

DEXTER

Episode 103
"Popping Cherry"

Written by
Daniel Cerone

Directed by
Michael Cuesta

DEXTER

"Popping Cherry"

FADE IN:

1 ON DEXTER

1

His face kind of scrunched into a look of compassion. Start slowly PULLING BACK --

DEXTER (V.O.)

You'd never know I was a sociopath.
I'm quite well versed in human
behavior, and when I apply myself,
nobody can tell I'm faking it --
except at funerals.

We can now see that Dexter stands among a group of MOURNERS, half of them in tears or weeping.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I'm not good at grief. In those
cases, shades come in handy.

Dexter dons a pair of DARK SHADES. REVEAL that we're --

EXT. BEACH - DAY 1

By the turquoise water's edge, six Miami Police HONOR GUARD stand at attention on either side of a lectern, surrounded by flower arrangements. Sixty folding chairs are filled, many of them by uniformed MEN and WOMEN in law enforcement. Dexter stands among a group of mourners behind the chairs. *

At the lectern, Detective STEVE McNAMARA, 40s, brave and dignified but torn up inside, talks into a microphone. *

DET. McNAMARA

Miami's full of good cops. A lot of
'em here today. But no offense, I
wouldn't want any of you hitting on my
sister.

(then)

Ricky was different.

WEAVE AMONG the mourners to find DEBRA paying respects, a stoic BATISTA listening, LT. LAGUERTA eyeing the reporters and cameras, and SGT. DOAKES fighting back real emotion. *

DET. McNAMARA

He was a guy you wanted your sister to
fall for, 'cause you just knew he'd
respect her, marry her -- and he did.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

DET. MCNAMARA (CONT'D)

I never saw Kara as happy as she was
with Ricky.

CUT TO:

2 AFTER THE SERVICE

2

Knee-deep in water, TWO ELDERLY COUPLES, the parents of the deceased, spread their children's ashes in the ocean. By the shore, bereaved officers, friends, and family members congregate and commiserate as they watch. Doakes approaches McNamara, who stands with two rough-and-tumble COP FRIENDS.

SGT. DOAKES

It's a fucking travesty.

DET. MCNAMARA

(appreciates the support)

Thanks, man.

COP FRIEND

Heard you're going after Guerrero.

SGT. DOAKES

Shit yeah. This ain't over. Guerrero ordered these hits. I'm gonna make something stick to that cartel cock-sucker.

DET. MCNAMARA

I never knew you and Ricky were so tight.

Doakes, who was actually sleeping with Ricky's wife, covers.

SGT. DOAKES

Ain't about that. Fuck with a cop, lose the privilege to walk the streets we protect, am I right?

As the cop friends enthusiastically ad lib their agreement, SWING AROUND to find Lt. LaGuerta a short distance away, giving sound bites to a TV NEWS CREW.

LAGUERTA

We're heartbroken over the tragic loss of our fallen brother. But we praise his courage. Ricky Simmons knew no fear. I always called him the gutsiest man on the police force.

Debra WIPES PAST, staring in disgust. FOLLOW her to Dexter.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

DEBRA

Can you believe that cow? She didn't even know Simmons.

DEXTER

At least she knew he was a cop... unless, wait -- did you tell her?

Debra smiles.

DEBRA

I'm proud of you for coming, Bro. I know you hate funerals. How you holding up?

DEXTER

(brave breath)

I'm managing.

Debra gives his arm a sympathy squeeze then splits off. Dexter turns to look out to sea, where the two elderly couples are returning from spreading ashes.

DEXTER (V.O.)

No I'm not. Keeping one's face pinched in sorrow for two hours straight is a real chore.

Dexter's attention drifts to a CHILD using a red plastic shovel to build castles in the sand.

*

DEXTER (V.O.)

Ooh, that reminds me. I need to pick up a shovel for my next project.

3 EXT. CORRECTIONS FACILITY - DAY 1

3

A batch of hardcore YOUNG MEN -- all races, sizes, and gang affiliations, but none older than 21 -- are escorted by a PRISON GUARD out the front gates of a low-slung, concrete facility surrounded by high chain-link. Excited families, gangsters, and hoodrats greet them.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Florida prisons kick free 25,000 inmates a year. They don't do that for me, but it sure feels like it.

