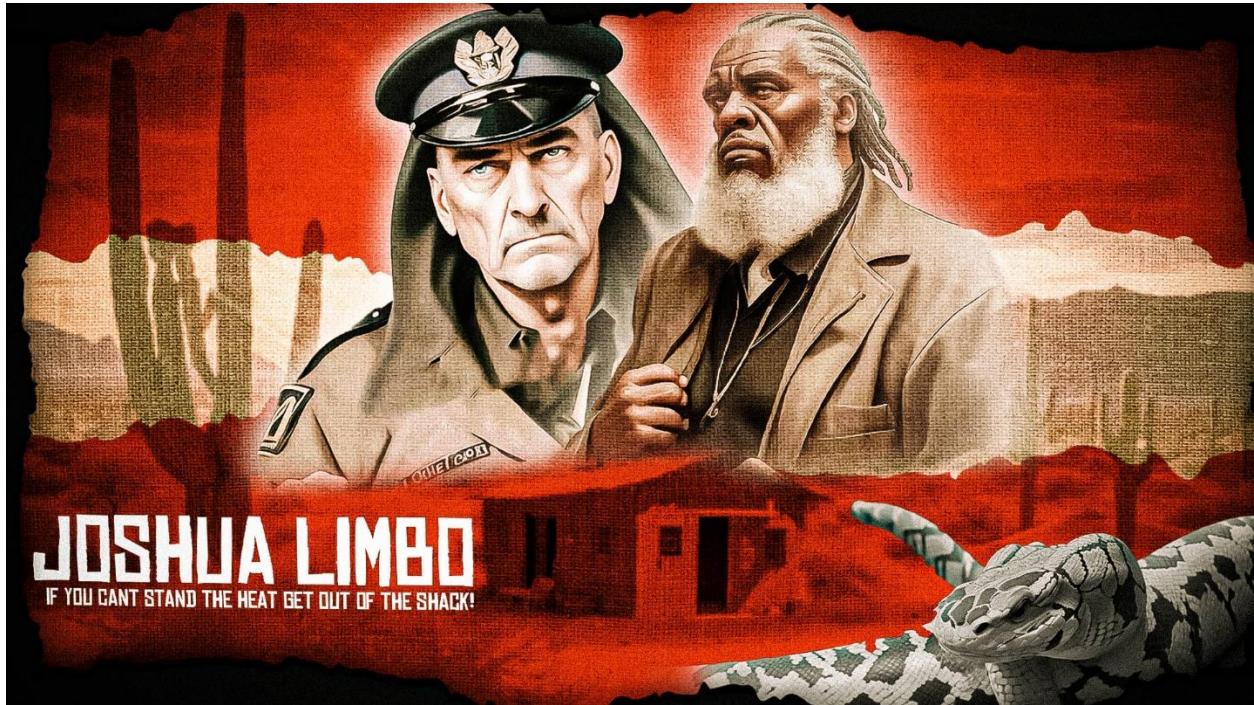
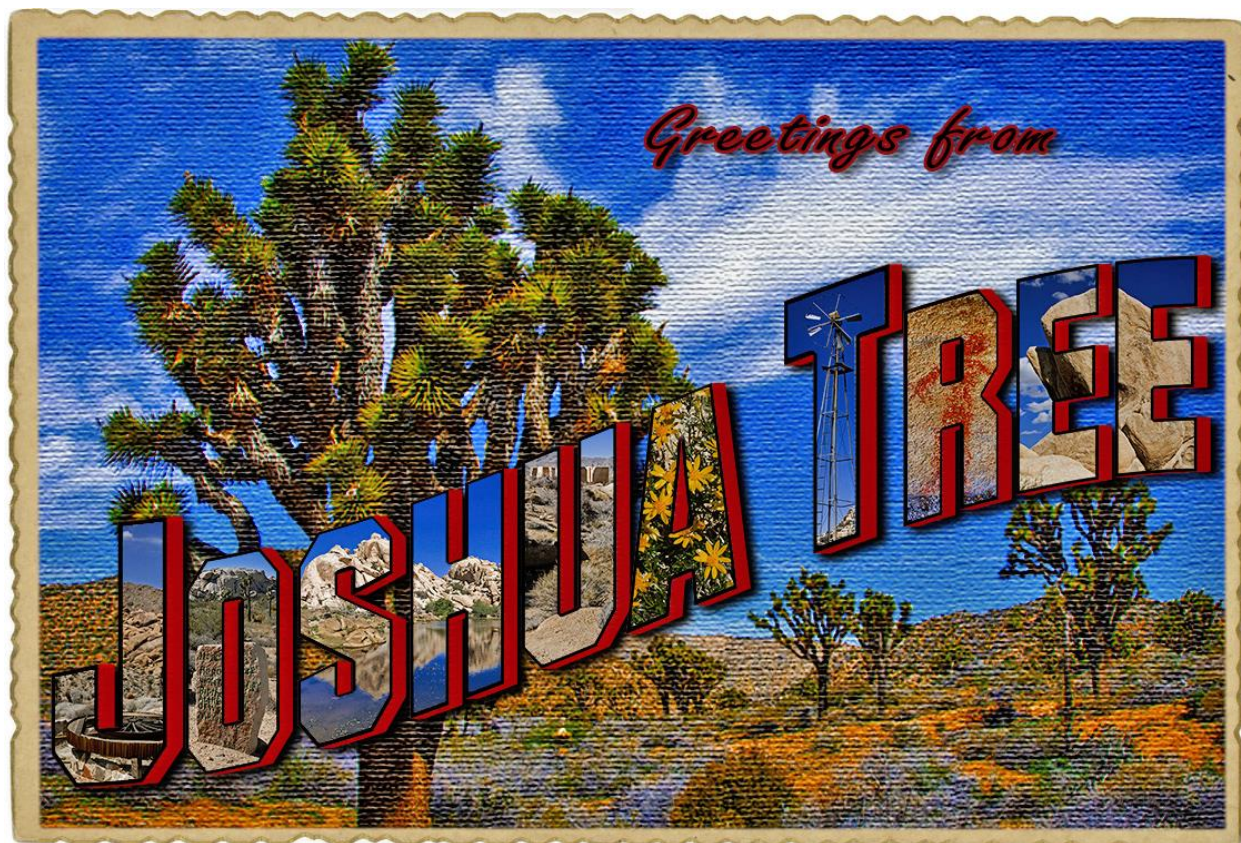


