



# Joshua Limbo

Play in Two Acts

*by*

S.W. Laro



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[larochris23@gmail.com](mailto:larochris23@gmail.com)



This two-man play represents *predation & bigotry*. Takes place in 1990.

The setting is Joshua Tree Desert. A place of Timeless hardship not far from the Mojave where in a very short time a man can rot from thirst and deprivation - parched into oblivion. Joshua Tree is a mystical landscape far away from Los Angeles below what is called 29 Palms, a live fire Marine range and airbase. There's a stretch of roadway cutting through the desert and rock formations that look like a child piled stones, one a top the other like blocks, at random. Big sky country. Stars that undulate 'pon you when you sleep outside staring up into the Great Mystery. *Things* happen in Joshua. Other realm type of things, where awfulness can happen to good men. Or, necessary things, to evil men.

Who the predator is and who's prey is unclear. Both characters seek a justice only the desert Herself can deliver. Afterall, She makes all the rules.

*SWL*



### *The Men*

Hector Pete Jackson (78): W.W. II bomber pilot living in Joshua Tree Desert. He's an elderly Afro-American hermit who went to *solitude* to forget all he had been.

Kosh Gleason (50): LA grifter. A white man trapped in a whirlwind of desperation on the run from himself and what hope still feels sorry for him.

*Limbo*: A place of imprisonment/confinement. An uncertain situation that one cannot control and in which there is no progress or movement.

It's said a desert is Timeless. Mysteries abound there. And men perish for not paying attention.



LIGHTS UP

MUSIC - *dirty slide guitar*

## ACT ONE

### *Scene One*

*The stage is sparse. But we know it's the interior of a rundown shack - a sun faded window with half the glass within the frame. A rusted Franklin stove. Stacked desert wood is stacked to one side. Sideways shelving filled with canned foods and rags, plates, utensils and cups. Another shelf reveals a series of book bindings of various titles. A poster of W.W. II bombers faces us on one wall and a ragged American flag hangs from the beams above a wooden table. Another wall has a Vargas girlie pin-up who smiles wide. Boxes of double-D batteries line a corner as well as oil for the lamps. Four-track cassettes as well. There's an Army cot with pants and a shirt, a metallic water bucket nearby. There's an old mattress in a corner, a sofa couch and ripped up chair by the stove. Beer bottles litter the floor and boxes and crates are piled high by the front floor. A coat rack is draped with leather pilot jacket and cap w/ goggles. Shotgun leans against a wall.*

*Most prominent is an American flag hanging from the ceiling beams. A medium size table with two glass tanks contains two*



*rattlesnakes. A clock radio plays old time band tunes from the 1940s. Moonshine jugs lay in a corner.*

*WE HEAR the snakes rattling their tails. Danger lurks in this space. The rattlesnakes make us uneasy. After a time, as the radio plays an advert. Hector Pete enters.*

*He's tallish, wears stained jeans as rusted as the iron stove, a white gini-T and tattered boots. His hair is 'old' white. His face wrinkled by hard sunshine and cruelty, a pair of sunglasses hide what's left of his eyes. His manner is scattered but slow as the heat dictates all movement. Oddly, there's a terracotta pot with colorful desert flowers rising up he tends to gently. Throughout the play Hector Pete will focus his attention on the flower pot when he becomes confused or angered in such a way that the flowers seem to relax him. (this detail of his persona is optional)*

*But always, the two rattlesnakes steal him.*

*PRODUCTION NOTE: A stage scrim (s) may be used to display image projections for time lapse video and stills of desert and interior of shack/props. Movement outside shack can be displayed on scrim.*



*Hector Pete's desert shack*



## Exordium

HECTOR: Sup'time ladies, SUP TIME! (*he slams front door and walks to the table with glass tanks*) Got us some fine rat meat for m' ladies I do. Good eats t'nite ladies. I treat yas good don't I? DON'T I? 'Good as new can be n' good as I knew yud' be.'*(snakes rattle louder. Hector carries a large paper bag with one rat inside moving round. He twists the open end tighter and proceeds to slam the bag against the end of the table. His signature 'tic' or mannerism is imitating a snake hissing with its tongue darting out)* Damned rat, squash ya up good dead for m'girls. Sup' time ladies. Good eats. (*He dumps the unconscious rat into one tank. Then Hector sings along to an old time radio - 'Stormy Monday Blues' by Billy Eckstine, as he watches one snake wrap up the rat preparing to swallow it*)

*'It's gone n' started rainin', I'm as lonesome as a man can be  
It's gone n' started rainin,' I'm as lonesome as a man can be  
Cuz everytime it rains I realize what you mean to me...'*

HECTOR NARRATES: Ah yeah, Billy Eckstine cud sing a ballad like no man cud. (pause) Love to see how ya 'twine round that rat! Smooth, quick like when lightnin' hits the back hill upa' ways. Snatch that damned rat and swallow em up. (*Hector leaves the tanks and moves to the stove to make coffee in an old iron pot*) Years ago Sally, one a them rats bit thru ya hide clean, o'most



killed ya. Beat that rat to death, fucker! Broke it in half and cooked em up. Ate that rat like a hamburger. O'most killed ya but we nursed ya back. Good as new can be and good as I knew yud be! (*laughs! Yawns*) Won't feed ya live rats no more ladies. I do the killin' then you swallow em in peace ya see. Love my girls I do. (*he stands to salute the flag and recites a few lines of Allegiance*) 'I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America...' AH! Ya' know the rest. (*sits down*)

*WE HEAR off stage the distant sound of a car. Quick horn blast and then engine dies. Hector Pete goes to the window for the shotgun and grabs it up. He returns to table and sits drinking coffee.*

Whadduh...? Backfire. Any man comes here he gonna see the sign. (*whistling enters from off stage*) Who 'dat?

*Hector goes to the front door, peers out the window holding shotgun with passion. We hear the rattlesnakes 'rattle' and he shhhhs them. They stop rattling.*

Quiet now ladies. (*Waits. A knock. Silence. Knocks again. Silence. Rattlesnake rattles. Hector Pete reacts. Man says, 'Hello?'*) Didn't see the sign did'ja?

MAN: (*off*) You home?

HECTOR: I'm in it.



MAN: My car broke down.

HECTOR: Yeah?

MAN: Need some gas, tire iron. Got a flat.

HECTOR: You see the sign?

MAN: I did.

HECTOR: So...

MAN: So what sir...?

HECTOR: My sign.

MAN: Yeah, I saw it.

HECTOR: Read it did'ja?

MAN: Think so. Faded kinda.'

HECTOR: How so?

MAN: Sun rays I guess, sir. Faded. I need some gas if ya got any.  
Out of it.

HECTOR: Move on friend. No gas here ya see.

MAN: *(whistles, sings melody)*



HECTOR: Why are ya doin' that?

MAN: What, singin'?

HECTOR: Yeah. Stop.

MAN: Pardon me sir but are you okay in there?

HECTOR: Why's that?

MAN: Jus' askin.' Look, I need gas is all. And to fix my flat.  
(*whistles*)

HECTOR: You ain't one of them white ass lilies from L.A. are ya?

MAN: Jeez-uz, jus' a dude from L.A., car ran outta gas is all!

HECTOR: What happened to ya?

MAN: I said my car broke....

HECTOR: I mean why'd ya leave that shithole L.A. for?

MAN: Sorry to bother ya sir. I'm leaving. (*whistle grows fainter*)

HECTOR: (*waits*) HEY! You said the sign faded?

MAN: Sun rays did it.



*Hector opens the door. He aims shotgun hard as the man enters. Kosh Gleason steps in to the shack. He's 'rundown' slick, from LA. A cocky primal looking man. Handsome hair - a face women adore to loathe. He wears thick sunglasses, removes them and puts them in a shirt pocket. He has grease on his hands, stained slacks and wears sneakers.*

KOSH: Don't shoot. *(he hears rattlesnakes)*

HECTOR: I may boy.

KOSH: Jus' need gas ol' man.

HECTOR: You come here end of day and tell me my damned sign is faded.

KOSH: What's it suppose to say?

HECTOR: **'EVISCERATION AWAITS YOU INTERLOPER.'**

KOSH: *(laughs)* Biblical.

HECTOR: Is what it is, means what it means.

Kosh. Not anymore. Reads, **'ceration aits u looper.'**

HECTOR: No shit.



*Scrim reveals the faded sign. And a brilliant pastel sunset.*

KOSH: Put it down will ya. I'm about to piss myself.

HECTOR: *(gun down at table)* I re-painted that goddamn sign a month ago...

KOSH: Name's Kosh Gleason. From L.A.

HECTOR: Hector Pete Jackson, Hector or Pete do fine. Don't say *old* again.

KOSH: Didn't mean to offend you.

HECTOR: Sit down then. Coffee on the stove. So, why you leave LA with bad tires n' no gas for?

KOSH: Have a clean cup somewhere?

HECTOR: Shelf there.

KOSH: Thanks. *(pours)* A woman. What else makes a man leave without thinkin'?

HECTOR: You wanna know what the sign says?

KOSH: Basically, 'no trespassing.' You ever do what that sign warns of?

HECTOR: *(finally sits down at table with Kosh)* What's that?



KOSH: SIGN. You deaf...

HECTOR: Oh, the sign, not yet. Killed a lot of desert rats tho.'  
And other things. (*laughs, pause*) So, a woman.

KOSH: It's always about a woman ain't it? Use to be fine and loving. But then she got too neon for me Mr. Pete.

HECTOR: Pete's fine boy. Neon?

KOSH: Stirred up, witches brew - NEON. Wow, strong coffee.

HECTOR: Perks up the anus it does ya see.

KOSH: Guess your ass is jus' about blown to shit then Pete.

HECTOR: So, if the sign was clear n' not sun faded, you'd have walked away from my shack?

KOSH: I usually don't walk away from nuthin.' 'Cept the woman I left last night back in Venice Beach. Fuck her.

HECTOR: My wife Elly hit me in the head with a hammer one time! She died some years past. I'm alone now Sunshine Sally and Lucky Lucy.

