

Comparison and contrast of it had to be murder and rear window essay examples

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



Introduction

The movie *Rear Window*, which Alfred Hitchcock made in 1954 (Krinsky), was based on the short story *It Had to be Murder*, which was written by Cornell Woolrich in 1942 (“*Rear Window*”). Although there are differences between the movie and the short story, the story is basically about a man who is temporarily confined in a wheelchair because of his legs being in a cast. As such, he has nothing to do all day except look out his bedroom window and observe the goings-on in his neighbors’ lives through their windows. As the story goes on, Jeffries, the main character, begins to suspect that one of his neighbors has been murdered. This is where most of the story revolves in.

Comparison and Contrast

The similarities between the movie *Rear Window* and the short story *It Had to be Murder* (Woolrich) can be observed more from the general aspects of the stories. However, more differences will be noted once the details are considered.

Setting

In both the movie and the short story, the setting is in a neighborhood street with residential structures. In the short story, the neighborhood street is lined with houses where Jeffries is bound to observe his neighbors through their houses’ windows. There is also one apartment building that’s located at one end of the street. In the movie, however, Jeffries’ neighbors lived in an apartment building as he himself did. As such, he usually watched his neighbors who lived in the apartment building across the street.

Jeffries' neighbors in the short story were different from his neighbors in the movie. In the short story, the neighbors whom Jeffries regularly observed included the teen couple, the widowed mother, and the man (Lars Thorwald) with the sick wife. In the movie, the neighbors he observed included the ballerina, the pianist, Miss Lonely Heart, and the couple who slept on the veranda. Moreover, in the short story, Thorwald was the only neighbor from the flat whom Jeffries observed. In the movie, all of the neighbors whom Jeffries observed lived in the apartment building across the street. In addition, one of the neighbors in the movie had a cat whereas no pet was mentioned in the short story.

The only similar neighbors in both the short story and the movie were Lars Thorwald and his sick wife. However, in the movie, Lars Thorwald was indicated as a sales man and was portrayed as someone who was well to do. On the other hand, the Lars Thorwald in the short story was out of work and was depicted as someone who might be struggling financially. Similarly, Mrs. Thorwald was portrayed as someone meek and frail in the short story. In the movie, however, she was depicted as a nagger despite her illness.

Main Characters

The only similarities between the heroes in the short story and the movie were that they were both temporarily confined in a wheelchair and that their legs were in a cast. Both of them were also confined in their rooms, although the Jeffries in the short story lived in a house, which was depicted as his permanent residence whereas the Jeffries in the movie lived in an apartment building, which was depicted as his temporary residence while he was

recovering from his injury. The Jeffries in the movie was indicated to be working as a photographer, which required him to travel a lot whereas no occupation was indicated for the Jeffries in the short story.

Another difference between the two Jeffries is that the Jeffries in the short story had a name of Hal Jeffries while the Jeffries in the movie had a name of L. B. Jeffries. Both Jeffries had people to assist them with their needs. Hal Jeffries had a male house keeper whose name was Sam and who had been serving him for ten years at the time that the story was told. L. B. Jeffries, on the other hand, had a female nurse named Stella who helped him while he recovered from his injury. Stella was not under L. B. Jeffries' permanent employment, however, as Jeffries needed her only until he recovered. Moreover, Hal Jeffries was quite authoritarian in his treatment of Sam whereas L. B. Jeffries was friendly towards Stella. Sam had no right to question Hal Jeffries' orders whereas Stella openly criticized and scolded L. B. Jeffries on things where they had differences in opinions.

In both the short story and the movie, Jeffries had a friend Boyne who was a detective and who helped Jeffries with the case. However, unlike Hal Jeffries, L. B. Jeffries had a girlfriend who also later became his accomplice in solving the crime.

Story Line

Both the short story and the movie revolved around Jeffries' suspicion about Lars Thorwald killing his wife and how he would be able to prove such so that he could get Thorwald arrested.

Just like Hal Jeffries, L. B. Jeffries began to become suspicious of Thorwald when he no longer saw Mrs. Thorwald through their windows. In the short story, Hal Jeffries often saw Mrs. Thorwald walking about the house in her frail form and greeting her husband whenever he came home. In the movie, L. B. Jeffries would often observe Lars Thorwald taking care of his wife and bringing her food. Mrs. Thorwald, on the other hand, would always be seen fighting with him. Moreover, just like in the short story, L. B. Jeffries' suspicion grew even stronger because of the shades always being down in the Thorwald home when they used to always be up during the day. Both Jeffries also observed that the lights were always turned off in their home and that Lars no longer slept in his and his wife's bedroom after she disappeared.

When Jeffries finally asked Boyne to investigate, the alibi that Mrs. Jeffries went away on vacation was the same in both the short story and the movie. The information was also obtained from the other tenants in both instances. Moreover, in both stories, a post card was planted in Thorwald's mailbox to indicate that Mrs. Thorwald was indeed at a farmhouse somewhere.

In the short story, Boyne sent some men to look for clues or evidence in the Thorwald apartment while in the movie, it was Lisa, L. B. Jeffries' girlfriend, who searched the apartment and got the evidence. In both the short story and in the movie, a note of warning was placed through Thorwald's door, although Sam was the one who did this in the short story while Lisa did it in the movie.

In both the short story and the movie, Jeffries saw Lars Thorwald packing his wife's belongings and having them shipped to her location. In both the short story and the movie, cops were said to have verified that the package was received by Mrs. Thorwald. However, in the movie, Jeffries saw Thorwald making long-distance calls and inspecting his wife's jewelry, which he kept among his clothes. There were no such scenes in the short story.

Finally, Thorwald lived at the end of the movie but died in the short story. Moreover, Mrs. Thorwald in the short story was suspected of having died from food poisoning and was later buried under the cemented floor of the apartment being built two floors above the Thorwald's apartment. In the movie, however, it was speculated that Mrs. Thorwald was chopped to pieces and was either boxed and shipped off or buried somewhere.

Conclusion

Both *It Had to Be Murder* and *Rear Window* revolved around the same story line. They also shared a lot of general similarities. However, they have more differences when it comes to the details of the story in terms of the setting, the characters, and the story line. It can be said that changes in the movie were made to make it more cinematically interesting than the short story.

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