4 INT. DEXTER'S CAR - DAY 1

4

CLOSE ON a gleaming RED SHOVEL, price tag and stickers still attached, propped up in the passenger seat. PAN to Dexter, parked out front, watching the young men being released.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

DEXTER (V.O.)

I search for ones who think they beat
the system. They're not hard to find.
Like young Jeremy Downs.

Dexter sees JEREMY, 19, hardened beyond his years. He steps through the gate, squinting into the sunlight. The guard escorts Jeremy, who has no one to greet him, into a van that says "Homestead Halfway House."

DEXTER (V.O.)

Today, Jeremy is just another piece of
trash on the street. But four years
ago, he was the toast of Miami...

CUT TO:

5 A SCREEN

5

An Asian REPORTER stands in a park, holding a microphone. A GRAPHIC reads: "BREAKING NEWS. SANDRA YEE. MIAMI." Police cars can be seen behind her, along with yellow police tape stretched out to keep a gathering CROWD out of the park.

SANDRA YEE

It was a gruesome scene today. The
bloody body of a teenage boy found
stabbed to death inside this South
Miami park.

PULL BACK to reveal that we are --

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 1

Dexter sits shirtless behind his desk on a hot Miami night, eating popcorn and watching the archived NEWS REPORT on his computer. A gentle breeze billows the curtains behind him.

SANDRA YEE

Police haven't released the name of
the victim, but our sources tell us
that investigators are holding a 15-
year-old suspect in custody.

On the computer, B-ROLL NEWS FOOTAGE shows uniform officers wheeling out a BODY covered by a white sheet, followed by fuzzy LONG-LENS SHOTS of police poking around the area.

*

SANDRA YEE

We're hearing that the suspect lured
the older boy to the pond to spot
alligators.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

5

CONTINUED:

5

SANDRA YEE (CONT'D)

But once they were alone, the victim
was robbed and repeatedly stabbed.

Using the mouse, Dexter closes the window on-screen with the news report and clicks on a folder with AUTOPSY PHOTOS. He starts flipping through COLOR STILLs of the dirty, bloody body of a HEAVYSET BOY, 17, crisscrossed with deep knife wounds.

DEXTER (V.O.)

To the coroner, the knife strokes
looked random, impulsive. But I saw
the work of a young virtuoso. Too
many major arteries were severed...
femoral, brachial, carotid.

Dexter, staring with wide eyes, takes a bite of popcorn. He clicks the mouse and a PHOTO OF JEREMY in the courtroom appears. The boy has a smug smile on his face.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Jeremy got off easy. Four years in a
juvenile facility for manslaughter.
But I knew what he was, and what he'd
do again. All I had to do was circle
my calendar... and wait.

PUSH INTO the bulletin board near the desk, where on the calendar a DATE IS CIRCLED that says: "Jeremy."

SMASH CUT TO:

6

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - YARD - DAY 2

6

From a LOW ANGLE in the dirt, the new RED SHOVEL swiftly STRIKES down on us. Dexter, wearing jeans and a t-shirt, wields the shovel. He uses the sharp edge to hack at something we can't see. We can only imagine what, until --

THE LUMINOUS RITA

Strolls up in a skirt with a tray of ice-cold lemonade.

RITA

Lemonade for my sweaty workers?

REVEAL that Dexter is digging up a dead little LEMON TREE in front of her modest home. Nearby, CODY and ASTOR play in the dirt with hand shovels. Dexter turns to the kids.

DEXTER

What do you say, crew? Anyone
parched?

(CONTINUED)

CODY

What's parched?

They come over for drinks. Astor carries her little doll inside a plastic zip-lock.

RITA

Once we put in the new lemon tree, we'll make our own fresh-squeezed lemonade.

ASTOR

(excited)

Can we have a lemonade stand?

DEXTER

I'll apply for a business license first thing in the morning.

RITA

Thanks for doing this, Dexter. You know, I moved from Michigan with dreams of fruit trees in my yard.

CODY

But they keep dying.

Astor holds up three fingers and mouths "Three" to Dexter.

RITA

I can't help it. I kill things.

DEXTER

That must be awful. Fortunately, I have a green thumb. The secret to happy citrus is in the fertilizer. I find that bone meal works best.