KOSH: (*stares at snake tanks*) Nice rattlers Pete. Why not name one of them after your dead wife?



HECTOR: Did. *That* snake died.

KOSH: What do snakes die of, don't mind me askin'?

HECTOR: Heartbreak. (*beat*) Sunshine Sally replaced her. What's the name a the broad you drove off from?

KOSH: Uh, *Melanie*. Nice woman. Middle-aged. Neon.

HECTOR: That's good.

KOSH: Great sex. Mushrooms, MADONNA - now there's a broad I'd like to sniff on.

HECTOR: L.A.'s a shithole.

KOSH: Yes it is. Desperate place for desperate narcissists. I call it, *narce-a-situs*.

HECTOR: I knew a priest one time who ran a parish in Fairfax County, L.A. Fr. Fred Nab, Nabaret his name was. Nifty white priest served up a soup kitchen to the riff-raff ya see.

KOSH: *Nifty*. Never needed a soup kitchen.

HECTOR: Soup and bread can end a man's pain when he gets to the bottom of the bowl ya see. When he gets to the bottom of himself.

KOSH: Chowder's good.



HECTOR: Nah, like puke. A thick meat and vegetable is best for me.

KOSH: I like chowder. Boston. Lived there for a while back in the day.

HECTOR: When was that boy?

KOSH: Jus' a bowl a soup after a ballgame. Red Sox, Yankees. So ya have some gas? Tire iron.

HECTOR: Both. Knew some dames in New York, upper west side, Hells Kitchen. Took em to see the Bombers play way back. Sox had scags like Johnny Pesky n' what's his name, uh, Luis Tiant.

KOSH: Okay, sure, go Yanks. I'm a Dodgers fan now anyway. 'Go Dodgers.'

HECTOR: Jimmy Claxton, first Negro to play for a white team, the 1916 Oakland Oaks. N' Jackie Robinson, now he WAS life changin' even for all you white mothafuckas.

KOSH: Outstanding players. But black is black right ol' man?

HECTOR: Black is black what, *boy*?

KOSH: Doesn't matter. You have any gas...?



HECTOR: You in a rush to get back to that broad in L.A.?

KOSH: Fuck it we're done. Till next time when...

HECTOR: What?

KOSH: When the epic debates bring the walls down and we start over. *(thinking to himself)* I still miss *the artist*, what happened to her. *(pause)* Can I pour more coffee?

HECTOR: *(gestures to stove; snakes rattle)* Shhhhh girls, quiet now I'm o'rite. Pot's there boy.

KOSH: Watchdog snakes huh Pete.

HECTOR: Sumptin' like that.

KOSH: Long as we're jus' two guys talkin' lemme ask ya this: the sign, keeps folks away.

HECTOR: You the first one to ever say it's faded.

KOSH: You a hostile ol' man.

HECTOR: *(bit deaf)* How's that, don't hear well no more?

KOSH: *(loud)* You a bigot or sumthin'! Said *white mothafuckas*, boy.



HECTOR: I dislike alotta people ya see. But nobody comes ‘round here, ya see ‘cept you Mr. Kosh. You a bigot?

KOSH: Ain’t we all Pete? There’s folks I don’t wanna be ‘round faggots mostly. Gangbangers. But I don’t have a sign like you got.

HECTOR: N’ if’in ya did, it say what boy?

KOSH: *(thinks) ‘hit the road Jack, don’t come round here no more no more no more hit the road jack and don’t come round here no more...!’*

HECTOR: All You white folk Talk, talk, talk, TALK...! Diarrhea words poopin’ the diaper.

KOSH: Sign can just read HIT THE ROAD JACK, good enough for ya?

HECTOR: KKK, *Nazi*. Put that on ya white sign.

KOSH: I don’t need a sign. Need some gas, a tire...

HECTOR: I know a white boy racist when I hear one ya see. Ya remind me a some of the whites my father worked for when I was a kid back in the day.

KOSH: Where’s that?

HECTOR: Born in th’ south but lived Upper west side NY city. Ol’ man sold insurance, one a the few black men sellin’ it back



then and sold a ton, ya see. Good huckster m' ol' man, knew how to play the game with whitey. My mother, what a voice she had ya see, sang big band, jazz too. Knew all the songs of Ma Rainey n' Billie Holiday. Died young my mother did, her voice stayed in here boy (*taps his head*). Ya see, I was schooled but NOT FOOLED by white people's history a things. You look like a scag who reads comics n' porn.

KOSH: I came for gas and... (*getting up*)

HECTOR: (*raises gun*) Siddown! Good little rat boy. Scared? G'hed *shat* ya'sef if'in ya need too.

KOSH: It's all good. Do you need to shit ya self cause I'm all good ovuh' here sir. No shitting in my pants...

HECTOR: Ya don't need a sign, ya need a ball gag so nobody has to listen to ya talk no more. (*walks around him at table*) Earth's bored as a whore on her weddin' night to a Mormon, with white peoples talk.

KOSH: Angry ol' black coot ain't'cha.

HECTOR: *Discontent*, as a good cup of harsh joe boy. Keeps the blood up.

KOSH: Did'ja hate me for knockin' on your door?

HECTOR: You one a them rich white mothafuckas?



KOSH: I'm no banker. Kill me for knockin' on a door asking for gas and a tire iron...

HECTOR: Only if m'girls said I shoulda.

KOSH: Snakes talk to you Pete?

HECTOR: Sure they do and me them. Love em like daughters.

KOSH: How long you been out here in Joshua?

HECTOR: Oh, lemme see, is 1990 now so - 1980's sumptin' I come out here. Many years now in Joshua. Wife passed, here I am.

KOSH: From where?

HECTOR: California. Spent lots a time all over boy, Air Force. Usta whoop shit up on Manhattan Island, NYC we did. Don't miss a city. Out here, Hector Pete Jackson has QUIET. Jus' like when the *yucca brevifolia*, Joshua Tree, blooms come springtime.

KOSH: Hey, You rich?

HECTOR: 'I'm poor, but I've a ransom of soul.'

KOSH: What did you do your whole life?



HECTOR: Pilot. Trucker, barkeep. Lotta' things to keep on keepin' on as they say, ya see. (*lost in past*) Had a son with my Ellen, died Vietnam, 1968. How's 'bout you, what...?

KOSH: Got your funds in a bank around here then.

HECTOR: (*grabs shotgun and aims at Kosh; snakes rattle*) Why?

KOSH: Whoa now ol' friend! Sure your money is safe around here *buried* and in some bank...

HECTOR: What I did with my life's work ain't ya concern white boy.

KOSH: If I came here to rob you I wouldn't wait.

HECTOR: You have cash for some gas and that tire iron ya need Mr. Gleason? I don't give shit o'way, ya see, 'specially to no white fuck from the devil's abyss of LA.

KOSH: Put the gun down Pete, please. (*Hector Pete leans shotgun against his knee at table*) Thank you, sir. I'm no threat to you or your snakes!

HECTOR: We'll see. (*lights wooden pipe*) You come out here to Joshua Tree for trouble boy?

KOSH: Left a broad on Venice Beach. Like I said, wasn't thinking.



HECTOR: Never leave LA without thinkin'! Soulless place men go to die if in they can't fly straight.

KOSH: Look, I can leave if you want...

HECTOR: Sit and stay quiet. (*lights wooden pipe*) Sumptin' 'bout ya Mr. Gleason makes my ass pucker. Don't fit.

KOSH: Your ass don't fit what?

HECTOR: No, YOU don't fit; you're like religion white boy, jus' an easy excuse to get it all wrong.

KOSH: That so.

HECTOR: You a wrong puzzle piece end up the hell out here in the middle of Joshua Tree Desert? Nah-uh. Be like a whore's weddin' to a priest and blessed by the Pope.

KOSH: I like the desert. Came here years back to think things out. Come to grips. Did business in the Palm Springs.

HECTOR: What a ya do in LA? Newspapers, druggie hustler...?

KOSH: I uh, run an office.

HECTOR: For what?

KOSH: Industrial equipment. Contractor.



HECTOR: Where?

KOSH: San Bernardino, Oxnard jobs sometimes. Got one now near Santa Monica. Lease the rigs. Easy work.

HECTOR: No work is easy.

KOSH: *(sips)* Good coffee. I like watching dozers and cranes tearin' up the roads and earth. The sound of profit per hour to run them damn things, I tell ya not cheap.

HECTOR: Men like you been fuckin' mother earth for centuries. Out here when them white green flowers of the Joshua tree fly free wit' May rains ya see, I walk up politely n' say, 'who ya becomin' nex' M'am? Thanks for YOUR color.'

*Walking around the shack as if expecting a secret to be revealed.*

Lookin' for sumthin' boy?

KOSH: Nice place ya got. Private. Pets. Stove. Don't know if I could do it though.

HECTOR: What's that?

KOSH: Live alone out here. *(looking around more obviously, he nervously lights a smoke)* Mind?

HECTOR: Give ya'self lung cancer for all I care.



KOSH: *(his back is to Hector Pete)* You aiming that shotgun at me ol' man?

HECTOR: *(he raises shotgun)* James Baldwin said, '*...american whites have always glorified violence, unless a Negro had the gun.*'

KOSH: *(agitated, pours more coffee and smokes)* Yeah, the fuckin' quietude out here would cave in my sanity. *(walks to shack door)* Don't bother you here alone?

HECTOR: Depends. *(pounds head)* When the electrics get LOUD, I don't see, hear things clear. Wirin' turns down LOW, can hear the desert spirits out there talkin' kindly.

KOSH: What a they sayin'?

HECTOR: *(pause)* Spirits say, 'Hector, this man ain't worth the paper he's printed on.' *(laughs)* I know ya ain't here for gas and a flat.

KOSH: I do have car trouble.

HECTOR: No boy, you jus' got trouble.

LIGHTS DOWN

MUSIC– dirty slide guitar theme



LIGHTS UP

ACT ONE

*Scene Two*

*Later, first night. Light fx display a dark desert/scrim displays thick starry sky. Someone lights an oil lamp. Soft light drapes the stage. Radio plays big band tunes. Kosh sits by the window looking out onto the desert landscape. Hector tends to his snakes. Makes more coffee. The shotgun is now slung over Hector's shoulder.*

HECTOR: Drink more sludge white boy, ya be runnin' for the latrine out back ya see. Locomotive joe - WOOOOOOO! (*imitates train*) rollin' down the tracks.

