

CARVILLE  
Writers' Statement

When we started talking about writing this show, we couldn't believe that a place like "Carville" existed. We thought, people should hear about this; this is amazing. We were fascinated by the fact that people in America were rounded up and stripped of their identities, and forced to live in a sort of alternate world - in the twentieth century, and no one even talks about it. As we investigated further, and discovered the deep connection the residents of Carville forged with not only each other, but the place itself, we realized this is more than a story about a disease, this is a story about identity, religion, human resilience, humanity, fate, and what it means to live.

The idea of identity has become a constant topic in today's news programs, op ed pieces, chat rooms, social media, and elections. In today's world, many are trying to shed the labels society has given them. In the world of Carville, we get to explore what happens when people are stripped of their identities, and are forced to give up their privilege or their prejudice. Some cling to their identities: the luxuries of being rich, white, educated, married, free. Some have become accustomed to their oppression and placement in society. When all this is gone... what happens?

We are both survivors of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, having lived as roommates in our early 20s in NYC during the attacks, and having moved home to New Orleans just before the hurricane. We identify, and know others will too, with Dr. Dyer: the young, cocksure dreamer in all of us, unaware of his mortality. He represents that youthful duality of being voraciously confident, but also the anxiety that accompanies it: the fear that you may never accomplish that which you set out to do, and you will have wasted your life. This is the age before you realize you don't always get to choose your path. You have big plans, but life, the universe, GOD, your calling.... Well, they may have different plans.

We both faced this head on when we moved into our NYC apartment, and the city was attacked 10 days later. Suddenly, life for us was much more about survival, and our dreams about stepping on a Broadway stage took a back seat. Life became more about community, and less about ME and my personal pursuits. This is the same journey Dr. Dyer takes. As he ages, he works tirelessly to find the cure. But like Moses, who lead the people for 40 years in the desert, but never got to see the promised land, Dr. Dyer never discovers the cure. But must instead be satisfied, indeed fulfilled by the seeds that he has planted for the scientist who will find the cure in the future.

Carville is an ideal setting to explore this idea of MY desires, versus the development of COMMUNITY, and how community develops within horrific circumstances. Carville serves not only as a view into our history, but also as a warning for the future - history can, and does repeat itself. Carville is a microcosm of the world, showing how easily our fear can cause us to lose our humanity.