**Article of the Week #2 – alternate for Walking Dead fans**

**Directions:**

1. **Show evidence of a close reading (highlighting key points and making notes in the margins – can be questions, thoughts, confusion, etc.)**
2. **Do the activity at the bottom of the article.**

# Was That Major 'Walking Dead' Death For Real? All Signs Point To No

[Paul Tassi](http://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/) ,

Last night, The Walking Dead shocked the world with a death of a major character, one who has been around since almost the very beginning. The death was stunning in both its placement in the episode and the season, along with the context. It was no heroic end, nor did it tie directly into an event from the comic source material.

To discuss it any further, obviously **enormous spoilers** are going to follow. Honestly, you really shouldn’t have clicked on this story at all if you haven’t seen last night’s episode yet. I’ll also get into some comic spoilers later, but I’ll warn you first.

The character being mourned this morning is Glenn, who apparently met his end after being cornered by an absolute swarm of walkers in an alley, falling to the ground after his dead-weight cohort Nicholas shot himself and knocked them both off a dumpster where they were seeking refuge. Glenn is shown being torn apart by dozens of walkers, and the fanbase screamed their collective heads off as a result.

But…is that really what happened? Now that the shock has worn off, the reality of Glenn’s death is being called into question. And from everything I’ve seen both in the episode and out of it, I’m actually leaning toward a hard no. Glenn is not dead. We may not see him for a while, but that ignoble end was a head fake, and we’ll be seeing him again at a later date.

Strangely, the reason conspiracy theorists (like myself) believe Glenn is alive is not because of what happened in the show itself. Viewed in a vacuum, it’s hard to fathom that Glenn somehow survived what appeared to be one of the show’s trademark gory deaths, literally buried in a sea of walkers. [Our own Erik Kain](http://www.forbes.com/sites/erikkain/2015/10/25/the-walking-dead-season-6-episode-3-review-thank-you/) didn’t even mention the possibility that Glenn could be alive in his review, and I’m sure some aren’t considering it at all. I mean, given what was shown, it does seem pretty clear cut.

But then we have The Talking Dead, AMC’s wrap-up show where a host, cast members and special guests talk about the events of the evening. A great many things happened on The Talking Dead last night that very clearly indicate AMC’s desire to paint Glenn’s death as ambiguous, something the show has never done before.

- It’s never said directly that “Glenn is dead.” The phrasing used is always “Glenn appears to have been killed” or something like that.

- Glenn was not featured in the show’s usual post-mortem wrap-up of characters that have died. Another first.

- The actor playing Glenn, Steven Yeun, was not a guest on the show. When a major character dies, they’re usually brought on The Talking Dead as a surprise guest to discuss their demise.

- The showrunner, Scott Gimple, actually issued a prepared statement about Glenn’s alleged death which read in part, “In some way we will see Glenn, some version of Glenn, or parts of Glenn again, either in flashback or in the current story, to help complete the story.”

That last item could mean literally anything. With that phrasing, Glenn could show up in a flashback, as a walker, or as his normal, alive self in present day. Gimple could not cover more bases with that statement. The thing is, The Walking Dead almost never does flashbacks except to show where a character has been after being missing for a period of time (The Governor, Beth, Morgan, which is next week’s episode), and if Glenn did appear as a walker later, I don’t know why all this dancing around his death would be necessary. If AMC is doing everything possible to give hope that Glenn is alive, why would they have all the build-up just to reveal that yup, he totally died, weeks or months later?

But wait, you say, how the hell would Glenn be alive after what we just watched?

That’s where we rewind back to the show and start speculating about what we were actually seeing, and how Glenn could have made it out alive despite what would seem to be outright impossible odds.

The story grieving fans are telling themselves (which could very well be true) is that we see a few things happen during the minute-ish long death sequence. Nicholas shoots himself, and his body tumbles into a stunned Glenn, knocking them both off balance. But from that angle of the fall, it looks like Nicholas actually lands on top of Glenn.