*(Kosh goes to stove to add wood/deadfall to heat pot)*

KOSH: I'll get it.

HECTOR: Yes you will. I only serve m'gals.

*It is clear to us that Kosh is now held hostage in the shack as Hector Pete sits at table with shotgun pointed in Kosh's direction.*

KOSH: If ya got some beer Pete, I could use a drink soon...



HECTOR: No beer. Got *shine*.

KOSH: (*nervous; fidgets like a junkie*) Moonshine it is. I need a fuckin' drink. (*sips coffee, puts cup down*)

HECTOR: In time m'friend. (*snakes rattle loudly*)

KOSH: Really did knock on your door for help.

HECTOR: (*stretching*) If I was gonna shoot ya, I wouldn't wait. HA! What a you a lily? Never fought for sumptin' bigger than ya'self?

KOSH: Tore a drunk fuck up at a bar called The Railhead once, his nose ended up on his cheek, that count?

*Hector rises from table and scrambles through the milk crates and boxes in one corner. He pulls out a thick jug and swills from it hard; passes jug to Kosh who swills hard as well. Hector puts new batteries in radio as he loses himself in memory all of a sudden...*

HECTOR: (*reminiscent at bookshelf*) My ol' man said: 'A man who don't read don't deserve his eyes.' See, books are your friends white boy.

KOSH: (*on his own rant w/ jug*) Don't read much.



HECTOR: Too bad. Should read on 'bout Little Big Horn, Slave trade ya see, the Jamaican Maroons and Queen Nanny who fought them Brits in the jungle...

KOSH: Blacks, Indians stuck in the religion of playin' victim.

HECTOR: The scarest folks of all, are white folk. Shit, even Martin Luther King, Jr. knew that.

KOSH: (*ignores discussion, swills*) Packs a whollup Pete. Make it yourself?

HECTOR: Friend of mine from Morongo Valley gets it made. None a ya damn biz'nez 'bout the *still*, tho.

KOSH: Really good batch Pete. Goes down hard, makes the head smile.

HECTOR: Quit tellin' me my name will ya, was born with it. Listen ta me...

KOSH: Sorry. Damn fine shine. Go'hed. (*swills again and slides jug across table*)

HECTOR: Power mongers slurpin' up profits, like hungry dick...!

KOSH: (*on his own rant*) ...Mexicans need to stay put in their home nation I say. We'll get the fruit picked either way. Use robots or the insane to do it...



HECTOR: *(stands at table saluting flag hanging from rafters)* 'Oh say can you see by the dawn's early light.....!

KOSH: Jus' KEEP the good ones I say...

HECTOR: *(swills shine, snakes rattle)* Good ones. *(laughs)* Like pickin' the best fruit off a tree huh boy? Good whitey, mick, jew. I can smell how rotten ya are from here. I'm RIPE ya see. N you ain't nevu' liked a nigguh a day in ya life. But here you are in this shack with a black man holdin' a gun.

KOSH: Should be holdin' the back of a noose twistin' off a branch!

HECTOR: *(imitates snake w/ his tongue)* A viper strikes in one-tenth of a second, boy. *(extends his arms fast as he can like a snake!)*

KOSH: *(Hector passes him the jug)* Lemme ask you a question you gonna' kill me by sun up or let me drive back to Los Angeles?

HECTOR: Dunno yet.

KOSH: Maybe if you fixed up that sign, I would'uv kept walkin' on bye.

HECTOR: Sunshine don't give a good goddamn for a painted sign. *(aims shotgun with more focus at Kosh)* Think them



wildflowers give a shitheap 'bout men? Indian paintbrush, mojave aster, they laugh ya see! Perseid meteors, LAUGH! Stones, piss their pants at us. Fool's dolls we are!

KOSH: How do ya know I'm gonna let you jus' kill this fool, without a fight?

HECTOR: Your choice. Like goin' to war.

KOSH: What'd you do in war?

HECTOR: Tuskegee fighter pilot! Officer. I'm seventy-eight. Helped liberate the world, people like you are fuckin' up.

KOSH: So you're a flyin' monkey? Big deal, never saw the Wizard of Oz?

HECTOR: *(drunker)* CRACKER scag! Shut up! In war, ALL color is ripe not just white!

KOSH: Lunatic!

HECTOR: Gun's on you boy - *Bomb's away! Bombs' away!*

KOSH: No good about your dead son, he die a nigguh's death...

*Hectors rushes Kosh at table and knocks him out of the chair with the butt of the shotgun. Kicks him in the guts.*

KOSH: Did I say sumthin' Pete?



HECTOR: SHUT UP! Say that word again, I'll give ya agony boy.

KOSH: Shit man, I'm having a really bad day. *(rises off floor takes seat)* C'mon Pete, I left LA to get away from chaos and ya gonna do this to me man?

HECTOR: Don't say nuthin' 'bout my son, EVER!

KOSH: *(in pain)* Hey, HEY, I know karate...

HECTOR: Ya may know *karate* but I know KAR-AYZEE!

KOSH: O'rite - I USED to know karate. Still may have to kill ya tho old man.

HECTOR: Rats n' snakes, snakes n' rats is all about the battle ain't it. *Bombs away...bombs away...bombs away...*

*Both men calm down, the fast struggles and Kosh's use of the 'n' word, unsettled them both to a new level of tension. A forced calm hovers inside the shack. Pete sees that Kosh is holding his side where he kicked him.*

KOSH: Least you got this shack ol' man...

HECTOR: That side gonna ache a while, good.

KOSH: Why don't you talk to your kid no more?



HECTOR: He died in Vietnam, 1968.

KOSH: You have a daughter no...?

HECTOR: I'd walk right passed her on... how'd you know that white boy?

KOSH: What's heavier for ya Pete, the heat out here in July or not seein' ya kid?

*Hector Pete moves around Kosh like a constrictor snake, almost stalking him.*

HECTOR: *(ignores him)* My generation was the last best one to come along ya see. Enlisted 1942, was over twenty-five and b'came a Tuskegee escort for them Bombers - 17's, 29's. Flew the P-51 Mustang good as any 'whitey' pilot flew his bird. You? From goddamned Venice Beach watchin' fake tits on rollerskates and eatin' dirty hummus.

KOSH: I hate hummus actually...

HECTOR: Bombed the hell outta them kraut fuckers ya see. *(swills shine)* Jim Crow laws wudn't allow a black man to fly bombers. The 332nd fighter squadron. *(he salutes the flag hanging from rafters)* Back home a dark pig, up there at 30,000 feet, a hero.

KOSH: Like I said ol' man, jus' a flyin' monkey.



*Hector knocks Kosh off the chair again with the gun butt! Kicks him more.*

HECTOR: Gonna ask again boy, how you know I had a daughter?

KOSH: *(in pain)* Just a crazy old hermit OFF his meds.

HECTOR: I can let Sally and Lucy fang ya alabaster. Want that?

KOSH: Don't hit me again! Forget her ol' man, not here for...

HECTOR: I already did. *(beat)* They fang ya nobody gonna come to the shack n' help ya. *(Kosh slowly sits up into chair)*

KOSH: Please put on different music? Like being at my aunt's house when I was a kid in Carolina. Don't smell moth balls tho.'

HECTOR: *(he turns up volume then lowers sound)* Stayed on Donaldson air base one time, Carolina. Why you here in MY house for?

KOSH: Just needed help...

*Hector strikes Kosh again at the table this time with his bare hand, the shotgun held at his side. Kosh wrestles the shotgun from Hector Pete. They struggle at the table for a moment but Kosh's youth takes control and Hector Pete is subdued. Kosh strikes him in the back of the head until he slumps over onto the table. The wooden pipe falls to the floor.*



KOSH: GODDAMNIT! (*snakes rattle*) Quiet in there, ya bitches.

LIGHTS Fade slow...



## ACT ONE

### *Scene Three*

FADING UP slow WE SEE -

*Kosh swilling more moonshine and is feeling his drunk come on full tilt. He lights a smoke and drags hard on it. He checks his handgun strapped to one ankle. The sun is all gone.*

*He turns off the radio then adjusts the wick on both lamps, finds oil on a shelf and puts it on table. He makes sure the shotgun is far away from Hector Pete's grasp. He stares out the window, opens the door and inhales the desert night deeply. Coyotes howl in a pack! LIGHTS UP softly outside of the shack where **Kosh seems to be searching for something closeby**. He's in a creeping panic but the smoke squelches it. He stares up at the huge sky of stars. Finally, overcome, he sits against the porch of the shack near a few crumbling steps.*

*Inside, Hector Pete stirs at the table. Kosh hears his groaning, waking up.*

KOSH: *(to himself)* It's got to be here somewhere, she said it was here...

HECTOR: Time is it, son?



KOSH: *(enters)* I ain't ya **son** old man. Vietnam took...*fuck* your son. You got any food in this dump?

HECTOR: Open some tuna cans. Beans.

KOSH: All you got? Where's the fresh fruit, avocado. Spics sellin' oranges everywhere and you got tuna. Beans.

*Kosh hurriedly rummages through shelving and boxes, grabs a can of beans to heat up on the stove. He keeps his eyes on the shotgun.*

KOSH: Been out here too long ya crazy snake fuck. I need to know where it all is.

HECTOR: *(recovers)* 'Scuze me?

KOSH: *(frantic)* Where is it!?

HECTOR: Don't burn my beans o'rite. I'm hungry too.

KOSH: I'll starve ya first if ya don't tell me where it's hid!

HECTOR: Jus' don't burn...

KOSH: Confess some truth tonight and I won't go back to LA and hurt her.

HECTOR: *(seems unaware/confused)* Who?



KOSH: Your child.

HECTOR: *(recovering from being hit)* Child?

KOSH: *Janice* old man. Your kid. Black bitch. How come you never see her no more.

HECTOR: I don't know wh...

