

HUMONGUS TOE RIDES AGAIN

a play by

Frank Gagliano

CONTACT

sandrico@aol.com
www.gaglianoriff.com

SCENE ONE:

A pile of junk on one part of the stage.

The pile of junk consists of parts of a car, a TV antennae, a blood plasma bottle still hanging from its holder, an outboard motor, a toilet bowl without a seat, some coil plates from a gas range, a faceless manikin.

On top of the pile of junk is a large hour glass.

Projected on the stage floor is a giant kaleidoscope image that constantly changes.

BEFORE CURTAIN:

Sirens, fire engines, people yelling and screaming, cars screeching, feet running, gun fire.

All sounds must crescendo to drown out any noise or talking in the theatre. If the sounds do not hurt the ears, they are not loud enough.

AT CURTAIN:

Flames on the Cyclorama.

SANDRO runs in. He carries a guitar. On occasion HE plays some chords and sings his lines.

SANDRO

Beautiful! I mean it's terrible, but kinda beautiful! They're stealing everything! And doing it with bee-uu-tii-ful zest! And now they've set fire to the rest! Everything! Everything's burning down! The hospital. The police station. The Welfare office. This whole neighborhood we call "The Bog!" Even the church! Fffuuussshhh!

(HE makes the sign of the cross
and gives each sign a sound of
"Fffuuussshhh!")

BUZZ, a black boy, rushes in.
HE limps)

BUZZ

Sandro! Sandro! Those flames! Like tongues, taking long licks out of the windows! And all that glass! Sandro, it's a glass thunderstorm! Blood color glass. Orange and green and yellow color glass. And I just got out a green-glass splinter from my blue-black foot. The good foot!

SANDRO

Don't go near that pile, Buzz!

BUZZ

Asbestos boots, Sandro—that's what I need! Asbestos boots! What we all need.

SANDRO

No way! You'll get a bad case of asbestos toes! Anyway, those fire tongues are flushing out the rats with the people.

(The pile of junk
moves a center stage)

Rat's fangs don't know from asbestos boots, Buzz! Don't trust that crawling pile!

BUZZ

(Sobs)

God, it's beautiful!

SANDRO

Sure it's beautiful—beautiful and raw. The most beautiful sight I ever saw.

BUZZ

Then why am I crying?

SANDRO

(Near tears himself)

'Cause it's the first time you've felt warm all winter. That's why.

BUZZ

Then why am I scared?

SANDRO

Because your crummy apartment, like mine, just burned down. That's why. And crummy or not, there's no place like home.

(Two POLICEMEN rush in)

POLICEMAN 1

Out of the way!

POLICEMAN 2

You heard him! Move it!

(THEY push SANDRO and BUZZ aside and dig into the junk pile)

POLICEMAN 1

They gotta be here! They gotta!

POLICEMAN 2

Here! Over here!

(THEY hold up two clear plastic sacks filled with white powder.

MUSIC.

Plastics sacks glow in the dark)

SANDRO

Jesus!

BUZZ

What is it?

POLICEMAN 1

Six million dollars worth. . .

POLICEMAN 2

. . .that's what it is. . .

**(A bottle with a lit rag stuffed in it
is thrown in from offstage onto the junk pile)**

SANDRO

Duck!

(EXPLOSION! SMOKE!)

**(When the smoke clears, the TWO POLICEMEN
lay unconscious behind the pile of junk, their feet
sticking out.**

**A very tall NATIVE AMERICAN appears,
standing on top of the junk pile.**

**The Kaleidoscope on the stage floor freezes
in a variety of crimson shapes.**

**MUSIC: Ersatz Native American symphonic movie music
that crescendoes and crashes.**

Pause)

AMERICAN INDIAN (HUMONGUS)

(Perfect contemporary diction)

**Can anybody here please let me know of the whereabouts of my princess? The
Princess Anemone?**

(No answer)

**She's about —oh— as tall as my braid end? Has big, purple puppy eyes? Shiny-
slick, black-as-mink hair? Warn in a braid but, when let loose to fall, falls down to
her knee backs?**

(No answer)

**She has a voice like a hand-whittled flute. You'd never forget it. Oh, yes! And skin
like coffee ice-cream. She was last seen sliding down the side of El Capitan in
Yosemite National Park, clutching a peace pipe and being pursued by the cavalry.
Anybody of that description pass this way? With maybe a demented blue-boy
Union General floating along in a large plastic bubble?**

