

Quentin's Last Act

by [Isobel](#), his mom



Quentin E. Delgado

November 17, 1985 - September 10, 2009

tumor on his kidney had spread to the bones of his spine, where numerous secondary tumors had sprouted. The first noticeable effect of his disease was back pain and soon thereafter loss of feeling and function in his legs and feet, as the tumors caused the bones of his spine to crush in against his spinal cord.

A horrible ordeal of radiation, chemo, and surgical procedures followed, although the doctors knew from the outset that his cancer was not curable. He withstood unimaginable pain, frustration and humiliation at being unable to walk without assistance, hideous side-effects from the radiation and chemo "therapies," and despondency and emotional devastation at knowing that he would not live to see his months-old daughter grow up.

In the end, the cancer spread to most of his vital organs, and the failure of his liver became the immediate cause of death. Have you ever witnessed a person dying from liver failure? As the liver function fails, toxins build up in the tissues of the body and cause dementia of the mind. For several days before his death, Quentin became increasingly incoherent, delusional, and agitated. He was unable to eat, to converse, even to communicate a need so basic as urinating. But he knew he wanted to smoke. His addiction was planted on such a deep level that even the psychotic mania induced by liver failure could not displace it.

His last volitional act was to smoke a cigarette. He did not ask to look at the sky or feel the

On the morning before he died, Quentin's last volitional act was to smoke a cigarette. He was very confused and was suffering delusions and even hallucinations as a result of the toxification in his body due to advanced liver failure. But he was able to reach for a pack of cigarettes, and struggle into a wheelchair to be taken outside for a smoke.

Quentin had been diagnosed with renal cell carcinoma about 10 months before, on the day he turned 23 years old. A scan showed a previously-undetected

soft late-summer air on his skin. He did not ask to see his baby daughter's face. He did not ask for his beloved dog, or for his brother, or for his mother. He asked for a smoke.



With his baby daughter, before diagnosis



Quentin's artistic script of his daughter's name



At the hospital, undergoing chemotherapy



Quentin's altar for Dia de los Muertos 2010



Graffiti mural in Denver painted by a friend. "Rest In Peace"

[E-mail Quentin's Mother Isobel](mailto:isobel@quentin.com)

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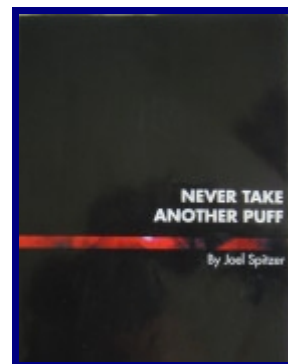
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- [Cigarette smoking as a cause of cancers other than lung cancer](#) - A 2010 study linking smoking to kidney cancer.
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