

“THE MAN WHO KILLED THE CURE”

A new play by Luke Yankee

Inspired by a true story

Unit set, 6 characters (4 M, 2 W, some doubling)

**There has been a cure for cancer available since the early 1950's.
The pharmaceutical companies will go to any lengths to make sure the public
doesn't know anything about it.**

When Max Gerson and Rudolph Heller escape Nazi Germany together, they have no idea what is in store for them in New York. Both prominent cancer doctors, Rudy saves the lives of Max and his daughter Charlotte as they run from the Gestapo, but Max's wife is killed. Still, he owes his life to Rudy and their loyalty to one another knows no bounds. But when Max starts experimenting with natural methods of healing, Rudy becomes angry. How can they make any money without prescribing expensive drugs? Besides, in postwar America, everyone knows it's impossible for the body to heal itself. Just smoke another cigarette and trust your doctor.

A strange thing starts to happen. All of Max's patients on his "natural" program are healing, while Rudy's patients on an accelerated drug protocol are getting sicker and dying faster. Rudy is infuriated and certain that Max is lying to him about not prescribing drugs. The two men part company and go about their own methods of healing. Rudy quickly becomes a wealthy man, getting paid large amounts of money by a big pharmaceutical company to prescribe untested, experimental drugs. Max is considered "dangerous" and is constantly coming under scrutiny from the established, medical community.

Max goes on a popular radio show, announcing that he has cured more than fifty people from supposedly incurable diseases and he is writing a book of the case histories. Rudy and his allies are outraged. What will happen to the profits of the drug companies if people believe they can be healed with fruits and vegetables? As his former partner, Rudolph Heller is the perfect man to stop Max Gerson.

Rudy coerces Helga, his devoted mistress, to pose as Max's secretary and sabotage his book. She unknowingly takes the pages home to Rudy who deletes key passages and rewrites others. But Helga believes Max is a good man who is doing important, medical research. One she discovers Rudy's plan, she threatens to leave him, but she has nowhere else to go. When Max discovers Helga's deception, he instantly fires her, never suspecting Rudy is behind it. With no other copies of his notes, Max starts recreating the book from scratch.

Rudy and Max meet regularly for coffee. When Rudy is unable to persuade his friend to give up this crazy book idea, he says he is more determined than ever and he is about to take part in Congressional hearings for funding of natural healing methods for cancer. The hearings are tremendously successful and it finally looks as though Max will get the support of the medical community. When the drug manufacturers learn of this, they make certain the bill is suppressed and the three days of testimony are expunged from the records. Heartbroken, Max returns to treating his patients the best he can.

One day, Max arrives early at their usual café and is told they are out of his special blend of coffee. “What special blend?” he asks. Max takes the empty coffee bag and finds traces of arsenic in it. Someone has been slowly poisoning him. But who? Feeble and riddled with tumors, Max finishes the book just as he dies of arsenic poisoning. The fines from the American Medical Association are so vast, his daughter Charlotte can barely pay for the funeral.

Rudy now has everything he wanted: a comfortable life, a thriving practice and the bonuses from the pharmaceutical companies are pouring in. But in his heart, he knows that Max was a medical genius and that he is a deceitful, lying, murderer. Can he live with his shame...or will he make the ultimate sacrifice?

Inspired by a true story, *THE MAN WHO KILLED THE CURE* does for the world of medicine what *AMADEUS* did for the world of music, redefining the nature of genius and what it truly means to be a success. More importantly, it exposes the hypocrisy in the medical industry with shocking facts and authentic testimony about the multibillion-dollar cancer business and how it has always suppressed alternative therapies.

Luke Yankee’s other plays include *THE LAST LIFEBOAT*, *A PLACE AT FOREST LAWN* (both published by Dramatists Play Service), *THE JESUS HICKEY* (originally produced in Los Angeles, starring Harry Hamlin) and his one-man show, *DIVA DISH*, which he has toured internationally. His critically acclaimed memoir, *JUST OUTSIDE THE SPOTLIGHT* is published by Random House, with a forward by Mary Tyler Moore. He has also written numerous television scripts and screenplays.