# JOSHUA LIMBO



‘If you can’t stand the heat, get outta’ the shack!’



WELCOME!

Play for screen by S.W. Laro  
C. 2019/2023, WGA-East Coast  
[www.rebelravenfiction.com](http://www.rebelravenfiction.com)



LOGLINE: A middle-aged L.A. grifter/addict discovers a secret about stolen money hidden by a W.W. II hermit living in a shack in Joshua Tree Desert.

## INTRODUCTION

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*Joshua Limbo* is a snake of a fiction set in the haunting desert of Joshua Tree Park in 1990 - does anyone remember the 90's anymore? Cell phones? 'Brick' phones the size of an actual masonry *brick* was the trend of the day. This affordable and 'controversial feature film' isn't about PCD or 'personal communication devices', culture wars, politics, movies, and fashion but tells the tale of **RACIAL HATE AND GREED!**

Two men, one Black and the other, white, meet in the middle of nowhere for a weekend of secrets the desert Herself forces both men to confess. At [www.rebelravenfiction.com](http://www.rebelravenfiction.com) please find a short **montage video** of the film's setting/theme and LINKS to all Laro's fiction.

*Mr. Kosh Gleason (40's)*...or is that his real name, finds the shack and calls out his need for a tire iron to fix a flat and gas. A recluse, *Mr. Hector Pete Johnson, (78)*, answers but refuses, at first, to offer the stranger help.

Writer, Christopher Laro (*S.W. Laro*) crafted the *two-man bullet* of a play to be filmed as a one-off feature for a host of streaming platforms (Netflix, Prime Video et al) and accomplish two things: 1) engage audiences/viewers in an allegorical fiction about our own current n' toxic, racist culture of angry violent 'men,' and 2) to sculpt memorable characters to survive the test of time, i.e. TRUE WEST by writer Sam Shepard, or SLEUTH by Anthony Shaffer. Once again, two people in a plain room with one door both refuse to use as an exit to save themselves. A potent use of this device was the eloquent and brutal stage play, BLACKBIRD by David Harrower starring actors Michelle Williams and Jeff Daniels – same concept of the door as Dante's entrance to Hell nobody flees from once they enter.

