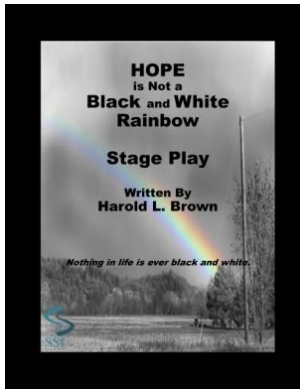


# Harold L. Brown's Hope is Not a Black and White Rainbow A Play in Two Acts

**Logline:** An orphaned trustee manager, sent to a town to wrap up a sawmill owner's estate, deals with escalating crime and complicated race relations, and uncovers unimaginable secrets about his interracial birth parents, as he begins to realize the lives of a community and displaced immigrants are dependent on him.

**Tagline:** Nothing is ever black and white!

**Synopsis:** At 27, NIC BARRE's a rising star. His black and white no nonsense approach to business make him the go-to guy at Coastal Business Advisors. But, he has secrets, and lives a life of guilt turned bitterness and anger in his unsuccessful search for the birth parents who abandoned him at age six. He struggles with his identity and physical features that hint at an ancestry he denies. Flashbacks and haunting voices scream in his head. He's resolved these events never happened, but has one dogged memory of a black body bag wheeled to a Coroner's vehicle.



Out-of-the-blue Nic learns his father wants to meet him. Nic is conflicted. He knows nothing about his parents, but discovers his father may be living in Hope, British Columbia. He takes an assignment to manage Rainbow Sawmills in Hope B.C. after the black owner, ISSAC FULLY, is killed. Hope B.C. brings familiarity for Nic and the haunting memories of a past long suppressed come flooding back.

Before he knows it, he is in the middle of a dying community's escalating racial war to survive on its own terms. The Mill is starved of timber. No one will work for the Mill. Sudan workers are brought in, and forced to live in a "Tent City." The Mill's woodlot is torched, and NYA LISSA, 27, an immigrant worker from Sudan and "spokesperson" is raped as her six-year-old son, ZAC, 6, watches on. Then Nic walks into Issac's office. He goes into shock. He stares at a photograph of the Mill's founder smoking a ceremonial "peace pipe" with an Indian Chief. He opens his wallet and pulls out a picture. It's weathered and worn, but it's the same picture. This sends Nic on a journey to search for the truth as he tries to salvage his assignment as the sawmill trustee.

**Cast:** 13 characters, various ages, including one child age 6, race and ethnicities, appear on stage with 3 voice over characters. NIC BARRE, 27, and NYA LISSA, 27, are the main characters, with KIM HUNT, ROBERT DIETRICH, GEORGE WILLIAMS, LLOYD CHARLIE, CHERYL GORDON in supporting roles.

**Setting:** Two primary locations—the **Rainbow Sawmill** and the **Rainbow Family Home**. In addition, there is a space on stage for minimalist settings used



to augment the main sets. This serves the scenes outside of the sawmill and home. Through the use of basic furnishings essential to the scene, for example a hospital bed or desk and chair, the space is transformed into a hospital waiting room, police department, child services department, an immigration office and other spaces. This



is supported through use of signage, including nameplates, such as HOPE POLICE DEPARTMENT.

## Act 1

Consists of 9 scenes taking place at the sawmill, augmented with minimalist set pieces. The play commences with NIC BARRE learning his birth father wants to see him as he arrives at the ransacked

Rainbow Sawmill offices. The sawmill's owner, ISSAC FULLY, has been killed in a series of escalating attacks on the saw mill and immigrant workers living in a tent city near the sawmill.

### EXCERPT ACT I SCENE 3 – Tent City

Nya demands that Nic visit Tent City.

*Tent City. One canvas tent, a water barrel and port-a-potty with an OUT OF ORDER sign posted on the door. It is drizzling rain.*

(NIC follows NYA past the tent to the water barrel. He is in disbelief.)

*The sounds of chickens and kids laughing as they chase the chickens.*

NYA

We're running low on water. Our mothers need it for their babies.

(NYA points at the port-a-potty.)

NYA

And over there, Mr. Barre, is our toilet. Filled to the brim. And... the tents leak.

*Basins catch rain dripping through a worn canvas tent roof.*

NYA

Mr. Fully did his best to get us some shelter. Lord knows no one in town would help.

(NIC takes in the third-world conditions. He is speechless.)

NYA

He came from my village. We came here to work for Rainbow, this place you call Hope.

*The rain stops. A rainbow appears.*

(NIC snaps back into the moment. He looks at the rainbow.)

NIC

Maybe this is not the pot-of-gold at the end of the rainbow.

(NYA watches ZAC kiss a rooster.)

