

Theme variation lacks gut-busting humor



Courtesy of Warner Brothers

Tom Hanks as Joe Banks and Meg Ryan (in one of her three roles) as Patricia in "Joe Versus The Volcano."

By Matt Burton
Senior Reporter

"Joe Versus The Volcano" is a slight variation on an old theme. Imagine a situation where a doctor

movie REVIEW

informs a patient that he has a terminal illness and only six months to live.

Live life to the fullest, right?

Tom Hanks plays Joe Banks, a hypochondriac, sorry soul with a less-than-spectacular life. His physician tells him that he has a rare disease called a "brain cloud."

Joe quits his lousy job, a depressing little business run by Mr. Waturi, played by Dan Hedaya, better known as Nick Tortelli from "Cheers."

"Joe Versus The Volcano" makes light of depressing situations, such as in the factory run by Waturi. Annoying, old, fluorescent lights, flickering on and off and petrified nondairy coffee creamer add to the dark, yet farcical tone of the movie.

So Joe, a former fireman, realizes that he must capture the same feeling of adventure and danger in order to make his life worthwhile.

That's where the volcano comes in.

Joe gets an offer by Graynamore, an eccentric old man played by Lloyd Bridges, at a chance to jump into a volcano located somewhere in the South Pacific.

A mighty strange request, but it's not as complicated as it may seem. On this South Pacific island, named Waponiu, (translated meaning "little island with big volcano"), exists an extremely rare natural resource, located exclusively on Waponiu.

Graynamore has arranged a deal with the natives of Waponiu to supply a hero for the purpose of jumping into the volcano as a sacrifice -- then he gets some rare resource.

Guess who the hero is.

Joe gets helped with the journey by Meg Ryan, who plays three different roles, all with romantic interests in Joe.

Throughout "Joe Versus The Volcano" there is the feeling that everything will come out all right and to that extent, it is slightly predictable.

Often the scenes and acting are innocent and silly, yet don't evoke the kind of gut-busting laughter that a moviegoer would want.

"Joe Versus The Volcano" is playing at the Plaza 4 Theatre, 201 N. 12th St., and Edgewood 3 Theatre, 56th and Highway 2.

entertainment SHORTS

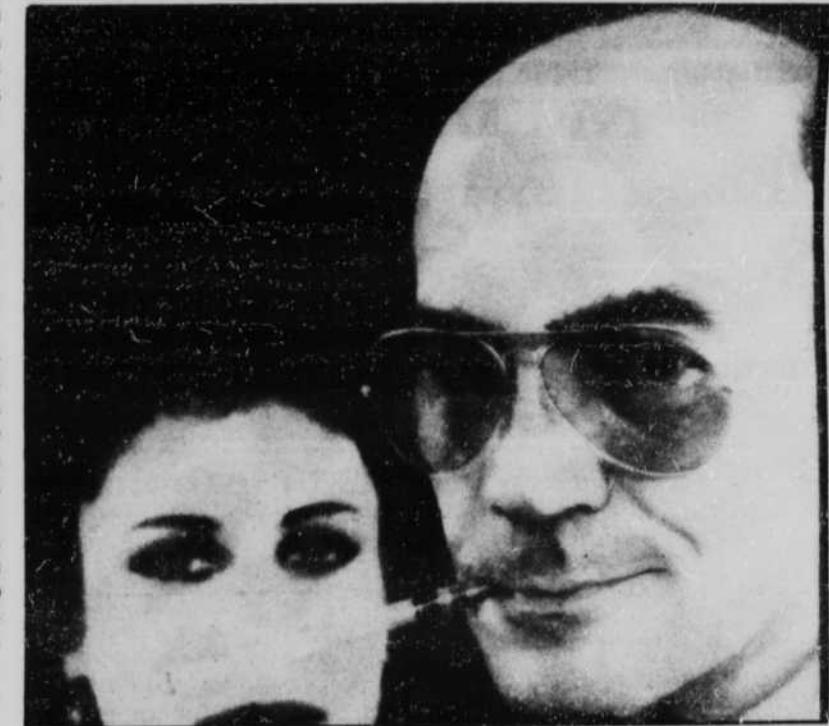
Helios Creed plays Duffy's tonight

Post-psychadelic grunge freak Helios Creed will perform tonight at Duffy's Tavern, 1412 O St.

Helios Creed is touring in support of "The Last Laugh," his last mind-frying album.

Helios Creed's music is an aural picture of alien landscapes. Audiences are left sweaty and disoriented, like waking up from strange dreams, after hearing him play.

Opening for Helios Creed is nobody. He likes it that way. Cover is \$6. Show starts around 10:30 p.m.



Courtesy of K.P. Simonson

Dr. Hunter S. Thompson

Thompson to speak on campus

From Staff Reports

Best-selling author, booze hound, critic, political columnist, handgun expert, drug lush, genius, inventor of gonzo journalism, lunatic and insightful social commentator Dr. Hunter S. Thompson will fly onto campus Friday night.

Thompson, who rarely makes public appearances, will present "Fear and Loathing: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream" in the Centennial Ballroom of the Nebraska Union.

In other words, he will talk about whatever he finds interesting.

Thompson, 52, is incomprehensibly famous for his offbeat, informal writing style and sometimes dangerous personal antics.

His journalism career began in 1959 when he did a year with Time magazine as a Caribbean correspondent. From there, he went to the New York Herald Tribune, the National Observer, The Nation and Ramparts. He served as national affairs editor at Rolling Stone for a decade and High Times readers will recognize him as global affairs correspondent.

Today, he resides in Aspen, Colo., with his troop of Dobermanns and porch laden with peacocks.