The intense film THE LIGHTHOUSE by director Robert Houston Eggers, was a recent drama filled with *confinement, paranoia*, and male *violence* with no way to escape. To offer levity, JOSHUA LIMBO, although it isn't 'My Dinner with Andre' by any means and much more like Mr. Eggers film, i.e., the constancy of the ocean akin to the Joshua

Tree desert as an omnipresent symbol of human helplessness vs nature's power, does employ humor.

The producers and director may decide to combine both elements with the innate 'dark comedy' of this piece to off-set the incessant brutality – lighter moments despite 'heavy' plotting.

When the middle-aged, haggard drifter Kosh enters Hector Pete's shack, it is not only the two pet rattlesnakes he must be afraid of – YES, did I mention rattlesnakes? But the reasons for his untimely visit prove to be more venomous than a FANG BITE.

The poison within the cauldron-like shack?

**RACIAL HATRED & GREED.**

## SYNOPSIS

Canned beans, HEAT & Snakes...

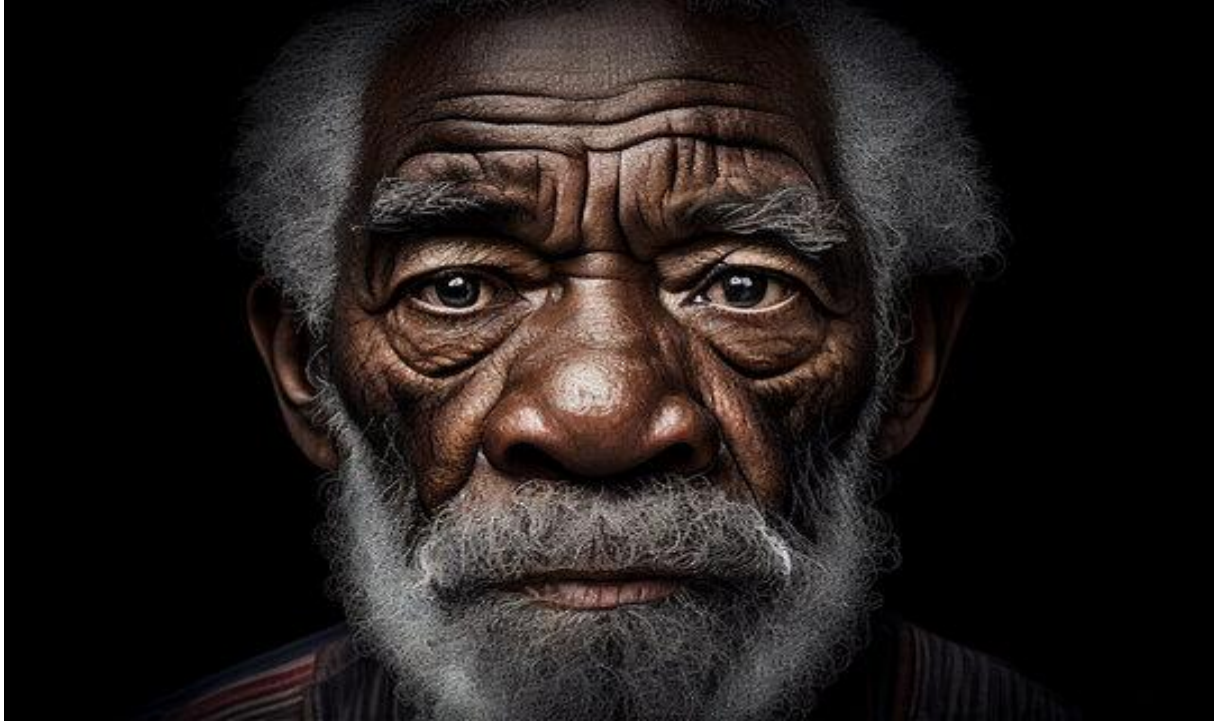


As the scrip notes suggest, the shack itself IS America – an oven of turmoil and both characters are us. The desert, however, determines who lives and who dies – ‘Her’ cruelty and indifference as to what justice is, was written long ago by the wind spirits of Joshua Tree under the Great Mystery.

*Kosh Gleason*, a desperate addict, is a man slipping off the edge of himself. He is a lovesick drifter, lost and half-dead. If he sold his soul to the devil *once* he has spent years trying to steal it back!

*Hector Pete Johnson*, has been alone longer than his memory can recall. A haunted recluse, rage monger and drunk, Hector Pete went to the desert not to discover himself but to forget all he had ever been.

