

DVD Review: Helen Mirren Delivers One of TV's Best Performances in 'Prime Suspect'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on September 13, 2010 - 5:27pm

- [Acorn Media](#) [2]
- [Brian Tallerico](#) [3]
- [Ciaran Hinds](#) [4]
- [Colin Salmon](#) [5]
- [David Thewliss](#) [6]
- [DVD Review](#) [7]
- [Helen Mirren](#) [8]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [9]
- [Jonny Lee Miller](#) [10]
- [Kelly Reilly](#) [11]
- [Mark Strong](#) [12]
- [Peter Capaldi](#) [13]
- [Prime Suspect](#) [14]
- [Ralph Fiennes](#) [15]
- [Television](#) [16]
- [Tom Wilkinson](#) [17]
- [Theater, TV, DVD & Blu-Ray](#) [18]

CHICAGO – She is amply assisted by a who's who of some of the best supporting actors Britain has produced in the last two decades but "Prime Suspect," which recently saw its complete 7-series run released in one box set for the first time from Acorn Media, belongs to the amazing Helen Mirren. Just her turn in the first film would merit consideration in the history books of great TV performances but it is the body of work across the many hours of "Prime Suspect" that cements Mirren's work as one of the best of all time.



DVD Rating: **5.0/5.0**

Originally produced for ITV in the U.K. and seen here on PBS, "Prime Suspect" is the name given to a series of films featuring one of our best living actresses as Detective Chief Inspector Jane Tennison. And these are not your typical American TV movies. They feature theatrical-caliber production values and run several hours long, sometimes even encompassing more than one case. For example, the first "Prime Suspect" alone is over 200 minutes. They are more like mini-series than what American audiences expect from a mystery movie and should you pick up this box set having never seen one, you're going to have to seriously clear your schedule for what's in front of you. It's going to take more than a day in total running time but it's worth every minute.



Prime Suspect: The Complete Collection was released on DVD on September 7th, 2010

Photo credit: Acorn Media

"Prime Suspect" is essentially a procedural mystery that plays with several themes over the seven films but comes back to the saga of a smart, beautiful, tough woman stuck in a world that's heavily driven by men and their egos and how she struggles to balance a personal life with a very difficult professional one.



Each film features different cases (although the first resurfaces in the fourth) — sometimes one, sometimes more — and each takes its time detailing life behind the doors of Scotland Yard and the procedural elements of solving crime while never losing track of the three-dimensional people who do so. These are detailed, character-driven mysteries and watching them nearly twenty years after the premiere of the first one in 1991 makes crystal clear how much influence they've had on British film and television. The recent "Red Riding Trilogy" owes a lot to "Prime Suspect." That's just one example of many.

With incredibly accomplished screenwriting, the "Prime Suspect" easily attracted an amazing overall ensemble of actors to accompany Mirren's award-winning work including Ralph Fiennes (1), Tom Wilkinson (1), Colin Salmon (2), David Thewliss (3), Ciaran Hinds (3), Mark Strong (3), Peter Capaldi (3), Jonny Lee Miller (3), and Kelly Reilly (4). The series was named by Time Magazine as one of the best of all-time and won several Emmys and BAFTA Awards during its run. The seventh film aired in the fall of 2006 and featured DCI Tennison's final case before retirement. And with that, she went into the history books as one of the most notable TV characters of not just her era but all time.

Special Features:

- o Prime Suspect behind-the-scenes special (50 min.)
- o Series 6 behind-the-scenes featurette (23 min.)
- o Photo Gallery
- o Cast Filmographies
- o SDH subtitles

'Prime Suspect: The Complete Collection' stars Helen Mirren, Ralph Fiennes, Tom Wilkinson, Zoe Wanamaker, Colin Salmon, David Thewliss, Ciaran Hinds, Mark Strong, Peter Capaldi, Jonny Lee Miller, and Kelly Reilly. It was released by Acorn Media on September 7th, 2010. It is not rated and runs over 1500 minutes.



[19]

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- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/colin-salmon>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/david-thewliss>
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- [14] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/prime-suspect>
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