

SHIELD, THE (*Police Drama*)

BROADCAST HISTORY:

FX

60 minutes

Original episodes: 2002-

Premiered: *March 12, 2002*

CAST:

Det. Vic Mackey Michael Chiklis

Det. Shane Vendrell Walton Goggins

Det. Curtis "Lemonhead" Lemansky

..... Kenneth Johnson

Capt. David Aceveda Benito Martinez

Det. Claudette Wymys CCH Pounder

Det. Holland "Dutch" Wagenbach Jay Karnes

Officer Danielle "Danny" Sofer

..... Catherine Dent

Officer Julien Lowe Michael Jace

Asst. Chief Ben Gilroy John Diehl

Corrine Mackey Cathy Cahlin Ryan

Matthew Mackey Joel Rosenthal

Television arguably broke new ground with this violent drama about cops operating on – and well beyond – the edge of the law in the battle against rampant street crime in the drug-infested barrio of Los Angeles. At the center of the action was Det. Vic Mackey, leader of the Farmington District Strike Force, a beefy, bald tough guy ready to use any means to nail the perps. That could include planting evidence, beating confessions out of prisoners, strip-searching gang leaders in front of their homies, and sometimes meting out "street justice." His violent tactics had earned him the respect from gang leaders: they often turned over evidence, or agreed to treaties, just to keep him from cracking their skulls. Key members of Mackey's team were Vendrell, a loose cannon who sometimes went too far even for Mackey, and Lemansky, a muscular enforcer.

Mackey's other major battle was with Capt. Aceveda, his nominal boss, who was determined to bring down this "Al Capone with a badge." They hated each other. Aceveda had his own demons, however. Arrogant, cocky and ambitious, he was using the Farmington District strictly for his own political ends (he wanted to run for mayor), so he often looked the other way while Mackey cleaned it up for him, then took the credit. Others in the station house were tough but sensible veteran Wymys and her wimpy partner, Wagenbach, and the experienced Sofer (an Aceveda ally) and her partner, gay black rookie Lowe. Assistant Chief Gilroy was Mackey's sometimes frustrated "protector" at headquarters. At home Mackey dealt with his worried wife Corrine and three children, including autistic son Matthew.

Violence (in the first episode Mackey shot an informer who had been sent to infiltrate his team), nudity and strong language, including racial epithets, permeated the show, though they hardly seemed out of place. Michael Chiklis won a Best Actor Emmy for his role as the tortured Det. Mackey, the first time the lead in a cable drama was ever so honored.

From *The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows, 1946-Present*. 8th ed. Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003. p. 1063.