

'Rear Window' is quintessential Hitchcock

By JEFF GROVE
Arts Editor

One of this year's best movies is actually one of 1954's best movies.

Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, first released almost 30 years ago but unavailable to audiences since then, is back in general release. Seeing the film is like being reunited with a long-lost friend. Its sterling cast, excellent technical work and brilliant construction make it hard to avoid the cliché that they don't make 'em like this anymore.

Review

Rear Window is one of five films — the others are *Rope*, *The Trouble With Harry*, *Vertigo* and the 1954 re-make of *The Man Who Knew Too Much* — to which Hitchcock retained all distribution rights after their initial release. He kept them out of circulation and off television. After his death in 1980, negotiations began between distributors and Hitchcock's estate. In the end, Universal Classics won the right to exhibit the films. After screenings at this year's New York Film Festival, the movies began making their way around the nation's art houses.

Some of the films have been more popular than others. *The Trouble With Harry* is still regarded as a minor Hitchcock effort, and *Rope* was a box-office bomb when first released. *Rear Window*, however, was fifth on *Variety's* 1954 list of top-grossing films, having earned over \$5 million. It went on to be nominated for three Academy Awards. *Rear Window's* current release is repeating its initial success; it has earned \$1 million in its first four weeks of limited engagements.

There is legitimate reason for the film to be so popular. It is quintessential Hitchcock, blending sophisticated humor and nerve-grinding suspense in a delicate but complementary balance. In James Stewart and Grace Kelly the film has an All-American hero and a beautiful, classy heroine.

Stewart plays L.B. Jeffries, a photographer whose leg and hip are in a cast because of an occupational injury and who is confined to his New York City apartment for seven weeks while he heals. Kelly is Lisa, his fiancée, who drops by in the evenings to bring him dinner and keep him company. Stella, an insurance company nurse played to perfection by veteran character actress

Thelma Ritter, gives him back rubs and wisecracks each morning. Jeffries is still left with a great deal of time alone, and he spends it observing his neighbors through his window.

Jeffries has a view of a courtyard surrounded by four apartment buildings.

Some of the characters Jeffries watches are included for the sake of humor. There is a busybody who is also a would-be artist, a dancer (dubbed "Miss Torsio" by Jeffries) who does warm-up exercises on her balcony, and a newlywed couple who rarely interrupt their lovemaking long enough to pull their shades up.

Other characters are more pathetic. A childless, middle-aged couple lavish parental affection on their dog. In a first-floor apartment, a lonely spinster has candlelit dinners with imaginary suitors.

Then there are the neighbors directly across the way. Lars Thorwald, a salesman played menacingly by Raymond Burr, must constantly attend his invalid wife. One day, after they have a bitter argument, the wife seems to mysteriously disappear. Jeffries is convinced that Thorwald has murdered his wife, and the majority of the film revolves about Jeffries' efforts to get Lisa and Stella, as well as the police, to investigate.

Perfect elements, then, for a suspense story. It is no wonder that John Michael Hayes' screenplay picked up an Oscar nomination. But added to the tale are Hitchcock's fascination with the interplay of light and dark, his obsession with clocks (which provides the means for his obligatory cameo appearance), the usual "Hitchcockian" camera angles and a concentration on lenses, glasses and windows.

In many ways, *Rear Window* exhibits the best features of Hitchcock's style. This alone makes it a good choice to be the first film of the five to be re-released. Add to that the engrossing performances by Stewart, Kelly and Ritter and the acting gems provided by the various neighbors, and the film would deserve even more consideration.

Above all, though, the film remains relevant. When one neighbor cries out accusingly at the others that they don't know how to be neighbors, that they don't care if anyone lives or dies, the accusation still hits home after 30 years.

It's just another proof that Hitchcock was as concerned with people as with suspense, and it's another good reason to see *Rear Window*.

Campus Calendar	Today	Tuesday
The Carolina Student Fund/DTH Campus Calendar will appear every Monday and Thursday. Announcements to be run on Monday must be placed in the box outside the Carolina Student Fund office on the third floor of South Building by 6 p.m. the Friday before they are to run. Announcements to be run on Thursday must be placed in the box by 6 p.m. of the preceding Tuesday. Only announcements from University-recognized and campus organizations will be printed.	3:30 p.m. S.T.A.N.D. meeting upstairs Campus Y. Call Bill Popper at 967-5503 for more info. 4 p.m. Hunger Responsibility Meeting upstairs Campus Y. 5:30 p.m. Christian Aerobics at the Baptist Student Union.	6:30 p.m. North Carolina Student Legislature Christmas Party at Mr. Gatti's back room. For more info call 962-NCSL. 7 p.m. STOW Residence College Fashion Show in Great Hall. 50¢ admission — proceeds go to Cancer Research Center. Call 933-5851 for more info. 8 p.m. UNC College Republicans general meeting at the Carolina Union.
Wednesday	Thursday	
11 a.m. RA Awareness Day sponsored by RA Programming Advisory Committee in the Pit. Rain date is Dec. 1. For more info contact Cindy Johnson at 933-2722. 4 p.m. Professor Robert Schommer of Rutgers University will speak on "The Expansion Rate of the Universe" in 265 Phillips Hall.	6 p.m. Channukah Celebration and Deli-style dinner for Hillel and Newman Center members and guests at the Hillel Foundation. This will be followed by Dr. David Halperin's speech on "Christianity and Judaism: Some Historical Links" at 7:30 p.m. at the Newman Center. 6:15 p.m. Baptist Student Union Council meeting.	2:30 p.m. The African and Afro-American Studies Department presents a Dramatic Presentation of African Literature, "The Pumpkin in the Old Homestead Must Not Be Uprooted," in the Union. Call Ron Dixon at 933-3367 for more info. 5:45 p.m. Baptist Student Union Christmas worship service at the Battle House. This is the first of three Christmas Worship Services.