CLOSE on ratty sneakers tromping across a yellow lawn. TILT UP to reveal FRANKIE, 30s, a degenerate friend of Rita's ex. Rita instinctively pulls her kids close as he marches up. *

RITA

Paul doesn't live here anymore.

FRANKIE

No shit, he's in jail. But he still owes me for fifty grams of blow, which means you owe me. *

As Dexter curiously steps over, Rita holds up a hand.

(CONTINUED)

RITA

Don't get involved.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I'm supposed to get involved? I never know in these situations.

Rita, scared, turns to Frankie.

RITA

I don't have money.

Frankie indicates the Toyota RAV4 parked in the driveway.

FRANKIE

You have a car.

RITA

(disbelief)

My car...?

FRANKIE

(snaps fingers)

Keys.

Rita doesn't know what to do. Cody innocently looks up.

CODY

You know my dad?

Frankie squats down to Cody's level and smiles.

FRANKIE

Why I sure do, little man. And you look just like him. I'll tell him you said hi, okay?

Frankie reaches to tousle Cody's hair, but Rita pulls her son close, out of Frankie's reach. With a knowing smile, Frankie rises to his feet and gets serious.

FRANKIE

Look... you want I could go into your house and throw around your furniture, make a real mess. But what kind of message would that send to the little ones? Just give me your fucking car.

Dexter knows better than to challenge this guy with the kids around. He calmly turns to Rita, who's near tears.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (3)

6

DEXTER

Maybe you should go get the keys.
I'll wait here with our friend.

Rita nods and herds the children inside. Frankie turns and stares daggers at Dexter, an imposing figure, holding the shovel in his hands.

FRANKIE

What? Think you can take me?

DEXTER (V.O.)

In my sleep.

Off Dexter's innocent expression --

MOMENTS LATER

Frankie recklessly backs down the driveway in the RAV4, bounces over a curb and speeds away. Dexter watches him go.

7 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY 2

7

Rita sits on the toilet peeing and crying. She reaches into a vanity drawer mirror for a rubber band, pulls it onto her wrist, and starts snapping it. She hears a KNOCK.

INTERCUT:

8 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY 2 (CONTINUOUS)

8

Dexter stands outside the bathroom door.

DEXTER

Everything okay in there?

RITA

Yes.

Dexter really wants to help but isn't exactly sure how.

DEXTER

Do you need toilet paper?

RITA

No.

DEXTER

(beat)

He's gone.

Rita dries her eyes, flushes the chain, and adjusts her skirt. She opens the door to find Dexter standing there.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

DEXTER

Guy clearly had no idea who he was dealing with. I'll file a report at work and get your car back.

Rita subconsciously pulls her sleeve over the rubber band.

RITA

No, Dexter -- thanks. No reports. Paul's out of our lives, I've filed for divorce... I just want my past to go away.

DEXTER

It went away in your RAV4.

RITA

Whatever it takes.

DEXTER

Okay, well -- I can give you a ride to work until you get another car.

Rita slips her arm through Dexter's and heads outside.

RITA

Or, I can take the bus like millions of other people. Now c'mon, let's go outside and enjoy this beautiful day.

Off Rita forcing an impossibly hopeful smile --

9 INT. POLICE STATION - DEXTER'S LAB - DAY 2 (MORNING)

9

CLOSE on a BLOOD SPATTER PHOTO that shows a vertical arc of crimson blood stretching up a wall. Dexter and ANGEL BATISTA discuss the photo, pinned on a bulletin board.

DEXTER

That's not arterial spurting. The drops are elliptical in shape. They were cast off by a weapon, something the killer swung overhead.

*
*

BATISTA

Like, what? An axe?

DEXTER

Blunt force. See how the head's caved in on the left side?

As Dexter shows Batista a CRIME SCENE PHOTO, VINCE MASUKA enters the work area.

(CONTINUED)

MASUKA

You guys scope out the new Hottie McHotass in dispatch yet?

BATISTA

(dismissing)

She's a Butter Face.

DEXTER

What's a Butter Face?

BATISTA

You know, compa. She's got a hot body, "but her face."

MASUKA

Yeah, but how great to pull a Bronco on that one, yeah? Yeah?

