

# Close Focus



**Top:** Arri Compact 12Ks bounce off Ultrabounce send light through the windows for day-interior work at the Wheeler house. "The rags would also cut the sun at the same time," notes gaffer Bill O'Leary. **Middle:** Frank tries to reassure his wife in one of the film's many kitchen scenes. **Bottom:** With bounce light from small instruments inside augmenting the window light, Deakins lines up the shot.



center of the story — a man and a woman in a room. I knew the heart of the movie was going to be in the close-ups, and I'd never done a movie in which that was the case."

In form and content, *Revolutionary Road* could not be more different from Mendes and Deakins' previous collaboration, the Gulf War drama *Jarhead*, but Mendes notes Deakins "is a master at cutting a suit according to its cloth. Just taking his oeuvre with the Coen brothers as an example, you can't believe the same person lit *Barton Fink* [1991] and *Fargo* [1996]; one is highly stylized and the other is totally observational, and yet they're both perfect. Roger's ability to morph himself, to shape his style according to the requirements of the script, is extraordinary. I suppose there are parallels amongst directors; some have a single style and impose it on whatever material they're dealing with, and others adjust their style to the requirements of the story. I'm in the latter category, and Roger is, too."

On *Revolutionary Road*, the requirements of the story, and Mendes' desire to tell it in an "unadorned" style, led to a visual approach Deakins calls "very straightforward." The cinematographer notes, "It's a film about a marriage falling apart in this supposedly idyllic suburbia, and when you've got two great actors in a story like that, you don't want to do much with the camera. You just want to photograph it as best you can to let the audience see the characters and the performances that give you the characters." The close focus on Frank and April also led Mendes and Deakins to make decisions about shots only after the director had thoroughly rehearsed DiCaprio and Winslet in the space at hand. "It wasn't like working with the Coen brothers, who decide in advance exactly how something will be staged and shot," says Deakins. "This wasn't the kind of film where you were