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**BNY MELLON**

The Buhl  
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## Characters

**Austin** - In his early thirties, Austin is a screenwriter and the younger brother of Lee. He prides himself on being in touch with the American society

**Lee** - More reckless than his younger brother Austin, Lee has done a variety of things in his recent life. He enjoys journeying through the desert, stealing things from people's houses and is now interested in writing a screenplay for a Western

**Saul Kimmer** - A Hollywood movie producer in his late forties

**Mom** - In her early sixties, she is the mother of Austin and Lee. During the majority of the play, she is away on vacation, leaving Austin in control of her house

## Setting

The kitchen and adjoining alcove of a suburban home in Southern California.

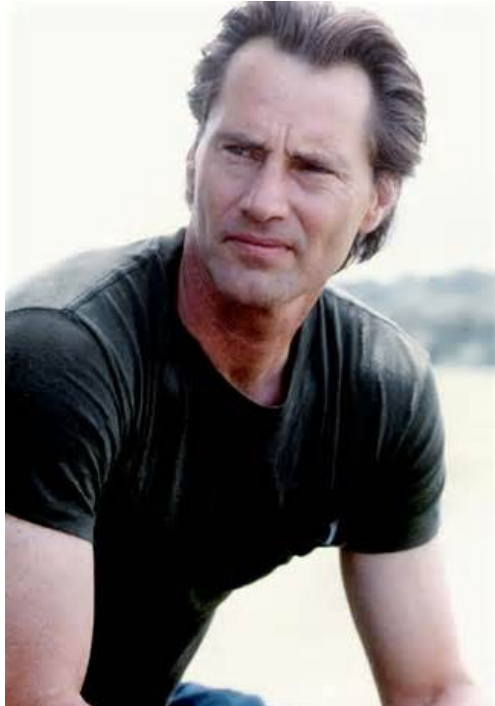
## Synopsis

Austin, a hard working film writer, is house-sitting for his mother in Southern California with the hopes of having peace and quiet in which to work. His solitude is disrupted, when Lee, Austin's vagrant brother, arrives late one night. There is an uncomfortable welcoming as the two brothers settle into the realization that they will both be staying at the mother's house.

The next day, Austin reluctantly allows Lee to borrow his car to get Lee out of the house during an important business meeting with movie producer, Saul Kimmer. The meeting is going well for Austin, who is pitching his idea for a film, until Lee returns home early with a stolen TV from his latest heist. Lee steals Saul's attention with his own pitch about a Western television series, which Saul eventually decides to produce over Austin's pitch. Saul commissions Austin to put Lee's idea into writing, which forces the brothers to work with each other. As they attempt to collaborate, their arguments become more heated. Austin degrades Lee on his inability to write, and Lee bets Austin he couldn't steal a toaster; a challenge Austin accepts.

The brothers begin to take on each other's personalities, Austin now stealing toasters while Lee struggles to write a script. Their aggression and jealousy builds until it reaches a volatile, drunken state, and the two brothers destroy the kitchen. This ends when Austin decides that he write Lee's story, Lee will teach him how to survive in the desert. Their mother arrives home to find her house destroyed, her plants dead, and her sons ready to kill one another. The play ends in a standoff between Lee and Austin.

## About the Author: Sam Shepard



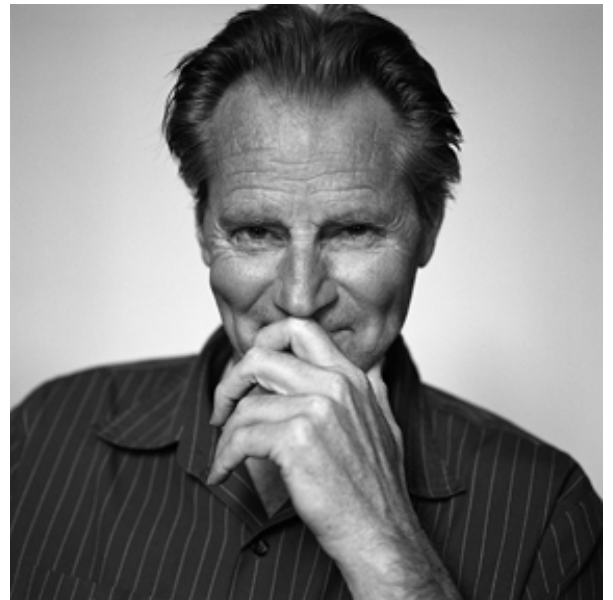
Samuel Shepard Rogers IV was born on November 5, 1943 in Fort Sheridan, Illinois. In the early years, Sam, the eldest of three children, led a rather nomadic life living on several military bases. His father was an army officer and former Air Force bomber during World War II while his mother was a teacher. His childhood experience of living in a dysfunctional family with an alcoholic father and his preoccupation with the myth of the vanishing West often provided recurrent dark themes in his writing. His writing commonly incorporates inventive language, symbolism, and non-linear storytelling while being populated with drifters, fading rock stars and others living on the edge.

