

Cop faces greatest challenge on runaway bus in 'Speed'

Jack Traven (Keanu Reeves), a Los Angeles Police Department cop on SWAT detail, has a fearless nature and a keen understanding of the criminal mind. That and some luck have kept him alive.

But Jack's luck is being put to the ultimate test. He's trapped on a runaway city bus that's set to explode if it falls under 50 mph.

Get ready for rush hour.

"Speed" also starring Jeff Daniels, Dennis Hopper, Sandra Bullock and Joe Morton opens Friday at metro Detroit movie theaters. The Twentieth Century Fox release marks the directorial debut of Jan De Bont. The screenplay is by Graham Yost.

The moment producer Mark Gordon finished reading Yost's screenplay he knew that "Speed" would be his first action project.

"The story feels real," said De Bont. "Most action films are so elaborate with so much fantasy, you can't go along with them. 'Speed' is about these normal everyday people on their regular bus ride downtown who are suddenly faced with their worst nightmare."

The bomb-laden city bus was actually 10 identical vehicles each outfitted with different driving, camera and lighting rigs. For in-



Partner: Michigander Jeff Daniels stars as Harry Temple, Jack's partner in "Speed."

stance, one bus, affectionately known as the "Pope-mobile," contained an enclosed Plexiglas platform fitted on its front which held three cameras, operators and sound equipment.

For the elaborate action set pieces Gordon turned to stunt coordinator Gary Hynes, a noted race-car driver and veteran of several Steven Spielberg films.

The other vital element to the success of "Speed" was the cast, particularly Keanu Reeves and Sandra Bullock who plays Annie,

PREVIEW

a passenger who unwittingly becomes the driver of the runaway bus.

De Bont was meticulous about his casting choices, selecting actors who would bring just the right tone to the film.

"Keanu and Sandra bring a contemporary look and attitude," said De Bont. "Because Keanu wanted to do most of his own driving and stunt work, it made his performance all the more compelling."

Bullock brings an edge of much-needed humor to the tense film. "The audience needs to laugh within the context of this story," said Gordon. "And Sandy provided that. Her performance is incredibly honest and funny."

What is a heroic film without a great villain?

"Action films live and die by their villains," said Gordon. "And we have a terrific one in Dennis Hopper."

Hopper, as the sociopathic Howard Payne brings the same air of menace and touches of evil to his performance that characterized his chilling work in "Blue Velvet" and "True Romance."

In battling Payne, Reeves is assisted by two noted stage and screen actors, Obie Award win-



Thriller: Keanu Reeves is Jack Traven in "Speed" a thriller about a cop who must remove a bomb planted beneath a bus that is set to explode when the speed of the bus drops below 60 miles per hour.

ning Jeff Daniels as Harry Temple, his partner, and Emmy Award nominated Joe Morton, as Captain McMahon.

Daniels first came to the attention of film audiences in the Oscar-winning "Terms of Endearment." Since then he has starred in a wide variety of roles, most

memorably "Gettysburg," "Ragtime," and Woody Allen's "The Purple Rose of Cairo" and "Radio Days." He is currently filming the comedy "Dumb and Dumber" with co-star Jim Carrey.

The Michigan native alternates film and stage work. He is the

founder of The Purple Rose Theatre Company in Chelsea, which is devoted to developing Midwestern actors, playwrights, directors and designers.

After attending Central Michigan University, Daniels joined New York's renowned Circle Repertory Theatre.

UPCOMING MOVIES

There's something for everyone at the movies. Here's a list of what's in the wings:

Opening Friday, June 10

■ "Red Rock West" — Main Art Theatre exclusive. A thriller with an avalanche of twists, turns, mistaken identities and hidden pasts leaving everyone unsure of who's to be trusted and who's to be feared. Stars Nicholas Cage, Dennis Hopper, and Lara Flynn Boyle. Directed by John Dahl.

■ "City Slickers II" — The city dudes are getting into the saddle again in search of a lost treasure and along the way must overcome many obstacles.