KOSH: Sure ya do old man...

HECTOR: Janice...?

KOSH: WHERE IS IT OR I'LL SHOOT ONE OF YOUR RATTLESLERS!

*Rattlesnakes begins to rattle loudly. Kosh stuffs wood in stove lights it.*

HECTOR: Thought it was Melanie...

KOSH: I left that broad long time. Your daughter Petey boy. I been with her for a year. Dark goddess Janice n' I don't like fuckin' them. By the way brother, any man keeps an American flag INSIDE his house must be a nutjob! Who does that! No wind in here to blow it around just hangs like a rotten tooth.

HECTOR: That's the American Flag ya talkin' of boy?



KOSH: Flags don't belong inside a man's home tattered like that! PUT IT ON A POLE, back of a pick-up, normal! Fold her up for an occasion.

HECTOR: She got more honor in one of them rips n' tears, ya see, than ya got in your entire existence boy.

KOSH: Ah, wrap it up anyway ya like ol' man.

HECTOR: Flag means nuthin' to you ya see. Red, is for blood left in battle, white is for how WHITE America is and Blue, for the god above watchin' us all.

KOSH: I didn't come here for this man. Christ, hot already n' I'm lighting a stove, no fans 'round her?

HECTOR: BOMBS AWAY!!

KOSH: QUIET!

HECTOR: You messin' with a W.W. II Tuskegee pilot, white boy!

KOSH: THANKS FOR YOUR SERVICE YA' SONOFABITCH!

HECTOR: (*pause to swill*) When whitey turned on the news and saw black girls blown up down South what did'ja all say? 'Fuckin' naygruhs, they deserved it, stay outta church.' Ya gran'daddy woulda' spit on those dead black girls in Birmingham,



16th St Baptist Church, 10:19 a.m. in the mornin,' bomb goes off  
killin' four little girls...

KOSH: And how many innocent German kids them bombers  
KILL over Berlin Pete....!

HECTOR: (*LOUDER*) Four black children that day, Cynthia  
Wesley, Carole Robertson, Addie Mae Collins n' Denise McNair,  
DEAD, September 15, 1963!

KOSH: Fuck those kids and FUCK your flag old man!

*He tries ripping it down from the rafters. Hector tries to stop him  
and they struggle for a time between the flag and the gun*

KOSH: ENOUGH. Where's the MONEY at Pete!

HECTOR: (*softly*) Them kids in Alabama were murdered, ya see .  
Anyone was underdogs them little girls were!

KOSH: (*he gives up leaves flag*) Hey man, keep ya flag up there  
anyway ya want, dusty and dyin.' Like you.

HECTOR: I was a LIBERATOR. What in the hell are you?

KOSH: Realist!

HECTOR: No, jus' a 'ignorant' mothafucka! (*quotes*) 'To ignore  
evil is to become an accomplice to it!' so said Martin.



*Long pause, each man holds his silent stance - time out*

KOSH: *(breathless)* She said you were a crazy ol' fuck, that her mom left ya when the business was dyin.'

HECTOR: SHE said what?

KOSH: We met on Santa Monica beach. Showed her my Brick phone, the big portable with the antennae? Future's here Petey boy, Technology!

HECTOR: No use for no telephone boy...

KOSH: Satellite phones, buy it retail like a pair a socks. So, she said her ma died when she was twenty. Never knew your wife – Ellen? Then started talkin' 'bout how you had a business, *flowers* in LA makin' good money and how she finally met ya once, before comin' out here to fuckin' Nirvana.

*Both men settle down as the moonshine dictates more calm to ease the confliction*

HECTOR: *(wipes sweat off his face, smokes pipe)* Janice's ma, was a stripper. Heard she passed. Sexy woman. I sent the girl money. *(pause)* Ellen n' me had a son, gorgeous boy, sent to Vietnam. *(Pause)* Ellen kept good books ya see. We saved, earned. She died. *(Hector rises to a water bucket and washes his face with a wet rag)*



KOSH: That's it then. You left Janice on her own?

HECTOR: No need to raise her. What a ya gonna do now boy, shoot me?

KOSH: I ain't here to take out one of your books old man.

HECTOR: Might as well kill me boy cuz I ain't tellin' ya nuthin' 'bout money. And, ya hate my flag.

KOSH: You will you.... *hey*, I don't hate the flag, just how guys like you wear it like a fuckin' proud shroud for bein' a black hero.

HECTOR: Whiteys like you wear the flag like an iron maiden 'stead of a loose fittin' shirt in spring time. Don't BURN the beans!

*Pot of beans are steaming.*

KOSH: Are you a fuckin' chef? Beans are beans. I'm cookin' em up my way. Got cheese, salt. Bread?

HECTOR: Look in the box. Fridge died when I traded a generator for some shine while back. A neighbor, Indian scag said he'd get me a new one.

KOSH: What's his name, Eagle claw or lame dick, wolf shit or sumptin'?



HECTOR: Them Lakota Sioux, they'd run a stake thru ya scrotum if ya interloped their land.

KOSH: Fuck the Indians. Jus' keep thinkin' over there because I need that hid stash.

HECTOR: She told you to come out here did she?

KOSH: Few days ago. Took me long time to get her to say where ya lived.

HECTOR: *Detective* then?

KOSH: A man with a plan is who I am. The FUCKIN' money!

HECTOR: She's a liar like my Elly was before she died. Dead can't lie only the livin' do that ya see. Don't burn m'beans now!

KOSH: Okay! *(he spoons the beans into two wooden bowls then sits at the table across from Hector Pete. They pass the moonshine jug back n' forth. Shotgun stays at Kosh's side)* Damned good batch of shine.

HECTOR: My kid, Janice huh...never figgered.

KOSH: Hates you.

HECTOR: *(laughs!)* You ain't no paper tiger boy, more like uh, styro-foam mosquito.



KOSH: Don't wanna hurt ya Pete but I will get what I come here for.

HECTOR: Incessant wanting, how whitey ruins it all.

KOSH: Needs more salt. *(he grabs a salt shaker)* Janice said come see what's what. So, tell me where ya buried it and I'll go.

HECTOR: Jus' like that.

KOSH: Just. Like. That. *(pause)* Wanna hear how I fuck your daughter...

HECTOR: Could give a damn 'bout your, RUDE coitus.

KOSH: Don't be a *Clem* man okay, you ain't that stupid! Want me to kill a snake ?

*Kosh stands up and aims the shotgun down into the glass tank.*

HECTOR: Tell me 'bout m'daughter.

KOSH: Hey! I fucked the black bitch so she'd lead me to your spacious hut in Paradise!

HECTOR: Did you hurt my child?

KOSH: Why? You don't care.

HECTOR: DID'JA HURT HER I SAID?



KOSH: Well, there must be cash here somewhere otherwise why would you admit that the black bitch I split from last night is really your kin?

HECTOR: I had a girl named Janice, yes... *(dialog overlaps)*

KOSH: You care more about these snakes than your own child. Creepy ol' fucker out here in a Joshua shack...

HECTOR: *(swills shine)* My wife inherited some money from family ya see, she sold land in PA. Wanted to open a flower shop. Eighteen years sellin' goddamned flowers....

KOSH: Now ain't that a GAY thing to do Pete, flower shop. *(laughs)* Janice did say somethin' about a florist....

HECTOR: So funny...?

HECTOR: *(imitating)* 'Hello, welcome to our shop, my name is Hector, looking for anything spe-shall...?'

HECTOR: Enough....

KOSH: 'Daisies? Gardenias? We do a lovely bouquet of long stems - a FREE lynching with every coupon.' *(overlap ends)*

HECTOR: Ya evil, boy.

KOSH: Fighter pilot clippin' and arrangin' petals and stems. *(he laughs harder!)* Florist? Jeez'uz man. *(laughing)* What would



them flyer boys say, you bein' a florist? You ran a profitable business with your ex wife, stole from...

HECTOR: (*drunker*) Elly had moxie like a Mick gangster. Got a partner, name Eddy Maclaven, whitey like you. Es'panded with us importin' flowers from Hawaii, Asia. We took in a motherload ya see. Eddy never knew she was stealin,' until we both did.

KOSH: America don't grow enough fucking flowers to earn profit.

HECTOR: Was *her* dream. Bein' Air Force n' all, we served military funerals all over - crescent sprays with yellow roses n' stargazer lilies, leaves, for the coffins ya see. Left corner of casket, open lid sometimes for the fallen. Flag for the family, folded up nice. Ya see. Taps.

KOSH: No flowers, cremate m' ass...

HECTOR: Evuh' seen a military funeral white boy? Rip ya soul to shreds. Killed in action, DaNang, sniper 1968. Put em under back east cemetery, 1969. Won't say his name to you though ya see. Anyways, m' wife n' me sold the hell outta' them flowers.

KOSH: How much Pete or I shoot the snakes to bits.

HECTOR: Million in five years think it was.

KOSH: SELLIN' FLOWERS!?



HECTOR: Ellen was a genius wit' them numbers.

KOSH: Musta' had, what do they call em, fake accounts. False billing. What's the rest of the story?

HECTOR: Meanin' what?

KOSH: The rest or I kill a snake.

HECTOR: He fucked her.

KOSH: Who?

HECTOR: Eddy.

KOSH: The partner?

HECTOR: (*swills shine*) Eddy damn Maclaven. White man. (*stands*) Think I'm scared of a scag like you? I escorted bombers in the biggest war this world ever saw sendin' Hitler to his Hell. You're in my house boy. MY HOUSE!

KOSH: (*leaves tanks and sits at table*) Easy Pete, jus' a shack not a house or a home. A shack. So, a white dude took ya woman, like me fuckin' your kid ain't it?

HECTOR: Swill boy! See that leather hangin' there and the cap? I wore em over Berlin Feb 3, 19 fuckin' 45. Where were you at? Not even an idea of sumthin' you weren't!



KOSH: Calm ya'self Pete...(*watches him leave shack*)

HECTOR: (*stands tall*) Know what it's like escortin' a B-17 at hi-altitude? Feel ya brain vibratin.' Bones rattle like the rattler's tail. Cold, like the desert night. We went in day, Brits bombed at night. We were targets boy, all out and visible ya see! Triple A was colossal!