In 1974, Shepard was set up as the playwright in residence at the Magic Theater in San Francisco, a post he held for the next ten years. Meanwhile, he joined Bob Dylan's "Rolling Thunder Revue," the singer-songwriter's traveling band of musicians who covered the northern hemisphere in the mid-1970s. He was originally hired to write a movie about the tour, but instead produced a book later on called "The Rolling Thunder Logbook."

He was then cast with the lead role in Terrence Malick's "Days of Heaven" (1978).. The screenplay was written by Rudolph Wurlitzer, who was also on Dylan's tour. Despite his branching out into other avenues, playwrighting remained Shepard's stock and trade.

Returning to the theater, he wrote some of his finest work, including several plays that later proved to be his most famous and revered. He produced the first two of a series of plays about families tearing themselves apart: *Curse of the Starving Class* debuted off-Broadway in 1978 followed by *Buried Child* the same year. *Buried Child* earned the playwright the Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 1979. He also began his collaboration with actor-writer-director Joseph Chaikin of the Open Theater, with both contributing to *Tongues* (1978) and *Savage/Love* (1979).

For the next installment of his family tragedy series that he started with *Curse of the Starving Glass*, Shepard wrote *True West* (1980), using a more traditional narrative to depict a rivalry between two estranged brothers. First performed at the Magic Theater in San Francisco, *True West* was revived on numerous occasions and starred several high-profile actors over the years, including Gary Sinese, John Malkovich, Philip Seymour Hoffman and John C. Reilly (who alternated the lead roles of Austin and Lee).



Meanwhile, based on his performance in *Days of Heaven*, Shepard began landing other roles in feature films with greater regularity. Tall, lanky and brooding, his weathered good looks served him well on screen. In 1980 he co-starred with Ellen Burstyn in *Resurrection* followed by a small role in *Raggedy Man* a year later and then a more substantial role in the biopic *Frances* (1982).

Since then, Shepard has continued acting, directing and writing for both the screen and the stage. He is now seventy years old.

## An Interview with Sam Shepard

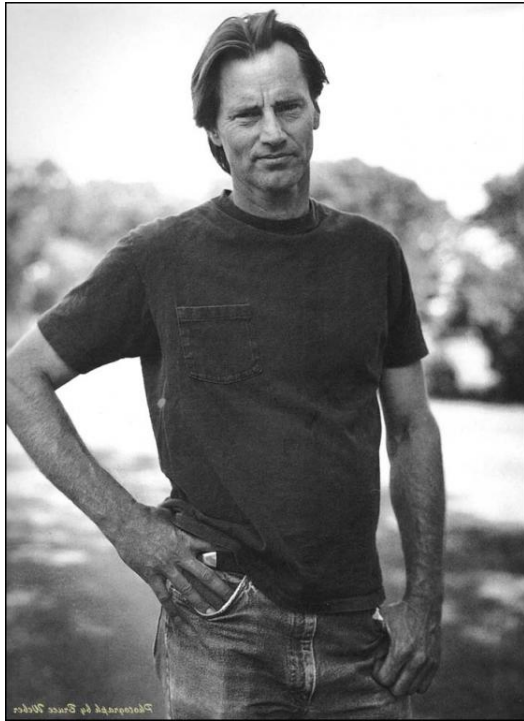
*Interviewed by Benjamin Ryder Howe, Jeanne McCulloch, Mona Simpson for The Paris Review*

### PARIS REVIEW

The West figures predominantly as a mythology in many of your plays. You grew up there, didn't you?

### SAM SHEPARD

All over the Southwest, really—Cucamonga, Duarte, California, Texas, New Mexico. My dad was a pilot in the air force. After the war he got a Fulbright fellowship, spent a little time in Colombia, then taught high-school Spanish. He kind of moved us from place to place.



P.R.

Do you think you'll ever live in the West again?

### SHEPARD

No, I don't think so. The California I knew, old rancho California, is gone. It just doesn't exist, except maybe in little pockets. I lived on the edge of the Mojave Desert, an area that used to be farm country. There were all these fresh-produce stands with avocados and date palms. You could get a dozen artichokes for a buck or something. Totally wiped out now.

P.R.

I read somewhere that you started writing because you wanted to be a musician.

### SHEPARD

Well, I got to New York when I was eighteen. I was knocking around, trying to be an actor, writer, musician, whatever happened.

P.R.

What sort of musician were you trying to be?

SHEPARD

A drummer. I was in a band called the Holy Modal Rounders.

P.R.

How did you hook up with the theaters?

SHEPARD

Well, I was staying on Avenue C and Tenth Street with a bunch of jazz musicians, one of whom happened to be Charlie Mingus's son. We knew each other from high school, and he got me a job as a busboy at the Village Gate. The headwaiter at the Gate was a guy named Ralph Cook. Ralph was just starting his theater at St. Mark's in the Bowery, and he said he'd heard that I'd been writing some stuff, and he wanted to see it. So, I showed him a few plays I'd written, and he said, Well, let's do it. Things kind of took off from there. New York was like that in the sixties. You could write a one-act play and start doing it the next day. You could go to one of those theaters—Genesis, La Mama, Judson Poets—and find a way to get it done. Nothing like that exists now.

