

Lowe's influence not always bad

by Rob Farnham
Collegian Staff Writer

The stars of *Bad Influence* have provided the film with an interesting publicity angle. While James Spader is trying to live up to his superb performance as Graham in last year's critical favorite, *sex, lies, and videotape*, Rob Lowe is trying to live down the notoriety of his leading role in an Atlanta home-video project, which, though untitled, seems also to deal largely with sex and lies. Coincidentally or otherwise, deception, sex, and camcorders all figure prominently in the plot of *Bad Influence*.

This new film is a glossy thriller about Michael (Spader), a successful but stressed-out market analyst whose life is changed drastically with the appearance of an enigmatic stranger, Alex (Lowe). Michael is prosperous and upwardly mobile, but isn't enjoying any of the expensive toys in his sterilely stylish apartment and is developing an ulcer from the infighting with a rival at work.

When Alex comes to his aid in a dispute at a bar, Michael is impressed with his casual bravado and allows himself to be drawn into unaccustomed territory. Alex leads him through shadowy after-hours clubs and to a gallery opening where the crowd is almost as avant-garde as the disturbing artwork on display.

Michael follows, fascinated by the chameleonic nature Alex displays as he shifts smoothly to a different identity for each new set of surroundings.

Having won Michael's confidence, Alex persuades him to confess his secret ambitions. "Tell me what you want, and tell me what you fear," he insists, promising to make things happen for Michael. As he takes care of Michael's problems, the implied menace of Alex's character becomes more apparent. Tension begins to build as the plot gears

takes people in. Though the script never makes Alex's motives clear, Lowe plays him as someone who chooses to manipulate people simply because he can.

James Spader is becoming continually more accomplished as a dramatic actor. He more than holds his own as Michael, even opposite Lowe's effortlessly Mephistophelian performance. He comes across well as a man who finds that getting what he wants can be very costly.

Also notable is the performance of Lisa Zane as Claire, the woman with whom both men are somehow involved and who figures prominently in the film's strange voyeurism-by-videotape subplot. Zane does an excellent job in a difficult role, making her presence felt despite only having a fraction of the screen time given the two leads.

Director Curtis Hanson (*The Bedroom Window*) and screenwriter David Koepp (*Apartment Zero*) have distilled a variety of influences, from Hitchcock's classic "wrong man" thrillers to the casual perversity of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* to the slick, surface-oriented visuals and pop-culture vocabulary of MTV, into a well-crafted, if not innovative, vehicle for their actors. Lowe, Spader, and Zane take full advantage of the opportunity to make *Bad Influence* a good movie.

Review

up from moody wish-fulfillment to tightly-focused suspense.

Michael, as he learns more about Alex's methods, must make a decision about the lengths to which he's willing to go for what he wants. When he does, events take a turn into the realm of psychological terror.

Events in Atlanta aside, Rob Lowe is perfectly cast in the role of Alex. His intentions unreadable behind a disarming grin, it's easy to understand how this seemingly amoral drifter

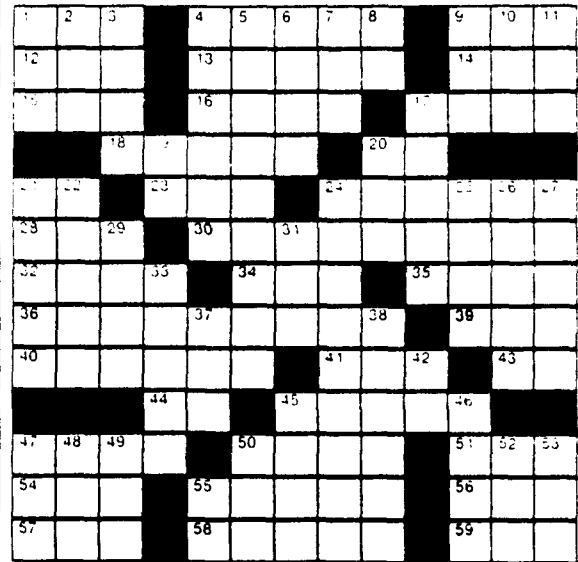
The Weekly Crossword Puzzle

ACROSS

- 1 Aeriform fluid
- 4 Ancient chariot
- 9 Offspring
- 12 Everyone
- 13 Prophets
- 14 Greek letter
- 15 Edible seed
- 16 Projecting tooth
- 17 Direction
- 18 Vegetable: pl
- 20 Decliter: abbr.
- 21 Symbol for glucinium
- 23 Southern black-bird
- 24 Shade of brown
- 28 Knock
- 30 Market places
- 32 The sweetsop
- 34 Sea eagle
- 35 Birds beaks

DOWN

- 36 Relevant
- 39 Meadow
- 40 Degree
- 41 Period of time
- 43 Railway: abbr
- 44 Article
- 45 Sharp
- 47 Suds
- 50 Fruit seeds
- 51 Conducted
- 54 Beam
- 55 Military student
- 56 Deface
- 57 Consumed
- 58 Winter vehicles
- 59 Pigpen



COLLEGE PRESS SERVICE

- 9 Health resort
- 10 Forerunner of CIA
- 11 Insect egg
- 17 Fairy
- 19 Babylonian deity
- 20 Click beetle
- 21 Fruit
- 22 Rubber ingredient
- 24 Joined
- 25 Coal or oil
- 26 Red-hot piece of coal
- 27 Composition
- 29 Saucy
- 31 Prefix before
- 33 Vapor
- 37 Hostelry
- 38 Has confidence in
- 42 Near
- 45 Assistant
- 46 Shade trees
- 47 Monk's title
- 48 Grain
- 49 Affirmative vote
- 50 Crony: colloq.
- 52 Dine
- 53 Arid
- 55 Symbol for cesium

(solution on page 9)

WIN A HAWAIIAN VACATION OR BIG SCREEN TV PLUS RAISE UP TO \$1,400 IN JUST 10 DAYS!

Objective: Fundraiser
Commitment: Minimal
Money: Raise \$1,400
Cost: Zero Investment
Campus organizations, clubs, fraternities, sororities.
Call OCMC at 1(800)932-0528/1(800)950-8472 ext. 10

NO FOOLING BIGGEST EVER GREENHOUSE SALE

SATURDAY, MARCH 31st and SUNDAY, APRIL 1st
9 AM-5 PM



20-50% OFF EVERYTHING IN GREENHOUSE

FREE HELIUM BALLOONS FOR THE KIDS

INCLUDING PLANTS & SUPPLIES
FREE JADE PLANT TO EVERY CUSTOMER!

PLANT GIVEAWAYS

PLANT CLASSES

FREE CARE INFORMATION

POTRATZ

FLORAL SHOP
and GREENHOUSES, INC.

1418 Buffalo Road

453-5501

455-1919