KOSH: Gonna' have an *infarcation* Pete relax...

HECTOR: (*very drunk*) It's INFARCTION ya idiot! The 332 fighter squadron over Berlin. We flew TIGHT nex' to them B-17s, don't veer off to attack German flyers ya see. BOMBS AWAY! DROPPIN' TONNAGE.

*Kosh remains at the table drinking more shine and smoking a new rette. He leans back and turns up the volume on the radio. A 1970's rock n' roll song plays. He hums along. Suddenly, he picks up the shotgun and goes to the front door - sees Pete outside standing under the moonlight.*

KOSH: A gorgeous night out here. I had to come. For the money. Had to see what's what.

HECTOR: What are ya broke?

KOSH: What's that?

HECTOR: Broke I said YOU deaf?



KOSH: Worse. *(pause)* Your daughter she loves to fuck when the moon's out bright like it is t'nite. Ever take a woman out here Pete?

HECTOR: Quit talkin' about her white boy....shimmed up good on th' shine. *(settles in on the ground)*.

KOSH: Sure, sure ol' man you nap.

*A night wind sweeps in. Coyotes screech.*

HECTOR: Met her in 19', uh was, 1950. Married later on. Had our son, buried him in '69. Then, the girl. M'wife never knew she was 'round.

KOSH: She's a dark goddess...

HECTOR: Desert steals everything from a man ya see. Ghosts n' regret makes ya walk in hot glue wit'out a breeze. Limbo out there ya see. Time goes noplac. Past comes a callin' like a Ninja sneaky n' takes ya life fast as lightnin' strikes. Flash! Ya done in by ya own damned life. Joshua Tree, all that female'ness out on the sands in the great mystery, reduces a man to a grain...

KOSH: Helluva tale Pete. Made me cry.

HECTOR: You're all but dead anyway white boy.

KOSH: Why?



HECTOR: Desert said so. (*passes out*)

*Hector Pete lays down on a blanket and slowly naps. Kosh stares up at the moon, smoking the last of his rette. He aims the shotgun at the sky then down 'pon sleeping Pete. He squeezes the trigger on one of the barrels and nothing happens. He breaks open the gun and sees that there are **no shells**. He LAUGHS! Then, he takes the gun out of the ankle strap and aims at Hector Pete. But he doesn't pull the trigger.*

*Kosh finally, drapes the leather bomber jacket over Pete's chest.*

LIGHTS DOWN



## ACT ONE

### *Scene Four*

MUSIC

LIGHTS UP

*The stage is the same interior of the shack. Sunrise and lighting shows us brilliant colors. Hector Pete sleeps outside by back porch. His leather bomber jacket is still draped across his chest. Kosh sleeps on the sofa, shotgun at his side. The second day begins.*

*Hector wakes up first. His hangover is obvious to us. He shakes his head and can hardly stand up easy. He's exhausted and older looking than the night before. He puts leather jacket on and peers into window to see Kosh asleep on the couch. Quietly, he enters. Step by step he moves to the snake tanks and checks on them - they rattle. He acts like a protective father presence smiling down upon his daughters.*

*He slowly walks across shack floor and looms over Kosh. **SUDDENLY**, Kosh sits up with the shogun and squeezes off a barrel at Hector Pete! Hector backs up several feet almost falling down.*



KOSH: *(laughing)* Whooboy, shoulda seen ya face.

HECTOR: Dear Lordy!

KOSH: Hey, next time ya wanna hold a man hostage make sure ya gun is loaded huh? Nuthin' in there, see? *(shows him empty barrel)*

HECTOR: M'mind's slidin' boy. Been doin' it lot lately.

KOSH: Gettin' OLD.

HECTOR: Put my leather on me last night.

KOSH: I did.

HECTOR: Cold.

KOSH: Sleep good Petey boy?

HECTOR: Make the coffee will ya, I haveta' piss.

KOSH: *(leans shotgun on a wall)* Sure hon, we married now? Look Pete, the shotgun is useless so whatever ya got in mind, let it go. Let's talk normal. Negotiate a deal.

HECTOR: *(leaves)* Ahhhh yeah. *(peeing)* '...good as new can be n' good as I knew yud' be...'



KOSH: *(makes coffee at stove)* Long night felt like Pete! Gotta have another jug around here. Maybe that's making you forget to load ya shotgun when you oughta. Too much SHINE. *(laughs)* I coulda pretended like it had buckshot all day but I came clean with ya. *(to himself)* Was honest as an Injun.' I ain't leavin' without the money. *(pause)* Think I dreamt about Joshua Tree last night. In the dream a woman stood by a flowerin' Yucca tree. We didn't fuck, don't think we did. Don't know who she was. Gorgeous, spirit. Had a baby in her arms. Sun came up and the woman and child vanished - saw em floatin' down a stream. Think it was my kid. They say a couple shares a child in some way, in life or death. Then they move on in agony either way. COFFEE'S COMIN' UP.

HECTOR: *(enters, sits in a chair)* '... 'it's gone n' started rainin,' I'm lonesome as can be - 'cus everytime it rains I remember what you mean to me...' Mistuh' Billy Eckstine.

KOSH: Head okay?

HECTOR: Had more hangovers then you lef' dick stains on socks.

KOSH: No headache for me. Fresh air. No LA smog. That stuff's paranormal radiation.

HECTOR: Movin' in are ya?

KOSH: You live in squalor we'd kill each other.



HECTOR: Don't recall invitin' you.

KOSH: *(pause, goes to window)* We ain't livin' together Pete. 'Mornin' honey how'ja sleep, can you pick up the kiddos after school?' *(inhales deeply)* No breeze today.

HECTOR: Power out there - sky, stars, wind. Stone n' sand. She wins everytime.

KOSH: Desert makes the rules huh.

HECTOR: O' ways. In the shack, I make the rules ya see.

KOSH: Was you who forgot to load the shotgun so, I have the control.

HECTOR: Of what.

KOSH: You.

HECTOR: What ya know 'bout me is a square peg to a round hole boy.

KOSH: Why are you here? I'd be on an island someplace with a hut and a hammock! Broads, mai tais, *Madonna*. Livin' in shit for what? Janice laughed at you being out here.

HECTOR: Don't care what she thinks! Got *mighty* in ya boy do ya?



KOSH: Sure.

HECTOR: No ya don't. This money ya think I hid out here in Joshua, gonna give ya sumptin' mighty?

KOSH: Might.

HECTOR: All I see on you is that stank of Los Angeles fuckery n' fakery. Check the coffee will ya please.

KOSH: This pot blow ya asshole out. I already had a sit in your comfy/cozy shithouse.

HECTOR: *(whispers)* God forgive me please...

KOSH: Ya know Janice said you were, how she say it, *incorrigible*.

HECTOR: Just pour the joe o'reddy.

KOSH: *(pours and serves coffee)* Here ya go dear just like you like it.

HECTOR: Married now, are we boy?

KOSH: *(sits to sip coffee)* So, what's next for t'day.

HECTOR: I'm gonna bury YOU in the desert. Ah man, shit joe ya made.



KOSH: Nobody can make you happy huh ya self-righteous old *nigg*....sorry.

HECTOR: Gonna bury you out here - missuh' alabaster. *Bombs away, bombs away!*

KOSH: Hey, go see your kid in Venice Beach, works at a juice bar, 'The Hummus Hut.' I'm not goin' back to her.

HECTOR: Sounds ta me like your escapin.'

KOSH: I don't love her man. USED her for you. *(pause)* Last broad who sunk my marrow, met her up in San Pedro, long time ago. *Emma*. Artist.

HECTOR: Gimme' a hanky boohoo.

KOSH: She said once, 'we were no good for each other cause we were Toxic alchemy.' *(pause)* Wasn't like that though. I tried to bring her joy, protect her but she didn't want it man. She wanted to be left alone to paint.

HECTOR: Did ya bore her to death did'ja?

KOSH: *(to himself)* Last time we spoke, called her up on my portable n' said, 'love ya like my liver.'



HECTOR: Got nuthin' for people ya see! No kids, no wife, no money. No LIFE. Nuthin' but glass shards. Come here lookin' for what ain't yours.

KOSH: HEY, just go be a good father ya' crazy fuck. Far as you and me, I'm gonna get that stash if it takes a year out here to get it from ya.

HECTOR: You're all piss n' vinegar no balls and bluster.

KOSH: Hector Pete, psycho-anal-list extraordinaire! Fuck you.

HECTOR: Choke on ya joe kid.

KOSH: Have an infarcation.

HECTOR: Infarction, ya idjit.

KOSH: Go to hell.

HECTOR: In it, drinkin' coffee with you! God o' mighty you got to be one of the most boring'st men I ever did know. If I knew you was comin' I woulda hung myself to get out of being host ya see.

KOSH: What a you Pete, a fuckin' movie star? Celebrity desert hermit. Do ya see how you live out here.



HECTOR: I'm happy, WAS, before you walked past my sign. Shouldn't of let it fade.

KOSH: *(unglued)* Where's the happiness Pete I don't see it. Its' a fuckin' shack man! Vulture palace! Shack a beans and coffee grinds smells like fuckin' piss and old man sweat. Ya got rattlesnakes for friends, losin' ya mind. LOSIN' IT clear as I can see.

HECTOR: Leave me alone boy or we throw down right here right now.

*Kosh rises and confronts Pete by the table. His fists are up and ready. Hector stands tall to face him in a stand-off. Rattlesnakes rattle!*

KOSH: I'm gonna beat you to death old man.

HECTOR: Don't peacock on me boy!

*They begin to tussle on their feet but Kosh shoves him off back to the chair at the table. Then, to break the tension he takes the pilot cap off the coat rack and wears it.*

HECTOR: Take that off!

KOSH: I wanna feel what it's like to be a WW Two pilot bombin' Germans. *(imitates flying a plane)*



HECTOR: Put it back on the rack now!

KOSH: Makes me feel MIGHTY.

HECTOR: Didn't EARN THE RIGHT!

