

The Plug
(working title)

A one-act play
By C. Lee Dionne

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CARTER—late 20s, mixed-race (white-passing), male. Carter has been a “nurse” at Mt. Airy Medical Center for four years, jaded and afraid of resigning to a life of nothingness.

BEETY—mid 40s, black, male. Also a “nurse” at Airy, Beety’s relaxed demeanor stems from having resigned to a life of nothingness years ago.

CARRIE—mid-30s, white, female. Carrie is the supervisor of the “nurses”, eager to be accepted and move up at the hospital.

ELLIS—late 30s, black, female. Ellis is a newly-admitted patient, exhausted from being kicked around the hospital circuit. She is ill, but can’t seem to get answers as to why.

DR. MANN—early 40s, white, male. Dr. Mann is an attending ER physician at the hospital. He thinks himself progressive.

TIME

Present day.

PLACE

Various rooms inside of Mt. Airy Medical Center.

ON STAGING:

Ideally, all four rooms sit on stage at once, separated however you please.

SCENE 1

LIGHTS UP on an ICU room where an obscured patient lies in a HOSPITAL BED, despondent. Standing over the patient is BEETY, with his hand on the patient's chest. We hear the BEEPING of a MONITOR and SOUNDS of a VENTILATOR. After some time, BEETY presses a button on the ventilator. The SOUND stops. The BEEPING of the monitor slows. Eventually, it flatlines

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP on a small employee break room at Mt. Airy Hospital, affixed with the usual accoutrements: an old microwave, Mr. Coffee, and two TABLES with utilitarian CHAIRS scattered around. At one table sits CARTER, head buried in his arms as if he were in a high-school history class. We hear the sound of a PA VOICE overhead.

PA VOICE

Code blue in trauma, code blue in trauma.

BEETY enters in scrubs, carrying an old thermos and lunch pail. He bee-lines to CARTER, slamming his pail on the table.

BEETY

Wake up!

CARTER snaps to.

BEETY

You work a double?

CARTER

No.

BEETY

Then what are you doing here so early?

CARTER

I couldn't sleep.

BEETY

A puddle on that table says otherwise.

CARTER

What time is it?

BEETY

Six 'o one.

CARTER slumps from the chair and wanders to the empty Mr. Coffee. He picks it up, then looks around aimlessly.

BEETY

First day, Carter?

(he motions CARTER over)

It comes with two.

BEETY takes the lid off his thermos and splits the two built-in cups, then pours the coffee.

CARTER

Convenient.

BEETY

For the *other* person...

CARTER

(taking a sip)

I used to nap in the kitchen.

BEETY

On the second floor?!

CARTER

No, at the restaurant. I'd get there early to set myself up for the rush, then conk out for half-an-hour in dry storage.

BEETY

Where was this, again?

CARTER

Outback Steakhouse.

BEETY laughs.

CARTER

Seven years, my friend.

BEETY

I'm trying to picture you dropping onions in a fryer.

CARTER

Drop? Oh no, you've gotta spin 'em...

As BEETY mimes his onion toss, CARRIE enters holding a clipboard.

CARRIE

Good morning, ang—

BEETY AND CARTER

Good morning, Carrie...

CARRIE

Carter—to what do we owe the pleasure?

CARTER

I'm...on the schedule?

CARRIE

For the midday shift; it's six a.m.

CARTER

Huh. It sure is.

CARRIE

Are you on the clock?

CARTER

That would be time theft.

CARRIE

Correct. And being in this wing *off* the clock is trespassing.

BEETY

Carrie...

CARRIE takes a beat.

CARRIE

Well, since you're both here, I only have to say this once. As you know, Mt. Airy Medical has been purchased by The Bestwell Group.

BEETY and CARTER hum the "Bestwell jingle".

CARRIE

Very cute. As of today, your positions at Bestwell Mt. Airy have been re-classified—

BEETY

Wait...

CARRIE

Let me finish, Beety. Your positions have been re-classified to an L4.

BEETY

L4?!

CARTER

We're getting a raise?!

CARRIE

You are not.

Beat.

CARRIE

What you *are* getting is to keep your job.

CARTER

Unbelievable.

BEETY

Are there any changes to the benefits package?

CARRIE

No, thank God.

(she sits)

But you will have to up your dosage.

CARTER pushes his chair out and rises, slowly
pacing around the room.

CARRIE

I understand this is not ideal...

CARTER

Being asked to play undertaker is not *ideal*, Carrie. But fine—that's the gig. I just...have you ever taken this shit?