Thompson has written several books, including the ever-popular "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas."

Tickets to the presentation are \$10 or \$8 for students in advance, \$12 day of show. Show time is 7:30 p.m., but be warned -- Thompson notoriously is late.

Happy/cranky Hanna seeks to please

Sometimes I'm happy; sometimes I'm cranky.

When I'm happy, I write columns that generally are positive and constructive. When I'm cranky, I write whiny, mournful columns.

Since this is sort of a consumer-based newspaper that must satisfy its readers in order to stay in business, it is important that I write in a style that DN readers will appreciate.

In an attempt to please everybody, today I offer you two distinct writing styles.



Jim Hanna

PASSAGE NO. 1: A HAPPY STORY

The gentle scrape of my cat's coarse tongue on my nose stirred me from sleep.

I opened my eyes to see Bert's warm, loving face staring back. He smiled, purred and playfully swatted at my chin. He was so cute.

I reached for the phone next to my bed and called up Time and Temperature. The forecast: sunny and warm, high temperatures near 75. What a perfect day.

I gleefully sprang up from my bed and rushed to open a window. In came delicious waves of fresh spring air. I took a deep breath and grinned toothily.

Just then, a colorful bluebird landed on my window sill. I held out my index finger, which he quickly perched upon.

"Good morning, Mr. Bluebird! How are you this fine day?"

He responded with a joyous chorus of chirps that made my innards glow.

"Go on, you silly bird," I said teasingly, and off he flew into the majestic morning sky.

I turned back into my apartment, and, once again, looked at my adorable kitten. He was curled into a fluffy ball and looked at me with hungry, yet adoring eyes.

"Would you like some breakfast, you silly goose?" I asked.

In one leap, he jumped into my waiting arms, and I gave him a warm hug of security.

I went to the fridge to get out a can of Puss 'N' Boots Salmon Platter for my deserving feline. Before I could

get there, however, I noticed the picture of J Burger that I had posted on my dart board.

With a sudden wave of goodwill, I took the picture down and vowed never to be so hateful and destructive again. I'm not sure what was happening, but it seemed certain that I was about to have the best day of my life.

I went to the phone to call a flower shop so I could send J a dozen long-stemmed roses. I paused for a second, though, contemplated the vegicide inherent in sending flowers, and opted instead for a box of chocolates.

I placed my order with a local candy store and then set about feeding my cat.

Oh, what a fabulous day!

I quickly showered (the water temperature was perfect on the first try) and put on my favorite clothes.

With a tender peck on my kitty's soft, pink nose, I headed out to greet this most beautiful of days.

On the front lawn of my apartment, I noticed a young fawn quietly nibbling leaves and grass.

"Ohhhh," I sighed. "Isn't that sweet?"

I reached into my backpack and pulled out a handful of the oats I carry with me for just such occasions. I held them out for the baby deer, who timidly approached and began to gingerly eat.

When finished, I patted the fawn on the head, and it went galloping up D Street, out of sight.

Then I turned and galloped up 12th Street, certain that I was now having the best day of my young life.

PASSAGE NO. 2: A CRANKY STORY

The gentle trickle of urine on my hand jarred me from my fitful sleep.

My worthless cat, Bert, grinned stupidly up at me, certain that he had done a good deed in relieving himself on my arm.

I angrily sat up and wiped my wet extremity on his fur before clobbering him with a pillow. He scampered away and hid under a chair.

"F--!" I said, "I don't want to get up."

But I knew I had to. I grumpily reached for the phone to call Time and Temperature, certain that the weather was going to suck.

The dead phone line was an instant reminder that I hadn't paid my bill in three months, and it had been disconnected.

"S--!" I screamed as I pulled the phone from the wall and hurled it at Bert, who was still cowering under

the chair. I pegged him right on the head and knocked him out. I couldn't help but laugh.

I figured I'd get a good idea of what the weather was like by opening my window. I got out of bed and cracked one a bit. A howling wind blasted through the opening, instantly freezing my wet-with-urine hand. It was snowing.

On my windowsill, I noticed a tiny bluebird shivering in the bitter cold. He looked at me with longing eyes and tried to squirm through the open window. I flicked him back with a frostbitten hand and slammed the window closed, pinching a few of his tail feathers. I laughed to myself as I watched the bird struggle to get free.

I turned back into my apartment and saw my hungry, emaciated cat. He looked up at me, hoping that maybe this would be the morning I'd finally feed him.

"Sorry, Bert," I sneered. "Maybe next time."

I looked at my feet and saw a dart on the floor. In one graceful, fluid motion, I picked it up and heaved it at the picture of J Burger I had pinned to my dart board. Ptwang! The dart nailed him square in the middle of his left eye.

I thought about taking a shower, but nixed the idea. I like the look on people's faces when I stand next to them in a line. Since I haven't showered in three weeks, my stench usually makes them wretch.

I put on a pair of shorts and a T-shirt and staggered out of my apartment.

"God d-- it!" I screamed. "That annoying little fawn is back."

I picked up a rock and hurled it at the fawn who was feeding on my lawn. It hit her in the leg but she didn't leave.

Then, I remembered the stun gun that I had stolen from the Humane Society. I carried it in my backpack for just such an occasion.

I whipped it out and aimed for the innocent baby deer. I shot one of the poison darts out and nailed the little creep in the neck. The stunning poison quickly traveled through the fawn, and it crumpled into a dazed heap.

"There's gonna be meat in the beans tonight," I said to myself.

I laughed pretty loud and pocketed my stun gun. Then I headed to school, knowing full well I was going to have another rotten day.

Jim Hanna is a senior theater major and an arts and entertainment staff reporter and columnist.