

= Pretty Much Dead Already =

" Pretty Much Dead Already " is the seventh episode of the second season of the post-apocalyptic horror television series The Walking Dead . It originally aired on AMC in the United States on November 27 , 2011 . In the episode , Glenn ( Steven Yeun ) reveals to the group that there are walkers in the Greenes ' barn , dividing the group on what to do . Hershel Greene ( Scott Wilson ) sets a deadline for the group to leave , unless Rick Grimes ( Andrew Lincoln ) does a difficult task . Meanwhile , Shane Walsh ( Jon Bernthal ) slowly loses his sanity after many secrets around him are revealed and Carol Peletier begins to question whether her daughter , Sophia will be found .

The episode was written by Scott M. Gimple and directed by Michelle MacLaren . The death of Sophia Peletier is a prominent theme in " Pretty Much Dead Already " ; she was killed by Grimes following her conversion into a walker . Robert Kirkman felt that killing Sophia off would add more dimension to the show , and create more flexibility in regards to the progression of the storylines , as well as leading to very different storylines , with Carol outliving her daughter , as opposed to the other way around . " Pretty Much Dead Already " generated critical acclaim , who praised the episode 's conclusion and the development of the characters . Upon airing in the United States , the episode attained 6 @. @ 62 million viewers and a 3 @. @ 5 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , according to Nielsen ratings . It became the highest @-@ rated cable telecast of the day , as well as the fourth most @-@ viewed cable program of the week .

= = Plot = =

During breakfast at the camp , Glenn ( Steven Yeun ) , at the urging of Dale ( Jeffrey DeMunn ) , finally tells the group that the Greene family 's barn is full of walkers . The survivors inspect the structure and debate what they should do . Shane ( Jon Bernthal ) furiously demands they clear the barn of the walkers , while Rick ( Andrew Lincoln ) reminds him that they 're guests on Hershel ( Scott Wilson ) ' s property and they cannot leave without Sophia ( Madison Lintz ) . Shane believes Sophia is long gone , prompting Daryl ( Norman Reedus ) to react furiously . Rick agrees the barn needs to be cleared , but insists on getting Hershel 's blessing first .

Maggie Greene ( Lauren Cohan ) is upset with Glenn because he betrayed her confidence by telling the group about the barn . Glenn confronts her and says that her personal well @-@ being is more important than her affections . As Daryl readies to search for Sophia , Sophia 's mother , Carol ( Melissa McBride ) insists that he not go out into the woods . He responds angrily , but later apologizes by taking her to a pond where another Cherokee rose is blooming ; this restores her faith in finding her daughter . Rick interrupts Hershel 's lunch to discuss the barn , and Hershel demands that the group leave his farm within a week . Rick argues that going " out there " would be a death sentence for the group . Rick finds Shane brooding by the barn , where Shane defends his opinion about clearing it of zombies . The two argue until Rick finally blurts out that Lori ( Sarah Wayne Callies ) is pregnant . As Rick leaves , Shane congratulates him , albeit with a look of fear and shock on his face .

After being confronted by Maggie , Hershel and Jimmy ( James Allen McCune ) bring Rick to a forest swamp , where they find two walkers stuck in the mud . Hershel explains that if Rick 's group wants to stay , they have to treat walkers like people . Meanwhile , Shane confronts Lori about her family 's well @-@ being , adding that he is the father of her baby . Lori denies his sentiments , which causes Shane to storm off the premises . Carl ( Chandler Riggs ) stops him , insisting that they stay and search for Sophia . Shane says he will do whatever is necessary to make it possible to stay . Lori watches from a distance as Shane conspires with her son . Dale unsuccessfully warns Andrea ( Laurie Holden ) about Shane 's erratic behavior . After distracting Glenn , Dale steals the weapons and leaves the RV . Shane realizes that the guns are missing , and locates them with Dale in the swamps . Dale threatens to shoot Shane if he takes the guns , but Shane calls his bluff . Dale backs down but warns Shane that he is losing his humanity . Shane utters the episode 's titular line in this confrontation .