CARRIE

I have not.

CARTER

Of course you haven't. Why would you? You're not the one pulling the plug on comatose patients every day.

BEETY

Carter.

CARTER

They're only doing this to cover their asses...

BEETY

(quietly to CARTER)

Sit the fuck down!

CARRIE

He's actually not wrong. Increasing your SSRI intake helps protect against claims of manic bias.

CARTER

See, I—wait, what the fuck is “manic bias”?

CARRIE

As does the next stipulation: you're both going to be spending time shadowing an attending physician.

BEETY

Seriously?

CARRIE

It's non-negotiable.

CARRIE rises, removing two pill bottles from her pocket and placing them on the table. She then reads from her clipboard.

CARRIE

“You are an integral part of operational harmony at Bestwell Mt. Airy Medical. The task you perform, while daunting, is essential in ferrying our patients to their final destination, wherever that may be. Please take two of these pills daily to help feel better, and let us know if there is anything we can do to make you more comfortable.”

Beat. CARTER and BEETY are silent.

CARRIE

Your assignments will be in the box.

(she begins to exit, then turns back)

And Carter? Clock in or leave; this isn't a restaurant.

CARRIE exits. BEETY takes his bottle of pills
and pops it open.

BEETY

"Ferry" was a nice touch.

BEETY takes his pills.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP on a emergency room stall—a room with two BEDS divided by a CURTAIN. In one bed sits ELLIS, draped in a HOSPITAL GOWN, waiting to be seen. The other bed is empty. Just outside the room, CARTER waits, eyeing ELLIS. DR. MANN approaches the doorway with a MOBILE DESK.

DR. MANN

Carter?

CARTER jumps, slightly frightened.

DR. MANN

Whoops! Sorry; scare easy, huh?

DR. MANN reaches into the room to pull the door shut. ELLIS notices, and DR. MANN gives her the “one sec” finger and a smile as he closes it.

DR. MANN

Gerry Mann.

DR. MANN extends his elbow for a bump, CARTER leaves him hanging.

CARTER

Carter’s fine.

DR. MANN

Sounds like a tax!

(Beat.)

Well, I’m sure you’re super amped to be here. I just wanna lay down a few ground rules before we go in, if that’s okay?

CARTER

Your world, doc.

DR. MANN

Ah, come on—we’re all one big Bestwell family, now! That said, *you*...do not exist.

CARTER

Naturally.

DR. MANN

See? I knew you'd get it. You're a med student, this is a teaching hospital, and there is no such thing as a "kill switch guy".

CARTER

We prefer "angels of death".

DR. MANN

Much more poetic. Shall we?

DR. MANN and CARTER enter the room.
CARTER looms back slightly as MANN approaches ELLIS.

DR. MANN

You must be Elyse?

ELLIS

Ellis.

DR. MANN

Ellis, my mistake. I'm Dr. Mann, and that slightly sheepish figure behind me is Nurse Carter. We've got a newly-minted teaching program at Mt. Airy—is it okay if Nurse Carter observes?

ELLIS

That's fine.

DR. MANN

Excellent. So what's going on, Ellis?

DR. MANN grabs the MOBILE DESK and begins typing as ELLIS speaks.

ELLIS

I've been getting these dizzy spells—

DR. MANN

Are you pregnant?

Beat. ELLIS is immediately put off.

DR. MANN

Sorry, I have to ask.

ELLIS

(she sighs)

No. I did miscarry two years ago.

DR. MANN nods and continues typing.

ELLIS

The spells usually pair with this pain around my lower back and abdomen.

DR. MANN

Is the pain causing the dizziness?

ELLIS

I get dizzy first.

DR. MANN

I see.

(reaching out to ELLIS)

May I?

ELLIS nods, and DR. MANN begins to palpate.
CARTER inches closer.

DR. MANN

Does that hurt?

ELLIS

A little.

DR. MANN. palpates another spot.

ELLIS

(wincing)

Ah!

DR. MANN

One-to-ten?

ELLIS

Eight.

DR. MANN

Eight? That's—eight is, "I can't breathe, it hurts so much."

Another beat; even CARTER is getting uncomfortable.

DR. MANN
(returning to typing)

Continue.

ELLIS

It started a few years ago—

DR. MANN

After the miscarriage?

ELLIS

Not long after.

DR. MANN

Any nausea?

ELLIS nods.

DR. MANN

Drinking? Smoking?

ELLIS

I've been sober over a year; quit smoking during the pandemic.

DR. MANN

What about anxiety?

