

# 8. Gliding Over All

"**Gliding Over All**" is the eighth episode and mid-season finale of the fifth season of the American television drama series *Breaking Bad*, and the 54th overall episode of the series. Written by Moira Walley-Beckett and directed by Michelle MacLaren, it aired on AMC in the United States on September 2, 2012. Walt meets with Lydia Rodarte-Quayle at a coffee shop to obtain the names of Mike's henchmen. Suspecting that Walt will see her as a liability and kill her, Lydia proposes a partnership in which Walt expands his distribution overseas to the Czech Republic, which has a high percentage of meth users. When Walt agrees with her proposal, Lydia provides him with the names. After Lydia leaves, Walt removes his hat from the table, revealing a hidden vial of ricin presumably meant to poison her. Walt then hides the vial in his house. The episode received highly positive reviews from critics. TV Fanatic's Matt Richenthal gave it a 4.8 out of 5 star rating, stating: "'Gliding Over All' still managed to shock, taking Walt to a place I never imagined he'd be prior to the big reveal: contentment. Happiness. A sense of satisfaction over a job well done, an emperor who no longer needed an empire." Richenthal particularly liked the two montages showing the prison hits and the time-lapse.[7] Alan Sepinwall of HitFix called the episode "an absolutely gorgeous piece of work, in both the visual sense and the way it brought us to the next, final phase of Walter White's story." [8] And Skyler seems to buy it. So desperate in her pessimism a few weeks ago that she was attempting to passive smoke Walt to death, Skyler seems to see a flicker of a light at the end of the tunnel for her family. A light that she might be able to steer her clearly unstable husband towards. And as Walt and Skyler lock eyes over a few blissful seconds of overlapping familial small talk, it seems to be a real, tangible possibility for them. At first it seems a little convenient, unlikely even, that Walt would keep such an incriminating piece of evidence as the book from Gale in his bathroom. But actually it makes perfect sense. Walt is someone who now finds it impossible to see the wood for the trees. Walt is unplayable when it comes to outlandish cat-and-mouse games, but the combination of his arrogance, recklessness and preoccupation with the finer details means Walt is officially starting to overlook things that would normally be enormously obvious. One night, Skyler takes Walt out to a storage locker to show him the giant pile of cash that has accumulated over the last three months. She points out that they have more money than they can launder, much less spend. As Mike's guys begin to trip over themselves asking for deals with the DEA, Walt approaches Lydia to get their names. Lydia is reluctant at first, because she claims that Walt would simply kill her once getting what he needs since she would just be one more loose end. To ensure her continued usefulness, she makes him an offer: she can sell his "Blue Sky" meth in the Czech Republic, using her associates at Madrigal, and in exchange for a 30% commission, she would double Walt's profits. Walt accepts the offer, so Lydia gives him the list of names and proclaims, "We're gonna make a lot of money together." Afterwards, Junior and Holly return home as Walt, Skyler, Hank, and Marie enjoy a happy family get-together at the White residence. Hank leaves to use the restroom and finds a book to read: Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Inside the cover of the book, however, he finds a message written inside: "To my other favorite W.W. It's an honor working with you. Fondly, G.B." Walter White is Heisenberg. This episode contains examples of:

1. Anachronism Stew: The episode is set somewhere in 2009, but Jack Welker mentions the assassination of Osama Bin Laden, which took place in 2011.
  2. Atrocity Montage: Walt ties up loose ends in three New Mexico prisons after Mike Ehrmentaut's death by ordering Jack and the Aryan Brotherhood to stab nine of Gus' remaining henchmen, followed by Dennis Markowski, the manager of Gus' industrial laundromat being immolated alive in his cell, all within less than two minutes, accompanied by an unsettling rendition of Nat King Cole's "Pick Yourself Up".
  3. Call-Back:
  4. The paper towel dispenser that Walt smashed in anger the last time he was in the hospital is still broken when he uses it again.
  5. Seeing the "W.W." dedication written by Gale in Walt's book causes Hank to recall when he was reading Gale's lab notes and musing over the meaning of "W.W." with Walt during his investigation.
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1. Can't Kill You, Still Need You: Walter was planning on killing Lydia by poisoning her drink, but he decides against it after she makes it clear that her help is vital to his expanding meth empire.
  2. Continuity Nod: This episode possibly has more than any other.
  3. The episode opens with Walt staring at a fly.
  4. The painting Walt observes in the hotel room is identical to a painting he saw in his hospital psychiatrist's office.
  5. After his MRI checkup, Walter comes across the paper towel dispenser he punched in rage from discovering his cancer entered remission.
  6. During the family's get-together in the backyard, Hank's beloved "Schraderbräu" beer can be seen on the table.
  7. Hank picks up a book written by Walt Whitman, and reads Gale's message dedicated to his "other favorite W.W.". Cue a quick flashback from Hank.
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1. Chekhov's Gun: As Walt is getting out of the shower, the camera focuses on his "Leaves of Grass" book gifted from Gale sitting atop the toilet. At the end of the episode, Hank finds himself on the toilet and decides to take a peek at this book...
  2. Chekhov's Gunman:
  3. Todd mentioned having connections back at buyout. Walter ultimately decided to take up his word.
  4. Gale becomes one from beyond the grave. The dedication he left to Walt in the "Leaves of Grass" book he gifted him becomes the key to Hank finally realizing that Walt is Heisenberg.
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1. Cliffhanger: Hank is starting to piece together that Gale's address to W.W. is Walter White.
  2. Death by a Thousand Cuts: Most of the prison kills are done by inmates ganging up on their target and stabbing them with small shanks over and over and over again.
  3. Death Montage: We're shown a montage of the simultaneous assassination of all eight of Fring's former employees (plus Mike's lawyer) currently in jail. Creepily set to Nat King Cole's "Pick Yourself Up."
  4. Dramatically Missing the Point: After Skyler says that there's more money in the storage unit than she can count, Walt presses her for an exact amount, leading her to clarify her point- there's more money in there than they can spend, let alone launder.
  5. Exact Words: Jesse asks if Mike made it out safely. Walt simply replies, "He's gone."
  6. Failed a Spot Check: Walt goes through everything he possibly can to keep his empire going and his

criminal identity a secret, yet is unable to factor in the piece of evidence that would've been the easiest to hide: Gale's book. Which Hank then comes across by chance.