And...who was *Janice* in both men's lives?



*“NO! You don’t fit Mistub’ Kosh. Ya like religion white boy, jus’ an easy excuse to get shit wrong, ya see!”*

Indeed, both men inside the shack don’t fit. They’re diagonals perched atop square fences about to topple over. Bad geometry ‘tween them.

Toxic alchemy.

Oh, and *rattlesnakes*...the constant Greek chorus reminding us when they ‘shake n’ hiss,’ that TRUTH can never hide for long. It STRIKES!

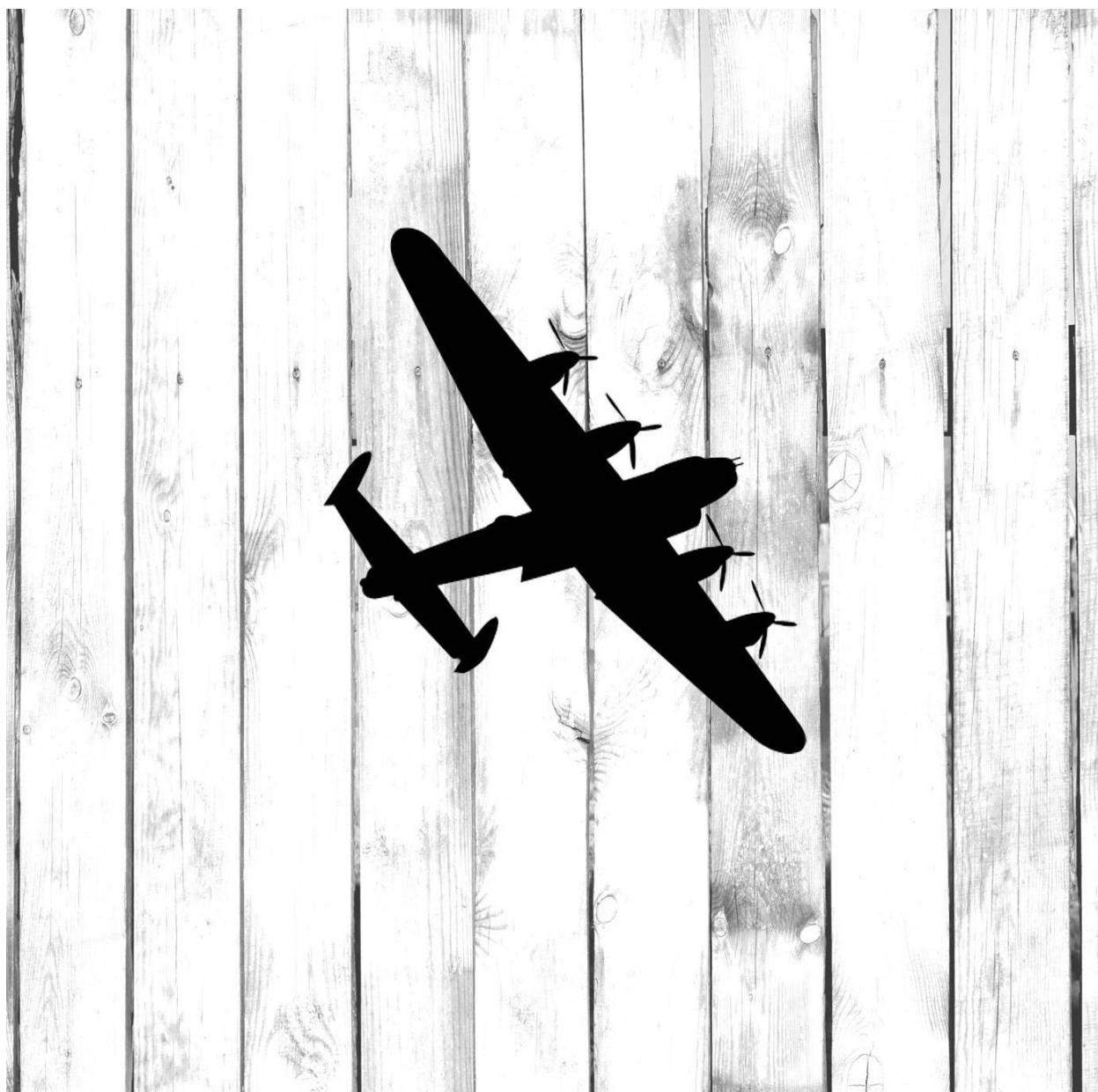
‘Hector Pete Johnson’ was indeed a famous Tuskegee pilot who flew countless bombing missions over Germany NOT as a fighter pilot but as support aircraft for the B52’s.

