



True West

Author
Sam Shepard

First Performed
1980

Original Language
English

OVERVIEW

Showdown in the Suburbs

Brothers Austin and Lee seem like opposites: Austin is a hardworking scriptwriter, and Lee's a homeless thief. When a Hollywood producer picks Lee's idea for a "true-to-life" western over Austin's script, the brothers turn on each other. A writing session gets ugly in this dark comedy.



True Success

Austin wonders how genuine his stable urban life is and craves a way out.

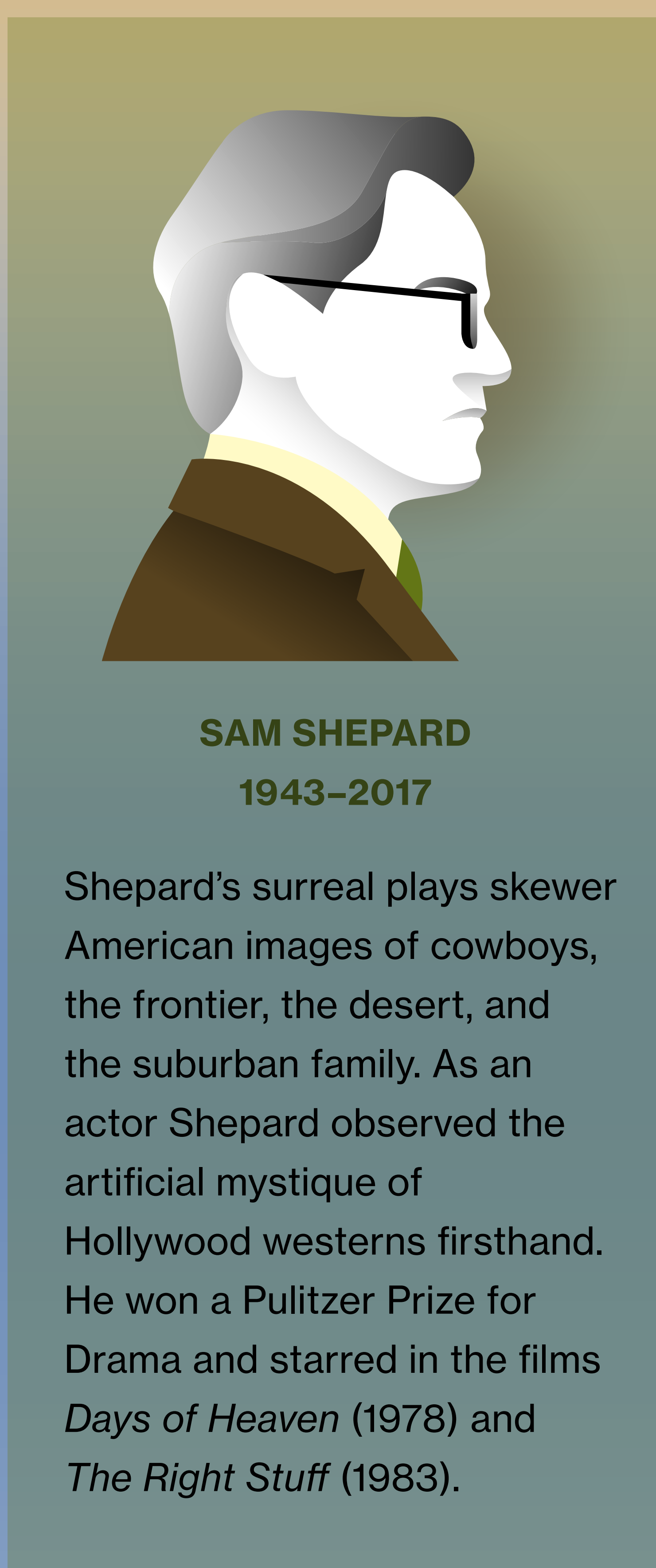
True Freedom

Nature, the desert, and the Wild West offer adventure and lawlessness.

True Danger

As the brothers start to inhabit their own story, they turn violent.