P.R.

Did off-off-Broadway plays get reviewed back then?

SHEPARD

For a while the big papers wouldn't touch them, but then they started to smell something, so they came down and wrote these snide reviews. They weren't being unfair. A lot of that stuff really was shitty and deserved to get bombed. But there was one guy who was sort of on our side. His name was Michael Smith; he worked for *The Village Voice*, and he gave a glowing review to these little one-act plays, *Cowboys* and *The Rock Garden*. I remember that distinctly, not because of the praise but because it felt like somebody finally understood what we were



trying to do. He was actually hooking up with us, seeing the work for what it was.

P.R.

What were the audiences like?

SHEPARD

They were incredibly different. You really felt that the community came to see the plays. They weren't people coming from New Jersey to have a dinner party. And they weren't going to sit around if they got bored. The most hostile audience I faced was up at the American Place Theatre when we were putting on *La Turista*. They invited all these Puerto Rican kids, street kids, and they were firing at the actors with peashooters.

P.R.



Did it take a long time to find your particular voice as a writer?

SHEPARD

I was amazed, actually. I've heard writers talk about "discovering a voice," but for me that wasn't a problem. There were so many voices that I didn't know where to start. It was splendid, really; I felt kind of like a weird stenographer. I don't mean to make it sound like hallucination, but there were definitely things there, and I was just putting them down. I was fascinated by how they structured themselves, and it seemed like the natural place to do it was on a stage. A lot of the time when writers talk about their voice they're talking about a narrative voice. For some reason my attempts at narrative turned out really weird. I didn't have that kind of voice, but I had a lot of other ones, so I thought, Well, I'll follow those.

P.R.

What was it like the first time you saw your work being performed by actors?

SHEPARD

To a certain extent it was frustrating, because the actors were in control of the material and I wasn't used to actors. I didn't know how to talk to them and I didn't want to learn, so I hid behind the director. But slowly I started to realize that they were going through an interpretive process, just like anyone else. They don't just go in there and read the script.

P.R.

Did becoming an actor help you as a writer?

SHEPARD

It did, because it helped me to understand what kinds of dilemmas an actor faces.

P.R.

Do you have any idea what the end of play is going to be when you begin?

SHEPARD

I hate endings. Just detest them. Beginnings are definitely the most exciting, middles are perplexing and endings are a disaster.

P.R.

Why?

SHEPARD

The temptation towards resolution, towards wrapping up the package, seems to me a terrible trap. Why not be more honest with the moment? The most authentic endings are the ones which are already revolving towards another beginning. That's genius. Somebody told me once that *fugue* means to flee, so that Bach's melody lines are like he's running away.

P.R.

Do you acknowledge the influence of playwrights like Pinter and Beckett on your work?

SHEPARD

The stuff that had the biggest influence on me was European drama in the sixties. That period brought theater into completely new territory—Beckett especially, who made American theater look like it was on crutches. I don't think Beckett gets enough credit for revolutionizing theater, for turning it upside down.

P.R.

Do you have a favorite among your plays?

SHEPARD

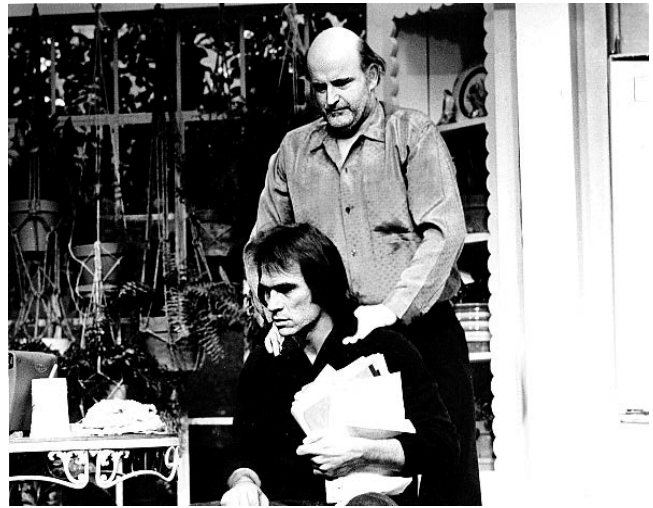
I'll tell you, I'm not attached to any of it. I don't regret them, but for me it's much more thrilling to move on to the next thing.

## Production History



*True West* was first performed at the Magic Theatre in San Francisco, where Shepard was the resident playwright. It had its world premiere there on July 10, 1980. It was originally directed by **Robert Woodruff** and featured **Peter Coyote** (Austin) and **Jim Haynie** (Lee).

On December 23, 1980, *True West* opened at Joseph Papp's Public Theater in New York City, starring **Tommy Lee Jones** (Austin) and **Peter Boyle** (Lee).



