

LYLE. Death is a funny thing. You hear people talking their whole lives about death. What happens to you? Is there a Heaven? Do you just disappear? What becomes of the person? The list goes on. It's a safe bet that most people view death as tragic. No surprise there. It's the end. Life is over. It's looked at as the most unfair, yet inevitable, event in a person's life. The most unwanted moment is that instant in which the person becomes nothing. They cease, if you will. It's bad -- but only for those left behind. It's not the ultimate tragedy, though. No, the ultimate tragedy would be what I refer to as the living death. *(He smiles)* What's that you might ask? Sounds like something out of a zombie film, right? Well, that's not very far off. The living death is when the person becomes a shell of their former self. This is a true tragedy. I know. I watched my father become this representation of the living dead. My dad was a man that I looked up to as a child. He was wonderfully inspirational in his teachings and lessons. A very thrifty person. However, as he got older -- he became a very hard man. Not only in his actions. I loved him, don't mistake that fact, but he became a hard man to like at times. He had not allowed himself the time or inclination to remember all of the things that made the gift of life wondrous. He was bitter -- and it was this bitterness that infiltrated his whole being just like a cancer. He allowed it to eat away at him from the inside out -- and for the last half of his life -- he was the walking dead. A man without his humanity -- living death to the fullest -- and waiting for actual death to consume him. *(Pause)* He never recovered -- but, I guess, dying is a hard thing to bounce back from. It just knocks the life right out of you.