrates the chaotic environment of heightened fear and paranoia that dominated London in the wake of the bombings.

Pope detailed a series of errors and misjudgements that precipitated the shooting. Jean Charles de Menezes happened to live in flats linked to a suspected bomber, and conflicting surveillance reports, including a scenario where an officer was distracted urinating in a bottle during the critical moment of identification, resulted in a tragic misidentification. Other operational failings included delayed briefings, malfunctioning communications, and inconsistent instructions regarding whether to challenge or shoot, all of which compounded the confusion.

Reflecting on the police response, Pope said, “The operation was poorly planned and poorly executed.” He criticised the Metropolitan Police’s post-incident handling, accusing them of denial and obfuscation that hindered public trust and closure for de Menezes’ family, who have been closely involved as consultants on the series. He noted that despite public expressions of regret from the Met, they had steadfastly refused to acknowledge specific mistakes.

Pope also pondered accountability: “If you’re driving a car, bend down to pick up a sandwich, smash into someone and kill them, it’s a criminal offence. I believe that the fault lay with the mismanagement of the operation, which arrives at the doorstep of Cressida Dick. Whether that amounts to something criminal is for others to decide.” The series aims to stimulate debate rather than provide definitive answers, and Pope expects it will provoke discomfort within police ranks.

Addressing recent controversies surrounding the Metropolitan Police, including systemic issues of racism and misconduct during Cressida Dick’s tenure as commissioner until her resignation in 2022, Pope expressed nuanced views. He acknowledged the complexity of police work and the challenges posed by societal changes: “The overwhelming majority of police officers are a force for good,” he stated, but also highlighted ongoing institutional problems and praised the current leadership under Sir Mark Rowley as potentially more progressive and transparent.

Suspect joins Pope’s portfolio of projects that interrogate the darker aspects of human behaviour and institutional failure. He distinguishes his work by focusing less on perpetrators’ motives and more on the repercussions of crime for victims and society. This approach has featured prominently in dramas such as Appropriate Adult, which depicted the West murders from the perspective of social worker Janet Leach, and A Confession, which examined the groundbreaking police work behind revealing a serial killer.

Pope’s dedication to truth and scrutiny extends even to productions examining institutions like the BBC, evident in The Reckoning, his 2023 series about the decades-long sexual abuses by Jimmy Savile. Despite controversy over its focus on the perpetrator, Pope defended the series, saying it began and continually included victim testimonies interwoven with the narrative to create an honest portrayal.

Beyond true crime, Pope’s work also embraces warmth and resilience, exemplified by Mo and Philomena and the recently released film The Penguin Lessons. This feature film tells the story of an English teacher in Buenos Aires who bonds with a penguin amidst the backdrop of Argentina’s military dictatorship, balancing a heartfelt narrative with a darker political context.

Suspect: The Killing of Jean Charles de Menezes is set to challenge viewers with its thorough re-examination of one of London’s most harrowing modern tragedies, offering a complex view of law enforcement amid crisis and the tragic consequences of misjudgement in a fearful time. The series will be available to stream on Disney+ from 30 April.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspect:\_The\_Shooting\_of\_Jean\_Charles\_de\_Menezes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspect%3A_The_Shooting_of_Jean_Charles_de_Menezes) - Details the 2025 Disney+ series about the 2005 police shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes, including cast, crew, and narrative focus on operational failures and misidentification.
* <https://www.disneyplus.com/en-ie/browse/entity-61f49f45-510d-47bc-aa51-7cbdf3d51da6> - Official Disney+ page confirming the series' premise, release date (30 April 2025), and its exploration of police errors during the counterterrorism operation.
* <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt28197237/> - IMDb listing corroborates the series' plot summary, emphasizing the misidentification of de Menezes and the police pursuit of suspects linked to failed bombings.
* <https://www.startribune.com/suspect-on-disney-digs-for-the-truth-around-a-fatal-london-police-shooting/601337358> - Article discusses Jeff Pope's screenplay, police mismanagement claims, and the family's involvement in the series, aligning with the description of operational failures.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appropriate_Adult> - Supports Jeff Pope's career background in true-crime dramas, specifically his work on 'Appropriate Adult,' as referenced in the article.
* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\_Reckoning\_(2023\_TV\_series)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Reckoning_%282023_TV_series%29) - Confirms Jeff Pope's role in creating 'The Reckoning,' a series about Jimmy Savile's crimes, mentioned in the article as part of his portfolio of institutional critiques.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/jean-charles-de-menezes-jeff-pope-steve-coogan-b2734355.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data