*Hector rises again and approaches Kosh. He tries to take the cap off his head and again they tussle and wrestle on their feet. Kosh picks up the shotgun and wields it like a sword. Another stand-off. Limbo. Snakes rattle!*

HECTOR: I'LL KILL YA BOY.

KOSH: Shit, why am I holdin' this, ain't got shells...

HECTOR: Don't worry ladies daddy's okay, he's fine...

KOSH: Daddy? You ain't droppin' bombs at high altitude this is man to man...

HECTOR: Red Tail fighter pilot NOT a bomber. *(pause)* Hey, HEY! Enough a this. Put the blaster down. *(he stands coat rack upright as it was)* Ya messin' up my routine. Elderly need their regular day ya see.

KOSH: *(holds shotgun at his side)* You got a mahjong n' bingo game to get to!

HECTOR: Put my cap on the rack boy, I won't ask ya again.



KOSH: (*obeys*) Let's figure this thing out?

*They sit at table. Kosh keeps the empty shotgun atop the table. They calm down from sweating profusely. Both men are exhausted*

HECTOR: I haveta' feed my snake, only fed one yesterday. I know where the rats live.

KOSH: None livin' in here, rodent motel.

HECTOR: Rats be UP soon! (*pause*) Ya think there really IS cash out here boy?

KOSH: Yes I - YOU SAID...!

HECTOR: Why, b'cuz my kid said so? She coulda' made it up.

KOSH: I already know you stole from the flower business - hold on, what did you do ol' man forget where you put it!?

HECTOR: No...

KOSH: Never met a man yet forgot where he put his wallet.

HECTOR: I coulda' lied ya see.

KOSH: Why do that Pete.

HECTOR: Ta' *keep* you here.



END ACT ONE  
LIGHTS DOWN  
MUSIC

INTERMISSION



*(Excerpt - Thanatopsis)*

‘...Thou go not, like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.’

- William Cullen  
Bryant



LIGHTS UP

MUSIC

ACT TWO

*Scene One*

*Day Two/later:*

*WE SEE a new setting on stage - a vast backdrop indicating the desert at Joshua Tree with cactus, Yucca trees, gullies, sagebrush and endless sand and mountains. Scrim reveals a smaller wood and tin shack resting like a weary grandmother. Hector Pete and Kosh are at the shack. He carries a shovel and netting for the rats. Kosh, stays close with handgun at the ready.*

*Sun blasts them.*

HECTOR: Known two scags disappeared in the Mojave. Nuthin' left a them 'cept sun white femurs and skulls. Rusty canteen. Coyotes dragged o'way the rest. Wind, kept their last terrors.

KOSH: *(wipes face)* What a we do Pete, piss off the sun or what?

HECTOR: When I first come out here bought water in town, stored it ya see. Cached it in secret spots nobody could find. Got lucky one year tho,' fella name Gus Rance outta Texas bought a spot on the other side of the park. Met 'em hikin' and he said



come by and use his well water, uh, North American Driller, Co. dug one for his place. He'd drive water to m' shack. Play cards. Traded 'em shine for water. He died some time ago. Decent scag Gus was.

KOSH: Water more important than money out here.

HECTOR: Can't drink it boy.

KOSH: More important even than that the flag in your shack- if you were dying of thirst.

HECTOR: Least I'd die in the shade. *(pause)* Walk out too far without caches, you done boy. Folluh' jackrabbits and roadrunners to see where the aquifers are hidin.'

KOSH: I'd suck water off a rat's ass if I had too.

HECTOR: *(sits, smokes pipe)* Knew a Pinto Injun' years back, Juan Estes Smiggs, cud' sniff out water by listenin' to the stones and wind. Think he was abducted one year – ALIEN ship come for 'em not **border patrol** ya see. I seen them ufos up there but THEY ain't takin' me off this gorgeous mother planet! I'll die on Earth n' be proud to do so! FUCK 'dem space folk!

KOSH: Already sent MONKEYS into spac ol' man.

HECTOR: *(ignores comment)* 'Roo Rats be scramblin' soon. Smart sumabitches.



KOSH: Roo rats?

HECTOR: Vermin, like you.

KOSH: Fuck you.

HECTOR: Never go hungry m'gals don't. Find me some Yucca lizards too.

KOSH: Why snakes?

HECTOR: Scared a snakes are ya LA alabaster?

KOSH: Just askin' and enough with the *alabaster*. (*Hector interrupts*)

HECTOR: Found em under a pile a rebar n' cement blocks when I come out here. They saved me from the loneliness ya see. (*pause*) They rattle, I don't HEAR the past so much.

KOSH: Fuck the past Pete - makin' plans to see the sights...

*Hector Pete enters the tiny shack, Kosh waits outside. We hear some crashing about as the rats scatter, some run out and Kosh dances his feet in fear and discontent (as intimated by actor, no real rats on stage) when soon Hector Pete exits with netting and a bag, showing us that he captured one live rat. He ties up the open end securing his quarry.*



KOSH: (*gun at his side*) Guess the gals get to...

*Suddenly, Kosh is knocked down by Hector Pete in one fell swoop as he is struck in the side of the head with **a rock**, kept hidden as a weapon! Kosh crumbles unconscious. Hector Pete searches him and grabs up the handgun)*

HECTOR: Ya alabaster PIG CREEP! (*retrieves shotgun and steps over Kosh's body*) Let the sunshine cook ya bones a while. (*laughing LOUDLY in celebration!*)

*He exits.*

LIGHTS DOWN



## ACT TWO

### *Scene Two*

LIGHTS UP

MUSIC

*WE SEE Hector Pete digging a hole near the shack. The heat is frying him, the lighting fx indicate this in searing yellows and reds. He's shirtless, dripping with sweat yet he strangely wears his leather pilot's cap and sunglasses. The radio inside the shack plays big band oldies circa, WW II era - another Cab Calloway, Eckstine hit from the 1940s. Stage right (images on scrim) REVEALS a newly painted sign the reads: 'Evisceration awaits you Interloper!'*

HECTOR: *(to himself)* Midday shake n' bake! *(sings with radio in his best crooners voice)* Nobody crooned like Billy Eckstine...

*He digs and rests to wipe the sweat off his face, swills from the moonshine jug. Then swallows water out of plastic container. Behind him (on stage or on scrim) we see a paint can and wet brush drying in the sun. The scrim can display imagery of Bombers over Berlin with Tuskegee fighter planes in escort. SOUNDS of bomb explosions!*

HECTOR: BOMBS o'way! Unleashin' howdoyadoodz over Berlin.  
BOMB 'em to Nuthingsville I say! Look at this Hector ol' boy,



hole comin' up nice n' fine like. 'Good as new can be and good as, I knew you'd be.' *(he returns to singing the oldies along w/ the radio: He drops shovel lost in memories. He pretends to be a flying fortress B-17 as he speaks and 'makes the sounds of bombs exploding on a city!)* LOOK. AT. THEM. 'Kickapoo Joy Juice,' the 'Windy Lou, 'Rosalie Ann,' flyin' death machines ya see, sittin' on top of the world that day, February 3, '45. 'Hey der fuher, sterben nazi!' *(hey father (Hitler) die nazi!)*

*Hector sips water then swills more moonshine. Vultures fly!*

He's thataway fellas, fly over there n' get to feedin.' *(laughs & laughs...!)*

*Hector returns to digging the hole as the radio plays its Oldies from yesteryear. Then: 'HEY, I PAINTED THE SIGN YA SUMABITCH!'*

*Desert noise surrounds him. Coyotes howling off in the desert night!*

LIGHTS DOWN

MUSIC



LIGHTS UP

ACT TWO

*Scene Three*

*Hector Pete tends to the snakes in the glass tanks. Radio still plays big band tunes softly. He smokes a classic old man's pipe, puffing on it with precision til the grey smoke rises to the shack ceiling. He mumbles to himself and is obviously quite drunk on the shine. Lighting reflects end of second day, just shy of sunset. The warm amber Ca light enters the window. There's a backpack on the table he fiddles with – a knife, shotgun shells, Kosh's handgun, water canteen, rope, tire iron. He 'fiddles' with the house plant in the terra cotta pot.*

*A can of gasoline rests by the front door.*

HECTOR: Feed ya soon Lucy. Sally was fed o'reddy and she's fine. I gotta put sumthin' down a hole forever! *(snakes rattle)*

*SUDDENLY, Kosh enters front door in a mad rush and TAKES control of shotgun! He's so overwhelmed by the force of Kosh's attack there's no defense. Soon as Hector Pete is down, Kosh finds his handgun and aims it down at Hector's face. Kosh is dirty, disoriented, sweat stained in every nook n' cranny of his*



*clothing, soaked through he is with dried blood on his shirt from the rock.*

KOSH: (*frantic*) What'ja think.... ya killed me out there by the rat shack!?!?

HECTOR: Alabaster resurrection!

KOSH: Burying me in that hole I seen out there ol' man were ya? Painted the fuckin' sign too but HERE I AM! Sit!

*Hector Pete obeys and slowly moves towards the couch as he rattlesnakes rattle. Shotgun is at his leg, ready to go, as Kosh pours water over his head and face to rub off the blood. He drinks and find moonshine jug and swills long and hard!*

HECTOR: Desert's gettin' to ya white boy.

KOSH: No shit! Tomorrow's sunday and it ends t'night. So I'm askin' ya for the last time, WHERE'S THE MONEY HID?

HECTOR: Ain't none I tole ya.

KOSH: YES THERE IS MONEY. Where is it!?

HECTOR: Gonna end up down in that hole sooner or later alabaster if'in ya don't let it go! She lied 'bout me keepin' it out here!



KOSH: FUCK HER. By the way but why didn't ya just kill me at the rat shack?

HECTOR: Mind's slidin' from the shine and heat...

KOSH: I'm getting sloppy myself. Heat's like a vice.

HECTOR: Was gonna ask ya before, why the gun on ya ankle for?

KOSH: Just in case. *(he directs what happens w/ shotgun then drops it, uses handgun held tight to Hector Pete's head)* Like right now.

HECTOR: Never find it boy. Desert, she gobbled it up!