**(SANDRO and BUZZ, stunned,
shake their heads. INDIAN falls to his knees.
Still with perfect contemporary diction)**

HUMONGUS TOE

(Continued)

Oh my grandfather-of-the-many-moons dead, bitter Brave Humongus Toe here, signing in with daily report, as follows: Cramped into the belly of the firewater bottle and womb-bent with kerosene head throbbing in the Molotov booze-bomb, I bobbed down the river of our ancestors in search of the Speonk Peace Pipe — my head between my legs, my knees irritating my ears, bobbing and banging into — oh— filth and people plops, my revered grey-headed grandfather, for—oh shame! — the river you knew as the River of the Crystal Water, is now the River of the Emerald Green Slime, which I bobbed in until—taken, lit and hurled—I exploded out, now ready to seek allies in this, my quest for the Speonk Peace pipe.

(A Cavalry Bugle is heard)

Va-moose!

(HUMONGUS TOE drags the stunned SANDRO and BUZZ to the side, as a huge bubble flies over, bearing the Mt. Rushmore-high face of a CAVALRY GENERAL, whose large-as-black tennis-ball eyes revolve in his head.

The bubble exits.
Cavalry bugle out)

HUMONGUS

All clear, Braves. Say, Dudes, thanks for not panicking.

BUZZ

Hell, we're used to everything in this neighborhood we call, "The Bog."

SANDRO

(Moving cautiously to THE POLICEMEN)

Sure. Couple of times a police helicopter dropped down and had a shoot-out right over our projects.

BUZZ

Who was that Dude in the bubble?

HUMONGUS

General Beauragard Custard. We stomped him and his blue boys back in Eighteen Six and Four. That was in the battle of BBH — Buffalo Plops Hill. Now he's after us to get even.

SANDRO

Hey, Buzz! Know who these two are? The “Badass Cop Twins!” And they’re only knocked out!

BUZZ

Oh, God, let’s get out of here!

HUMONGUS

No! Wait! I thought you’d help me.

SANDRO

Who said anything about helping you?

HUMONGUS

You must.

SANDRO

No we mustn’t.

BUZZ

Not to mention *couldn’t*.

HUMONGUS

(Falls to his knees)

Help me, Old Granddad, on your Waiting Room Cloud of Sacred Bones. I can’t go on without allies. I’ve run, swum, flew and floated through these many moons. I’ve changed my language many times, all along the way, to keep in step and keep in Hip. Until not only my tongue, but my brain, too, is forked. And I did it all to bring back the Speonk Peace Pipe, so that we might lay our tribe to rest at last. But I’m losing heart, heart.

SANDRO

The Badass Cop Twins are beginning to twitch.

BUZZ

Listen, Mr. Toe. . .Mr. Toe, I wish you’d break out of that trance or whatever it is you’re now in, and try to understand: The only way we can help you is to get out of here. Those Badass Cop Twins don’t fool around. Right, Sandro? Sandro, you talk to Mr. Toe. Maybe you—. . .Sandro? Why are you standing there like that?

SANDRO

(Mesmerized by the plastic sacks)

He said six million dollars.

BUZZ

Hey, no! You don't mean the giggle dust? If we fool with it, they'll make dust of us!

SANDRO

Six million! You know what that means? That means being free, Buzz. That means you get what you want, Buzz. Anything you want, Buzz!

BUZZ

I want to stay alive, Sandro.

SANDRO

Six million'll keep you alive. The best protection in town. And the best food. The best places to live. The best of everything. And you pay for it all in cash. Think of what that means, Buzz. You know how your father and my father are drownin' in all that — that — what do you call it again? — that extra boodle you have to pay when you buy on time?

BUZZ

Interest.

SANDRO

Right. All that interest you have to pay for everything the TV says we gotta have. Well, with six million, you don't drown—you float. You want that car? You write out a check or un-peel a wad — *AND NO INTEREST*. You're passing a store window and your eye catches the grandest sound system and video screen and movie camera, so's you can make your own porn. You know? You go in, and without a tick, you buy out the place. *AND NOT A FART WIFF OF INTEREST*. Get my point? And you never, ever think of stealing the stuff. You don't have to — never have to again. *AND NO MORE INTEREST! EVER AGAIN!*

BUZZ

(Caught up in it)

You want to visit your Grandma in California. Because she's sick and she 's old and you miss her and hate those once-in-awhile long distance calls. You just book passage and fly.

SANDRO

Right. And respect. Respect. Everybody respects someone with six million. In fact, that's all respect is: Six million dollars. And — wait a minute! — here's the clincher: You know what else six million'll do for me?