NIC

Maybe it's time to go back home.

(NYA whips around. She is in NIC's face.)

NYA

Back to where? A place where every day holds the potential that my son will be killed?

(NIC looks at ZAC holding the rooster.)

NIC

My job's to deal with the sawmill.

(NYA glares at NIC.)

NIC

I've got no authority to deal with Mr. Fully's personal affairs.

(NIC nods toward the tent.)

NIC

That includes your personal accommodations.

(ZAC sets the rooster loose. He runs up to NYA for a hug.)

(NIC looks on, a moment of envy. He takes a deep breath.)

NIC

I'll bring it up with the Mayor.

(NIC starts to leave, then he looks at NYA.)

NIC

I'm sorry about what happened to you.

(NYA holds onto ZAC's hand. She nods.)

NYA

I'm sorry about Mr. Fully. He was a good man trying to help me. Help us.

NIC

So, have the police --

NYA

Mr. Fully wouldn't hurt anyone. There were problems with the local Indian band. Some former employees were upset.

(NYA watches ZAC leave, then turns to NIC.)

NYA

They choose to believe we are the problem.

(NIC does not respond. He starts to walk away.)

NYA  
He'd be alive.  
(NIC spins around.)  
NIC  
What?  
NYA  
Mr. Fully would still be alive if he was white.  
(NIC gives NYA a passive nod. He doesn't really care.)  
NYA  
They left him lying in a hospital hallway to bleed to death.  
(NIC searches for words, and decides it's best to say nothing.)

Act I ends as Nic learns about the suspicious circumstances surrounding the hotel fire that has left him without living accommodations.

## Act II

While non-conventional, Act II is longer and consists of 15 scenes commencing at the Rainbow Family Home after the fire and shifts back and forth to the sawmill, augmented with use of minimalist set pieces.

### EXCERPT ACT II SCENE 8 – Issac Fully's Sawmill Office

Nya tells Nic about her past as he struggles to find a solution to salvage the sawmill.

*Rainbow Sawmill Administration Building, ISSAC FULLY's office.*

(NIC slams a ledger shut. He swivels in his chair as he stares at a whiteboard filled with calculations.)  
(NYA enters with a care package.)  
NYA  
Figured you could use this.  
(NIC, graciously smiles. The curls in his hair are more visible.)  
(NYA studies the numbers on the whiteboard. She zeros in on: **TIMBER NEEDED TO BREAK EVEN 20 TRUCKLOADS/DAY, TIMBER SUPPLY 0.**)

*Beside the "0" in red marker: WE'RE HOOPED.*

(NIC pulls a sandwich out of NYA's care package as he watches NYA walk up to the whiteboard for a closer look.)  
NIC  
We're hooped.  
(NYA turns to NIC, as he bites into a sandwich.)  
NYA  
My village was raided. My mother raped, then killed. My father tried to save her. They killed him, then my brothers and sisters.  
(NYA shakes her head.)  
NYA  
I couldn't save them. All I could do was watch a bulldozer push their bodies into a big hole.  
(Her face hardens.)  
NYA  
They took my innocence, moved me from village to village, then this man took me in, gave me food, paid for school, in return for companionship.  
(NIC puts the sandwich down and listens intently.)  
NYA  
After I got pregnant, I was of no use to him.  
NIC  
Zac?  
(NYA turns back to NIC and nods.)  
NYA  
With the money I saved, I went to medical school.  
NIC  
And took care of Zac.  
NYA  
We went back to care for our relatives and friends. The village was levelled again. This time, everyone was killed.

(NYA's strength and resolve is evident.)  
 NYA  
 Except for Bem, Zac, a few of us.  
 (NYA picks up a black marker, writes "GOT" and strikes out "O" and "D", changes "R" to a "V" to form phrase "WE'VE GOT HOPE.")  
 NYA  
 Hope, Nic, it's all we got and it's all we need.  
 (NIC stares at NYA. His life problems seem so insignificant.)  
 NYA  
 Have you talked with Bem?  
 NIC  
 I don't think--  
 NYA  
 You think everyone from Africa uses stone axes and hunts with a wooden spear.  
 (NIC acknowledges she's right.)  
 NIC  
 We talked about salvaging burnt wood.  
 NYA  
 What about the swamp timber?  
 NIC  
 What about the swamp timber?  
 NYA  
 Let's go.  
 (As they start to leave NYA motions to NIC's hair.)  
 NYA  
 Sure that's not natural?  
 (NIC does not respond. They exit the main office, heading toward the woodlot.)

