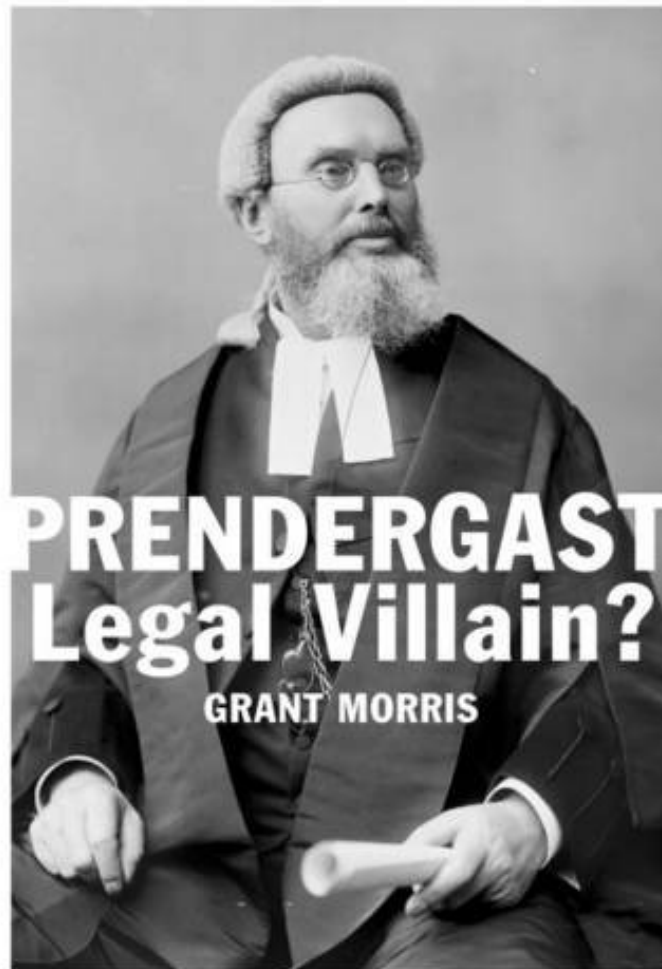


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Prendergast Legal Villain?

Grant Morris

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James Prendergast is the most infamous figure in New Zealand's legal history, known mainly for his condemnation of the Treaty of Waitangi as a simple nullity in 1877. But during his lifetime Prendergast was a highly respected lawyer and judge. He was arguably New Zealand's dominant legal professional from 1865 to 1899, and his good reputation remained intact until the 1980s, when the Treaty of Waitangi finally returned to the centre of New Zealand political

life. The more the Treaty has been celebrated, the more Prendergast has been condemned. Who was this legal villain? Was he really a villain at all? This comprehensive biography charts Prendergast's life from his upbringing in the heart of London's legal world through to his long and eventful reign as New Zealand's third Chief Justice. It provides fascinating insights into different parts of the 19th-century British Empire and, in particular, colonial Wellington, featuring bitter feuds, groundbreaking judgments, and personal tragedy.

About the Author Grant Morris is a senior lecturer in law at Victoria University of Wellington. He is the author of *Law Alive: The New Zealand Legal System in Context*.