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## Quentin's Last Act

by [Isobel](#), his mom



*Quentin E. Delgado  
November 17, 1985 -  
September 10, 2009*

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 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.

### *Quentin's Last Act*

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 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

*Quentin's Last Act*



At the hospital, undergoing chemotherapy

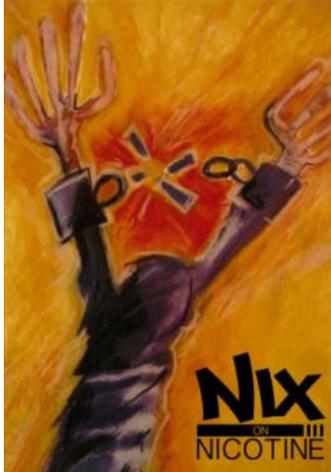


Quentin's altar for Dia de los Muertos 2010



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

[\*\*E-mail Quentin's Mother Isobel\*\*](#)



[Isobel's "Nix On Nicotine" page](#)

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- [Kids just don't get it](#) - Joel's message to mothers about youth smoking.
- [Nicotine Addiction 101](#) - WhyQuit's nicotine addiction lessons.
- [YouTube Video - Why do smokers smoke?](#) - Joel's video explanation of nicotine addiction.

- [List of all 81 cancer causing chemicals so far identified in cigarettes](#)
- [Risk factors for kidney cancer](#) - The National Cancer Institute's review of kidney cancer risk factors.
- [Cigarette smoking as a cause of cancers other than lung cancer](#) - A 2010 study linking smoking to kidney cancer.
- [Renal cell carcinoma in relation to cigarette smoking: meta-analysis of 24 studies](#) - Study finding that males who smoke 1 to 9 cigarettes per day increase their risk of kidney cancer by 60%, while those smoking 10 to 20 per day increase their risk by 83%.

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[WhyQuit.com](#) WhyQuit is the Internet's oldest forum devoted to the art, science and psychology of cold turkey quitting, the stop smoking method used by the vast majority of all successful long-term ex-smokers.



[Nicotine Addiction 101](#) WhyQuit's guide to understanding nicotine dependency.

[Nicotine Cessation Topic Index](#) An alphabetical subject matter index to more than a thousand nicotine cessation articles, videos and support group discussions.

[Joel's Library](#) Joel Spitzer began presenting stop smoking clinics and seminars in 1976. WhyQuit's education director since 2000, Joel's Library is home to his life's work. It includes Joel's "Daily Quitting Lesson Guide." The Guide walks new quitters through the first two weeks of smoking cessation, recommending daily videos to watch and articles to read. It's also home to more than a

hundred original short stop smoking articles, to "Never Take Another Puff," Joel's free ebook, and to his ever growing collection of more than 400 video stop smoking lessons.

**[Joel's Stop Smoking Video Index](#)** An alphabetical index to Joel's 400 videos. Each link opens a webpage where Joel shares the video together with related articles and links.

**["Freedom from Nicotine - The Journey Home"](#)** Written by John R. Polito, a former 30-year heavy smoker and WhyQuit's 1999 founder, Freedom from Nicotine shares the science underlying nicotine dependency and successful abrupt nicotine cessation. Whether hooked on cigarettes, e-cigarettes (e-cigs), bidis, kreteks, a pipe, hookah or cigars, on dip, chew, snuff or snus, or on the nicotine gum, lozenge, spray, inhaler or patch, the book provides a road-map home.



**[Turkeyville](#)** Imagine surrounding yourself with more than 10,000 cold turkey quitters. Turkeyville is a Facebook support group exclusively for cold turkey quitters. The group's primary focus is helping newbies navigate the first few days. Just that first brave step, yes you can!



**[Freedom](#)** Freedom was WhyQuit's original 1999 stop smoking support group. No longer accepting members, today Freedom's 453,000 archived member posts serve as a valuable source of recovery insight and understanding.

Knowledge is a Quitting Method

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