sanctuary

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If the group did take someone into sanctuary, a legal person would prepare an application for political asylum, about a two-week process, Bunch said. "As soon as he gets the paperwork processed, they're free to go," she said. "The INS can't touch them." Fulton said that while he is not sure what would happen in Chapel Hill, it was his impression that other sanctuary groups did not prepare the application for political asylum until forced to because so few are granted to Salvadorans.

Because the Reagan administration is supporting the

Salvadoran government, it would be inconsistent to grant political asylum to immigrants from El Salvador because it would be "an admission that the human rights condition is not good in El Salvador," said Alex Charns, a Durham attorney and 1982 UNC graduate. He now is representing four Salvadoran refugees, arrested earlier this year, who are seeking asylum.

McGough said the groups working for sanctuary did not hold any illusions about gaining political asylum for the refugees they worked with, but filed because the process takes eight months to a year. "That gives us time to maneuver," he said.

The groups hope the United States will get out of Central America, and are pushing for extended voluntary departure status for immigrants, McGough said. Extended voluntary departure status means that the immigrant is allowed to stay in this country until the situation at home improves.

"They want to go back. Even the ones we've worked with, they all say, 'I want to go back when it's safe,'" McGough said.

Brigham said he did not have statistics on the number of asylums granted and denied to Salvadorans, but he said that just because a person was from El Salvador did not mean he would be denied asylum.

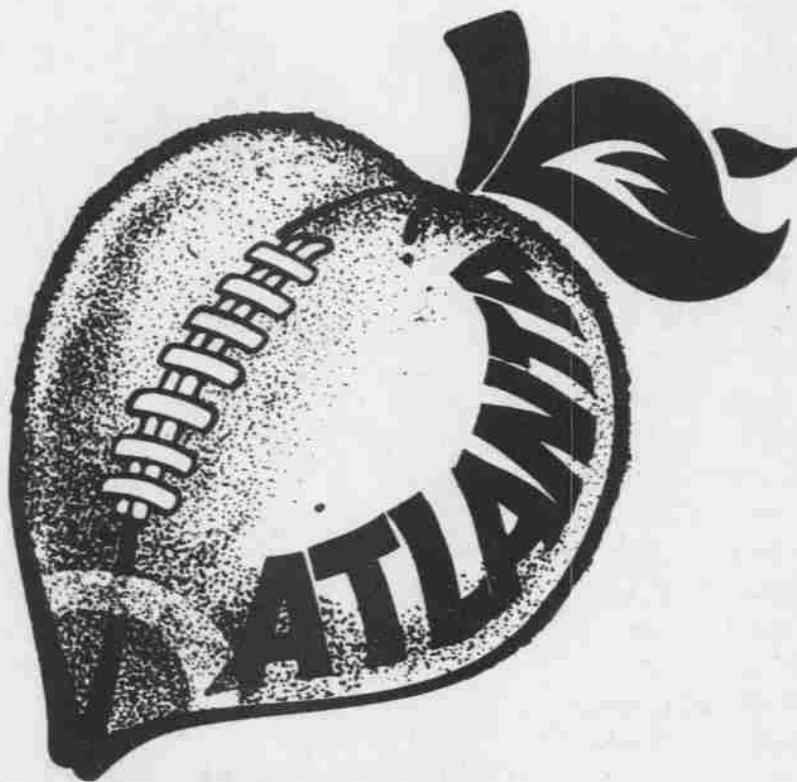
Brigham said the United States' relationship with an applicant's government was a consideration but not an overriding one.

"They have to articulate what it is that they fear and we try to ascertain if that is in fact a justifiable claim," he said. Brigham said the INS followed judicial process and did not arrest people and put them on a plane in the middle of the night.

If a person is arrested, he has the opportunity to apply for asylum, he said. "The individual is apprised of his rights every step of the way."

Bunch said it had been her experience that the immigration service did not follow the rules. "If they did follow them, we would have no need of a sanctuary program," Bunch said. "Basically, we don't trust them."

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