

Feast on The Dining Room

by Allison Johnston

A table and six chairs rest in the middle of a room — the dining room.

The Dining Room, written by A.R. Gurney and directed by Linda Moore, is a play that focuses on WASP families, their customs, their ideals, and their priorities. It is an ironic comedy that exaggerates and mocks the people it portrays. Overlapping scenes flow through each other with incredibly well-orchestrated choreography.

Gurney comments on a way of life that spans the 20th century. However, time does not drive the order of the scenes, theme and social comment are the connectors.

The dining room symbolizes the family nucleus: the father's chair at the head of the table, the mother's chair opposite, and the children's chairs along the sides. The room is viewed by some as a separate eating area, while others remember it as a place of torture and misery. But, for all, it represents 'The Family.' It is a decadent shrine in which families grow

and decay throughout the ages.

The play is reminiscent of Oscar Wilde and his mockery of his society. Gurney mocks the New England WASP culture into which he was born. This comedy intrigues the audience as we laugh at the triviality of the conversations, and at our recognition of generation gaps.

There are, of course, the themes of social status and capitalism. The servants play the role of a family outside of the family, which helps to emphasize the snobbery that money brings.

The Dining Room, written in the early 1980s, reflects the contrasts between modern ideas and archaic rituals.

Because of the numerous parts, each cast member portrays several characters. This demonstrates, once again, the incredible versatility of the actors from Dalhousie's theatre department.

The Dining Room is a polished, and well-staged play, and if this is an indication of Linda Moore's work, we have a lot to look forward to in Neptune's next season, when Moore becomes artistic director there.

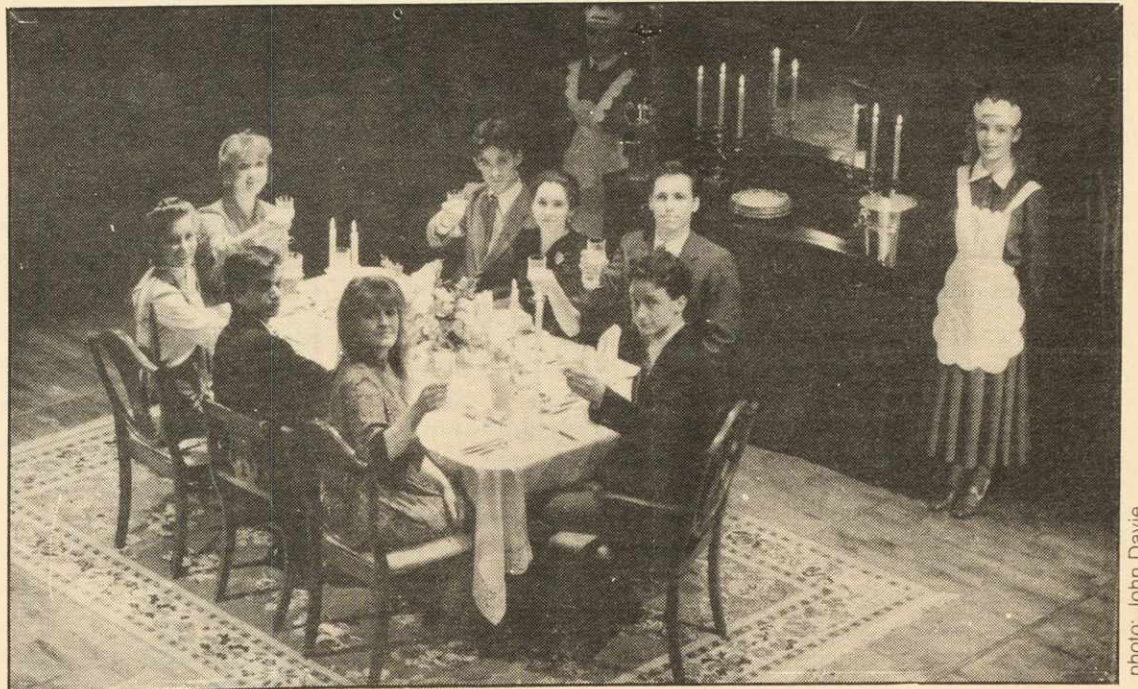


photo: John Davie

The cast of DTP's latest production which runs until Sunday

The inside story on Internal Affairs

by Matthew Rainnie

Internal Affairs probes the darker side of an institution in which we put our trust — the police force. This film shows its audience that police are not just valiant, law-abiding officers in blue, but human beings who have just as much potential to be corrupted as anyone else.

Andy Garcia stars as Ray Navilla, a man who has just been appointed to the internal affairs department of the police force.

His first case involves a young cop named Van Stretch, played by William Baldwin, brother to Alec (*Beetlejuice*, *Great Balls of Fire*) and Stephen (TV's *Young Riders*). Persons arrested by Stretch have filed complaints against him for being too abusive and for

planting incriminating evidence to get the arrest.

Navilla, who went through the police academy with Stretch, is assigned the task of finding out if there is any basis for these complaints.

As Navilla and his partner (played by Laurie Metcalf, Jackie on TV's *Roseanne*) dig deeper and deeper into the case, they find that all of the trails they are following seem to end at one man, Dennis Peck (Richard Gere), a well-respected senior officer.

This is where the true conflict of the film arises. It isn't Navilla fighting the system or Navilla against Stretch but Navilla versus Peck.

Navilla is a quiet man, calculating in all of his moves. Peck realizes how close Navilla is to

putting him behind bars and finds ways to make Navilla lose his cool. He shifts the conflict between them to a more personal level, involving Navilla's wife.

Garcia turns in an excellent performance as Navilla. His silent intensity is reminiscent of Al Pacino in *The Godfather* films (in fact, Garcia will be playing Pacino's nephew in the upcoming *Godfather III*). This film, along with past credits such as *The Untouchables* and *Black Rain*, promise a strong career for Garcia.

The man who knows how to light Navilla's fuse is Dennis Peck. Richard Gere's performance as Peck is superb. Peck is one of the great screen history and Gere milks it for all it's worth. As evil as this character is, he still remains three-dimensional. We see his home, we see his family and we see him at work. However, when Peck says things like "Trust me, I'm a cop," we see through the veneer.

Gere was at his most popular in the late seventies and early eighties with films like *American Gigolo* (1979) and *An Officer and a Gentleman* (1982). His most recent films, *No mercy* (1986) and *Miles From Home* (1988) failed to win either a big box-office or critical acclaim. *Internal Affairs* will, without doubt, revive Gere's career.

As good as this film is, it does have its flaws. There are some scenes that are rather ambiguous and are never fully cleared up. As well, the film's ending is somewhat abrupt, leaving the fate of one character unresolved.

However, *Internal Affairs* is a riveting and refreshing change of pace from the typical suspense thrillers of late. It is currently playing at both Park Lane and Penhorn theatres and is worth the seven bucks.

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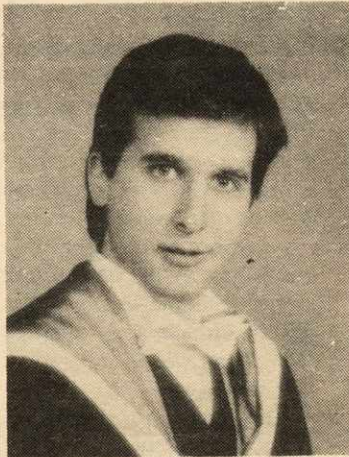
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