Shane brings the guns back to the farmhouse and arms the rest of the group . T @-@ Dog ( IronE Singleton ) spots Rick and Hershel emerging from the forest with two walkers attached to snare poles . Shane , distraught to brink of insanity , screams that walkers aren 't people and that Sophia is gone , and shoots one of the captured zombies despite Rick 's pleas to calm down . He then breaks the locks off the barn door . Walkers start to file out , and Shane , Andrea , T @-@ Dog , Daryl , and Glenn execute the zombies while the others watch . At the last moment , Sophia emerges from the barn , dead and zombified . The group is paralyzed with shock and sadness , unable to act as Sophia walks towards them . Only Rick is able to step forward and shoot her .

= = Production = =

" Pretty Much Dead Already " was written by Scott M. Gimple and directed by Michelle MacLaren . It features recurring appearances from Lauren Cohan , Scott Wilson , IronE Singleton , Madison Lintz , Emily Kinney , Jane McNeill , James Allen McCune , and Amber Chaney . Following the initial broadcast of the previous installment , " Secrets " , writer Robert Kirkman teased the following episode " Pretty Much Dead Already " . He stated : " There 's a lot of big stuff out there that we will be wrapping up to a certain extent . In the writers ' room we were fully aware that we were coming up on this hiatus , so we definitely wrote to it . I think people are going to be a little shocked . "

The death of Sophia Peletier is a major incident in " Pretty Much Dead Already " , largely affecting the themes of the episode . After the group has shot the walkers housed in Hershel Greene 's barn , Sophia appears from the barn as a walker , much to the groups ' dismay . A disturbed and distraught Rick Grimes pulls out his weapon and makes the decision to shoot her . Despite being initially surprised about her character 's being killed off , Madison Lintz concluded that she understood its aftermath for the show . Lintz affirmed that portraying a walker was a welcoming experience for her , and stated that she was " going to look back on and say that was amazing . " Robert Kirkman felt that killing Sophia would add more dimension to the show , as well as add more flexibility to its storyline progression . " When a good idea comes up , you have to go with it , " he articulated . " Sophia is a character who is still alive in the comic book series and who has contributed quite a bit to the overall narrative and informed a lot of story lines for a lot of different characters . Having Carol [ ... ] survive her daughter as opposed to the other way around as it is in the comics is going to lead to interesting but different stories . " Although Kirkman was not on set during production of the sequence , Gimple retrieved shell casings from the blanks that were fired on set . Referred to as " Barnageddon " by the writers , Kirkman asserted that he emphasized unpredictability while creating the scene .

It 's good to know people didn 't see it coming . That 's a big concern when you have this kind of story line and you are leading to that kind of reveal . You don 't want people to be expecting it , especially in the Walking Dead . I pride myself in the fact that , when you pick up an issue of the comic , you don 't know what 's going to happen at any time . So any time we can work that into the show and maintain that in a television environment , it 's very exciting for me . I 'm glad people are being caught off guard .

Other themes prevalent in the episode include Lori 's pregnancy . After getting into a heated argument , Rick reveals to Shane about her pregnancy . Although he didn 't question who the biological father was , Robert Kirkman felt that Rick was " smart enough to know that the kid 's either his or Shane 's and there may not be any way of ever finding out that definitively . " He continued : " Bringing that up to his wife , who he loves , is only going to be painful for her . I think that 's him being a good husband and him showing his tremendous leadership ability in that he can put his self aside for the betterment of someone else . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Pretty Much Dead Already " was initially broadcast in November 27 , 2011 in the United States on AMC . Upon airing , it garnered 6 @. @ 62 million viewers and a 3 @. @ 5 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , according to Nielsen ratings . The episode became the highest @- @ rated cable program of the day , obtaining significantly higher ratings than Kourtney and Kim Take New York on E ! and Real Housewives of Atlanta on Bravo . " Pretty Much Dead Already " received the show 's highest ratings since " Bloodletting " , which obtained 6 @. @ 7 million viewers and a 3 @. @ 6 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic . In addition , the episode became the fourth highest @- @ rated cable telecast of the week , and the highest @- @ rated non sport cable telecast of the week dated November 27 . Total viewership and ratings for the episode significantly increased from the preceding installment , " Secrets " , which garnered 6 @. @ 08 million viewers and a 3 @. @ 1 rating amongst adults in the 18 ? 49 demographic . In the United Kingdom , " Pretty Much Dead Already " received 666 @, @ 000 viewers , subsequently becoming the most @- @ watched cable program on FX of the week dated December 4 .