ELLIS

Sure, I get anxious.

DR. MANN

It says here you take Xanax...*daily*?

ELLIS

A quarter—half, sometimes.

DR. MANN

Every day?

ELLIS

My primary care told me to take it *as needed*. I can show you the bottle.

DR. MANN

Not necessary, thank you.

Beat. CARTER now looms directly over DR. MANN's shoulder, reading his notes.

DR. MANN

Any family history of depression, substance abuse?

ELLIS
(defensively)

My mom is bi-polar.

DR. MANN

I'm sorry to hear that.

ELLIS

I'm not.

DR. MANN finally senses the tension and pushes his computer away. CARTER steps back.

DR. MANN

Okie dokie; we're gonna take some blood to check your levels and give you something for the pain and nausea. Any allergies?

ELLIS

Penicillin.

DR. MANN

Rats—there goes the good stuff.

ELLIS

What's that supposed to mean?

DR. MANN

Because you...ah, never mind.

ELLIS

You think I'm drug-seeking?

DR. MANN

No, I didn't—

ELLIS

You think I'm making it up.

DR. MANN

Absolutely not—

ELLIS

I *do not* want to be here, talking to yet another doctor whose first assumption is that I'm pregnant.

CARTER chuckles audibly.

ELLIS

(to CARTER)

You think this is funny?

CARTER

Oh, no—I—

DR. MANN motions CARTER away.

DR. MANN

Ellis, I promise: we're going to get you taken care of.

ELLIS

(tired)

Sure.

DR. MANN slides the MOBILE DESK away and moves to the door. CARTER, uncomfortable, scurries behind him. MANN pulls the door as they exit. ELLIS begins lightly sobbing.

DR. MANN

What the hell?

CARTER

Mann, she had you.

DR. MANN

No, I mean her—wait, what do *you* mean?

CARTER

Come on, don't make me say it.

DR. MANN

I'm figuratively dying to know.

CARTER

You definitely made some leaps in there.

DR. MANN

That's a leap. Look, the whole point of this is for you to learn what not to say if a patient speaks to you. Do. Not. Give. Them. Anything.

CARTER

Do you hear yourself?

DR. MANN

Ammunition, Carter. Anything you say *can* and *will* be used against you in a court of law.

CARTER

And you did what?

DR. MANN

I tactfully dodged bullets while attempting to determine whether the patient's life was in danger. Trauma is a dance, my friend, and not one you want to improvise. Now come on, we've got all day for you to tell me how much of a piece of shit I am.

They exit.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 4

LIGHTS UP on the break room, where
CARTER and BEETY are eating lunch.

BEETY

...he grabs my hand, looks me dead in the eye and says, "I love you son."

CARTER

Oof.

BEETY

So I'm turning to Dr. Kim, like, "Please help." And she just smiles, nods, and motions forward.

CARTER

What the fuck does that mean?

BEETY

Apparently that I'm supposed to say, "I love you too, Dad."

CARTER

No! Did you?!

BEETY

I did.

CARTER

What did he say?

BEETY

He pissed himself.

(They laugh.)

Carrie thinks she's cute, putting me in geriatrics.

CARTER

You got off easy.

BEETY

Do tell.

CARTER

ED.

BEETY

What?! Oh, man, she is *trying* to get you to quit.

CARTER

Quit? She's trying to get me *arrested*—pairing me with some racist, trauma doctor version of Fred Rogers.

BEETY

Old white guy?

CARTER

Younger; two-faced as hell. You could tell he must have fucked up somewhere, 'cause none of the patients were mortally wounded or anything.

BEETY

Carter, I don't think you understand how the emergency department works.

CARTER

No, seriously. He didn't even check the board, they just gave him names. And after the first one, his mood shifted.

BEETY

What happened?

CARTER

A patient called him on some shit. She was right: Mann wasn't listening.

CARRIE enters carrying a clipboard.

CARRIE

Good morning, angels.

BEETY AND CARTER

Good morning, Carrie.

CARRIE

How was everyone's first day of school?

BEETY

I've got a bone to pick with you.

CARRIE

If it's about your assignments—I didn't choose them.

BEETY

Mhm.

CARRIE

Carter, before you meet up with your attending, I need you to head over to ICU for an assignment.

CARRIE pulls a sheet from her clipboard and dangles it.

CARTER

Classic.

CARTER rises and grabs the sheet, heading to the door.

CARTER

Did you tell Dr. Mann?

BEETY freezes. CARRIE winces.