KOSH: *(finds the gasoline and pours some into one of the tanks)* Here's the deal you tell me where the stash is hid out here TONIGHT, or I light up a snake.

HECTOR: Please, don't burn my snake. That's Lucky Lucy and she didn't eat her sup yet.

KOSH: The rat where is it?

HECTOR: I keep em alive in that box over there under the cot till feedin' time. Then I knock em' out.

KOSH: What do you mean knock em out?



HECTOR: Can't feed m'gals live rats. Rat can kill a snake or wound it bad, like one did some time ago ya see.

KOSH: Get the rat. NOW!

*Hector Pete obeys and scrounges for the rat and brings it in the bag to the tank where Kosh waits.*

HECTOR: Please, don't burn up my snake, she didn't do nuthin' to you.

KOSH: Live rat goes in, fair fight! Or I burn both of them ol' man got it!?

*Kosh sits against the table by the snake tanks. The bag with rat inside waits by one tank and a zippo lighter waits by the other tank.*

HECTOR: We have enough a the shine I think boy.

KOSH: Hope so. Gonna be a long night old man.

LIGHTS DOWN

MUSIC



LIGHTS UP SLOW

ACT TWO

*Scene Four*

*Night time in the Joshua Desert. Both men sit opposite each other at the table. The handgun rests on table close to Kosh's reach. Hector Pete quietly smokes his pipe. They're playing an easy game of Blackjack and sipping moonshine. They're drunk and tired. Bowls of soup rest atop the table. Hector licks a spoon. Coyote's howl in the mountains. The desert wind slams against the shack. The radio plays 90's rock n' roll, now that Kosh is in control.*

HECTOR: *(lazy/tired)* Like the soup did'ja?

KOSH: FIVE STAR bowl - could *weep* was so good. Can't believe you went to check on my car. Don't trust me Pete?

HECTOR: I was gonna' REPO-SESS it alabaster! Blackjack, I win again mothafucka.

KOSH: *(very drunk)* FUCK the cards! *(unglued, a panic attack)* I'm exhausted n' if I drink more moonshine ya gonna start lookin' like Tina Turner! *(pacing)* Startin' to see things – gotta get out of this shack, closin' in like a vice! *(actor's improv of visions from moonshine/claustrophobia until he lets himself lay on the floor)*



*heaving. Kosh's full blown anxiety attack wanes as Hector Pete looms over him curiously)*

HECTOR: You havin' an INFARCTION sissy white boy!

KOSH: INFARCTION!

HECTOR: AH! You're a grape boy!

KOSH: Huh?

HECTOR: *Grape*, an easy kill of an enemy pilot in a dogfight! *(laughing!)* Stay on the floor alabaster - LICK IT CLEAN.

KOSH: *(from floor)* The investigation into you and Ellen, I got the paper on it all - money grifting, *Janice*...read transcripts...

HECTOR: Thousand years ago feels like white boy...

KOSH: *(slowly sits up)* Fifteen years ago. Your ex-wife and this fuck Eddy grifted off the top of the business right? You didn't know about that? The case file I read said so.

HECTOR: *(swills shine)* Ya bore me Kosh. *(rises to door and exits)* Gots ta move my legs. Sciatica years back. You jus' a lowly scammer COP screwin' m' bastard daughter.



KOSH: I was a pvt detective on that case. The legals hired me to tail Elly, then, things got complicated for me. She had cancer I think it was...

HECTOR: Lymph nodes. Shit, shoulda' known you was a cop, ankle gun. Big tip off with that...

KOSH: ...quit talkin' ya ol' nigguh!

HECTOR: OOOOOOWEEEE! Racist POLE-LEECE! (*grabs leather jacket, starts to leave shack into desert*) Don't shoot me officer I'm a goddamned WW II Vet, Tuskegee pilot!

KOSH: Where you going?

HECTOR: Cockaroch can't get rid a ya. Money's out there, c'mon. (*Kosh follows, Hector Pete carries another oil lamp*)

*The men walk, Kosh aiming his gun at Hector Pete who is carrying a shovel. LIGHTING tells us the moon is full, their path well lit. Coyotes HOWL. (projected desert images on screen display movement)*

KOSH: (*desperate*) Tellin' me you can find the money right now, that it Pete?

HECTOR: Stay close n' shut up, you talk too much.

KOSH: So ya' wife's dying n' Eddy never gets to his lawyers office over on Alameda Drive. Then you disappear. Last address I



had was 222 Bronson Ave., Los Angeles. Landlord had no idea where you went. I tracked your kid down on Venice Beach last year from ya lawyer's notes he gave me. Hired a bad barrister ol' man. Anyway, she moved back to California seven years ago from NY.

HECTOR: You followed us all back then did'ja? Knew about Eddy n' Ellen this whole time...

KOSH: *(desperate/scattered)* Yeah Pete. When the department fired me I got jammed up after you sued each other, had to let it go. Lost track a ya until I remembered your daughter, figgered she'd know sumthin' 'bout where you went. She likes white guys, go figure that. Bin' doin' security for a Ruskie jeweler for years. Ran some heroin - lost my way. But, I found you. *(more desperate)* She said, come up here this weekend to get some money, 'go TAKE it Mike,' she said, 'daddy won't mind he's crazy.' And uh...I *am* broke. There's no earth moving business either. Owe a BIG debt to some bad men and NO time left. I can't hold 'em off much longer so...

HECTOR: Broke ass white cop...

KOSH: She's pregnant!

*Both men pause. Then, Hector moves again as if not bothered by his admission. Ignores Kosh.*



KOSH: The *thing* is comin' by Fall.

HECTOR: (*ignores truth*) What do ya want to know more about, where I put the money OR, what *happened* to Eddy Maclaven?

KOSH: Don't give a rats fuck where Eddy is! (*beat*) I said I knocked her up old man. STILL DEAF!?

HECTOR: We hated each other when our son was killed in' Nam ya see. By the time the flower shop closed Elly n' I hardly did much together 'cept argue. I was gettin' old, prostate issues n' such. Eddy didn't bother *me* alabaster.

KOSH: Stop walkin' and face me nigguh! (*Hector Pete obeys*) You loved her. *You* killed Maclaven.

HECTOR: You love Janice?

KOSH: Just another cunt.

*Hector STANDS face to face with Kosh - his rage boiling!*

HECTOR: You on ya way to oblivion boy. When ya get the money, leave her be, ya see. (*walks on*)

KOSH: (*scared*) I'm runnin' outta' time Pete...

HECTOR: Gonna need to rest.

KOSH: My head's pounding. Had to hit me with that rock.



HECTOR: (*inhales*) I know what the desert demands from a man and she gonna take you real soon. (*he sits on a rock, lights pipe*)

KOSH: (*stands, weary*) How'd 'ja survive out here so long Pete?

HECTOR: Think I'm crazy huh.

KOSH: Full blown monkey coo-coo INSANE.

HECTOR: I was a flyerman once. Hero. If I die, I go with honor on my soul. You? Where's ya honor to a cause greater than ya'self? Desert gonna put ya under cuz SHE knows you're worthless scag (*emotional/cries*) who never did nuthin' for nobody...You HURT my child boy then come out here to hurt on me! JANICE, SHE O'RITE?

KOSH: She's fine...now dig...!

HECTOR: You're a coward. I know it like a dog smells garbage meat. I give ya the stash then you NEVER see her again or I'll ZERO ya mothafucka'!

KOSH: Head's poundin' man...!

HECTOR: Whaddaya' do boy hustle from one broad to the next, year after year? Sleep in a rotters room downtown LA waitin' for the ceilin' to offer Angels 'steada razorblades?

KOSH: Head's pounding!



HECTOR: Long before I hit ya with that rock! Can smell regret on ya like bad cologne. Worthless alabaster scag! Ain't even ya real name! Saw your wallet when I went back to ya car.

KOSH: You did?

HECTOR: Liar sumabitch. Tires's low but ya got gas. Shoulda jus' put ya under by the rat shack, damnit!

KOSH: So what's my name...?

HECTOR: Michael Walters. Where ya get *Kosh Gleason* from?

MIKE: 'Twilight Zone' episode.

HECTOR: 'Scuze me?

*Tension wanes 'tween them/levity so calm their nerves*

MIKE: (*breathing heavy*) The one with the couple lost in a creepy neighborhood, turns out to be a little girl's toy town. Race a giants and she's playin' with humans as dolls.

HECTOR: Didn't watch it.

MIKE: One a the best 'sodes ol' man.

HECTOR: Used to watch 'Mod Squad.'



MIKE: They leave a church and in the background listed on like uh, an agenda board is the name Rev. Kosh Gleason. Always liked it. All alone they were like you. In a fake town.

HECTOR: Joshua Tree ain't a fake place Michael. Out here, is real as it gonna get for ya, ya see. I promise.

MIKE: Meanin'?

HECTOR: I did kill Eddy.

KOSH: KNEW IT!

HECTOR: Had fun doin' it too. Like when I kill you for puttin' ya poison in my daughter.

MIKE: By the way, you don't give a FUCK 'bout that girl, never did she told me. She can abort the fuckin' thing all I care now where is it?

HECTOR: *(they stop)* That's the Joshua Tree.

MIKE: *(at tree)* Where?

HECTOR: There. Say boy, gettin' too old to dig holes ya see so, you do ya business. Be MIGHTY!

MIKE: *(stares at sand by tree)* Why put it here for Pete?



HECTOR: Good a spot as any.

MIKE: Then dig old man. *(points gun at him)*

HECTOR: YOU DIG!

MIKE: *(faking sympathy)* I don't want to kill you, STOP. Sit over there where I can see ya. Rest your back.

*Hector obeys and smokes his pipe under the enormous desert sky. Mike rolls up sleeves and prepares to DIG. His gun lays in wait. Digging is mimed w/ shovel, no sand.*

HECTOR: I killed Eddy after the suit was done. Met em in Palm Springs to talk things out. Black man to white man. That night, after I knocked Eddy out in my car, I drove em here to the desert.

MIKE: *(digging and digging)* Get this stash and be gone ol' man, pay them off and BLOW LA!