We see Glenn smack his head and then it switches to a shot of zombies pulling gore out of what appears to be his chest. The theory is that the zombies are mauling and eating the body of Nicholas which is shielding Glenn from harm. The angle is purposefully confusing, so we really can’t tell if Glenn is the one actually being mauled. His screams and facial contortions do seem like they could be from someone getting their guts pulled out. They also seem like they could be from someone surrounded by zombies watching a dead corpse getting its guts pulled out on top of him. Still scary as hell. We also don’t see Glenn’s eyes roll back into his head or him spitting up blood which would indicate actual physical damage, instead of possibly pure fear.

The shot ends with a pulled back camera of the zombie mob, and it’s revealed that Glenn’s head is really close to the edge of the dumpster. The theory ends with the idea that somehow, Glenn manages to scramble away under the dumpster, out of reach of the mauling zombies, avoiding any fatal bites. We don’t know what happens next, but perhaps the zombies are once against distracted and leave, or covered in grime and gore, they simply lose Glenn’s scent if he manages to remain motionless long enough. And so, Glenn lives to fight another day, and will wander back to camp eventually even if he’s believed dead for a while.

If I was just watching the show itself, I probably wouldn’t have questioned Glenn’s death much at all as it does seem pretty clear cut at first glance. Even with the above explanation, the idea that someone could be in that perilous of a situation and somehow manage to escape without even a single bite is pretty far-fetched, if this is a fake-out, it’s kind of a poor set-up for one in my opinion because of how improbable his survival actually is.

But AMC’s behavior after the fact, refusing to confirm Glenn’s death in the after show and actually having a statement prepared because they knew fans would be confused implies to me that something is definitely fishy here. This hasn’t happened before. We’ve seen Shane, Lori, Dale, Sophia, Andrea, Tyreese, Beth and others die in very clear-cut ways. The show mourns them, and we move on. But this? This level of song and dance and ambiguity has never happened before.

There’s an additional factor here, but it gets into **comic spoilers**, so I want to throw out an extra warning here.

The thing is, Glenn is supposed to die, but not for a while yet. In one of the most famous scenes in the entire run of the comics, new villain Negan ends up beating Glenn to death with a barbed wire-wrapped baseball bat in an exceptionally brutal sequence that has scarred many comic readers to this day, myself included.

Now, there have been theories for a while that AMC could change that up. That like the Governor executing Herschel and not Tyreese, the show could swap someone else in instead. Daryl is a popular pick, given that his fate is unbound to the comics and his death would probably be the most shocking thing the show is capable of producing, given how beloved his character is. And yet, if they want to stick to the script and Glenn is supposed to die a season or two from now, they’re not going to gum up the plan by killing him off now.

The timing of this is just plain weird too. The Walking Dead may be attempting to be unpredictable, but it is more than a little hard to believe that they would kill a season one original character like Glenn in the middle of an episode, in the third episode of a season, in a sequence where he’s accomplishing exactly nothing. Simply everything about it feels wrong, other than the fact that if he is dead, it’s a true surprise, the likes of which the show has really never seen.

But I just don’t buy it. AMC is being way too cagey about Glenn’s fate not to raise suspicion, and even if his survival his a stretch of the imagination, from the way the scene was filmed, I don’t think it’s impossible either. It’s kind of a lose-lose though. If he’s dead, this was a poor way to kill him, if he’s not, this was a really annoying way to fake-out the audience. Still, in the end, I’d rather him stay alive and this was all just an elaborate illusion.

I don’t know when we’ll find out the answer to this, but this could be the last piece of the puzzle. Here’s a [snapped set photo](http://sirchristopherlee.tumblr.com/post/131923730289/guys-glenn-isnt-dead-there-are-pictures-of) showing Steven Yeun on set with Tom Payne who will be playing Jesus in upcoming season six episodes. Maybe he just likes hanging out on set, or maybe we’ll have our answers sooner than we think. To me, all available evidence points to the fact that Glenn isn’t dead, and I think those who are mourning today might be pleasantly surprised to find him miraculously still alive down the road.

**Answer the following question:** Do you think that Glen is dead or alive? Explain why in a paragraph-long response.