

excerpted from

**PHILADELPHIA COMMITTEE ON AGING
CASEWORKER VIDEO SERIES: DEPRESSION**

OPENING: MUSIC/VIDEO COLLAGE

SCENE: INT. OFFICE

NARRATOR

Depression is the most common psychiatric disorder in late life, with almost 50% of the population suffering from at least some symptoms. Although the incidence of depression is the same in all age groups, the suicide rate is highest in people over 65 and the success rate for elderly victims approaches 100%.

NARRATOR (off camera)

Today, the PCA Care Manager will be visiting Mrs. C., an 84 year old widow. Since her husband's death, 10 years ago, she has been living alone, although her grandson and his family were frequent visitors until their recent move to the West Coast. Unable to reach Mrs. C. by phone, the Care Manager spoke with Mr. D., Mrs. C.'s emergency contact. From his house next door, he has seen Meals on Wheels deliver her meals, and then take them away uneaten. When he checks in with Mrs. C., she says she's just not hungry, doesn't really feel like eating and is tired all the time.

INT. MRS. C's LIVING ROOM - DAYTIME

Care Manager and Mrs. C. thread their way into the darkened living room. There are no lights on. While the room is not filthy, the furniture looks dusty and there are other marks of neglect. Mrs. C. sits down and motions for the Care Manager to take a seat.

MRS. C.

What? Oh, just put it anywhere.

CARE MANAGER

I called a few times this morning. Were you out with friends? Did you go to the center?

MRS. C.

I was asleep. I'm always asleep these days. Except for the middle of the night. Then, I'm awake and all I do is think about my family in sunny California. All we get here is rain - or worse - snow and ice.

CARE MANAGER

Well, you'll be glad to know it's not raining today and I haven't seen a snowflake either. It certainly seems like you've turned your daily schedule inside out: awake at night and asleep during the day. Have you taken anything to help you sleep?

MRS. C.

No, I don't take anything that's not on the doctor's list, except for headache pills.

CARE MANAGER

Headache pills?

MRS. C. (distractedly)

Hm? Yeah, headache pills.

CARE MANAGER

Are you having a problem with headaches? When do you get them?

MRS. C.

I have headaches all the time, too. If I'm not sleeping, I've got a headache. Some fun, huh? That's why I've got the blinds drawn. The light makes my headache worse.

CARE MANAGER

Are they worse or better after you eat?

MRS. C.

I haven't been interested in anything those Meals on Wheels people bring. Everything tastes like cardboard. It's probably health food. I hate that stuff. You know, you eat right, exercise and what happens? You die anyway.

When my family came to visit, they brought good food. Real home cooked food. Not this microwaved, plastic meat. I know it was leftovers, but at least they came by, you know? I guess I can count on not tasting good food any time soon.

CARE MANAGER

How about at the center? I thought you liked their food. You and your friends seemed to enjoy lunch that day I saw you there.

MRS. C.

I don't go there much anymore. They all talk about their grandchildren - how this one's getting married and the wedding will be in the park; how this one's little boy got an award in kindergarten. What should I say? My little great grandson is growing up without me. Next time I see him, he'll be a little boy, not a baby anymore. I really miss them, almost as much as I miss my husband. Maybe I'd be better off with him.

CARE MANAGER

I'm sure that little boy misses you just as much as you miss him. Maybe you should call him tonight.

You aren't really thinking about taking his grandmother away from him, are you?

MRS. C.

No, I really wouldn't do that, I guess. I thought about it, but that's as far as I got. When God wants me, it'll be my time. If I show up early, he might not take me in.

CARE MANAGER

I'm very glad to hear you say that. I know you miss your family, but I'm sure I would too. What else has been going on, lately? Other than the headaches, have you had any other problems?

MRS. C.

No, I'm OK, I guess. It's just the same old thing, you know. I just don't feel good. Just blah. Not bad. Just blah.