HECTOR: *(sits, front of stage & speaks his soliloquy. Mike can't hear him)* When I slit his throat, the smell of whiteys blood, got a copper dirty penny like stench. Made me sick. Got close smellin' death ya see, not like droppin' tonnage from altitude. Eddy trembled, groaned. *(pause)* Bloody mess it was, all that syrup. Smell a mesquite n' the rubber aroma of Mariposa lilies on the wind ya see. Killed 'em in this spot there. Not smooth puttin' a man asunder by hand and wit' deadwood. Tore m' hands up buryin' that white fuck deep. I ran into the night, green shadows a



desert makes, fat moon, constellations laughin' at me for what I did. Spent the whole damn night out in Joshua wearin' just m'skivvies, way up there in a cold cave boy, in them rocks. Burned my clothes. Sunrise, found the car, settled in with a sweatshirt n' pair a shorts I had. Went to a motel. Police pressed me a while 'bout where Eddy coulda' gone but no proof. N' I had to help Elly die ya see. Cancer. She didn't even ask for him. Said ta me, '*sorry Hector if I hurt ya. We had a son.*' She was a good woman. *(stands)* Ol' Eddy jus' vanished, like dew under sunshine.

MIKE: *(digging faster)* GOTTA BE DOWN HERE RIGHT PETE?

HECTOR: God forgive me.

MIKE: *(rests)* Gotta jus' say it, man to man, you're impressive. All m'respect. *(digs)* Even for murderin' Eddy who fucked your wife.

HECTOR: *(Othello)* '*...men in rage strike those that wish them best.*'

MIKE: Should we split some of it?

HECTOR: Split 60-40. Figger' ya owe me since ya was messin' with my daughter, ya see.

MIKE: A number please Pete.



HECTOR: (*thinking*) Oh, take it all alabaster.

MIKE: (*DIGGING*) I got plans! See sights. Gotta' GO man..fuck the girl and child, met a broad in St. Luis Obispo and we're off to Mexico! NO TIME TO BE A FATHER to some half-breed pup. Looks like something's down here...Hey Pete? PETE?

*He stops and searches for Hector. He's gone.*

LIGHTS DOWN

MUSIC



## ACT TWO

### *Scene Five*

#### LIGHTS UP

*Hector Pete sits near the snake tanks holding his shotgun in his lap. He smokes the pipe, slowly. The oil lamp dances amber shadows inside the shack. The radio plays Big Band. He waits. Another oil lamp dangles from Mike's hand as he approached the shack. He turns the oil lamp off. SUDDENLY-*

MIKE: *(off, whistling)* Anybody home?

HECTOR: I'm in it.

MIKE: Sign looks good.

HECTOR: Ain't faded no moe.' What's it say?

MIKE: I know what it says Pete.

HECTOR: Dig sumptin' up did'ja boy?

MIKE: Charred cloth fibers looked like. Lotta bones. Eddy?

HECTOR: Eddy.

MIKE: Stash?



HECTOR: Out there somewhere in the great mystery boy!

MIKE: You have the blaster?

HECTOR: Jus' like you got that ankle special...what took ya so long...?

*SILENCE*

*Hector Pete turns off the oil lamp. The stage/shack is dark, no light. WE HEAR and SEE TWO MUZZLE FLASHES; the shotgun and the handgun. Both men grunting and struggling!*

LIGHTS UP FULL!

*Mike and Pete are on opposite sides of the snake tanks. Hector Pete is wounded, SHOT in the side. BLEEDS. Mike appears recovered. He pours more gasoline into one tank and aims the gun at Pete. Hold a zippo over tank.*

HECTOR: HAVETA' FEED LUCY NOW.

MIKE: Going to bleed out ya ol' crazy nigguh! Where's the fuckin' money?

HECTOR: Let me feed her first!



*He ties the rat bag tight at the top and is about to smash it against the side of the table when Mike sticks the end of the gun to Hector Pete's temple.*

MIKE: Wouldn't do that. You feed that fuckin' rattler a live rat, hearin' me? Fair fight.

HECTOR: It could bite Lucy real bad.

MIKE: Nuthin's for free right Pete? Put it in there CONSCIOUS. Or I shoot ya.

*Mike steps back but keeps the gun aimed at Hector Pete's head when in an instant, Hector THROWS the bag at Mike as he quickly flips the zippo to a flame and throws it inside the tank with Lucky Lucy. The rattlesnake burns alive!*

*Kosh stumbles backwards, gun falls as Hector Pete forces his head over the edge of the second tank so Sunshine Sally can STRIKE!*

*Mike SCREAMS!!*

LIGHTS DOWN

MUSIC



LIGHTS UP

ACT TWO

*Scene Six*

*Later same night. Radio plays.. Hector Pete tends to Sunshine Sally. Hector still BLEEDING from his back. He drops the half-dead rat into her tank and watches her feed. ‘Eat up good Sally. The burned out tank is empty and blackened. The black towel remains over the top of the second tank. Mike lays on the Army cot in a far corner of the shack covered in a blanket. He shivers in great pain, sweats and moans. Agony.*

MIKE: My...god, please Pete....I can't bare it anymore...

HECTOR: Say sumptin' white boy?

MIKE: *(groaning)* Hurts...so bad...

HECTOR: *(swills shine, lost)* Coulda' made history boy but *white flyers* only in a B-17 - no niggas' allowed! Flew my P-51 Mustang March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1945. Lt. Hector Pete Jackson FEARLESS! But couldn't drop no tonnage over Berlin. NO BOMBS AWAY!

MIKE: Please ol' man...*please...!*

HECTOR: *(at cot)* Know where the stash is boy? *Nowhere.* Ain't nobody ever come here before you ignored the sign.



**‘Evisceration awaits you, interloper.’** Fuckin’ faded sign did ya in boy,

MIKE: *Please Pete...can’t breathe...*

HECTOR: You killed my snake ya pig creep! Burned up Lucky Lucy! Now, ya die. How’s that venom feel? Burns like a hot tire iron. Death comin’! *(Hector rises off the cot and lifts up one of the tanks and PULLS OUT one small stack of money tied in a black pouch. He brings it to Mike and shows him the money up close. Can ya smell it Mike, like blood. There ain’t much lef.’ Gave most of it to Janice long time ago, spent th’ rest. SHE had the money but never said she did. Why? She sent you out here anyway - for what? NUTHIN.’ (pause) I o’ways took care a her them years...(smiles) I’ll never know that half white child...*

MIKE: *(whispers) ...fuck...your sign, old man.*



LIGHTS UP

MUSIC

## REQUIEM

*Radio still sings Billy Eckstine. **Hector, wrapped in the American flag** that hung inside the shack, kneels over a sandy mound near the shack. He pats down the top of the mound with a shovel. We clearly see him bleeding and **KNOW** it's **Kosh's grave**. He's weak and moves like a dying man.*

HECTOR: Ah, Mizz desert...what a night! Ain't it great - (*puts dead snake wrapped in rags by the grave*) 'Good as new can be and good as I knew yud be,' we'd say after a bath. 'Usta love tellin' that to YOU m'gorgeous son – *Anthony* - when you was little... before bedtime. Ah m'boy, ya old man was never the same when the military scag come to the door that day tellin' us tha' you was killed. A soul ripper - winter 1969, seven in the mornin.' My marrow was metal that day my son. (*he stands and tries to walk away. Hector Pete is on his last breaths and falls to his knees...*) SHE o'ways makes the rules....

*Radio sings:*

*'Give me land lots of land under starry skies above*

*Don't fence me in*



*Let me ride through the wide country that I love*

*Don't fence me in*

*Let me be by m'self in the evenin' breeze*

*And listen to the murmur of the Joshua Trees*

*Send me off forever but I ask you please,*

*Don't fence me in'*

*\*\*\*Writer changed lyric 'Cottonwood trees' to 'Joshua' for dramatic purposes.*

*A final series of images display on stage scrim of desert sky w/ audio of wind, coyotes and the sound of an approaching car/headlights streak. Someone parks, gets out, door slams - FOOTSTEPS on sand leading to the shack...*

**-Fin-**



### *Note to the Director*

The heat is a character unto itself in the play. ALL lighting effects should reflect time of day based on the men's violence – hot whites to amber, yellow and blood red designed to show the oppressiveness of who they are. Though the dialog can be delivered at a rapid pace the actor's movement should be slow due to the heat's intensity. The white washed sun battered set and shack, like Hector Pete himself, symbolize the incessant 'limbo' he's lived within for so long, until Kosh Gleason arrives.

Yet, the shack is more than a representation of limbo but IS America herself at present. Stuck and beaten down. The *rattlers*, are racial hatred and the men themselves. To contrast the bleakness of the set actors may wear colors in such a way to create balance. *Intermission* is optional per Theater's needs. Actors can push through entire play or for extra income, maintain an intermission for audience.

All music choices used only if in public domain or rescored to match the listing's melody.

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Mr. Laro by the Big Red Man sculpture at Standing Rock, 2017.  
*(taken during the stand-off between water protectors and North Dakota police forces)*

Mr. Laro lives, writes and works in the Green Mountains on family land called Bausch Lane Hill. For more information on the works of Chris Laro, visit his FB page under *Chris Laro* or search Amazon Books (S.W. Laro) for a complete list of fiction. His writings are also listed under Mr. Christopher Scott. Contact him directly, at [larochris23@gmail.com](mailto:larochris23@gmail.com)



S.W. Laro's plays

- MAUPASSANT: One man play about the infamous French writer Guy D'Maupassant during the last part of his life in a Paris asylum
- WALKING WITH JEFF: Full-length play about a failed writer and the special needs client he lives with and cares for
- OSCAR PHITKIN  
(*A Vendor's Tale*): Full-length play about a hot dog vendor in Hells Kitchen NY reliving the death of his father
- JOSHUA LIMBO: Two man full-length play about predation and bigotry in a desert shack in Joshua Tree Park
- NIGHT RABBIT: Two person play about substance/sex addiction in today's society.



[www.rebelravenbooks.com](http://www.rebelravenbooks.com)

[larochris23@gmail.com](mailto:larochris23@gmail.com)



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