# Evisceration awaits you interloper!

(or, 'ceration awaits you, looper !) as the sunshine warns after years of weather damage eroded the letters. Those who trespass near Hector Pete's shack, are sure to read what's left of the faded sign on one side and on the other, see the symbol of a *B52 Bomber*:







Early in the script, we are aware of the racial tensions between the strangers but also loitering on the gripingly humid air is our suspicion that something *connects* both men. **A war hero and a grifter addict...what could go wrong!**

The ugly, historical, and often ‘funny’ interplay between Kosh and Hector Pete, drives the slow revelation of the secrets each man hides in their dirty socks like old nosy lint. Kosh’s addiction and Hector Pete’s mental illness and penchant for smooth moonshine, helps build a shaky bond inside and out of the ‘crazy man’s shack’ once Hector begins to

realize that Kosh is much more than he appears. It is the 'friendly enemies' format of our characters who tell us exactly who they are even if *they* don't know who the other man is and was right away.

Kosh DEMANDS to know where Hector Pete hid the money – stolen 'booty' he was told is hidden out by his shack.

Hector says – "I know ya lookin' foe sumptin.' Ain't no money here white boy!"

"You aimin' that gun at me, Pete?" Kosh says.

"Yeah'uh. James Baldwin said, 'american whites have o'ways glorified violence, 'cept if a Negro got the gun.'"

"Don't know 'em. Say ol' man, fuckin' quietude out here would cave in my sanity. Don't bother ya?"

"Pends. When the electrics get too LOUD, I don't see, hear things clear. Wirin' turns down LOW, I can hear the desert spirits out here talkin' kindly, ya see."

"What do they tell ya now Pete?"

"Winds say, this scag ain't worth the paper he's printed on. I know ya ain't here foe no tire iron and gas Mistuh' Kosh."

"But I do have car trouble...."

"No, boy, you jus' got trouble."

And so do we as viewers bearing witness to the claustrophobic reality of the shack and what takes place during a long weekend of accusations, confessions, and threats.



THE RACIAL HATRED BUILDS ‘tween the men as they get drunker and drunker on moonshine. As the HEAT of Joshua Tree RISES over three days, the sun itself begins to LISTEN to the lies, half-truths, and racial slurs - in Her own disgust, She RAISES the temperature on the men. Soon, we learn that Hector Pete’s daughter Janice, is pregnant with Kosh Gleason’s child and it was SHE who led him to find her father in the shack! She knows where her father hid her *mother’s* money and Kosh followed her directions to the morbid shack.

Not only is the old recluse and W.W. II pilot a ‘vagabond dad’ and thief but the woman he had married, (they shared a son who died in Vietnam and daughter Janice who became estranged from the family after her mother died) owned a million-dollar flower shop in Los Angeles for decades before she passed. It is revealed that Kosh, an ex-cop and dooper detective had investigated Hector Pete when his wife engaged in a money scam with her lover. *That man*, Hector Pete led to the desert years earlier to discuss leaving his wife and confronted the adulterer when in a fit of rage, KILLED and buried him in the desert. It is this macabre backstory of Kosh knowing who Hector is and that he courted Janice specifically to GAIN access to the hidden money at the shack, which sends the plot into a tailspin.

In a sequence when Hector Pete tells Kosh he will finally bring him to the money buried a short distance away from the shack, that the final GAME is on – is the stash there or not? As he furiously digs under an undulating night sky, Kosh slowly discovers that there isn’t any buried stash but the remains of a corpse. Panicked, Hector Pete has vanished and Kosh, furious, heads back to the shack to make his final stand as he too is armed as is the heroic recluse.

Do the rattlesnakes have the last word?

As Kosh enters the shack, the lights are turned off as Hector Pete FIRES his shotgun, and Kosh FIRES his handgun, as the rattlers, hungry and aroused, twist and HISSSSSS inside their tanks. Hector Pete, hit by a bullet and bleeding out, finds the strength to win the fight.

As the death struggle grows more intense, Hector Pete subdues the drunken Kosh and holds his head down into one of the glass snake tanks – Kosh is FANGED!



