

Video Focus

Lowe gets mean, Idle just stinks in new video releases

By Todd Stone

Bad Influence
Rated R

"Sex, Rob, and videotape."

At least that's what many people called "Bad Influence" when it was released a few months after Rob Lowe's videotape sex scandal with a 16-year-old girl in Atlanta.

What hard lessons Lowe learned from the Atlanta incident seem to translate well in this film. He has a strong screen intensity as Alex, a bad influence.

James Spader also stars as an upscale yuppie, Michael, who is sucked into Alex's dark world. Alex is a manipulator, and he persuades Michael to explore his own dark side — give in to his dangerous whims.

Spader delivers another credible performance as Michael, but Lowe develops the more memorable and fascinating character as Alex.

It's ironic that Lowe took this role just months before his scandal in Atlanta, because after the incident, most people seemed to stereotype Lowe as being like his character Michael — evil, no morals and just plain mean.

Lowe reverses the bad publicity to his favor with a convincing, intimidating and surprising performance.

In a past interview, Lowe said, "I just funneled any stress anger or hurt that I was feeling — I just funneled it into the performance. I don't think I would have been

able to give the performance that I gave without this (Atlanta incident) happening to me" ("Interview" — March 1990).

Still, Atlanta incident or not, Lowe proves he has talent, and he's not just another pretty boy in "Bad Influence."

Don't let whatever conceptions you have of Lowe or his lifestyle distract you during this film. It would cheat you out of a quality movie.

The film explores the hypocrisy of society's tendency to label others as immoral, when each person has their own scars, sins and secrets.

Alex is bad, but does that make us good? We judge Alex, but shouldn't we also judge ourselves?

Maybe Lowe's convincing performance is asking the same consideration for him.

The film questions conventions and gets you to think, which makes it a cut-above most films and a solid two hours of filmmaking.

If you want to see a movie about the good and evil that's in us all, rent "Bad Influence."

Release date —
Wednesday. **Grade: B+**

Nuns on the Run
Rated R

"Nuns on the Run" is the kind of film that makes an enema seem like fun.

The filmmakers try to put together a comedy-farce, but the film is predictable, mundane and just plain stupid.

The crappy contrived circumstances conveyed in this story fall apart because the bonehead-filmmaking formula is used — bad acting and bad writing mixed with a ton of bad humor. It all equals a film that's... you guessed it — bad.

Eric Idle and Robert Coltrane star as Brian and Charlie, a couple of old-fashioned crooks who want to go straight. It seems that criminal employment isn't as safe, satisfying and serene as it once was.

The problem with modern-day crime is that people are getting killed. You can't even trust the criminals in your own gang. That shocks Brian and Charlie, who come from the old school of "no one gets hurt while robbing others, and criminals can be trusted."

Unfortunately for these two guys, their boss, Casey, won't let them quit their jobs while they still have a pulse.

Desperate, the boys plan to steal some money from another gang, fly to Rio and live happily ever after. But not everything goes as planned, so these two bozos end up aimlessly running around dressed like nuns.

This stupid plot wouldn't be so bad if there was one joke that worked. Every effort (I'm assuming someone in this movie tried) at humor is transparent in

the set-up stage and clumsy at the punchline.

This film certainly wastes some talent. Idle (Of Monty Python fame) was a true innovator of comedy with the rest of the Python clan during the '70s and early '80s.

Coltrane is supposed to be a talented hot shot from England's latest team of alternative comedians, "The Comic Strip." Yet both actors just embarrass themselves by appearing in this film.

Still, Idle and Coltrane should only be criticized for taking these roles.

Screenwriter and director Jonathan Lynn, however, should be lynched for creating this catastrophe, and executive producers George Harrison (Yup, the former Beatle) and Denis O'Brien should be shot for financing the film.

Harrison doesn't need the money, so don't waste your cash renting this video. Release date — Thursday. **Grade: D-**

Other Releases: Far Out Man, Stella, Where The Heart Is, Peter Pan and All Dogs Go To Heaven — release date, Wednesday.

Mountains of the Moon, Lord of the Flies and Mad House — release date, Thursday.

Previewed videos and release dates are courtesy of 2 Day Video.



Battalion File Photo

Eric Idle (Monty Python) and Robert Coltrane (England's "The Comic Strip") wave farewell to any entertaining elements in their new video release, "Nuns On The Run." Release date is Thursday.

'Video Spotlight' uncovers gems for film rental

By Don Atkinson Jr.

For many, a trip to the video store can be a frustrating experience. With the new releases and better-known titles invariably checked out, the rows upon rows of unfamiliar videos will intimidate all but the experienced movie buff.

Over the past summer, Video Spotlight has attempted to point out some of the lesser-known, quality films available at the video store. In this issue, we focus on classic films that many of today's audiences may be unfamiliar with.

The classics listed below are of the highest quality, and are as equally entertaining today as when they were first released.

DR. STRANGELOVE: OR, HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB (1964)

Undoubtedly the granddaddy of all black comedies, "Dr. Strangelove" takes the nuclear arms race and turns it into a grand farce. Featuring strong performances from Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, Sterling Hayden and Slim Pickens, this film makes you laugh at the possibility of our own annihilation.

