

'2012' is cinematic junk food

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Roland Emmerich's new film "2012" is a blissfully retarded disaster movie that, while entertaining, is pure cinematic junk food.

In the film, a series of solar storms has caused the core of the earth to increase in temperature. The government becomes aware of this, but keeps it quiet from the population. The governments of the world create a solution; they will build giant ships and save those who have enough money to buy salvation.

John Cusack plays Jackson Curtis, a failed novelist who is spending the weekend with his children. His marriage was destroyed by his dedication to writing and his ex-wife (Amanda Peet) is living with a Los Angeles plastic surgeon. While he and the kids visit Yellowstone National Park, they are confronted by the army, who has sectioned off part of the park.

Curtis realizes the world is doomed and escapes the massive destruction of Los Angeles with his children, ex-wife and her boyfriend.

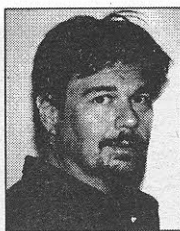
The movie is a series of escapes for this group. Each escape tries to out perform the previous ones with added mayhem and special effects. However, they are all the same exact method of escape, by airplane.

Emmerich and co-writer Harald Kloser are simply following the same formula Emmerich used in "Independence Day," "Godzilla" and "The Day After Tomorrow." Rather than develop interesting characters an audience can sympathize with, "2012" is overpopulated with flat, boring and useless people.

Cast members try, but they are repeating the same hackneyed dialogue that infects all of Emmerich's films.

Cusack is a likeable actor, but even he struggles when given a shallow character to portray.

Woody Harrelson has fun with a small part as a conspiracy theorist, but his character is indistinguishable from Ran-



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dy Quaid's character in "Independence Day."

The film is full of pointless destruction. This is a disaster film and it should have scenes

of grand-scale mayhem, but much of what is shown on screen has little to do with the plot.

For example, the Vatican is destroyed. If one of the characters was Catholic and travelled there for comfort, this scene would have some meaning. However, it simply appears because the filmmakers thought it would be fun to watch the Vatican crumble.

The film contains too many coincidences, a sign of lazy writing.

When Curtis takes a trip to Yellowstone National Park, he stumbles upon the government's cover up. He then meets Harrelson's character, who knows the government's plans. Curtis is a chauffeur. He works for a Russian businessman, who happens to have tickets for the escape ship.

When Curtis takes his family to the airport to escape Los Angeles' destruction, his ex-wife's boyfriend happens to be a pilot. When the plane runs out of fuel, they land in Los Angeles, where they happen upon Curtis' Russian employer.

The film is more than two hours of uninspired situations.

"2012" takes kitsch to a new level. It panders to its audience at every opportunity. The film is concerned with saving one dog, while billions are dying at the same time. It does this because the filmmakers believe the audience is more sympathetic toward the dog. An audience deserves to be treated with respect, even in a film that is designed to entertain.

"2012" is the cheese puffs of cinema. It is entertaining on a basic level, but provides nothing for the audience to think about after the credits roll.