7. Foreshadowing:
8. When Lydia believes that Walt will kill her if she gives him the names, Walt is incredulous that she thinks he'd kill her so publicly, only to later reveal that he had a vial of ricin concealed in his hat for that exact reason. Spiking her tea with ricin is exactly how he kills her later on.
9. Walt's regular MRI checkup will reveal that his cancer has returned.
1. For Want of a Nail: For all the effort that went into keeping his criminal life away from both his family and the DEA, from the systems Saul and Lydia laid down to hiring Jack's gang to get rid of every witness left, and despite every lucky break he got, Walt's undoing stems from him keeping Gale's gifted copy of "Leaves of Grass" in the bathroom for Hank to unwittingly stumble across.
2. Funny Background Event: In a subtle piece of Black Comedy, the convict on the phone next to Dennis immediately hangs up the phone and walks away the second he sees the Aryans coming for him.
3. He Knows Too Much: With no hazard pay to compensate for Mike's trusted men, this becomes an immediate problem. Dennis even considered a plea bargain if he cooperates.
4. Hope Spot: After constantly living under the threat of death from various sources as well as increasing law enforcement scrutiny and a growing estrangement from his family, Walt finally seems to be free: Everyone who wanted him dead has been eliminated; he has killed everyone who would link him to the meth business; he has made enough money for several lifetimes, as well as securing means to launder said money; He has retired from cooking meth, opening the door to reconcile with Skyler. Too bad he left the last piece of evidence somewhere Hank could find it....
5. Improperly Paranoid: Being kept in the dark about what exactly happened to Mike, knowing Walt had all of his men killed off quickly, and considering how their relationship was deteriorating since his own leaving of the partnership, Jesse is justifiably on-guard when Walter comes over to his house to make idle chatter. He also doesn't know that Walter cares too much about him (in his own selfish and twisted way) to consider him a loose end, and is astonished to see him actually provide the \$5 million share he demanded. His fear is so dire that he felt he needed to keep a pistol hidden on him for the duration of Walt's visit.
6. I Need a Freaking Drink: After Hank spends several days dealing with the fallout from every single one of his witnesses being murdered all at once, he understandably and immediately needs some bourbon when he gets home.
7. Internal Reveal: Hank finally begins to realize that Walt was Heisenberg all along.
8. Ironic Echo:
9. Lydia, to Walt: "We're going to make a lot of money together." Tuco said the same thing, word-for-word, to Walt four seasons earlier, and that didn't end well.
10. Walt, to Lydia: "Learn to take yes for an answer."
1. Kill It with Fire: The last of the witnesses on Walt's hitlist is kept in solitary and out of arm's reach, so the prison gang resort to sending flammable liquid in and setting him on fire.
2. Laser-Guided Karma: Walt was the one who set Gale's death into motion, so it is fitting that Gale's book ends up being the crucial piece of evidence that sets Hank against Walt.
3. Literary Allusion Title: To a poem in Leaves of Grass by Walt Whitman.
4. Man on Fire: Jack's prison connections kill the last of Mike's witnesses by setting his holding facility on fire.
5. Metaphorically True: When asked where Mike is, Walt simply says "he's gone."
6. Montage:
7. Walt has all nine witnesses and Dan Wachsberger murdered in under two minutes, in real time and cut together quickly.
8. The steady progress and success of Walt's empire is shown over a period of three months. The routine goes from Walt and Todd cooking across several houses with Vamonos Pest, Saul's consultation, Lydia's management of resources, and Skyler's laundering through the car wash.