On the last day of the weekend as Kosh lay paralyzed and trembling from venom, the wounded recluse and war hero confesses a final truth – that the money was never buried out under the sand, only the bones of his wife’s lover were. Far as any stash of money, Kosh’s last moments force him to listen to Hector explain that what was left of the *hundreds of thousands of dollars* stolen from his wife’s company was kept hidden under the cabinet where the snake tanks are kept. Oh, the terrible irony...Kosh’s death is a humorous affair no doubt.

Does Hector Pete die in the shack with his snakes?

Does his daughter he hasn’t seen in fifteen years drive out to see her father? Please enjoy reading the Play to find out.

Be WARNED, truth does wait for us all in the desert where pretense and lies vanish.

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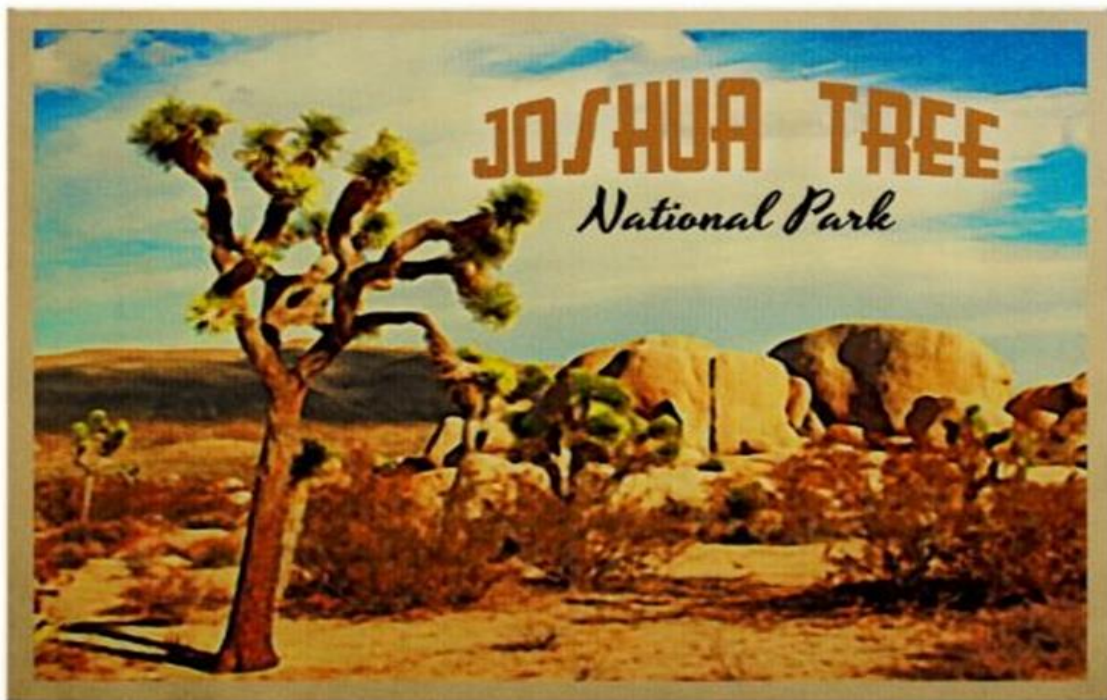
## BUDGET

'Joshua Limbo' LIT up the theater *twice* with its raw and confrontational style.

The play (staged at *LaMama's* experimental space & a staged reading in Hell's Kitchen) cost under \$50 thousand with Equity waged actors portraying Hector Pete and Kosh Gleason. Currently, a budget of one to two million dollars and a shooting schedule in Joshua Tree Park with per the Play's locations (shack, and nearby desert 'scape) would work. If the shooting script and per the director and production team's need, should include flashback scenes added to a new script, certainly the budget will increase. A required studio set must be built for the interiors while the Joshua sands, fulfill the exteriors.

Kosh Gleason - *Eric Roberts* or *Willem Dafoe* and for Hector Pete Johnson, Mr. *Keith David*. Two talented and courageous actors are essential to make 'Joshua Limbo' a successful independent feature for cinema or a streaming media platform. The original *twist* ending for an audience to hold onto as the long violent weekend in Hector Pete's

moonshine shack ends, will surely make audiences *shake and rattle* like a Diamond Back!



COME BACK SOON, YA SEE!?

*Joshua Limbo*

By S.W. Laro

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802-779-6386

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

