



Published on NCSE (<https://ncse.com>)

[Home](#) > Judgment Day in the news

SHARE TWEET EMAIL [PRINT](#) [1]

[NCSE Staff](#) [2]

11.15.2007

[Judgment Day in the news](#) [3]

Judge John E. Jones III, the federal judge who presided over *Kitzmiller v. Dover*, appeared on *The NewsHour* on November 13, 2007, to discuss *Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial*, the documentary that recently aired on PBS stations nationwide. Following a clip from the program, Jones discussed his background knowledge of "intelligent design" and evolution, the Establishment Clause and its applicability in the *Kitzmiller* case, the role of the independent judiciary, and the influence of his seminal decision. Jones [commented](#) [4], "It's not precedential outside of the middle district of Pennsylvania, but I thought that if other school boards and other boards of education could read it, they would possibly be more enlightened about what the dispute was all about."

Judgment Day aired on PBS stations nationwide on November 13, 2007. It will be [available](#) [5] to watch on-line as of November 16, 2007, and it is likely to air again in various places -- schedules for local affiliates can be checked on-line via the PBS [website](#) [6]. Be sure also to visit the generous [website](#) [7], featuring interviews with Kenneth R. Miller on evolution, Phillip Johnson on "intelligent design," and Paula Apsell on NOVA's decision to produce the documentary; audio clips of Judge John E. Jones III reading passages from his decision in the case, and of various experts (including NCSE's Eugenie C. Scott) discussing the nature of science; resources about the evidence for evolution and about the background to the *Kitzmiller* case; material especially for teachers, including a [briefing packet](#) [8] (PDF) for educators; and even a [preview](#) [9] of the documentary.

Meanwhile, *Judgment Day* is continuing to receive high praise from reviewers, both in Pennsylvania, where the historic trial took place, or across the country. The *York Dispatch*, one of the two daily papers serving Dover, Pennsylvania, editorially [offered](#) [10] (November 11, 2007), "**Thumbs Up** to PBS for bringing tribulations of the Dover Area School District to national attention in the two-hour Nova special 'Judgment Day: Intelligent Design on Trial' ... The blatant attempt to introduce religion-based

'creationism' into the public school classroom is detailed along with a recreation of the ensuing battle in a federal courtroom in Harrisburg that resulted in a humiliating defeat for the intelligent design proponents. A reminder that fiddling with public education to impose an individual religious viewpoint is a non-starter, 'Judgment Day' should be required watching."

Reviewing *Judgment Day* for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (November 13, 2007), Jonathan Storm [praised](#) ^[11] not only the scientific content of *Judgment Day* but also its objective approach: "Nova, the science show, stoutly defends science against the attack of the surprisingly hard-to-pin-down intelligent-design brain trust. It does use such loaded words as 'claim' and 'so-called' to describe tenets of the supposed theory, but it is surprisingly clear of a 'nyah-nyah, we won' tone. That makes this significant program more accessible to all." He also quoted Judge Jones as saying, "If you glibly embrace intelligent design, or if you're in that 48 or 50 percent who believe creationism ought to be taught in school, I hope [you] will watch this."

It was as a legal drama that *Judgment Day* struck Rob Owen, writing in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (November 12, 2007). Describing the program as "a fascinating and gripping look at the trial and both sides of the issue," Owen [wrote](#) ^[12], "I didn't know much about so-called 'intelligent design' theory beyond its name and a sense that it's synonymous with creationism. So I went into the film willing to be persuaded that maybe there's some validity to intelligent design. If there is, those in favor of ID failed to prove it. And failed miserably. That's what makes 'Intelligent Design on Trial' such a thriller. As a legal exercise, the pro-evolution team presents a slam-dunk case; in the end, even a defense attorney says his losing side received a fair trial."

In *The New York Times* (November 11, 2007), Cornelia Dean [admired](#) ^[13] the scientific content of *Judgment Day*, commenting, "the program as a whole recognizes that there is no credible scientific challenge to the theory of evolution as an explanation for the complexity and diversity of life on earth. And it shows how witnesses attacked two of the central premises of intelligent design -- that there are no 'intermediate' fossils to show one creature morphing into another (there are) and that some body parts are too complex to have formed from the modification of other body parts (not true)." She added, "But viewers also learn a more important lesson: that all science is provisional, standing only until it is overturned by better information. Intelligent design, relying as it does on an untestable supernatural entity, does not fall into that category."

