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Rear Window (Special Edition)

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Rear Window (Legacy Collection) DVD Review

We pick up our binoculars and peep on this DVD.

by Christopher Monfette and IGN Staff

October 2, 2008 - Hitchcock. Like any introduction is necessary. The guy's an institution. Even though *Psycho*, *The Birds*, and *Vertigo* are equally popular, it is *Rear Window* that sold me on the man.

J.B. Jeffries (Stewart) has had a nasty tumble. As a result, he's cooped up in his tiny apartment during a nasty heat wave with nothing to do except sit... and WATCH. Facing the inner court of the apartment complex, he watches the lives around him go by. Aspiring dancers (usually parading around half naked), bickering couples, a lonely women, and a mysterious man (Raymond Burr) who seems to be up to something nefarious.

From the apartment, we meet his woman (the breathtaking Grace Kelly), his maid, and as he sees things that seem to incriminate the man across the courtyard they become involved in his hypothesis as well. Of course, each time he tries to get the police involved things go awry.

What makes *Rear Window* so special is how it takes a very stagey environment and uses the lack of settings as a way to heighten tension and convey the claustrophobic and confining instead of fall prey to it. Since he's incapacitated, even the slightest amount of danger is increasingly more potent. His voyeuristic tendencies and deductive reasoning is what gives the film its hook (used to less effect in many films). Stewart is impeccable and Kelly is everything you'd expect. They make for a humorous and surprisingly modern couple even after all these years.

Hitchcock does what he does best, using his combo of inventive filmmaking and unequalled grasp of what builds suspense to make a film that seems fresh today even though we've seen most of it in many other films since this one was birthed in the 50's. It's so tempting to watch other people. This film takes that very human habit and allows a window into what could be... Remarkable stuff, and Hitchcock's best, in my opinion.

8 out of 10

(Review by IGN Staff)



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 Release Date:  
 US: October 7, 2008  
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 Rear Window

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Impressive

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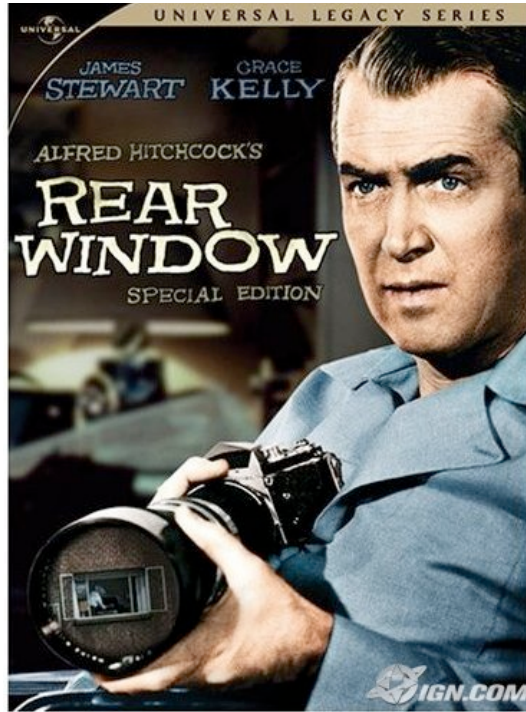
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**Video and Presentation**

The transfer here looks much the same as the last we saw it in past Collector's Edition DVD's – crisp and clear, sporting vivid colors and high image fidelity. Aside from the original film grain, there's virtually nothing in the way of additional noise, artifacting and/or digitization. Hitchcock has likely never looked as good as in some of these DVD's and restorations and the image here continues to underscore his place as the master of suspense.

**Score: 9 out of 10**

**Languages and Audio**

Sadly, the track remains the standard 2.0 mono mix heard on past releases. Fortunately, it's a solid transfer. The music and dialogue comes across clear and consistently strong, but for a film which relies so strongly on sound to create atmosphere from adjacent buildings, a bit more nuance – and especially a 5.1 track – would have been welcome.