= = = Critical response = = =

" Pretty Much Dead Already " was critically acclaimed by television critics . Eric Goldman of IGN evaluated the episode as " completely depressing " , and added that the dark nature made the series excel . Goldman ultimately gave the episode an eight out of ten , signifying a " great " rating . Aaron Rutkoff of The Wall Street Journal felt that the episode was the series ' best installment . Writing for The Grand Rapids Press , John Serba opined that " Pretty Much Dead Already " was a delightful ending to the first portion of the season . Zack Handlen of The A.V. Club stated that prior to its ending , the episode was " the usual mix of pretty good and deeply irritating . " Handlen lauded the character development in the installment ; " The episode puts a lot of effort into heightening the tensions between Hershel and Rick 's people , and while it ? s not exactly subtle , it makes enough sense to be effective . This is conflict that should 've been building for a few episodes now , instead of arriving fully formed right before it explodes , but I 'm willing to take what I can get . " Concluding his review , he issued the episode an A ? grade . Digital Spy 's Morgan Jeffrey avouched that " Pretty Much Dead Already " was " excellent " , and added that the tension " slowly ratchets up to an almost unbearable level . " Some critics were divided with the episode . Time journalist Nate Rawlings felt that while the writers put a lot of substance into the characters , many of them are still underdeveloped . Gina McIntyre of Los Angeles Times felt that some parts of the episode lacked cohesion and direction .

The episode 's concluding scene involving Sophia 's death was cited as the episode highlight . Janet Turley of The Huffington Post asserted that the sequence was " fiction not afraid to provoke " , while Goldman described it as an " absolutely horrific scenario " . CNN 's Henry Hanks opined that the sequence " left [ them ] with a final scene that we 'll be talking about until then . " New York 's Starlee Kine asserted that it contained cinematic qualities , and felt that the scene was " satisfying , sad , and fun " . She wrote : " It was everything you 've ever wanted this show to be . Zombies plus no dialogue , such a winning combination ! And how great was it that Sophia was dead instead of impossibly alive somewhere , holed up with Merle or Morgan or those warmhearted gang members in Atlanta . And because she was granted more screen time than she ever was when she was alive , we were finally able to care about the loss of her short , young life . " Jen Chaney of The Washington Post echoed synonymous sentiments ; " Really , the final moments of the last episode before the AMC series ' December / January hiatus played like a fireworks finale on the Fourth of July , assuming your Fourth of July celebrations typically involve zombies and a pile of corpses . " Rawlings concluded that it was the perfect resolution for what he called " television 's slowest subplot " . McIntyre felt that the concluding sequence was the most eventful moment of the episode , and stated that it was difficult to watch .

Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly affirmed that the scene reestablished The Walking Dead to full form , as well as redeemed the season 's " general gutlessness thus far . " HitFix 's Alan Sepinwall reflected similar thoughts , and observed that it was effective enough to keep the viewers chattering until the succeeding episode . Handlen summated : " The Sophia reveal is a punch in the gut ,

because narrative fiction teaches us the longer someone stays missing , the better the chance they 'll turn up alive ; otherwise , where would the drama be ? By using the little girl in this way , the show transforms what should 've been anti @-@ climax into a reinvention of an entire storyline . It 's not enough to make the bad parts of the earlier episodes great , but it does show that the writers had more on their mind than stalling . " Mark Maurer of The Star @-@ Ledger felt that albeit predictable , the segment was " well executed " . Josh Wigler of MTV said that the storyline ended in " a much darker way than anyone could have imagined . "