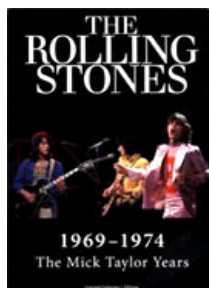


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Case Number 19327: Small Claims Court



The Rolling Stones: The Mick Taylor Years (1969-1974)

[MVD Visual](#) // 2010 // 99 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge Victor Valdivia // July 21st, 2010

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A DVD of Judge Victor Valdivia's most important years would end in heartbreak and misery. Who wants to see that?

Note: This is a pre-release review. **The Rolling Stones: The Mick Taylor Years (1969-1974)** will be available for purchase on July 27th, 2010

[Printer Friendly Review](#)



The Charge

The behind-the-scenes story of this hugely productive era for the group.

The Case

For an unauthorized DVD, **Rolling Stones: 1969-1974: The Mick Taylor Years** is actually not bad. Not only have the DVD's producers licensed several crucial songs from the Stones and other artists, but they've pulled together interviews with several reasonably knowledgeable writers and collaborators. No, none of the Stones, not even Taylor himself, are actually interviewed (though you'll see some archival interviews), but there are some insights and information that's useful for Stones fans and there's also some archival concert and recording footage that only hardcore fans who collect bootleg videos will have. It's impressive the DVD's producers went so far, and it serves the finished documentary well.

Fans, of course, will recognize the period covered here. After the Stones' founding guitarist, Brian Jones, was fired in 1969 for being too drugged-out to be reliable, the Stones (mainly Mick Jagger and Keith Richards) hired Mick Taylor, a talented but little-known prodigy in the London area, to replace him. As it turns out, Taylor's influence would be significant. By far the most virtuosic player the Stones have ever had, Taylor's elegant, swirling guitar solos added a whole new dimension and subtlety to the band's sound. It's no accident that the five albums the band recorded with him—*Let It Bleed* (1969), *Sticky Fingers* (1971), *Exile on Main Street* (1972), *Goats Head Soup* (1973), and *It's Only Rock n' Roll* (1974)—are considered the best and most influential in the band's career. Taylor's playing was so unusual that he helped drive the Stones' music into areas it had never been before and would never again do so after he left. Jagger's and Richards' songwriting would become more varied and focused, and the band would become tighter and more adventurous onstage. Sadly, the drugs and personality conflicts that infected the Stones as the decade progressed took their toll on Taylor, and even though he would record his crowning achievement with the band, "Time Waits For No One" on *It's Only Rock n' Roll*, he left just as the album was released. The Stones would continue with ex-Faces guitarist Ronnie Wood, who is there to this day, but while they would enjoy some further critical and commercial success, none of the music the band made with Wood would ever equal what they accomplished with Taylor. The magic, apparently, left with him.

In order to assess this period, the DVD's producers have called on a collection of writers and critics. The most significant is Robert Greenfield, who wrote extensively about the recording sessions for *Exile* and followed the Stones during the band's 1972 tour for *Rolling Stone* magazine. His stories and insights are the best ones here, especially when he recalls that *Exile*, contrary to its much-vaunted position as the best album the Stones ever made, was not particularly well-received by either critics or audiences when it was initially released. Also included are interviews with

Scales of Justice

Judgment: 80

Perp Profile

Studio: [MVD Visual](#)

Video Formats:

• Full Frame

Audio Formats:

• PCM 2.0 Stereo (English)

Subtitles:

• None

Running Time: 99 Minutes

Release Year: 2010

MPAA Rating: Not Rated

Genres:

• [Concerts and Musicals](#)

• [Documentary](#)

Distinguishing Marks

- Featurette
- Text Extras

Accomplices

- [RollingStones.com](#)

Judge Picks



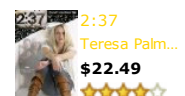
The Girl Wi...

Michael Nyqv...

\$17.49



"An intricate, involving, and emoti...



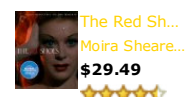
2:37

Teresa Palm...

\$22.49



"Against all odds, 2:37 is a damned g...



The Red Sh...

Moira Sheare...

\$29.49



"I feel utterly incapable of commu...



Look Arou...

Nigel Lamber...

\$17.99



"This is one of the freshest, funniest, a...



Mystery Sc...

Joel Hodgson...

\$40.99



"This is the best one yet!" -- Judge Erich ...



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several session musicians who played on *Exile* and recall how the album was recorded and written. John Mayall, who led one of England's most influential blues bands, is another important participant. He was the first musician to discover Taylor's talent, recommending him to Mick Jagger. His memories and insights into Taylor's talent and how he blended with the Stones are worth hearing as well.

Interspersed with the interviews is archival footage from this period. What's significant is that the producers have not only licensed several important Stones songs, but also used footage from some legendary performances that have never been officially released. An excerpt from **The Stones in the Park**, a TV film of the band's first performance with Taylor in London's Hyde Park in 1969, appears here. There are also excerpts from **Ladies and Gentlemen, The Rolling Stones**, the official concert film from the band's '72 tour, and even from **Cocksucker Blues**, the infamous unreleased documentary from the '72 tour that was junked because it includes graphic footage of groupie sex and heroin use. The most graphic parts aren't seen here but you do get enough to see just how scabrous and seedy the film is. None of these films have ever been officially released on any home video format (they're only available through the underground market) so some fans may be getting to see glimpses of them here for the first time. Coupled with some archival interview footage of the band members, these excerpts help illustrate the story in a surprisingly thorough way. This was truly a smart decision that makes this better than most unauthorized DVDs.

If **The Mick Taylor Years** has a flaw, though, it's that the documentary's narrative isn't always easy to follow. For the most part, you'll get the story but there are times when you might be confused unless you're already a hardcore Stones fanatic. For instance, although the documentary is called **The Mick Taylor Years**, it doesn't really examine in detail all of Taylor's contributions to the Stones music during this period. His high points are examined, but for a long stretch in the middle, he isn't mentioned that much. Also, the documentary doesn't really evaluate the two post-*Exile* albums particularly fairly. The commentators all take the basic position that both *Goats Head Soup* and *It's Only Rock n' Roll* are subpar efforts, but these albums are more underrated and influential than that (and certainly far superior to the forgettable product the Stones have been cranking out since the '80s). A less predictable appraisal would have been more interesting to see.

Nonetheless, **The Mick Taylor Years** is actually one of the better unauthorized Stones DVDs available. It examines the band's most important period with enough detail and insight as to be valuable to both fans and newcomers, although fans will get the most out of it. It's not entirely the best introduction to the Stones' music, but as far as unauthorized DVDs go, it's worth a look.

Technical specs—full-screen transfer, stereo mix—are both satisfactory. The extras include some text bios and "Meeting Mick Taylor" (6:16), a brief look at Taylor's early years.



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The Verdict

Not guilty.

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