In 1982, *True West* was revived at the Steppenwolf Theatre Company in Chicago featuring then-unknown actors **Gary Sinise** (who also directed the production) and **John Malkovich**. The production later transferred to the Cherry Lane Theatre in New York where it enjoyed a run of 762 performances.





On March 2, 2000, a Broadway revival of *True West* opened at the Circle on the Square Theatre featuring **Philip Seymour Hoffman** and **John C. Reilly**, who alternated playing the lead roles. This critically acclaimed production earned Tony Award nominations for best actor (both Hoffman and Reilly), best director, and best play.

Also pictured, **Robert Lupone** (Saul).

## The Mojave

The Mojave is important to both Lee and Austin. Lee has spent a lot of his time living in the desert and learning its ways. Austin dreams of giving up the pressures of society and moving out to the Mojave himself. Here's a little more about the Mojave.

The transition from the hot Sonoran Desert to the cooler and higher Great Basin is called the Mojave Desert. This arid region of southeastern California and portions of Nevada, Arizona and Utah, occupies more than 25,000 square miles. Situated between the Great Basin Desert to the north and the Sonoran to the south (mainly between 34 and 38°N latitudes), the Mojave, a rainshadow desert, is defined by a combination of latitude, elevation, geology, and indicator plants. Elevations are generally between three and six thousand feet, although Death Valley National Park includes both 11,049-foot Telescope Peak and the lowest point in the United States 282 feet below sea level at Badwater. Temperatures are a function of both latitude and altitude. Although the Mojave Desert has the lowest absolute elevation and the highest maximum temperature (134°F in Death Valley), it is north of the Sonoran Desert and its average elevations are higher. As a result, its average temperatures are lower than those of the Sonoran.

The Mojave has a typical mountain-and-basin topography with sparse vegetation. Sand and gravel basins drain to central salt flats from which borax, potash and salt are extracted. Silver, tungsten, gold and iron deposits are worked. While some do not consider the Mojave a desert in its own right, the Mojave Desert hosts about 200 endemic plant species found in neither of the adjacent deserts. Cacti are usually restricted to the coarse soils of bajadas. Mojave Yucca and, at higher elevations Desert Spanish Bayonet, a narrow-leafed yucca, are

prominent. Creosote Bush, Shadscale, Big Sagebrush, Bladder-sage, bursages and Blackbush are common shrubs of the Mojave Desert.



Occasional Catclaws grow along arroyos. But, unlike the Sonoran Desert, trees are few, both in numbers and diversity. The exception is the Joshua-tree. While this unusual tree-like yucca is usually considered the prime indicator of Mojave Desert vegetation, it occurs only at higher elevations in this desert and only in this desert.

# Westerns

This indigenous American art form focuses on the frontier West that existed in North America. Westerns are often set on the American frontier during the last part of the 19th century (1865-1900) following the Civil War, in a geographically western (trans-Mississippi) setting



with romantic, sweeping frontier landscapes or rugged rural terrain. However, Westerns may extend back to the time of America's colonial period or forward to the mid-20th century, or as far geographically as Mexico. A number of westerns use the Civil War, the Battle of the Alamo (1836) or the Mexican Revolution (1910) as a backdrop.

The western film genre often portrays the conquest of the wilderness and the subordination of nature, in the name of civilization, or the confiscation of the territorial rights of the original inhabitants of the frontier. Specific settings include lonely isolated forts, ranch houses, the isolated homestead, the saloon, the jail, the livery stable, the small-town main street, or small frontier towns that are forming at the edges of civilization. They may even include Native American sites or villages. Other iconic elements in westerns include the hanging tree, stetsons and spurs, saddles, lassos and Colt .45's, bandannas and buckskins, canteens, stagecoaches, gamblers, long-horned cattle and cattle drives, prostitutes (or madams) with a heart of gold, and more. Very often, the cowboy has a favored horse (or 'faithful steed'), for example, Roy Rogers' Trigger, Gene Autry's Champion, William Boyd's (Hopalong Cassidy) Topper, the Lone Ranger's Silver and Tonto's Scout. The western film genre has portrayed much about America's past, glorifying the past-fading values and aspirations of the mythical by-gone age of the West.



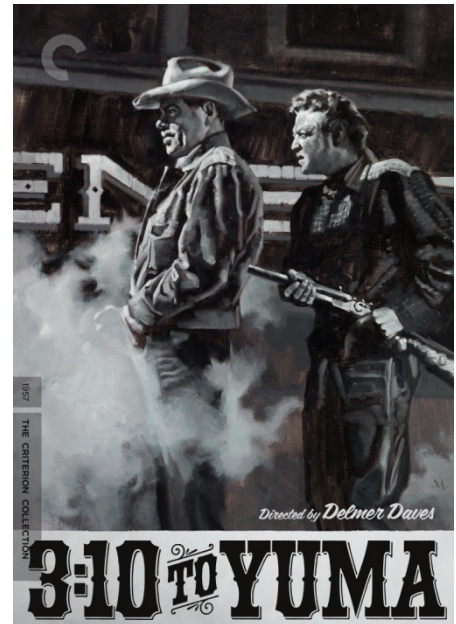
## Famous Westerns

### *3:10 to Yuma (1957)*

“3:10 to Yuma” is the 1957 western in which Glenn Ford, as outlaw Ben Wade, makes evil look like an attractive option. Wade is being escorted from the western town of Bisbee to Contention, where a train will take him to his presumed hanging in Yuma, Arizona.

