

Ja Rule: 2005 ★★1/2

(2005) 2 discs, 210 min.
DVD: \$19.95. Music Video
Distributors (avail. from most
distributors).



Tricked out with post-production effects (including split screen), *Ja Rule: 2005* presents the New York rapper on tour in Europe supporting his 2004 release *R.U.L.E.* Since his outfits change (even within the same song), it's obvious that excerpts from multiple dates have been stitched together (along with clips from video duets

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with Ashanti and Jennifer Lopez) in footage that alternates between color and b&w. This hodgepodge approach seems designed either for short attention spans or to make up for the fact that there isn't much of visual interest happening on stage, other than rapping from Ja Rule and Young Life and sampling from an unidentified DJ (along with plenty of drinking and swearing). Increasingly, hip-hop acts are adding live instruments to the mix, and Ja Rule's show could benefit from that sort of an update. In his patter, the MC gives shout-outs to Belgium and Germany, giving at least some indication to locations. Altogether, Ja Rule runs through 20 tracks, including "I Cry," in which Ja Rule (born Jeffrey Atkins) grieves for fallen musical comrades, such as Aaliyah, Tupac Shakur, and Run-DMC's Jam Master Jay. DVD extras include videos from Ja Rule's days with Cash Money Click, four bonus tracks (recorded in Manchester with Ashanti and Charli Baltimore), a radio station tour, and interviews with the rapper (Ja Rule talks about his career, his childhood as a Jehovah's Witness, and his beef with rapper 50 Cent), his hype man, and his bodyguard. Presented in Dolby Digital 5.1 and stereo, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (K. Fennessy)