Author



Main Characters



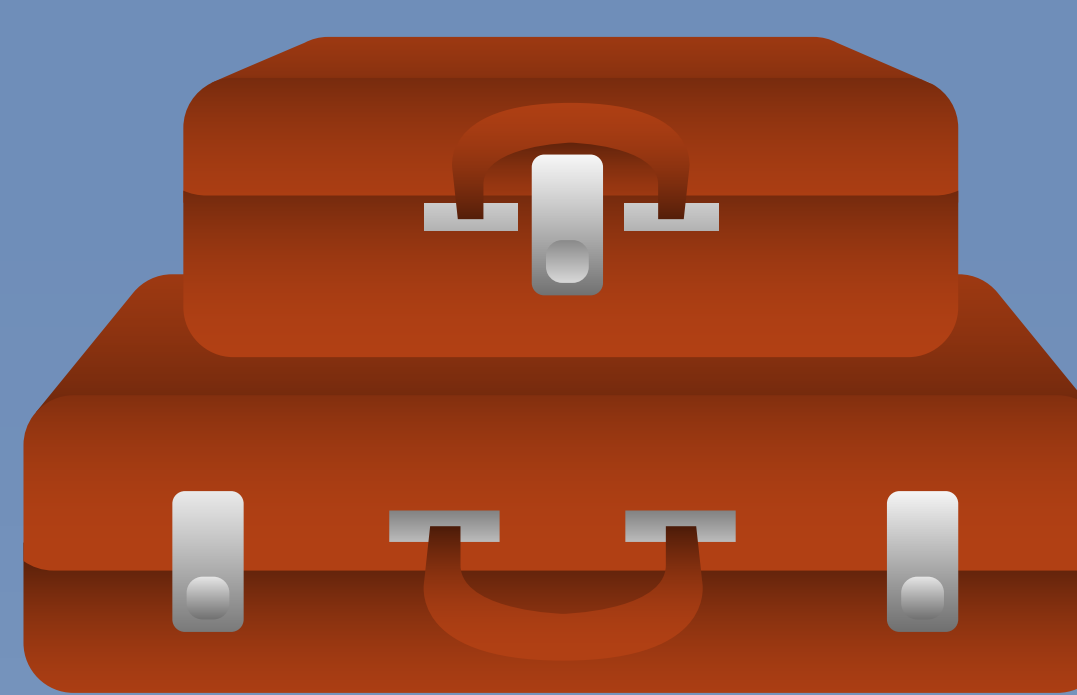
Austin

Ambitious, responsible screenwriter seeking his big Hollywood break



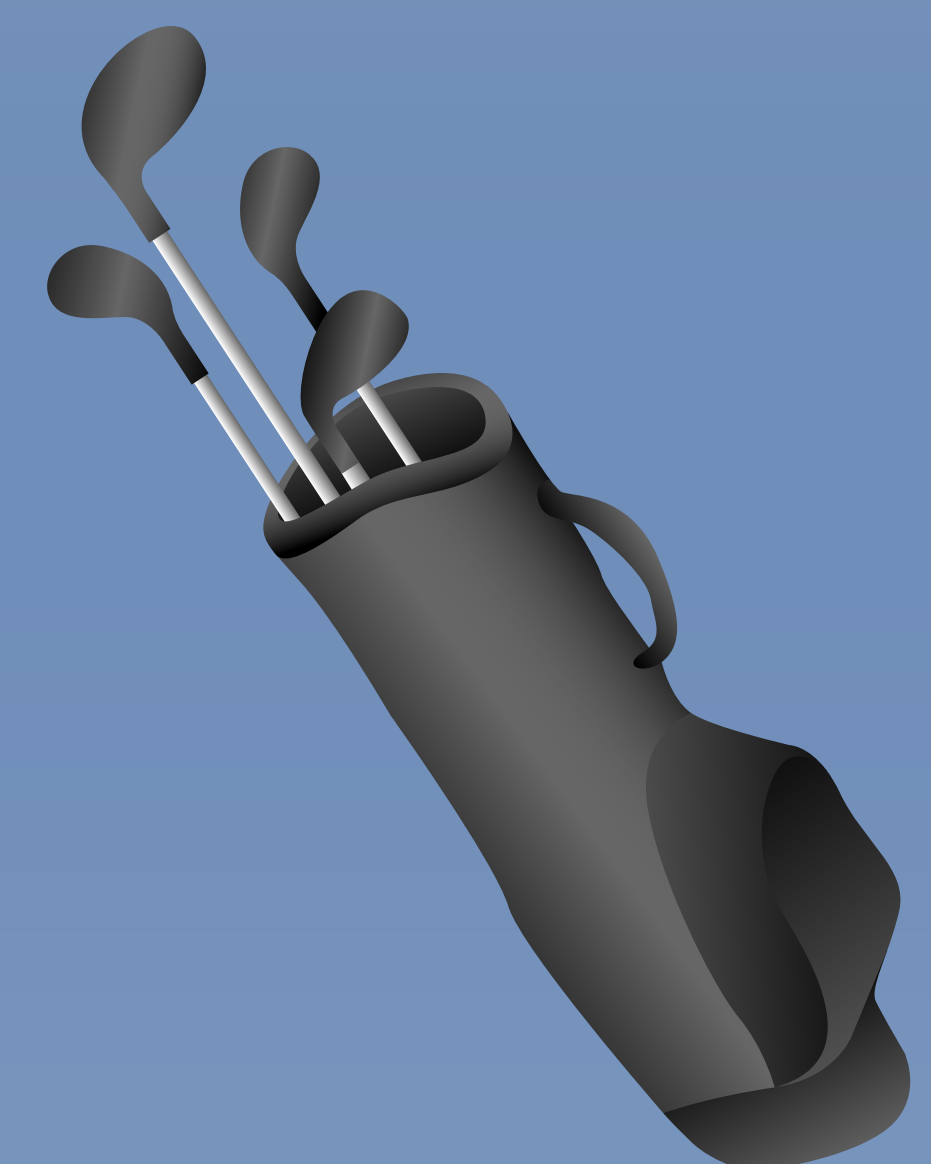
Lee

Hostile desert nomad; steals from rich