BUZZ

What?

SANDRO

What do I want more than anything else in the world?

BUZZ

To be a rock star.

SANDRO

(Sings most of the following)

Right. You are so right. 'Cause that's the way to get you out of "The Bog." And not need school or anythin. A star! They listen to stars! They bow down to stars! You'll see. . .Six million will buy the stars for me!

(Stops singing)

And you — God, everybody knows what you want more than anything, Buzz.

BUZZ

Oh God, yes. . .to make my leg right.

SANDRO

Right. And all it takes is to find that one big, Make-Your-Leg-Right doctor. You know: the kind that costs the biggest bucks.

BUZZ

—And if you have the bucks—

SANDRO

—And we'll have it—

BUZZ

—Then they make the miracle. . . .But, but, but, but, but the giggle dust is theirs, the Badass Cop Twins.

SANDRO

Wrong, Buzz! Or they wouldn't have hid the giggle dust junk in *that* junk.

BUZZ

NO! NO! It doesn't matter, Sandro. Operation or no operation, those Badass Cop Twins are plugged into the meanest crud in town. You know that, Sandro. Even the good cops haven't been able to nail them. Please, Sandro, let me grow up with at least one straight leg.

SANDRO

Six million dollars! A star!

HUMONGUS

(Breaking from his trance)

Wait! Listen!. . .Yes? Yes? . . .What is it, Old Granddad?I t's about what you two want. . . .Yes? Yes? . . .Yes, OMG! For Buzz-Of-The-Witherd-Leg. . .the specialist who can untwist your twisted limb is . . .Dr. Sureto Rakitin. His clinic is located in California.

(Map of U.S. is projected on the CYC.
Blinking light at San Francisco blinks
on and off)

BUZZ

Clinic? Hey, Clinic's are free.

HUMONGUS

(Eyes closed)

Not this one. It costs five thousand dollars just to press the gate's buzzer, Buzz.

BUZZ

Five thousand! Oh no!

SANDRO

And what about for Sandro-of-the-needed stardom?

HUMONGUS

(Eyes closed)

Same place. LaLa land. Eternal Recording Studios. Max Canbebought is the man who can be bought for \$25,000.

(Blinking Lights and map—out on Cyc)

SANDRO

Peanuts! If we can dump the giggle dust.

BUZZ

God, it sounds good. But I don't know. . .

SANDRO

I know. And you know, too.

BUZZ

It's dangerous. And it means we have to run. And what about our friends?

SANDRO

What friends? You and me: We're the only people around here we can stand.

BUZZ

And what about our families?

(GIRL #1 rushes in)

GIRL #1

HEY, BUZZ! YOUR FATHER'S DEAD! HE'S BEEN SHOT WITH A KLOCK PISTOL THIRTY TIMES!

(SHE rushes out! BOY #1 rushes in)

BOY #1

Hey, Sandro! Your tenement is all burned out! So's your whole block!

(BOY #1 rushes out)

(GIRL #2 rushes in)

GIRL #2

Hey, Buzz! Your mother ran away with a fortune teller from Mozambique!

(GIRL #2 rushes out)

(BOY #2 rushes in)

BOY #2

Hey, Sandro! There's no trace of your family! And the car your only relatives were visiting you in, exploded! With them in it!

(BOY #2 rushes out)

SANDRO

You hear that, Buzz! We're alone. All alone in this motherless mother of a world.

BUZZ

No.

(Cries. They cling to each other)

HUMONGUS

You won't be alone. I'll be with you. And I'm strong. *And* 175 years old! And that means life experience you wouldn't believe. And between worlds. Only General Custard can harm me. That blue boy's between worlds, too. Don't you see, I need allies completely of this world. The Speonk Peace Pipe is completely of this world. General Custard isn't — and neither am I. So I can at least deal fully with *him*. But the pipe . . . the pipe is too real. It keeps slipping through our fingers.

(MUSIC: As an image of an INDIAN GIRL appears on the CYC. She's tied to a tree)

HUMONGUS

Look! It's Princess Anemone!

PRINCESS ANEMONE

(SINGS)

HUMONGUS TOE, YOU'VE GOT TO KNOW,
THEY'VE GOT ME IN A CAVE.
THE PEACE PIPE'S GONE, I CAN'T GO ON,
YOU'VE GOT TO COME AND SAVE ME.

HUMONGUS

Princess, where are you? What cave?

