Friday, February 24, 1989

Daily Nebraskan

'True Believer'succeeds as a gripping crime drama

By Sarah Knight Staff Reporter

"True Believer" is a gripping, and at times hilarious crime drama directed by Joseph Ruben who also directed "The Stepfather" and 'Dreamscape.''

The story begins as Roger Baron (Robert Downey Jr.), a fresh-out-of-

college law graduate comes to New York to work under Eddie Dodd (James Woods). Dodd is a cynical and not wholly respectable defense attorney who smokes pot and defends clients he knows are guilty.

Formerly a man who fought for and believed in "lost causes," Dodd has grown bitter over the years and now assumes and accepts the fact that

his clients are never innocent. Baron's idealism convinces him

to take the case of convicted murderer Shu Kai Kim (Yuji Okumoto) whose mother has come to Dodd for help. She says that her son was wrongly imprisoned and she wishes to re-open his case.

Baron and Dodd are joined in their fight by Kitty Greer (Margaret

tigators.

The audience is then led through the trial, discovering evidence along with Dodd and Baron. The plot keeps the audience guessing while remaining understandable.



Woods gives his usual outstanding performance (this one may lead him to an Oscar next year) by keeping a subtle sense of controlled fury. At times he lashes out, but immediately regains his cool -- warning, almost daring anyone to cross him.

Downey is every bit his equal as the two wage the war between naivety and worldliness. The supporting cast members are up to what the scripts demands, but it is Woods and Downey who take the show.

The film escapes becoming a run-of-the-mill underworld/courtroom movie by not taking itself too seriously. Humor is thrown in at all the right places.

Writer Wesley Strick should be

Colin), one of Dodd's personal inves- recognized for his witty and engrossing script. Strick took more than three years to write "True Believer" and it is obvious. For once, cleverness replaces constant repetition of four-letter words.

There is a smoky quality to the film, giving it a steamy feel and tak-ing the audience right into the pulse of New York City.

The film is about lost and regained values and shows the necessity of both idealism and cynicism to make society work.

Not without flaw, however, the film culminates in a rather corny manner that painfully reminds us that what we are watching is illusion. It is enough to say that life doesn't

always have a happy ending -- unlike what Hollywood wants us believe. And, of course, the film doesn't

escape without the use of stereotypes. The prosecuting attorney Robert Reynard (Kurtwood Smith) is the overused, bad-guy caricature who will step on anyone's toes to gain success.

"True Believer" is rated R for some rather graphic violence and a bit of foul language and is now showing at the Douglas 3 Theaters, 13th and P streets.

Centers of Consciousness--Video by Ken Keyes. Dis-cover the path to higher consciousness through several methods used by most major philosophies. Keyes is author of "The Hundredth Monkey" and "Handbook To Higher Consciousness." Friday, February 24th at 7 p.m., Christ Unity Church, 31st & P. Streets. No charge--all welcome.

Brian



James Woods as Eddie Dodd in "True Believer."

"LAW OF DESIRE"

