



God's Waiting Room

By Ashlin Halfnight

Directed by Alexis Poledouris

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Review by Michael Wang

A beer or two usually can't relieve the gravity of death, but that's exactly what Jeff Clarke tries to do in Ashlin Halfnight's *God's Waiting Room*. The audience members at this Fringe Festival play are each offered a beer, and then instantly thrown into Purgatory to witness the tension and absurdity of the afterlife as both fellow visitors in limbo and as voyeurs to four souls attempting to find meaning in the last scenes of their lives. While death and self-destruction become prevalent and painful themes throughout the production, this ensemble cast brings wit and feistiness to their lament.



Scene from *God's Waiting Room* now playing at the Fringe Festival

God's Waiting Room focuses on the past lives of a married couple, Drummond (Clarke) and Indira (Rebecca Lingafelter), and the downfall of their "perfect" lives. With Saskia (Shelley Gershoni) as a wealthy home wrecker and Bordo (Elena Mulrone) spinning spiritual tales and searching for signs of the apocalypse in the couple's small Floridian store, the characters carry years of emotional baggage into Purgatory after an accident kills them all at once. In the afterlife, the cast transitions flawlessly between replaying loving scenes at summer barbecues to bitter arguments in limbo to an escalating sequence conflicting emotions and back again. Lingafelter especially plays an impressively honest Indira, blinded by love and the image of the perfect marriage in life,

desperate and defiant in death. She seems through pleading her case, cursing God and refusing to perform in the requisite memories. Tension builds throughout the performance, almost heightened by moments of forced levity by the guilt-ridden Drummond and Saskia, intensifying to a crash as memories become more chaotic, uncertain, and in effect, more powerful.

The sparse set, simply four chairs, a sheet of Astroturf, and a few omnipresent and foreboding gas cans, provides the perfect venue for isolated and relentless introspection. Director Alexis Poledouris and Halfnight's evocative writing force the audience into the memories of the play's characters as we tensely anticipate the events leading to their deaths. We don't know what we are supposed to learn from their tragic ends or their replayed lives, but we continue to watch and wait.