PRINCESS ANEMONE

(SINGS)

HUMONGUS TOE, GET HELP AND ROW,
TO WHERE THE WATER'S FALLING.
IF I AM FREED, I THINK I KNOW
FROM WHERE THE PEACE PIPE'S CALLING.

(Image begins to fade)

BUT I MAY FAIL THE TEST,
AND I DON'T JEST.
FOR ALL IS LOST IF YOU DON'T COME OUT WEST.
HUMONGUS TOE.
HUMONGUS TOE. . .

(Image out)

HUMONGUS

Princess—No!—wait! Please stay and—

(To Buzz and Sandro)

You've got to help me save Princess Anemone!

BUZZ

But, if you're sort of dead, what can anybody do to you? To *her*?

HUMONGUS

Cause perpetual pain. It's true of any living thing, that true—they can also go through periods of perpetual pain — when the spirits decide to have fun with them. But at least a living thing knows the pain will end. Sometime. But not with us “in between.” We undergo the suffering without the release. Only the Speonk Peace Pipe will give us that release. And Princess Anemone knows where it is.

BUZZ

She *thinks* she knows.

SANDRO

Listen, Buzz, there's nothing now to keep us here.

BUZZ

You refuse to listen. What about the Badass Cop Twins?

SANDRO

No! You won't listen. With six million and Humongus Toe, those two can't touch us.

HUMONGUS

Right. I'll help you, and you'll help *me* find the princess.

SANDRO

Nothing can be worse than life's been here.

HUMONGUS

But where do we start? I don't know exactly where Princess Anemone is.

SANDRO

And how do we get cash for the giggle dust? Can't do it in this town. Too risky.

BUZZ

Solly Seer! He might have the answers.

SANDRO

Of course! See why we need you, Buzz? You're thinking all the time. But how do we get Solly here fast?

BUZZ

This should do it!

(Buzz opens one sack of Giggle Dust,
takes a pinch and flicks it into the air.

MUSIC: Sting! Everything turns blue,
as Solly Seer floats in.

Everyone floats throughout the following)

SOLLY SEER

Who made it all feathers? Happily. And, happily, why is the ground foam rubber?

BUZZ

Solly, there's a full shot glass more of the giggle dust for you, *if* you locate a certain Princess Anemone for us.

SOLLY SEER

Tied to a tree?

HUMONGUS

Yes!

SOLLY SEER

Near a water fall?

SANDRO

Yes.

SOLLY SEER

Under a cliff that's gonna avalanche down on her in a couple of days?

BUZZ

Uh-oh!

SOLLY SEER

And if that doesn't happen, a certain Cavalry General will tickle her on the feet for two weeks straight? Is that the one?

HUMONGUS

OH Ancient Granddad, do not — do not allow Princess Anemone to become a perpetual sole giggle.

SANDRO

That's the one, Solly. Where is she?

(Blue haze out.
Cyc biz with map of US.
Light flashes at NW tip of US)

SOLLY

There. There she is. Now, where's my thimble full?

SANDRA

'nother thing: Who do we see out west to get cash for this giggle dust?

SOLLY

Thimble me again.

(HE does. Blue biz again)

Tushy, The Dwarf of Alcatraz Island.

(Blue OUT)

BUZZ

Everything is out west. Even my grandmother.

HUMONGUS

Yes, we're in luck.

SANDRO

Buzz, take my hand.

BUZZ

God, Sandro, I'm afraid.

SANDRO

I know, Buzz. I am, too. But the operation — and my stardom

HUMONGUS

— and the Princess Anemone — and the Speonk Peace Pipe — and the final rest of an entire nation!

SANDRO

I'm so excited. I think I feel a song coming on.

(SINGS)

HOLDIN' HANDS TOGETHER

WE'LL GO SPINNIN' DOWN THE PIKE.

MOVIN' ON. MOVIN' ON.

BUZZ

(SINGS)

I WILL GET A WORKING LEG

AND SANDRO, HIS NEW MIKE,

MOVIN' ON. MOVIN' ON.

SANDRO And BUZZ

(SING)

THEN THIS FINE AMERICAN,

SO LOYAL AND SO BRAVE,

WILL SAVE HIS COFFEE GIRLFRIEND—

FOR HIS NATION, FIND A GRAVE.

ALL

(SING TOGETHER)
 AND WE WILL LIVE SO HAPPY
 FROM NOW ON—
 MOVIN' ON
 MOVIN' ON
 MOVIN ON'

(THEY EXIT)

(The BADASS COP TWINS revive)

COP 1

The giggle dust—

COP 2

Solly, did you see—?