Elsewhere, the *Cincinnati Post's* reviewer (November 13, 2007) [wrote](#) ^[14], "Leave it to the respected PBS science show 'Nova' to put some common sense back into the often hysterical debate over whether intelligent design is science or religion -- and remind us that Darwin's theory of evolution is a solid one that should be taught in science classes." The *Deseret News's* reviewer (November 13, 2007) [described](#) ^[15] the program as "captivating," and quoted Judge Jones as saying, "I think there's a lesson here for communities and how they elect their school board members." And the *Oregonian's* reviewer (November 13, 2007) [wrote](#) ^[16] **[Link broken]**, "'Judgment Day' offers an admirably compact and methodical presentation of the sides in the debate. It should be highly useful in years to come."

Finally, writing in *Salon* (November 13, 2007), Gordy Slack, the author of *The Battle Over the Meaning of Everything: Evolution, Intelligent Design, and a School Board in Dover, PA*, looks forward from the trial, [explaining](#) ^[17] that although "intelligent design" aspired to be a big tent under which creationists of all stripes were welcome to shelter, "Judge Jones'[s] decision was like a lightning strike on the big top, sending many of the constituents running home through the rain." He ends by quoting NCSE's executive director Eugenie C. Scott's warning: "Evolution remains under attack ... If creationists have their way,

teachers will eventually just stop teaching evolution. It'll just be too much trouble. And generations of students will continue to grow up ignorant of basic scientific realities."

[Anti-Evolution](#) [18]

[2007](#) [19]

[National](#) [20]

[+ read](#) [3]

Source URL: <https://ncse.com/news/2007/11/judgment-day-news-001251#comment-0>

Links

[1] <https://ncse.com/printpdf/13173>

[2] <https://ncse.com/users/ncse-staff>

[3] <https://ncse.com/news/2007/11/judgment-day-news-001251>

[4] http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/education/july-dec07/evolution_11-13.html

[5] <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/id/program.html>

[6] <http://www.pbs.org/tvschedules/>

[7] <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/id/>

[8] <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/id/media/nova-id-briefing.pdf>

[9] http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/preview/i_3416.html

[10]

[http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=YKDB&p_theme=ykdb&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=allfields\(nova\)%20AND%20date\(11/12/2007%20to%2011/12/2007\)&p_field_date=0=YMD_date&p_params_date=0=date:B,E&p_text_date=0=11/12/2007%20to%2011/12/2007\)&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=\(%22nova%22\)&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=no](http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_product=YKDB&p_theme=ykdb&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_dispstring=allfields(nova)%20AND%20date(11/12/2007%20to%2011/12/2007)&p_field_date=0=YMD_date&p_params_date=0=date:B,E&p_text_date=0=11/12/2007%20to%2011/12/2007)&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=(%22nova%22)&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=no)

[11]

[http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_multi=PI|DN|&p_product=PHNP&p_theme=phnp&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_trackval=PHNP&s_dispstring=Judgment%20Day%20Nova%20AND%20date\(2007\)%20AND%20date\(all\)%20AND%20date\(all\)&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=Judgment%20Day%20Nova&p_bool_advanced-1=AND&p_params_advanced-1=date:B,E&p_field_advanced-1=YMD_date&p_text_advanced-1=\(2007\)%20AND%20\(all\)&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=no](http://nl.newsbank.com/nl-search/we/Archives?p_multi=PI|DN|&p_product=PHNP&p_theme=phnp&p_action=search&p_maxdocs=200&s_trackval=PHNP&s_dispstring=Judgment%20Day%20Nova%20AND%20date(2007)%20AND%20date(all)%20AND%20date(all)&p_field_advanced-0=&p_text_advanced-0=Judgment%20Day%20Nova&p_bool_advanced-1=AND&p_params_advanced-1=date:B,E&p_field_advanced-1=YMD_date&p_text_advanced-1=(2007)%20AND%20(all)&xcal_numdocs=20&p_perpage=10&p_sort=YMD_date:D&xcal_useweights=no)

[12] <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/07317/833303-42.stm>

[13] <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/11/11/arts/television/11dean.html>

[14] <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-171310712.html>

[15] <http://deseretnews.com/article/1,5143,695227059,00.html>

[16]

<http://www.oregonlive.com/entertainment/oregonian/index.ssf?/base/entertainment/119490270485010.xml&coll=7&thispage=1>

[17] http://www.salon.com/news/feature/2007/11/13/intelligent_design/

[18] <https://ncse.com/news/anti-evolution>

[19] <https://ncse.com/news/2007>

[20] <https://ncse.com/news/national>