CARTER

I don't want him to think I'm cutting class...
(he notices BEETY)

CARRIE

You're fine, Carter; go.

CARTER

Hang on—

CARRIE

Go.

CARTER, confused, exits. CARRIE takes a seat across from BEETY.

CARRIE

Look, I—

BEETY

Didn't have a choice?

CARRIE

No, I did; I chose *not* to torture you.
(beat)

You knew he still worked here.

BEETY
“Mann wasn’t listening.”

CARRIE
Huh?

BEETY
Carter.

CARRIE
Please tell me you weren’t talking about your patients.

BEETY
We’re not doctors, Carrie.

CARRIE
Same rules apply.

BEETY
How about the rule that patient neglect costs you your license?

CARRIE
Beety—

BEETY
And he still works in emergency?!

CARRIE
You’ve been a building apart for five years and neither one of you—

BEETY
He was supposed to be reassigned—

CARRIE
Enough!

(beat)
Can we just go back two minutes?

BEETY
Sure, Carrie.

BEETY rises to exit.

BEETY
Can we take it a little further, though? Back to where my fucking wife is still alive?

BEETY exits.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 5

LIGHTS UP on an ICU room where an obscured patient lies, despondent. We hear the BEEPING of a MONITOR and SOUNDS of a VENTILATOR. CARTER enters, taking his time crossing to the ventilator. He looks down at the patient; the room is still. After some time, he presses a button on the ventilator. The SOUND stops. The BEEPING of the monitor slows. Eventually, it flatlines; CARTER pulls out a DIGITAL RECORDER and checks his WATCH.

CARTER

Time of death: three fifty-two PM.

He turns off the monitor.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 6

LIGHTS UP on an EXAM ROOM with two BEDS divided by a CURTAIN. ELLIS is in one of the beds, scrolling on her phone, singing to herself. CARTER is passing in the hall when he hears her voice—it's heavenly. He slowly approaches the doorway and stands, listening. After a few moments, he knocks.

ELLIS

Yes? Oh...

CARTER

Ellis, right?

ELLIS

Look at that, like it's a common noun or something.

CARTER

What are you still doing here?

ELLIS

I don't feel well. Listen, I don't need—

CARTER

No, no—I'm glad...well, not *glad*, but...

(beat)

What did you say to convince Dr. Mann?

ELLIS

(chuckling)

That I would sue him.

CARTER

You're serious...

ELLIS

Of course I'm serious! You just got bought out; nothing scares conglomerates like lawsuits.

CARTER

Not a bad move.

ELLIS

Are you one of those people that always uses negatives to attribute credit?

CARTER

I...might...be.

ELLIS

It's a white people thing. "You're not doing a bad job at maintaining your weight."

CARTER

Shit. I'm not white, though.

ELLIS

Could've fooled me.

(beat)

What's your focus?

CARTER

Focus?

ELLIS

Your specialty.

CARTER

Oh, I...

(beat)

I'm not a student.

ELLIS

Please tell me you're a pharma rep.

CARTER

Why?

ELLIS

Because that's a slam dunk case.

CARTER

(laughing)

You're not 'gonna believe me.

ELLIS

Well now I'm invested.

Beat.

CARTER

I kill people.

ELLIS

You're an assassin?

CARTER

You could say that—I do *get paid* to kill people.

ELLIS

A hospital assassin...

CARTER

They bring me in to pull the plug on people when no one else wants to.

ELLIS

That's a thing?

CARTER

You'd be surprised.

ELLIS

Wow. Wait—am I dying?

CARTER

I legitimately have no idea.

ELLIS

So that's...not...why you're here...

CARTER

I was on my way to find Mann when I heard you singing.

ELLIS

I'm sorry.

CARTER

No; what? You have a beautiful voice.

ELLIS

Thank you.

(beat)

How long have you been...

CARTER

Four years.

ELLIS

What's your score? I assume you keep count.

CARTER

I, uh...stopped counting during COVID.

ELLIS

Shit, I am so sorry.

CARTER

(sarcastically)

Don't be; I'm a hero!

(beat)

They make so much noise about keeping us a secret and you seem...pretty comfortable with it.

ELLIS

Absolutely nothing in the world of medicine surprises me anymore. I've been billed *tens of thousands* of dollars, and no one can tell me what's wrong.

CARTER

What do you think it is?

ELLIS

My WebMD search history would disgust you.

CARTER

What if they don't find anything?

ELLIS

Then I just keep living in the hell that is my body.

ELLIS becomes dizzy and latches to the bed.

CARTER moves closer.