Escorting him to the train is Dan Evans (Van Heflin), a struggling farmer who needs the \$200 reward money. (Thanks to the drought that has ruined his ranch.) Similar to the famous western drama, High Noon, Dan Evans is a man who is doing this task alone and with great personal risk.

First, Evans must bring Wade home to his ranch (and his unknowing family) overnight to keep Wade’s gang from knowing their boss’s whereabouts. Later a psychological thriller ensues as Wade tries to finagle his way out of the Contention hotel room where he is being kept until it is time to catch the 3:10 train to Yuma.



### *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid (1969)*



Butch Cassidy (Paul Newman) and Sundance (Robert Redford) are leaders of the “Hole in the Wall” gang. Their specialty is stealing. After robbing multiple trains, the owner of the Union Pacific railroad line decides that he has had enough and decides to hire a super-posse to track them down and kill them. Finally realizing that the super-posse is formidable and not going away, Cassidy and Sundance decide to move to South America. They

take Sundance's girlfriend, Etta Place (Katharine Ross) with them. Their plan is to start a new life above the law that doesn't include robbing trains and banks. But old habits die hard and Butch and Sundance find themselves robbing banks once again. Moreover, the Union Pacific railroad super-posse continues to hunt for them in South America and they have also enlisted the help of the local authorities.

### *The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (1966)*

This spaghetti western is about three men, all motivated by greed. There's "The Good" named Blondie (Clint Eastwood), "The Bad" named Angel Eyes (Lee Van Cleef) and "The Ugly" named Tuco (Eli Wallach). All three men are despicable in their own way and none of them trust each other, but they need to work together in order to find a stash of gold hidden during the Civil War in a cemetery.



From *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*

No man knows all the details about where the \$200,000 has been buried, so they must rely on each other. The Ugly knows the name of the cemetery where the gold is hidden. The Good knows the name on grave where it is buried. The Bad doesn't know any details but has promised to kill the other two if they don't share the fortune with him. Against the backdrop of the raging Civil War the three cold-blooded men traverse the desert in hopes of finding the fortune.

## *Stagecoach* (1939)



Ford's groundbreaking Western that set the precedent for all others to follow was also John Wayne's breakthrough film after scores of B-films in the 1930s. Wayne played the key role of The Ringo Kid, an outlaw and prison escapee who gets picked up by a stagecoach driven by Marshal Curley Wilcox through dangerous Apache territory. Ringo seeks revenge on Luke Plummer, who killed his family and sent him to jail on false testimony, but finds himself under arrest by Curley while the motley crew of passengers find themselves without troop protection the closer they get to the Apaches.

### **The Revival of the Western**

In the past decade, Westerns have returned to the mainstream. One example of a notable modern Western is the 2007 movie *3:10 to Yuma* starring Russell Crowe and Christian Bale. Another Western that recently made a splash was *True Grit*, a 2010 Western written and directed by the Coen Brothers.

## The Movie Producer

Saul is a movie producer. You may be wondering what it is exactly that movie producers do. Here is some more information on the topic!

A movie producer is the person responsible for making sure an appealing, high-quality movie is produced on time and within budget. That means supervising and packaging the project from conception to distribution to theaters, while interfacing with the studio and managing the work of hundreds of individuals [source: [Full Sail](#)].

As you can see, movie producers do indeed have to wear many hats during movie production. Starting at the beginning of the process, here are some of the main producer responsibilities:

### Preproduction

- Find material from a book or script.
- Get the script into good enough shape to attract a director (and studio, if this is not a studio-initiated production).
- Secure financing for the film, if it is not being made for a studio.
- Choose the director and other parts of the creative team.
- Cast the actors, working with the director.
- Determine locations and budget.
- Decide on cinematographer and special effects.
- Hire a production team including crew and producers.
- Develop a shooting schedule.
- Create a detailed plan of action for production.

### Production

- Offer creative suggestions to the director.
- Handle problems with actors or creative staff.
- Monitor production timetable and budget.
- Review video dailies, the film shot each day.

### Postproduction

- Discuss order and selection of scenes with the director.
- Review the fine cut of the film after it is edited.
- In some cases, polish, revise and restructure the film to create the final cut.
- Work with a distributor to secure distribution for the film. This may include showing the distributors the final cut of the film.
- Review the distributor's advertising campaign for the film.

[sources: World Book and "Movie Moguls Speak: Interviews with Top Film Producers" by Steven Prigge, 2004]

You may be wondering where movie producers find the material or come up with a film concept. In some cases, actors, writers or editors approach producers with a completed script. In other cases, coincidence or serendipity has led to successful movies.