## Why is this stage play important now?

“Hope is Not a Black and White Rainbow” speaks to a global shift that has been slowly transforming the makeup of individuals, families and communities, and the struggle to embrace a new world and release the old world beliefs and values that have outlived their usefulness. The story has many layers as it explores the growing global village of interracial/mixed heritage families and the blurred lines of long held beliefs that we live in a very black and white world. Harold believes that racism is man-made, while a world rich in diversity is God-given, as is free-will—the ability to choose the kind of world we want to live in.

The story speaks of the devastating affects racism has on the lives of individuals, families and communities. It is hoped audiences will immerse themselves in the shoes of Nic and Nya, individuals from two different worlds, who are brought together to tackle a universal problem—adapt or perish.

It is a story about overcoming racial obstacles, a story of humanity at its worst and best—a story about the human condition which at its core is blind to colour when the stakes are about survival. It is a personal journey of realization of how deficient the world is if everything is viewed as black and white, rather than as a world with an entire spectrum of colours, like a rainbow. It is a story of hope—the essence and reason to live—regardless of our race, cultural background and heritage.

## Why is Harold L. Brown the person to tell this story?

Harold’s early screenplays dealt with racism – “Destiny of Tar and Feathers,” a story of one man’s struggle with his Metis heritage, and “Hope is Not a Black and White Rainbow,” a story of a man coming to grips with being born into an interracial marriage and the consequences. It is part of his ongoing thirst to better understand humanity and why he has certain immediate responses to certain things. As someone once said, “If you go back far enough, we are all related.” His work experience directly ties to the subject matter, and includes Indian and Northern Affairs (Ottawa) and Alberta Children’s Services. Harold talks at length about HOPE IS NOT A BLACK AND WHITE RAINBOW, including his early personal experiences with bullying and racism in an interview with WILDsound Festival. The 2014 interview can be found at: <https://vimeo.com/787743692>

## Stage Play Honours and Awards

The stage play has resonated with international audiences, with recognition including:

**2023 Screencraft Stage Play Competition Beverly Hills, CA** – Quarterfinalist Best Stage Play (In Competition); **2022 Las Vegas International Film and Screenwriting Festival** – Best Stage Play; **2022 Northern Virginia International Film and Music Festival** – Jury Award Stage Play; **2022 Katra Film Series New York City, New York** – Best Stage Play; **2022 Crime List, Ink and Cinema, USA** – Official Selection/Finalist – Competed against other Stage Plays, Screenplays, Teleplays, Books, Manuscripts and Short Stories

## Reviews of the Story (Screenplay)

“There is some great character work here — Nya is an amazing role for an actress. Her history is heartbreaking. This is an ambitious script. It’s message is profound. The setting and situation feel original/fresh. Action lines are succinct and vividly paint the film in the mind of the reader — well done. There’s so much to like in this piece.” **Academy Nicholl Fellowships in Screenwriting, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences**

“Our readers thoroughly enjoyed your script. You crafted an intriguing and mysterious world.” **Austin Film Festival**

“Smart concept...” **Slamdance Festival Judge Screenwriting Competition**

“This is one of those compelling screenplays that not only entertains its audience but also has something to say.” **WILDSOUND Screenplay Festival Judge**

## About Harold L. Brown - Writer, Producer, Publisher

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



Entering his eighth decade, Harold believes that **“Story is life well told!”** His family roots are Norwegian and Finnish, where story is core to passing on history to future generations. He writes from a desire to understand and learn about himself and the world around him, hoping to inspire, inform, educate and entertain audiences as they follow an individual’s journey to overcome obstacles, while dealing with their own personal obstacles or inner demons that have left a lasting impact. These are the stories that cause him to pause and reflect—to think. His stories are cerebral, but, also tug at a person’s heartstrings and truly shake them to their very core. For Harold, it is not so much about what he has to say on a subject—it’s what it causes the reader, actor or viewer to feel deep down inside. If a story evokes a strong response, if a character pulls an actor in and challenges them to dig deep into their emotional reservoir; or if the story causes a reader or viewer to pause and reflect on life, and perhaps talk about their emotional experience, that is the greatest reward he could ever receive—he believes he will have succeeded as a writer.

A seasoned executive, turned fiction writer, his writing has garnered **79** screenplay/teleplay wins and a further **81** nominations (IMDB) at 50+ film festivals and writing competitions in Canada, US, Mexico, Spain, Australia, Sweden, Ireland, Netherlands, Chile, Germany, Romania, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Italy, India, China/Hong Kong and UK; **twelve** book awards and **three** stage play awards. He is the recipient of the **Jean-Luc Godard Honoree Award**, **three Writer of the Year Awards**, **The Mico Award for Innovation, Courage and Excellence** and **Producer Emergence Program Gerri Cook Memorial Award**. He is profiled in **“The Top 100 Indie Writers in the World.”**