Dexter just stares at them blankly. Batista explains --

BATISTA

Mira aquí. You do her doggy style, right? Just when she gets into it, you grab her hips and yell another woman's name. Bam, you're riding a bronco 'cause she's trying to buck you off.

Masuka, getting into the spirit of things, lets out a holler and pretends to ride. Dexter can only stare in amazement.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Many times in life, I feel like I'm missing some essential piece of the human puzzle. This is one of them.

Debra runs up, looking for Dexter, and sees Masuka.

DEBRA

What're you doing -- the Bronco?

BATISTA

(to Dexter)

See *socio*, she knows.

*

Debra excitedly turns to Dexter.

DEBRA

I got my first official homicide call! He's back!

(CONTINUED)

9

CONTINUED: (2)

9

DEXTER
(hoping beyond hope)
Who's back? The Ice Truck Killer?

DEBRA
That's right, and you're not gonna
believe where he left the body.

10 EXT. MIAMI - AERIAL VIEW (STOCK) - DAY 2 (MORNING) 10

An AERIAL SHOT circles a giant Sports Arena.

11 INT. SPORTS ARENA - LOBBY - DAY 2 (MORNING) 11

Dexter, craning his neck around in awe, enters the massive indoor stadium, where the Miami Blades play hockey.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I knew he'd be back. It feels like
Christmas morning.

12 INT. HOCKEY ARENA - DAY 2 (MORNING) 12

Dexter enters the expansive space, which looks even bigger with the uniform rows of empty seats. SOUNDS of an active murder scene echo across the cold, hard surfaces. Dexter stops at the perimeter of the ice rink and peers through the plexiglass with child-like wonder.

REVERSE ANGLE

Reveals a woman's bloodless BODY PARTS, carefully wrapped in butcher paper and stacked on ice inside the goalie net. The brunette HEAD of the victim is perched ghoulishly atop the pile. Crime scene PERSONNEL work the area.

DEXTER (V.O.)
(breathless)
Look at that, a miracle on ice. Any
jeweler will tell you that finding the
right setting is essential, but this --
it's stunning.

AT THE HOCKEY NET

Batista and Masuka are already examining the body. Dexter, struggling not to slip, crosses the ice and joins them.

DEXTER
You ever seen anything like this
before, Angel?

(CONTINUED)

BATISTA

Guy's an original.

MASUKA

Did you hear? They caught him.

DEXTER

(heartbroken)

The killer?

MASUKA

Yeah.

(points across the ice)

They sent him to the penalty box for slashing.

Masuka laughs. Dexter nods -- "You got me" -- then turns to stare at the body, mesmerized.

BATISTA

You all right, Dexter?

DEXTER

I am fantastic. This is like a dream.

(off their curious looks)

Standing on the home ice of the Miami Blades.

BATISTA

Never pegged you for a hockey fan.

DEXTER

There's something about sitting in a big, cool hall I find very relaxing.

(then)

So what do we know?

MASUKA

(holding a severed leg)

Same as the others, no blood.

BATISTA

But... I'm not seeing any hesitation cuts this time. No flayed bones. I think our boy's got his confidence back.

Dexter cranes his head, looking around the inspiring arena that engulfs them like a cathedral.

DEXTER

He never lost it. He was just getting bored.

(CONTINUED)

BATISTA

Wonder what he's trying to tell us by stuffing her body in a goalie's net.

DEXTER

Hockey's a violent sport?

BATISTA

Anything else?

DEXTER

(realizing)

He's escalating the thrill. Posing his victim in a 20,000-seat stadium for all Miami to see. To show them, show us, what he's capable of doing.

Debra eagerly slips and slides her way across the ice to join them and skids into Dexter, who catches her.

DEBRA

What'd I miss? What'd I miss?

DEXTER

Relax. You're not missing anything.

Masuka smiles and waves a SEVERED HAND at Debra. The FINGERTIPS have been sliced off.

MASUKA

But she is... fingertips.

DEBRA

Fucking A! That's my girl!

(to Dexter)

This body belongs to the fingertips we found frozen in the ice truck. Shari Taylor. Another prostitute.

Dexter smiles proudly at his sister.

DEXTER

Well, no blood, no need for me. I should probably get going.

Doakes strides over, managing much better than Deb and Dex did on the slick ice. He glowers at Dexter.

SGT. DOAKES

What are you smiling at, freak boy?