The animated feature *Bee Movie* (2007), for example, started with an offhand comment by comedian Jerry Seinfeld to producer Steven Spielberg during dinner. "Wouldn't it be funny if they made a movie about Bees and called it 'Bee Movie'?" Seinfeld mused. Spielberg liked the idea, and Seinfeld found himself with a deal and the need to write a movie to go with his title. That took two and a half years.

*Rocky* (1976) started with a casual comment from an actor. Producer Robert Chartoff arranged to meet Sylvester Stallone after seeing him act in the "The Lords of Flatbush." Stallone mentioned that he had an idea for a script about a boxer and asked Chartoff if he would read it. Six weeks later, the actor brought in the first draft of the script for the film that earned him an Oscar nomination for best writing and was followed by five sequels.

## Writing a Script

In *True West*, both Austin and Lee work on writing scripts. Austin has been writing scripts for a while (it's his job!) but Lee is new to the task. Here are some tips that might have helped Lee write his Western script!

1. **Formulate a premise.** Write a short sentence of the fundamental concept which drives the plot.

2. **Create an outline or treatment.**

Before you begin actually writing dialog and script, it might help to create a basic road-map/story of what will happen in your story so you don't get sidetracked and can work out any plot holes or kinks. Sketch out a general plan and envision how events will unfold. This should be told in the third-person.



3. **Flesh out your story.** Write the entire premise of the play, movie, etc. with lots of details and ideas, paying no mind to style, format, repetition, or anything else that gets in the way of your creative flow. Your finished product should cover the plot, personalities, relationships, character arcs, and a larger point to the story. Sometimes, drawings or diagrams may be used as a temporary storyboard to show to other persons to demonstrate facets of your plot and characters, etc.

4. **Trim the story down.** Now that you have everything on paper, look for dead weight, weak links, irrelevant details, over-explaining, sidetracking, elements that drag, and anything else that weakens the overall trajectory. Be harsh; just because you fell in love with

something you worked on in the exploratory phase doesn't mean it should survive the revision phase.

5. **Write the plot in script format.** The exact format will vary depending on whether you're writing for theater, TV, or the silver screen – and in what country. Set the scene. Don't forget to include important details such as time of day, setting, and actions of the characters in the scene. These are nearly as important as the dialog that occurs. Describe action only briefly; provide a sense of what's happening on screen, but leave it to the director to fill in the details.

6. **Spend a lot of time working on your dialogue.** Dialogue will make or break your characters and their relationships. What's worse, dialogue is extremely difficult for most people to write. To get your bearings, write down or record real conversations to see how people really speak and which expressions they use. Be sure to listen to a variety of speakers so that you can give your own characters more flavor and individuality. Read your dialogue aloud as you go, paying extra attention to whether or not it sounds halting, stereotyped, over-the-top, or totally uniform.

7. **Edit your work.** Polish it, but don't be a perfectionist; work *toward* perfection, not *to* it.

8. **Show your finished work to people whose opinion you respect.** Choose people who not only come from different backgrounds and have varied personal tastes, but are also willing to provide honest feedback.

9. **Revise your work as many times as necessary.** Painful as it may be, you'll be glad when you're finally able to convey your vision.

You can find more information about screenwriting in Robert McKee's widely-acclaimed book *Story*.

## Meet the Director



**PAMELA BERLIN** (*Director*) has directed six previous productions at Pittsburgh Public Theater: *Clybourne Park*, *Red*, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*, *Talley's Folly*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, and *Tea*. New York credits include: *Steel Magnolias* (also Los Angeles, Chicago, and National Tour), *To Gillian on Her 37<sup>th</sup> Birthday* (Circle in the Square), *The Cemetery Club* (Broadway), *Joined at the Head* (Manhattan Theatre Club), *The Family of Mann* and *Red Address* (Second Stage), *Black Ink* and *Elm Circle*

(Playwrights Horizons), *Snowing at Delphi*, *Club Soda* and *Peacetime* (WPA), *Close Ties* (Ensemble Studio Theatre). Regionally, she has directed at the Long Wharf, Kennedy Center, Huntington, Seattle Rep, Pasadena Playhouse, Portland Stage, Virginia Stage, TheatreWorks Palo Alto. Opera credits: *La Traviata*, *Rigoletto*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Eugene Onegin*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Of Mice and Men*, *Bernstein's Mass*. Pam has taught at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University and served for six years as President of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national labor union.