1. Mood Whiplash: The final scene: the first of it is all in the Whites' backyard, overall a pleasant time for everyone. Hank then steps inside to use the bathroom, and while there he starts digging through the magazine holder for something to read. What he finds is none other than Walt Whitman's Leaves of Grass... and it's Gale Boetticher's copy from a season ago, with the initials "W.W." inside. Hank's expression turns to horror when he starts connecting the dots.
2. My God, What Have I Done?: The look of guilt on Walt's face, coupled with the fact that he could've gotten help from elsewhere on Mike's men, makes killing Mike weigh on him.
3. Nice Job Fixing It, Villain: As Walter is far too gone to be considered an anti-hero at this point, though still applies by making things worse for himself. Hank was pretty much on the verge of giving up his investigation into Heisenberg, until he takes out a glaring piece of the puzzle Walt forgot to hide.
4. Offscreen Villain Dark Matter:
5. Lydia pitches to Walt that she's capable of expanding his meth business as an empire, just as she'd done so for Gus. As she explains, Madrigal is such a large corporate conglomerate that they can both manage every resource they'd need and withstand the heat of the DEA's investigations, with her as the logistics expert in touch with all the right people. By the end of her tangent, Walt's sold. **Lydia:** This is what I do, you understand? Move things from point A to point B all over the globe. 1.2 million metric tons a month... and all of it right at my fingertips, a laptop click away.
6. Then it's Deconstructed. Walt does not have the same foresight, connections, and means Gus had in order to launder all the money he's making, preventing any legitimate use. He also doesn't have the tempered personality that allowed Gus to handle it, and currently, there aren't even any other endeavors in the criminal underworld he'd think to spend his funds on. With his only concern being the cooking, he gradually loses interest in the routine after a few months pass. The result is a huge pile of cash he can't use in any meaningful way, and though he'd be better off trying to get rid of it (or at least the excess), his ego demands hoarding it anyway.
1. Oh, Crap!: Hank's reaction to finding Gale's book.**Walter (from a flashback):** You got me.
2. Pet the Dog: Walter decides to give Jesse the five million he's earned. Needless to say, Jesse is in a mix of relief and confusion afterward.
3. Properly Paranoid: Lydia voices her hesitation in giving Walt the list of Mike's men, as she assumes she'll be another loose end he intends to take out immediately. Walt claims her fears are ludicrous seeing as they're in public... but later quietly withdraws the vial of ricin he was planning to have her take.
4. Reluctant Retiree: After three months, and with Marie suggesting that the kids should return home, Skyler pleads with Walter one more time to get out of the meth business, especially with a storage unit full of cash. Walter decides to retire the next day.
5. Rule of Symbolism:
6. After Walter tells Jesse he has the final say in how they'll be dealing with Mike's men, they're left staring at each other as the garage door slowly closes between them, signifying how much they're drifting away.
7. Just as the last of Mike's guys is killed, the montage cuts to Hank in a photoshoot with a local girl's softball team, where he receives the news. As a parallel to the ten witnesses on the list, the team consists of ten members.
1. Sarcastic Confession: Played with. When Lydia accuses Walt of intending to kill her after she hands over the list of nine names, Walt points out how absurd it is that he would murder her in the middle of a café in broad daylight. The end of the scene reveals that he had a vial of ricin concealed in his hat, meaning that was Lydia right on the money after all.
2. Soundtrack Dissonance: "Pick Yourself Up" by Nat King Cole, aka a slow dance song, is put over a prison massacre.
3. Surprisingly Realistic Outcome: While Walt's empire is capable of earning him tens of millions of dollars within a few months, he and Skyler only have one car wash to let them legitimize it, and it was already a hassle to try and find a business that wouldn't raise eyebrows to the authorities. As

impressive as the pile of money is, Walter's position also voids him of any reason to keep it around beyond sating his ego.

4. Time Skip: A short one of 3-4 months where Walt eventually accumulates his vast amount of wealth.
5. Victory Is Boring: The real reason Walt finally calls it quits after months of rationalizing. Everyone who could threaten him is dead, he's made more money than he can possibly spend, much less need, and at this point his cooking is starting to feel like just another job. Even the three months of successfully running a drug empire is done in a quick montage, seemingly to illustrate the fact that there's no longer any drama, or stakes to keep his story interesting.
6. Wham Episode: All loose ends were successfully whacked and Walt decides to leave the meth business. Then, Hank finally puts it all together and realizes who Walter really is. Good thing he was already sitting down. On a toilet.
7. Wham Line: A flashback version that Hank recalls:**Hank:** "To W.W. My star, my perfect silence." W.W. I mean, who do you figure that is, y'know? Woodrow Wilson? Willy Wonka? ...Walter White?  
**Walt:** You got me.
8. Wham Shot: This episode is full of them.
9. Walt takes his Heisenberg porkpie hat off the table at the café, revealing his ricin vial.
10. Skyler pulling the tarp off of the enormous pile of Walt's drug money. Doubles as In-Universe for Walt, who had no idea his business had amassed so much money.
11. After Walt leaves Jesse's house, Jesse reveals a pistol he'd been concealing in his pocket, and tosses it aside, relieved.
12. And of course, the closeup of Hank's face as he realizes Walt is Heisenberg.
1. You Have Outlived Your Usefulness: Lydia wants to Defy facing this from Walt, who demands she give him the names of Mike's men, both seeing it as the only reason Walt's kept her around until this point. Not only does she successfully do so by providing the names, but also by explaining how she can use her connections to expand his empire further. While he initially didn't want to hear it, Walt ends up taking her up on her offer.  
"You got me."



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