SOLLY

(Statements)

A singing kid called Sandro. A limping spade-kid called Buzz. And an Indian.
THEY got the giggle dust.

COP 2

Where did they go?

SOLLY

(Takes out his shot glass)

Fill my shot glass first.

(COP 1 pulls out a gun
 and shots the shot glass
 out of SOLLY's hand)

SOLLY

(Points)

That way!

(HE runs out)

COP1

C'mon!

(The BADASS COP TWINS exit.
 The Cavalry bubble floats over)

SCENE 2:

*Three Fir Trees with birds on them
pop through the mountain of junk.*

SOUND: forest murmurs and birds.

Buzz, Sandro and Humongus enter.

BUZZ

I can't. . .my leg. . .let's stop. . .

SANDRO

Can't. Not now.

HUMONGUS

We must. His leg is bad.

BUZZ

Anyway, we're way ahead of them.

SANDRO

By only a few days.

HUMONGUS

Good head start. Besides, we're in the mountains now.

(U.S. Map flashes on and off on Cyclorama
West Virginia featured)

HUMONGUS

(Continued)

This is country I know how to survive in. Natural, tough, beautiful.

(Map projection OUT, as a shower of
can tops rain down)

Ugh! What's all this?

SANDRO

Beer can tops.

BUZZ

Pepsi, Coke, Dr. MyGod Pepper tops, too!

HUMONGUS

Over here!

(They huddle in a corner
until the shower stops)

BUZZ

Aluminum blizzard!

SANDRO

Kind'a pretty.

HUMONGUS

Let me see your leg, Buzz.

(SOUND: Helicopter overhead)

SANDRO

Hey! That's a helicopter!

BUZZ

I kept hearing it all along the way.

VOICE

(Amplified)

We see you down there. This is one of the Badass Cop Twins. We can see everything. We got infrared telescopes and defoliating stuff, so's we can skin this forest alive, and we can land right on top of your heads. Now, just drop the giggle dust and move on, and we won't bother you.

SANDRO

Humongus, do something!

VOICE

(Amplified)

We also have ultra sensitive hearing devices and other electronic crap like that and just heard you ask a Mr. Humongus DoSomething something. Ha! There's nothing this Humongus DoSomething can do. You can't escape us.

(He laughs.
(Laughter reverbs)

HUMONGUS

No, huh?

(Humongus strings an arrow and shoots up.
Laughter stops. Sound of helicopter falling and crashing)

VOICE

(Amplified)
HEEEEEELLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLPL!

(Crash off)

BUZZ

Oh, God, they must've been killed.

SANDRO

Serves them right. Now you can really rest.

HUMONGUS

That's what *you* think. Look!

(Custard flies over.
A huge mouth in the bubble opens.
A bugle is heard, sounding like dialogue.
Shouting up)

That's not possible. You know you can't destroy me.

(Bugle talks)

And you can't destroy my Princess, either. Her goodness will stop you.

(Bugle talks)

Great tomahawks and totem testes! That cannot be true!

SANDRO

What's it saying?

HUMONGUS

Custard's bubble collided with a Pac-Man meteor and has become a cannibal. It can now eat everything in his way. It sees everything as dots.

BUZZ

Look, it's about to land!

SANDRO

Hey! What's that?

BUZZ

The earth. . . ! shaking. . . .!

BITUMA

The “glow.” A terrible fever. The dreaded “glow” has appeared on his royal belly. Where the precious bellybutton was, glows now the dreaded “glow.”

SANDRO

The dreaded “glow?”

BITUMA

When the dreaded “glow” glows, that means you are burning up inside. Slowly.

BUZZ

Is there a cure for it?

BITUMA

Yes. There is a white powder that de-glow's the dreaded “glow.” It is called by many names. But you may know it as “the giggle dust.”

BUZZ

Hey, you're in luck. We —!

SANDRO

Shut up, Buzz!

BUZZ

But Sandro—

SANDRO

Water. We can get some water.

BITUMA

No! Water is the worst thing for the dreaded “glow.” It steams the “glow” and causes indescribable pain.

(To Buzz)

But you were going to say something, Anthracite person.

(Lord Sulphuro staggers in)

BITUMA

My Lord Sulphuro!

(She rushes to him; helps him to sit and leans him against the pile of junk)

SULPHURo

Lord Petrol is closing in. Because I am so weak he will probably be able to go through with the “Decapamountaination” —