## Cast



**KEN BARNETT** (*Austin*) is very pleased to return to Pittsburgh Public Theater after playing Hero in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* in 1998. He has appeared on Broadway in *Wonderful Town* directed by Kathleen Marshall and in Julie Taymor's *The Green Bird*. His Off-Broadway credits include *February House* at The Public, *Manon/Sandra*, *La Ronde*, *Debbie Does Dallas*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Whore of Sheridan Square*. Regionally, he has played leading roles in plays and musicals at The Old Globe, Hartford Stage, Geffen Playhouse, Mark Taper Forum, The O'Neill, Long Wharf, Delaware Theatre Company, Prince Music Theatre, The Guthrie, and Paper Mill Playhouse. Film work includes *Admission*, *People Like Us*, *Friends With Kids*, *Ira and Abby*, and *Puccini for Beginners*. For television: "Mad Men," "In Plain Sight," "Grey's Anatomy," "Entourage," "How I Met Your Mother," and "Monk." A graduate of Wesleyan University, he has received two Connecticut Critics Circle Acting Awards and a Best Actor Award from NY Fringe Festival. [www.kenbarnett.net](http://www.kenbarnett.net).



## **DAVID MOGENTALE**

(*Lee*) is a proud graduate of Peters Township High School right here in the South Hills. David is thrilled to be doing this particular production in this particular town after all these years in New York City! In

NYC he is most pleased with his involvement in 29<sup>th</sup> Street Rep where he has been a Company Member for 23 years and Artistic Director for 19. He has been the leading influence in creating a unique style of visceral, raw work audiences have come to love and expect at 29<sup>th</sup> Street Rep. “Brutal Theater” done extremely well. David has acted in 25 productions for the company, most recently as Harry Caul in the New York City premiere of Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Conversation*. Other New York premieres include: Jack Henry Abbott in *In the Belly of the Beast-Revisited*, *Avenue A*, *Pick Up Ax*, the title role in *Killer Joe*, *Visiting Oliver*, *Necktie Breakfast*, and *Killers*. Memorable revivals: a 19-week run as Eddie in *Fool for Love*, title role in *High Priest of California*, title role in *Bobby Supreme*, and *Tracers*. Off-Broadway: *An Oak Tree* (Obie Award). Broadway: *True West* and *Death of A Salesman*. TV: Charles Augustus Milverton on “Elementary,” SWAT Team Commander (Reynolds) on “Law & Order: Criminal Intent,” Gerard Petosky on “Law & Order,” and the recurring role of Coach Goodwin on “The Sopranos.” Film: *Invisible*, *Arresting Gena*, and *Mickey Blue Eyes*. He also directed the NYC premiere of *Hiding Behind Comets* for 29<sup>th</sup> Street Rep. He currently can be seen and heard as Nervous Ron Jakowski in the newest chapter of the most successful and violent video game of all time, *Grand Theft Auto 5*.



**MARY RAWSON** (*Mom*) is a member of Playhouse Rep and was honored as 2012 Performer of the Year by the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* for her role as Violet in *August: Osage County*. Recent credits include Pittsburgh Irish & Classical Theatre's *House & Garden* and Quantum Theatre's *When the Rain Stops Falling*. World premieres: Amy Hartman's *Chicken Snake* and Tammy Ryan's *In the Shape of a Woman* and *FBI Girl*. Favorite roles include Mrs. Young in *Honus and Me* for City

Theatre, Micheleine in *Splendour* for Quantum and, for PICT, Margrethe in *Copenhagen* and Pauline in Thomas Kilroy's adaptation of Chekhov's *The Seagull*, set in the west of Ireland. But her all-time favorite role is Cousin Mary on "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood."



**DAN SHOR** (*Saul*) has performed at The Guthrie, Mabou Mines, The Old Globe, Los Angeles Theatre Center, Taper Too, and the New Met, among others. Film credits include *Tron: The Next Day*, *Silakbo*, *Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure*, *Air Force One*, *Wise Blood*, *Tron*, and *A Strangers Kiss*, among others. Television appearances include "Cagney and Lacey" (series regular), "Studs Lonigan," "Friendly Fire," "Star Trek: Next Generation," and "Star Trek: Voyager," among others. Dan has received multiple L.A. Ovation and *L.A. Weekly* awards as well as the People's Choice

Award for the mini-series "The Blue and The Gray." He hosted three seasons of "Screen Test" for Fashion TV Asia and has been an instructor at the International Academy of Film and Television in the Philippines and at Northern Marianas College. He is the writer/director of "State of Liberty: Saipan" and the owner of ShodaVision, a moving picture company.

## Theater Etiquette

When you visit the theater you are attending a live performance with actors that are working right in front of you. This is an exciting experience for you and the actor. However, in order to have the best performance for both the audience and actors there are some simple rules to follow. By following these rules, you can ensure that you can be the best audience member you can be, as well as keep the actors focused on giving their best performance.

1. Turn off all cell phones, beepers, watches etc.
2. *Absolutely no text messaging during the performance.*
3. Do not take pictures during the performance.
4. Do not eat or drink in the theater.
5. Do not place things on the stage or walk on the stage.
6. Do not leave your seat during the performance unless it is an emergency. *If you do need to leave for an emergency, leave as quietly as possible and know that you might not be able to get back in until after intermission.*
7. Do clap—let the actors know you are enjoying yourself.
8. Do enjoy the show and have fun watching the actors.
9. Do tell other people about your experience and be sure to ask questions and discuss the performance.

