

DVD Review: The Electric Chair (1985)

By [Aubrey Ward III](#) | Published 10/17/2010 | [Reviews](#) | Unrated



A One Man Show Captured On Film.

Arnie (Victor Argo) is a shoe salesman by day and a stand-up comedian by night. For this particular show Arnie goes through his usual routine but the audience ignores him. That's when Arnie decides to go off the comedic trail and down a darker path of harsh truths and social commentary. To add more shock to his act Arnie has an electric chair brought on the stage. Now the audience's curiosity is piqued as they watch to see if Arnie will sit in the chair and fry himself for their amusement.

Aubrey Ward III

I'm just a regular guy that loves watching movies and talking about them. I feel it's my duty as a world citizen to detect cinematic "bombs" so you don't have to. I'm no cinemacist but if I think a film is worth spending money on I'll tell ya. If it's not fit to be used as a doorstop I will certainly tell ya. And remember to always rent first before buying.

[View all articles by Aubrey Ward III](#)

I actually had the distinguished pleasure of being invited to a theater screening of Mark Eisenstein's art house, underground film at the 92Y Tribeca theater with Mr. Eisenstein in attendance. And of course only during this special event does my phone start vibrating so I had to quickly turn it off before someone threw me out for disorderly conduct.

The film is mostly Arnie going on and on.....and on about the waterfall of thoughts rushing through his brain on a daily basis. He does slapstick, preaching and even a little dancing. Eventually, Arnie gets impatient with the audience and begins to mouth off with no care for repercussions or retribution from the club patrons. Honestly, he doesn't have to worry about any of the audience members going up there to punch Arnie in the eye since they all seem to be preoccupied enough in their own activities to focus on what Arnie is rambling about. The stand up routine is interspersed with shots of a deserted beachside town where Arnie's close friend and agent (Mark Eisenstein) acts as the voice from the wilderness that tries to advise Arnie from afar.

Wild Eye Releasing seemed to corner the market on schlock-y horror and comedic flicks but I would say that *The Electric Chair* is the most impressive selection in their catalog. It sounds like watching a man blather on for almost 100 minutes straight would be a waste of time but I gotta tell you that Victor Argo had me riveted with his powerful and emotionally stirring performance. The bulk of the film rests on Mr. Argo's shoulders and he seems to bolster the weight almost effortlessly. The man goes from anger to drollness to desperation to sorrow to sarcasm in that stand up routine and the statements that come out of his mouth are just as jarring as the [emotion](#) that's attached to his words. Watching *The Electric Chair* is like watching a bona fide one-man show on the big screen (or smaller screen if you're watching the release at home).

The audience members also get into the act with their individualized reactions to Arnie's act. One couple decides to make out in front of everybody while a mother dotes over her

Article Options

- [Email to Friend](#)
- [Print Article](#)
- [Add to Favorites](#)
- [Add to 'Articles to Read'](#)

Popular Articles

- [TV Recap: Dancing With The Stars - Season 11, Week 5 - Elimination Night \(2010\)](#)
By [Aubrey Ward III](#) | 10/19/2010
- [TV Recap: Dancing With The Stars - Season 11, Week 5 - Elimination Night \(2010\)](#)
By [Aubrey Ward III](#) | Yesterday
- [TV: Is the CW's Nikita revival with Maggie Q going to be Garnered?](#)
By [David Knight](#) | 10/14/2010
- [DVD Review: The Runaways \(2010\)](#)
By [Aubrey Ward III](#) | 10/14/2010
- [Anime Review: Corpse Princess](#)

oversized child. A rabbi takes turns praying in the back and accompanying Arnie with a saxophone while an uptown girl is waited on hand and literally foot by her eager waiter.

I also liked that *The Electric Chair* doesn't have a clear and present lesson at the end. It's the kind of art that people can look at and take their own interpretations from. For me, I felt that Arnie's act represented the apathy that effects society especially in the advanced civilizations. Here's a comic pouring out his heart and soul in the open and no one seems to care. The man was hired to make them laugh. Who cares that he's in a career slump? Who cares that his marriage is troubled? *The Electric Chair*, I felt, was a look at how self centered I can be sometimes. I'm surrounded and distracted by cell phones and video games and, yeah, even movies. Do I have any empathy left to spare change to a homeless mother? Do I have enough sympathy left in me to take a moment to call a friend to see how he's doing?

The Electric Chair isn't perfect. Though Mr. Argo's performance is amazing his ranting can get tiresome. There came that point where I just wanted him to sit in the chair and be fried so he could be silenced and I could go home. I also wonder how the film will work in home theaters. It was one thing to sit in a theater and be sort of forced to focus on the [large screen](#) presentation. If I watched *The Electric Chair* at home I don't know if I would be as attentive. There's a chance I would be tempted to watch the movie in segments. The other thing I disliked were the cuts to the "boardwalk wasteland". I didn't know if Arnie's agent friend was speaking from the great beyond or from Hell or from a past vacation gone awry. It provided a nice break from Arnie's ongoing diatribe but I couldn't understand what purpose it served to Arnie or to the plot.

I would encourage those who are into avant-garde or abstract films to give *The Electric Chair* a try especially now that it's been released on DVD and can be enjoyed at home or at a public viewing for a film festival. Though the movie is mostly about an angry comedian lashing out at his audience for almost a straight hour Victor Argo makes it an exciting and captivating spectacle. T

he [DVD](#) special features include director's commentary from Mark Eisenstein, six short films by Mr. Eisenstein including his 1992 short film, *Roach*, and related movie [trailers](#).

Rhymes With: *Eraserhead* (1977), *The Boys In The Band* (1970), *THX 1138* (1971), *Moon* (2009), *12 Angry Men* (1957), *Taxi Driver* (1976)



StyleList.com

Ads by Google

Spread The Word

[del.icio.us it](#)
 [Digg this](#)
 [Furl](#)
 [Reddit](#)
 [Yahoo! this!](#)
 [StumbleUpon](#)
[Google Bookmarks](#)
[Live Favorites](#)
[Technorati](#)

Related Articles

[TV Recap: Dancing With The Stars - Season 11, Week 5 \(2010\)](#)
[TV: Is the CW's Nikita revival with Maggie Q going to be Garnered?](#)
[DVD Review: The Runaways \(2010\)](#)
[Anime Review: Nana Uncut Box Set 4](#)
[TV Recap: Dancing With The Stars - Season 11, Week 4 - Elimination Night \(2010\)](#)
[Review -- The Simpsons: "MoneyBart"](#)

Related Links

<http://www.wildeyereleasing.com/electric.html>
www.92ytribeca.org

Comments

No Comments Found.

How would you rate the quality of this article?

Rating: * Poor Excellent

Your Name:

Your [Email](#):

Your Comment: *

Verification * **a2gr 86**

Please copy the characters from the image above into the text field below. Doing this helps us prevent automated submissions.

All Articles Copyright 2006-2010 by the respective authors unless otherwise noted. All rights reserved.
Firefox News is not affiliated with Mozilla, however, we highly recommend the Firefox Browser and other Mozilla products.
Please do not reproduce articles from this site in their entirety on forums, [blogs](#), or other Web sites without our express permission. We have no objection to short quotes from our articles being posted on other sites.
Firefox News is powered by [ArticleLive](#)
[Privacy Policy](#)