homes and longs for a secure life



Mom

Suburbanite with refined tastes; escapes her home to go to Alaska



Saul Kimmer

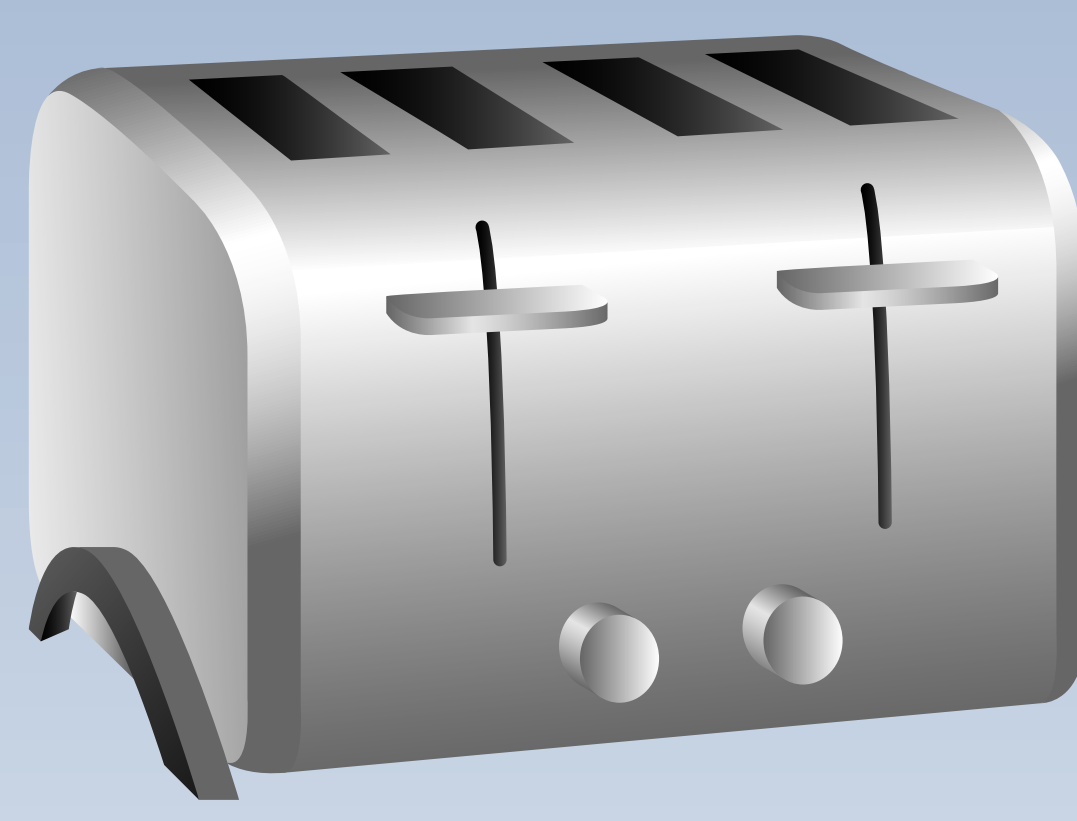
Charming Hollywood producer looking for the next blockbuster film