## Discussion Questions

1. What was Austin trying to prove by stealing all of the toasters?
2. Does Lee change at all throughout the play? If so, how?
3. If you wanted to make a movie that would be very popular, what subject matter would you choose?
4. Which movie would you rather see: Lee's Western or Austin's period piece? What reasons might Saul have had to pick either one of those scripts?
5. In stealing toasters, Austin became a little more like Lee. Lee also tried living a life similar to Austin's by writing his screenplay. Do you think each character found each other's life as interesting and exciting as they thought they would?
6. Why is the desert so appealing to both brothers?
7. Which traits do you admire in each of the brothers?
8. What made Austin lash out physically against his brother, Lee?

10. Lee and Austin's mother does not come in until the very end of the play. What point did her appearance make? Did her presence push forward the plot or did it serve some other purpose?
11. *True West* travels the line between being realistic and being surrealistic. How does the feel of the play change from the beginning of the play to the end?
12. What role does family play in the story? Why do you think Sam Shepard chose to write about two brothers rather than, say, two neighbors or two childhood friends?
13. How does Austin and Lee's responsibility to their father change the course of the story?

# Pennsylvania Academic Standards

The plays of Pittsburgh Public Theater's 39<sup>th</sup> season, subtitled the Masterpiece Season, are a wonderful celebration of some of the greatest works in theatrical history, with rich benefits for school students. The 2013-2014 line-up features a six-play subscription series, all by world renowned composers and playwrights that hold a special place in any theater enthusiast's heart. The Masterpiece Season will provide examples of the wittiest dialogue, the sharpest characters, and the most captivating scores.

## **Applicable to All Plays and Productions:**

Arts and Humanities Standards and Reading-Writing-Speaking-Listening Standards

Attendance and participation by students at any play produced by Pittsburgh Public Theater bears direct applicability to the PA Education Standards in Arts and Humanities and Reading-Writing-Speaking-Listening (RWSL). These applicable standards are summarized first. Then, each play for Season 39 is taken in turn, and its relevance to standards in other Academic Content Areas is cited. All standards are summarized by conceptual description, since similar concepts operate across all the grade levels served by The Public's Education-Outreach programs (Grades 4 through 12); the principal progressive difference is from basics such as Know, Describe and Explain, moving through grade levels towards more mature activities such as Demonstrate, Incorporate, Compare-Contrast, Analyze and Interpret.

## **9.1: Production, Performance and Exhibition of Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts**

Elements

- Scenario • script/text • set design • stage productions • read and write scripts • improvise • interpret a role • design sets • direct.

Principles

- Balance • collaboration • discipline • emphasis • focus • intention • movement • rhythm • style • voice.
- Comprehensive vocabulary within each of the arts forms.
- Communicate a unifying theme or point of view through the production of works in the arts.
- Explain works of others within each art form through performance or exhibition.
- Know where arts events, performances and exhibitions occur and how to gain admission.

## **9.2: Historical and Cultural Contexts**

- The historical, cultural and social context of an individual work in the arts.
- Works in the arts related chronologically to historical events, and to varying styles and genres, and to the periods in which they were created.
- Analyze a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective, and according to its geographic region of origin.
- Analyze how historical events and culture impact forms, techniques and purposes of works in the arts.
- Philosophical beliefs as they relate to works in the arts.



**TRUE WEST.** November 7 – December 8, 2013.  
Written by Sam Shepard (1980). Directed by Pamela Berlin.

Having celebrated the American ethos in our opening production, The Public will fast-forward to the work of another groundbreaking American playwright forty years later. Whereas Thornton Wilder bore witness to a reaffirming and constant universal order to be found in the simplicity of everyday life, Sam Shepard acknowledges the antithesis of that order: a world in which the existential terrain shifts eerily and dangerously beneath our feet, and in which identity and self-definition warp and shift on a dime. The chosen vehicle is the epic rivalry of two estranged brothers, and their aggressive interactions – at once both shocking and ludicrously comic – make this grand and mythic story his most famous and oft-produced play. Full of twists, action, insight and gritty humor, *True West* has been an irresistible magnet for charismatic actors since its premiere in 1980.

### **Geography**

- Identify how basic geographic tools are used to organize and interpret information about people, places and environment.

### **Family and Consumer Sciences**

- Justify the significance of interpersonal communication skills in the practical reasoning method of decision making.
- Contrast past and present family functions and predict their probable impact on the future of the family.
- Solve dilemmas using a practical reasoning approach: identify situation, identify reliable information, list choices and examine the consequences of each, develop a plan of action, draw conclusions, and reflect on decisions.

### **Health, Safety, and Physical Education**

- Analyze the factors that impact growth and development between adolescence and adulthood: relationships (e.g., dating, friendships, peer pressure), interpersonal communication, risk factors (e.g., physical inactivity, substance abuse, intentional/unintentional injuries, dietary patterns), abstinence, STD and HIV prevention, and community.

## Resources for True West

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