Opening Friday, June 17

■ "Wolf" — A romantic thriller about a book editor who is bitten by a wolf he was trying to help. From that moment on, nothing, not his job, his marriage or any part of his life will ever be the same.

■ "Fear Of A Black Hat" — Main Art exclusive. Hilarious comedy that lampoons the world of hip hop music, sort of a "Spinal Rap," the film follows the group N.W.A. through its rise, fall and comeback. Stars Rusty Cundieff, Larry B. Scott, and Mark Christopher Lawrence. Directed by Rusty Cundieff.

■ "Getting Even With Dad" —

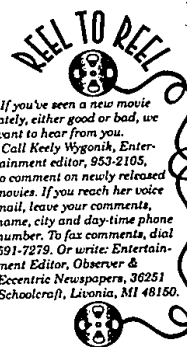
Comedy about a young boy who finds the perfect way to turn his father into the dad he never had — a little love, a little kindness, and a little blackmail. Stars Macaulay Culkin, Ted Danson, Glenn Headly, and Hector Elizondo. Directed by Howard Deutch.

Opening Friday, June 24

■ "Wyatt Earp" — An epic of the American West from the 1860s to the turn of the century seen through the exciting and tumultuous life of Wyatt Earp from youth to middle age. Stars Kevin Costner.

Opening Wednesday, June 29

■ "Little Big League" — A 12 year old ardent baseball fan inherits the slumping Minnesota Twins and becomes the youngest owner-manager in baseball history.



If you've seen a new movie lately, either good or bad, we want to hear from you. Call Keely Wygonik, Entertainment editor, 953-2105, to comment on newly released movies. If you reach her voice mail, leave your comments, name, city and day-time phone number. To fax comments, dial 591-7279. Or write: Entertainment Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

'Get Even With Dad'

Here's an early Father's Day gift idea for dad — take him to a special afternoon sneak preview of "Getting Even With Dad" on Sunday, June 12. At select theaters including Star John R, Star Winchester, AMC Laurel Park Place, Showcase Pontiac and Movies at Fairlane, the purchase of a children's ticket will also buy an admission for dad. Call the theaters for show times.

"Getting Even With Dad" stars Macaulay Culkin and Ted Danson in a hilarious and

heartwarming comedy about an enterprising kid who finds the perfect way to make his father into the dad he never had — a little love, a little kindness — and a little mischief.

Directed by Howard Deutch ("Pretty in Pink," "Some Kind of Wonderful") from an original screenplay by Tom S. Parker and Jim Jennewein ("The Flintstones," "Richie Rich"), the film was produced by Katie Jacobs and Pierce Gardner, with Richard Hashimoto executive producing.

'Midnight Cowboy' rides again at select theaters

In honor of the 25th Anniversary of the original release of "Midnight Cowboy," MGM Pictures will be presenting this film June 10 to 14 at the Michigan Theatre in Ann Arbor and July 15 to 21 at the Main Art Theatre in Royal Oak.

Originally released May 25, 1969 at the Coronet Theatre in New York City, "Midnight Cowboy" stars Joe Buck, (Jon Voight) a good-looking, uneducated Texas youth, who is convinced that he is the answer to the prayers of many lonely, love-

starved New York women. Joe quits his dish-washing job, outfits himself in synthetic cowboy regalia and heads East. In New York, he meets Ratso (Dustin Hoffman), a sickly, underized Bronx-born con man, who first victimizes then teams up with him.

This unlikely pair of loners join forces to bilk, hustle and which rebuffs them at every turn. In the movie history books, the Jerome Hellman/John Schlesinger production of "Midnight Cowboy" rates landmark status not

only as a multi-Oscar winner, but the first major studio production to be branded with an X by the MPAA's then brand new Code and Rating Administration in 1969. In 1971, the rating was commuted to an R, according to "Variety." "In light of evolving rating

standards and the film's ac-

claim." When the rating was changed to an R, rumors persisted — and still do — that the film had been edited, but, in fact, the movie has never been cut from the time of its original release.

KEANU REEVES DENNIS HOPPER SANDRA BULLOCK

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