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER
I'm not smiling. Just stretching my
face.

SGT. DOAKES
Well stop it.
(to Debra)
Meet me at the command post in five.
We may have a suspect.

Doakes walks away. Intrigued, Dexter turns to Debra.

DEXTER
There's really a suspect?

DEBRA
(a little cocky)
I'll let you know, Bro. When I get
back from my first official homicide
investigation. Damn, it's good to be
out of vice. I can't wait to...

Her voice trails off when Masuka stands, WIPING FRAME to
reveal the SEVERED HEAD of the victim. Debra blanches.

DEBRA
I know her.

DEXTER
Shari?

DEBRA
She called herself Cherry. We worked
the same corner when I was undercover.
We had coffee together. She always
ordered hers black. Like her pimp.
(knowing it's lame)
She thought that was funny.

DEXTER
So you and Cherry were, like, friends?

DEBRA
I guess.

Debra appears shaken, maybe even close to tears. Dexter has
compassion for his sister, but as a semi-sociopath he never
knows how to show it.

DEXTER
(sincere)
You want a hug?

(CONTINUED)

DEBRA
(as if)
Fuck off.

Upset, she turns to go, slips a little, rights herself and walks away.

13 INT. HOCKEY ARENA - THE STANDS - DAY 2 (MORNING) 13

LaGuerta has set up a command post halfway up the stands, with a dramatic view of the ice below. Doakes briefs her.

SGT. DOAKES
...I tore apart the security office.
A surveillance tape's missing.

LAGUERTA
Lemme guess, the one covering the ice.

SGT. DOAKES
They said you were good.

LAGUERTA
Don't bust my balls, James. The press is pounding on the doors outside. Someone had to be here last night who saw something. A rent-a-badge? A cleaning crew? A crack whore in the men's room? Work with me.

SGT. DOAKES
They got a night watchman. We can't find him.

LAGUERTA
Then he's a suspect.

DEBRA (O.C.)
Unless the Ice Truck Killer abducted him to gain entry into the arena.

They turn to see Debra coming up the stairs to join them.

LAGUERTA
Your brother help you with that startling piece of deductive logic?

SGT. DOAKES
(to Debra)
It's possible the watchman was in the wrong place at the wrong time. That's why we need to get to his apartment, see what we can find.

(CONTINUED)

13

CONTINUED:

13

Debra turns to LaGuerta. Takes a deep breath...

DEBRA

Actually, I was hoping I could hit Calle Ocho. Talk to my old contacts.

LaGuerta folds her arms, loving this.

LAGUERTA

Well isn't this a piss. I thought you wanted to get out of vice. Isn't that what you cried to the Captain last week?

DEBRA

Yeah. I mean no, I didn't cry. Look, my girls know this victim, okay? They may have information that could help us.

LAGUERTA

(considers it, then --)

No. I want you to stay with Doakes.

LaGuerta turns to go. Debra can't believe it. Doakes is caught in between, but he's a detective first and foremost.

SGT. DOAKES

Maria. She's got contacts.

LaGuerta stops on the stairs and turns back. After shooting Doakes an annoyed look for putting her on the spot, LaGuerta glares at Debra.

LAGUERTA

You still got your tube top?

DEBRA

And my nipple clamps.

LAGUERTA

Don't come back without information.

LaGuerta turns and walks away. Debra gives a small nod of appreciation to Doakes, who nods back.

14

EXT. CALLE OCHO - STOREFRONTS - DAY 2

14

A row of colorful storefronts -- all the flavors of Miami. Dexter stands outside a curio shop with a table out front, full of assorted second-hand knickknacks. Dexter holds up a blown-glass POODLE to examine it.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

DEXTER (V.O.)

Everyone moves to Miami to die, which means we have more junk than any city in America. A skilled bargain hunter can find real treasure here -- Tiffany lamps, Steuben glass -- but that's not my idea of hunting.

RACK FOCUS from Dexter's POV of the poodle to REVEAL Jeremy, walking up the sidewalk toward Dexter, window shopping.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I prefer a stalk and ambush approach. My instincts are impeccable, but I have to be sure of my prey.