Symbols



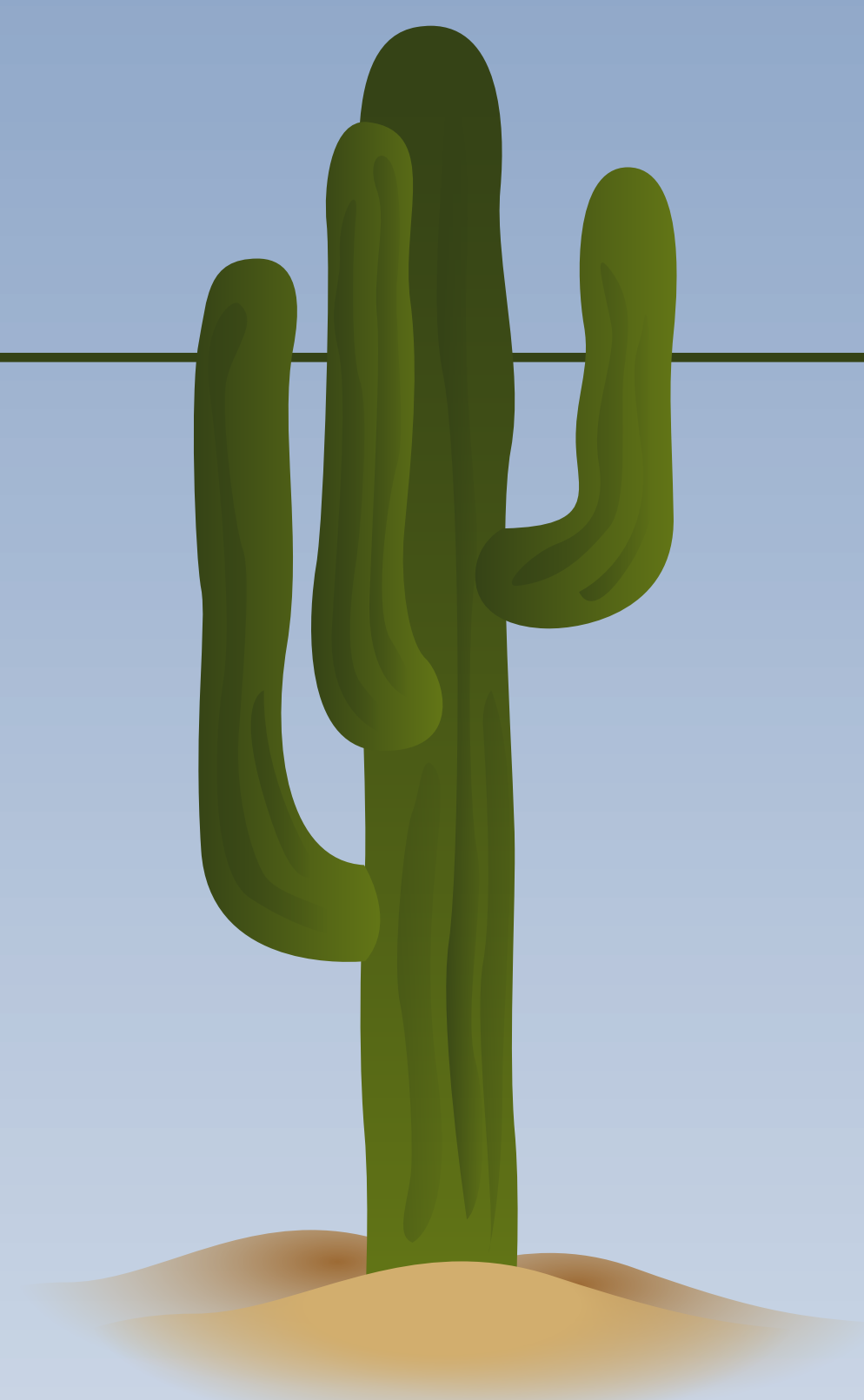
Typewriter

Represents the manufacturing of art as a consumer good



Toasters & Kitchenware

Symbolize ease and comfort but also domestic suffocation



Desert

Stands for possibility, independence, and life-threatening risks

Family people. Brothers. ... Real American-type people. They kill each other in the heat mostly.

Lee, Act I, Scene IV