A series of events are set into motion when a demented Air Force general (Hayden) orders his bombers to attack their targets inside the Soviet Union. Once the president (Sellers) discovers what's happened, he frantically attempts to stop the bombers and

avert doomsday.

Sellers shines while playing three different characters in this film. He plays a British officer, the U.S. President and the German Dr. Strangelove. Amazingly, Sellers creates perfect American, British and German accents, convincing many viewers that different actors were playing Sellers' roles.

One of the best moments in the film happens when the Russian ambassador and another Air Force general (Scott) get into a fistfight in the Pentagon's war room.

The president jumps up and screams at them, "Gentlemen! You can't fight in here! This is the war room!!!"

"Strangelove" received Oscar nominations for best picture, best director (Kubrick), best actor (Sellers) and best screenplay based on material from another medium (Kubrick, Peter George and Terry Southern).

THE LION IN WINTER (1968)

Peter O'Toole and Katharine Hepburn star in this film version of James Goldman's stage play of the same name.

Henry II (O'Toole), king of England, and Eleanor of Aquitaine (Hepburn), his imprisoned wife, tear into each other over Christmas about who will be the next king.

Actually, what they are really fighting about is why they love and hate each other so much.

The film features some of the

most clever dialogue ever written. Extraordinary performances by the entire cast, including Timothy Dalton (the new James Bond in "Living Daylights" and "License To Kill") in his first film role, make the film one of the best you'll ever see.

"The Lion In Winter" won Academy Awards for best actress (Hepburn) and best screenplay on material from another medium (Goldman).

JUDGEMENT AT NUREMBERG (1961)

This film should be required viewing for Oliver North and his supporters.

Focusing on the Nuremberg Nazi war trials, the true meaning of accountability is uncovered.

Spenser Tracy turns in one of his best performances as an American judge trying to decide whether "I was only following orders" is an appropriate defense against the atrocities committed.

Maximilian Schell is incredible as a defense attorney who has a seemingly unwinnable case. Quoting Oliver Wendell Holmes, he is actually able to gain some ground.

"Judgement At Nuremberg" is a vastly entertaining, disturbing film that won Academy Awards for best actor (Schell) and best screenplay based on material from another medium (Abby Mann).

WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF? (1966)

Kurt Vonnegut Jr. credits the

Edward Albee play from which this film is based for introducing the word "hump" in its present sexual connotation.

While that may be reason enough for some to see this film, "Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?" deserves praise on many levels.

Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor star as the mysterious George and Martha whose sole entertainment seems to be verbally turning each other into lunch meat.

George Segal and Sandy Dennis co-star as the unlucky couple invited over for drinks, only to get caught up in an evening they'll never forget.

Directed by Mike Nichols ("The Graduate," "Working Girl"), this film set new standards for vulgarity when it was released. Although the language content seems mild by today's standards, other things such as George and Martha's vicious games still carry a lot of shock value.

"Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?" won Academy Awards for best actress (Taylor), best supporting actress (Dennis) and cinematography (Haskell Wexler).

ANNIE HALL (1977)

MANHATTAN (1979)

Together, these two films represent some of the best work Woody Allen has ever done.

Writing, directing and starring in both films, Allen's dry sense of humor and neurotic tendencies show a side of humanity rarely

glimpsed anywhere. He struggles with the absurdities of life and relationships.

I think he sums it up best in the beginning of "Annie Hall" when he says, "Life is full of pain and misery...and it's over much too quickly."

"Annie Hall" won Academy Awards for best picture, best director (Allen), best actress (Diane Keaton) and best screenplay (Allen and Marshall Brickman).

"Manhattan" was nominated for best supporting actress (Mariel Hemingway) and best screenplay (Allen and Brickman).

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER? (1967)

The last of the great Spenser Tracy/Katharine Hepburn films and possibly the best, "Guess Who's Coming To Dinner?" deals with bigotry on a personal level.

Tracy and Hepburn star as a well-to-do couple whose daughter (Katharine Houghton) has just announced her engagement to a black doctor (Sidney Poitier).

Although this film classifies as a comedy, it raises very important questions to today's audiences. The humor is thought-provoking and never malicious.

"Guess Who's Coming To Dinner" won Academy Awards for best actress (Hepburn) and best story and screenplay (William Rose).

Previewed videos courtesy of 2 Day Video.

AggieVision gives glimpse of A&M life

By Todd Stone

When you have trouble telling your tall tales of Aggie times, AggieVision, Texas A&M's first video yearbook, provides the visual aid you need to describe life at A&M.

But that's the one problem with this video — plenty is shown, but little is explained. If anybody not completely familiar with all A&M events and traditions watches AggieVision, they may get lost at some point during this video.

Still, AggieVision manages to offer a quick look at almost everything around campus — the video's best attribute.

From scene to scene, AggieVision reminisces during an introduction filled with panoramic shots of the Academic Building, Clayton Williams Alumni Center, Kyle Field, Albritton Tower and the Sterling C. Evans Library.

Flaws are revealed only when information is lacking.

For example, the significance of Elephant Walk is lost because of little explanation. It just looks like one big shaving cream fight.

Also, yell practice, the Corps march-in, the Big Event and Earth Day are not explained. Without background information, the significance of many of these events is lost.

Still, major Aggie events such

See AggieVision/Page 7

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