Dexter curiously watches Jeremy stop to survey the wares of a KNIFE VENDOR, 60s, a bit of a yahoo wearing an American Eagle cap and surrounded by American flags. He has set out a couple card tables with rows of shining KNIVES, all sizes and shapes, floating on dark velvet.

KNIFE VENDOR

What'cha in the market for? You hunt trophies or meat?

JEREMY

Excuse me?

KNIFE VENDOR

Well, trophy hunters, they're into the raw adrenaline rush...

(redneck accent)

Kill it till it dies, Billy Bob!

(then)

Meat hunters are looking for dinner.

What're you looking for?

JEREMY

Can I see that one?

Jeremy points to a SKINNING KNIFE with a 4-inch blade, not the most impressive of the lot. The vendor takes the knife and deftly shows it off like a birthday party magician.

KNIFE VENDOR

Good eye. Fixed-blade skinning knife. Full-tang stainless steel. Real time saver for hunters who like to do their own butchering in the field.

Dexter drifts a little closer, as the knife vendor holds up the skinning knife, which glints in the sunlight.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

KNIFE VENDOR

See the way that blade curves gently,
son? Like an eagle's talon. It's
yours for fifteen dollars.

JEREMY

(pulls out a twenty)
I'll take it.

KNIFE VENDOR

Hell yeah, you'll take it. Why
wouldn't you? I'll get your change.

Jeremy delicately picks up the knife off the table to test the weight, holding the handle with an expert backhand grip. Abruptly, he SLASHES the empty air in front of him, once, twice, then spins with the blade --

-- and a HAND catches his wrist, stopping him in midswing. The hand belongs to Dexter, now standing next to Jeremy. The knife hovers two inches from Dexter's head. CLOSE on Jeremy's eyes -- cold, enraged, hungry.

DEXTER (V.O.)

There it is. The inhuman lizard-brain sense of I-Want. I remember the first time I saw that look.

FLASH CUT TO:

15 RAPID IMAGES

15

A hypodermic NEEDLE... The chilling eyes of an enraged NURSE, 40s, with a stout body... A weakened HARRY, lying in a hospital bed --

RESUME:

16 EXT. CALLE OCHO - STOREFRONTS - DAY 2

16

Dexter stares at Jeremy with an odd sense of recognition.

DEXTER

Easy, kid.

The knife vendor turns to see Dexter holding off the knife.

KNIFE VENDOR

Hey -- what the Sam Hill?

Jeremy pulls his hand away.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

JEREMY
I didn't see him.

KNIFE VENDOR
(to Dexter)
You okay, sir?

DEXTER
I'm fine. Honest mistake. No harm.

The knife vendor hands Jeremy his change.

KNIFE VENDOR
Be more careful, huh?

Jeremy takes off up the street, looking nervously over his shoulder at Dexter. The knife vendor turns to Dexter.

KNIFE VENDOR
Sorry about that. I only sell 'em.
So what're you hunting? Trophies or
meat?

Off Dexter, watching Jeremy go --

FLASHBACK:

17 EXT. WOODS - DAY

17

CLOSE on HARRY, dressed for a hike, walking through thick woods with 15-year-old TEENAGE DEXTER. They move in and out of shadows as they talk.

TEENAGE DEXTER
You ever shoot anybody, Dad?

HARRY
Afraid so.

TEENAGE DEXTER
Any of 'em die?

HARRY
Just one.

TEENAGE DEXTER
How'd it feel? To kill a guy?

Harry turns and fixes his son with a probing look.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

HARRY

Not so great, Dex. When you take a man's life, you're not just killing him. You're snuffing out all the things he'll ever become.

That reality hits Teenage Dexter. *

HARRY

As a police officer, I only fire my weapon to save a life. That's a code I live by. Killing has to serve a purpose. Otherwise, it's just plain murder.

Harry sees something on the ground ahead.

HARRY

There it is...

They reach a FALLEN DEER, bleeding in the hindquarters from where it was shot, but still breathing. For the first time, we notice the RIFLE in Harry's hands. Teenage Dexter stares down. *

TEENAGE DEXTER

It's still alive. *

Harry, troubled by his son's questions, has an idea to help the boy cope with his emerging instincts. Reluctantly, he unsheathes a HUNTING KNIFE and hands it to Teenage Dexter. *

HARRY

Why don't you go ahead, son. Put the poor animal out of its misery. *

Teenage Dexter looks in wonder from his father to the wounded deer. *

TEENAGE DEXTER

Really?