CARTER

Whoa—

ELLIS

Easy, Death; I just need to lay down.

DR. MANN enters from the hall.

DR. MANN

There you are.

(to ELLIS)

Ellis, you doing okay?

ELLIS

Not really.

DR. MANN

What's goin' on?

ELLIS

I think I might pass out...

DR. MANN

I'll have the nurse bring some Zofran. Carter, meet in my office?

CARTER

Wait, shouldn't you—

DR. MANN

She'll be fine; five minutes, tops.

CARTER looks to ELLIS, who has retreated into herself. He exits.

DR. MANN

Be right back, okay?

DR. MANN follows, pulling the door behind him.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 7

LIGHTS UP on an office, where CARTER is seated in front of Mann's DESK. DR. MANN enters.

MANN

Carter, welcome. Take a seat...

CARTER

You do realize you're not my supervisor, right?

MANN

I'm not trying to—

CARTER

And she is—

MANN

They are not your patient. Don't assume pronouns.

CARTER

You are a smug piece of shit.

MANN

And *you* are expendable, Carter. I've never seen anyone so ungrateful for such an easy job—all you have to do is walk in, press a button, and walk out. Greeters at Costco expend more energy.

CARTER

There he is.

MANN

And you come at me with this hostility! Like...man, listen: I am not your enemy.

CARTER

I—

MANN

Because, I understand the emotional toll your job takes.

CARTER

Fuck off.

MANN

You think that I—as a trauma physician—haven't seen my share of death?

CARTER

You would turn it into a competition.

MANN

What do they have you on?

CARTER

(caught off-guard)

Excuse me?

MANN

Lexapro? Paxil?

CARTER relaxes a bit.

CARTER

We take Paxil.

MANN

Paxil! That shit is rough. Did you get the weird head-buzz?

CARTER

For three weeks.

MANN

Still pushing garbage; I take Wellbutrin. Not the best but...

Beat. CARTER has lost his steam.

MANN

Carter, they feed you old drugs. They put you with me because they think...well, they think you're not a person. This corporate buyout bullshit—it all rolls downhill. You and I, we're in the trenches, my friend.

CARTER

You're slick, Mann; and you really seem convinced people buy it.

MANN

Well, I sell cheap...

CARTER

Ellis isn't imagining things.

MANN

What qualifies you to make that determination?

CARTER

What qualifies me? I don't know, empathy?

MANN

Ooh, emotions! You still feel those?

CARTER

I—what?

MANN

I'm serious!

DR. MANN opens his desk-drawer and pulls out a bottle of pills.

MANN

Top shelf, still in trials. Let yourself feel however *you* want.

CARTER

You're fucking with me.

CARTER takes a beat. MANN hones in.

MANN

Take the pills, and you don't have to come back to do rounds.

CARTER

You're serious, huh?

MANN

I'll sign the paperwork right now. Aced it.

Beat.

CARTER

What are you so afraid of?

MANN

Losing my job, dipshit. I caught the vibe in there; you can see Ellis as much as you want *after* she's discharged, which should be pretty soon.

CARTER reaches for the pills.

MANN

Carter—two a day to help feel better.

CARTER exits.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 8

LIGHTS UP on the break room where, again, CARTER appears to be asleep as BEETY enters. BEETY sits at the table and unpacks his breakfast.

You need help.

BEETY

CARTER stays head-buried.

Mann gave me drugs.

CARTER

Gerald Mann?

BEETY

One and the same.

CARTER

BEETY sighs.

That was loaded.

CARTER

How's he doing?

BEETY

Mann? He's a motherfucker.

CARTER

Always has been.

BEETY

Your kids go to the same school or something?

CARTER

BEETY

He's the reason my wife is dead.

CARTER sits up.

BEETY

She was constantly in pain towards the end, but she knew how much I hated this place. I begged her to go to emergency; when she finally caved, we got Dr. Mann.

CARTER

He brushed her off?

BEETY

He said, "None of your tests indicate the level of pain you're claiming; could you be having a panic attack?"

(beat)

She died the next day.

CARTER

How is he still a doctor?

BEETY

Because the system is fucked, Carter—couldn't afford a lawyer.

CARTER

But the hospital—

BEETY

Promised me an MD-level benefits package. With the buyout, I'll be able to cash in and pay for my daughter's degree.

CARTER looks visibly ill.

BEETY

Don't you dare judge me, kid.

CARTER

Ellis.

CARTER bolts through the door as CARRIE enters, shoving her.

CARRIE

What the fuck was that about?