**Score: 7 out of 10**

**Extras and Packaging**

Presented over two discs, the extras for the Legacy Series release of *Rear Window* are uniformly excellent:

- Commentary by John Fawell (Author, *Hitchcock's Rear Window*)
- *Rear Window* Ethics
- A Conversation with Screenwriter John Michael Hayes
- Pure Cinema: Through the Eyes of the Master
- Breaking Barriers: The Sound of Hitchcock
- Hitchcock/Truffaut Interview Excerpts
- Alfred Hitchcock Presents: "Mr. Blanchard's Secret"
- Production Photographs and Notes
- Re-Release Trailer

Most releases are lucky to have a single feature which anchors the disc. This one has three. "*Rear Window* Ethics" acts as the uber-documentary – the one which includes the input of famous directors, writers, historians and film technicians to provide an hour-long overview of the importance of *Rear Window* in cinema. From the technical innovations of the film, to the careful framing and editing, to the themes of voyeurism and sexuality, the documentary presents an in-depth, educational and fascinating look at the film for any diehard Hitchcock fan. "Pure Cinema" offers twenty minutes on Hitchcock's ability to convey information and emotion purely through the visuals – without dialogue or exposition. Alternately, "Breaking Barriers" offers an additional half-hour on Hitchcock's careful use of sound effects and music (or, often, his lack of use) to create the suspense of a given scene. Each of these three pieces do an excellent job to give a sense of Hitch's overall techniques, but also pull them back in to their relationship to *Rear Window*.

The conversation with screenwriter John Hayes provides an amusing anecdote about how the then-young writer was hired based upon a drunken dinner with Hitchcock. Otherwise, it's just a brief, charming inclusion – an old man looking back on his first major

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gig. Conversely, Fawell's commentary is much more scholarly, full of information, though fairly dryly presented. In fact, it feels as if Fawell is reading much of his material and ultimately show little of his own personality. And finally, the production materials and the re-release trailers are nice inclusions for the curious film buff.


**Score: 9 out of 10**

**The Bottom Line**

Yet another masterful release of a film by the master himself.

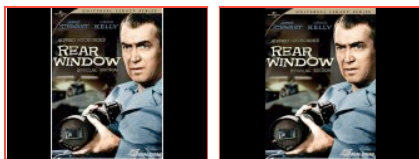
IGN's Ratings for Rear Window (Special Edition)

Rating	Description
out of 10	<a href="#">click here for ratings guide</a> ⓘ
<b>8</b>	<b>The Movie</b> The original voyeuristic thriller.
<b>9</b>	<b>The Video</b> A fantastic transfer.
<b>7</b>	<b>The Audio</b> Standard two-channel mono.
<b>9</b>	<b>The Extras</b> A great, intelligent collection.
<b>8</b>	<b>OVERALL</b> (out of 10 / not an average)



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The person who reviewed Rear Window movie portion should put their name to it not some IGN STAFF. This is ridiculous the quality here is just so bad. That IGN STAFF better come forth because he/she just lost all credibility in movie reviewing.

**Posted by:** [Phoxhunter](#) on October 06, 2008 07:14 PDT

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Wait. How would a movie like Rear Window get an 8? It is one of the best movies ever. With movies like 300, Funny Games and Be Kind Rewind getting 10's, I wonder why I visit this site for movie reviews.

**Posted by:** [RHCPfan24](#) on October 04, 2008 15:17 PDT

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With each review I read here, I become less and less likely continue visiting IGN. An 8 to Rear Window? How is that possible? Seriously. What else gets an 8? Citizen Kane? The Godfather? How about other Hitchcock films like Vertigo or Psycho?

I'm seriously starting to wonder if the... [\[+\] Full Comment](#)

**Posted by:** [luezuve](#) on October 03, 2008 14:02 PDT

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I don't understand why every film made before a certain year is precluded from any score higher than a 7 or an 8. This is an amazing film! I prefer North by Northwest somewhat, but really, it's not a matter of quality, but more on the basis of style. Most of Hitchcock's films in the middle-point of... [\[+\] Full Comment](#)

**Posted by:** [JesseBed](#) on October 03, 2008 11:56 PDT

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An 8 is good, but for one of the best movies ever (in my opinion)? No way. it deserves

at least a 9.

Posted by: [timmah638](#) on October 03, 2008 08:00 PDT

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