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ALERT TOP STORY

Love, family, dysfunction: Performer with South Dakota ties brings one-woman show to Rapid City

Tanya Manus Jul 19, 2025 0



Actress and writer **JJ Pyle** is coming to South Dakota to take audiences on a heartbreaking, dysfunctional, comical, clever and hopeful holiday road trip.

Pyle's family has roots in western South Dakota, and she has affectionate memories of many visits here throughout her life. Pyle now lives in New York City and is collaborating with Catalyst Theater Company in Rapid City to present her original one-woman show, "How to Find a Husband in 37 Years (or Longer)."

Showtimes are 7 p.m. Friday, July 25, and Saturday, July 26, and 2 p.m. Sunday, July 27. Go to [catalyst.art](#) for tickets. The show contains strong language, adult content and mild references to sex and drugs. It's recommended for adults and teens 14 and older.

In the Midwest, who hasn't endured a long drive on seemingly endless stretches of highway to visit relatives for the holidays? "How to Find a Husband in 37 Years (or Longer)" is inspired by an actual road trip Pyle and her father made one Christmas. After Pyle's planned vacation to India was disrupted, she ended up in her father's pickup traveling to her married sister's new house in rural Indiana.

Pyle and her father don't have a close relationship. But on that particular road trip, Pyle's dad talked about his four failed marriages and legal woes.

In Pyle's fast-moving show, her dad's story alternates with Pyle's reflections about her own romantic journey. The show merges two scripts Pyle initially planned to write — one about her father and one about her ex-loves.



JJ Pyle is bringing her one-woman show "How to Find a Husband in 37 Years (or Longer)" to Catalyst Theater Company in Rapid City July 25, 26 and 27. The play merges real-life tales of love and heartache from her own life and her father's. Though portraying real people instead of fictional characters made her nervous at first, Pyle said those who are mentioned in her play are supportive, and audiences relate to the sometimes dramatic, sometimes comical show.

Courtesy photo

"I wanted to explore the blissfulness of falling in love and the gut-wrenching agony of breaking up. As I kept writing, I realized it was the same script," she said.

Names of her former boyfriends have been changed to monikers like "Latin Lover" and "Maybe Someday" to protect their privacy. Her father's life story and his dialogue in the show are entirely real.

During the actual road trip that inspired her show, Pyle confesses that on a whim, she recorded her dad telling his side of the story. The plan, at first, was not to write about him but to play the recordings for her sister and her mom and pick on her dad.

Though Pyle's not proud of her motives for recording the conversation, hearing her father's story and writing "How to Find a Husband in 37 Years (or Longer)" made Pyle realize her father has an interesting life story. In fact, as she's performed the show, her father emerged as the audience's favorite character.

"In playing my dad, and me talking to my dad, my compassion for him has grown," Pyle said, adding that her father has been supportive of the show.

Audiences, meanwhile, identify with the show and are entertained by it, Pyle said, as she explores family dysfunction and pokes fun at "stupid things I did in my life."

Pyle has performed "How to Find a Husband in 37 Years (or Longer)" in locations such as Los Angeles, New York and Scotland, but bringing it to South Dakota – where some members of her family will be in the audience — is especially meaningful. Pyle's brother, TJ Pyle, and her aunt, Nancy Glassgow, live in Rapid City and they've been helping Pyle promote her show.

Family, memories and a place to escape heartbreak

The timing of bringing "How to Find a Husband in 37 Years (or Longer)" to South Dakota is bittersweet. Pyle's grandmother Florence Glassgow, Pyle's aunt Sandra Eisenbraun, and Pyle's uncle, former Custer County sheriff De Glassgow, all died within the past year before they had a chance to see her show.

"I have been (performing it) a bit now and wanted to bring it home to family," Pyle said. "I have a new urgency about making art and about spending time with my family."

"My uncle De was very proud of this," Pyle said of her show. "I'm sad he didn't get to see it because he would have loved it."

Pyle cherishes her family and the time she's spent in South Dakota. Pyle's mother was born in Deadwood and grew up in Wall. Pyle's parents met at Ellsworth Air Force base. Pyle's dad was an iron worker who traveled a lot when Pyle was growing up, she said.

"My (brother and sisters and I) spent much of our childhood and adolescence in Wall and Creighton and Custer," Pyle said.

Pyle's immediate family moved often because of her father's job before eventually settling in Indiana. Pyle's childhood was spent visiting her grandparents DeWayne and Florence Glassgow in Wall, and living for a while with her aunt and uncle, Sandra and Alvin Eisenbraun, on their dairy farm in Creighton. One of the many schools Pyle attended while growing up was Creighton's one-room schoolhouse. As a teen, she milked cows on the Eisenbrauns' dairy farm.

"I have such fond memories of the Wall Drug. Grandpa would give us \$1 or \$2 and we'd spend our whole summer trying to figure out what we were going to buy at the drug store," Pyle said. "We excavated that place, every corner. Was it going to be candy or ice cream or a trinket or play a game? We manipulated every cent to see how we could we were going to spend it at the drug store."

"Every time somebody new came, a friend or a boyfriend, we would have to make the rounds of Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse," Pyle said. "I spent a lot of time in and around Rapid City. We spent every family reunion at Storybook Island and Dinosaur Park. We did the rounds of those things all through my childhood."

"When my siblings started having kids, we would go out to Uncle De and Aunt Nancy's ranch in New Underwood and give them horse rides and things like that," Pyle said.

As she grew up, South Dakota was her safe place to escape the heartache of some romantic break-ups.

"It's a special place to me. It feels like going home," Pyle said. "After adolescence and after you get your heart broken, all you're thinking about is how you're going to get out of there. That's in my show, too. ... It seemed like the place I always wanted to go back to be protected and feel like home was ... South Dakota."

Pyle said her brother encouraged her to bring her show to South Dakota. The upcoming shows here will put Pyle closer to her goal of performing "How to Find a Husband in 37 Years (or Longer)" 100 times at locations such as regional and off-Broadway theaters. After that, Pyle said the show might evolve into another format such as a podcast or movie.

"One of my friends says this is the modern-day 'Bridget Jones' Diary,'" Pyle said. "Maybe I'll be done with it or maybe it'll turn into a memoir or something else."

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