BEETY

Someone named Ellis, I think.

CARRIE

(reading)

“Ellison Danley”?

CARRIE raises her clipboard and shows
BEETY.

BEETY

Shit.

BEETY grabs the form and sprints through the
door.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 9

LIGHTS UP on an ICU room where a patient lies, despondent, connected to a VENTILATOR. Standing over the patient is DR. MANN. BEETY enters the room.

Ah, crap.

DR. MANN

Where's Carter?

BEETY

How do you—oh. Oh no. You're a plug guy?

DR. MANN

We prefer "angels—

BEETY

"Of death," yeah I know. I just...I thought you were...you know, a janitor or something.

DR. MANN

Of course you did. Where is Carter?

BEETY

No clue. Not my patient.

DR. MANN

And Ellis?

BEETY

Disch—wait, you thought—Ellis-on Danley is right here. You got the papers?
(taking the sheet)
Little old to be involved in high school drama, aren't you?

DR. MANN

BEETY

You can leave now.

DR. MANN

Nah, I wanna see this, this—whatever it is you do that’s so vital to our Bestwell core values.

BEETY, fuming, walks over to the patient and composes himself. He gently places his hand on the chest of the patient and begins to pray.

BEETY

Heavenly Father, please shepherd this soul to your house as they cross the river of consciousness into the great beyond. Grant them mercy for their shortcomings, as your son himself asked forgiveness for us all. Blessed is your light, and the light we carry—those of us lucky enough to sit up from the mud and mire. Amen.

BEETY turns the ventilator off, followed by the monitor. The monitor slows to FLATLINE.

BEETY

Rest in peace, brother.

BEETY pulls out a RECORDING DEVICE.

BEETY

Time of death: ten fifty-seven AM.

DR. MANN

That was actually really lovely.

BEETY

Keep your goddamn mouth shut.

DR. MANN

What? I was trying to pay you a compli—

BEETY hauls back and punches DR. MANN.

BEETY

You have absolutely no business being in medicine, Gerald. None.

DR. MANN

Why, because I’m a dick?

BEETY heads to the door.

DR. MANN

Then what?

DR. MANN kicks the bed.

DR. MANN

Come on, Beatrice—what?! Ow...

BEETY

That looks painful, Doctor, but not *that* painful; could you be having a panic attack?

BEETY exits.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 10

LIGHTS UP on a job fair. CARTER and BEETY wander around.

BEETY

What about a legacy trade? Carpentry, metalwork—

CARTER

Plumbing?

BEETY

You're still young...

CARTER

I'm pushing thirty.

ELLIS enters and approaches them from behind.

BEETY

A little perspective might be in order, Carter...

ELLIS

He's working on that.

CARTER

Oh hi there.

ELLIS

Hi.

BEETY

How you feeling, kid?

ELLIS

Today is good.

CARTER

I'm pretty sure my mom has that hanging in the bathroom at her beach house,

Your mom has a beach house?
ELLIS

No—she lives at the beach.
CARTER

She can *afford insurance* on a beach house?
BEETY

Holding out on us...
ELLIS

Guys, it's not like that.
CARTER

White people.
ELLIS

Every time.
BEETY

You've got to stop saying that.
CARTER

How about that one?
BEETY

Crisis counseling?
CARTER

What? You're perfect! Patience, acceptance...
BEETY

You're doing a bit.
CARTER

...optimism: these are all things you could *work on* as a crisis counselor!
BEETY

Shouldn't I do that *before* attempting to help people?
CARTER

What a novel idea!
ELLIS

BEETY

I want you to go over there.

CARTER

Not a chance.

BEETY

Go over, or I'll have Ellis slip that drug Mann gave you into your coffee.

CARTER begrudgingly exits.

ELLIS

Thank you for being so good to him.

BEETY

My wife collected strays; she was a bartender.

ELLIS

Where at?

BEETY

Luke's, over on third.

ELLIS

Shut up! I *lived* there in undergrad. Did she have a nose ring?

BEETY

That's Barbie.

ELLIS

That girl *always* poured heavy.

BEETY

Tell me about it; I've been sober since the day she died.

Beat.

ELLIS

Do you find peace in what you do?

BEETY

I do. I shouldn't—it should torture me to end the life of someone I've never truly met. But I don't see them that way. And I hope—I pray—that when I meet them on the other side, they'll tell me about their lives. "And then mud lies back down."

ELLIS

What?

BEETY

Vonnegut, Cat's Cradle. Don't you read?!

LIGHTS OUT.

END OF PLAY.