HARRY

For now, this is how we'll control the urges you feel. Channel them. *

Teenage Dexter takes the knife, barely believing. He steps forward and kneels OUT OF FRAME. PUSH INTO Harry, hoping this is a good idea... *

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

*HARRY**This deer will put meat on our table tonight. It serves a purpose.***END FLASHBACK:**

18 EXT. POLICE STATION - KITCHEN - DAY 2 18 *

A tired Doakes fixes a cup of coffee. On the counter, he notices a NEWSPAPER ARTICLE on the memorial for fallen officer Ricky Simmons and his wife Kara, with separate photos of each. Doakes picks up the story. PUSH IN on KARA's photo. As he stares at his slain lover, Doakes is flooded with anger. It's time to do something about this. *

19 EXT. CATHOLIC CATHEDRAL - COURTYARD - DAY 2 19 *

CLOSE on Doakes entering a Spanish courtyard. FOLLOW him through a crowd of mingling CHURCH MEMBERS, on the heels of a Confirmation ceremony. He moves through TEENAGERS dressed for Confirmation, receiving hugs and handshakes from FAMILY MEMBERS. *

Doakes scans the courtyard, until he spots -- *

ROSE, 15, Latino, awkward but beautiful, wearing a virginal white gown. A Catholic BISHOP, 70s, full white hair and red vestments, clasps her hand in his hands.

BISHOP

I'm very proud of you. You worked hard for this.

ROSE

Thank you, Bishop. *

Rose smiles and steps away to find her friends -- but bumps into Doakes, now strategically positioned in her path.

SGT. DOAKES

Hi, Rose. Congratulations on your Confirmation.

ROSE

Thank you. Do I know you?

SGT. DOAKES

My name's James Doakes. Miami-Metro PD. I'm investigating the murder of an undercover officer and his wife.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

ROSE
That's terrible. Were they members of
the church?

Rose couldn't be sweeter or more innocent.

SGT. DOAKES
No, Rose. They weren't.

ROSE
(confused)
Oh?

Doakes pulls out a PHOTO of Ricky Simmons and holds it up.

SGT. DOAKES
Have you ever seen this man?

In the background, for the first time we see kingpin CARLOS GUERRERO and his wife CELESTE, talking to other churchgoers. A Guerrero ASSOCIATE urgently taps his boss on the shoulder and points out Doakes.

ROSE
I don't know. Why are you asking me?

GUERRERO
Hey! Get away from my daughter!

Doakes turns to see Guerrero angrily racing over, pushing people aside.

SGT. DOAKES
What? C'mon...

Trying to provoke Guerrero into a fight, Doakes holds up his hands, like "Take a shot." Guerrero pushes people aside and lunges at Doakes to do just that, but some of his associates wisely hold him back. Guerrero strains to get to Doakes --

GUERRERO
At my church? In front of my family?

SGT. DOAKES
Ricky and Kara had families, too.

Everyone in the church has turned to watch.

ROSE
(scared)
What's he saying, Daddy?

(CONTINUED)

19

CONTINUED: (2)

19

CELESTE

Come on, honey. Let's go.

Celeste escorts away Rose. Guerrero forces down his fury, shrugs off the associates holding him, and faces Doakes.

*
*

GUERRERO

You just opened a dangerous door.

SGT. DOAKES

Naw, man. You did. When you murdered a cop. And an innocent lady. You don't follow the rules, Guerrero. Why should I?

The Bishop calmly approaches.

BISHOP

This is a place of worship, officer. I need to ask you to leave. Go in peace.

*

SGT. DOAKES

Not likely.

Guerrero's men step aside to let Doakes exit. As he walks down the center of the courtyard without turning back --

*
*

20

OMITTED

20

21

EXT. CALLE OCHO - NIGHT 2

21

Little Havana. The heart of Cuban Miami. A time warp into an alternate reality of hand-rolled cigars, fruiterias, meat markets, and windows with cafecitos for only 25 cents.

At a corner traffic light, four motley hookers in slinky dresses and strappy heels -- SHANDA (Black, attitude), GABRIELLE (Latino, trashy), BELLA (Latino, demure), and a FOURTH HOOKER -- lift their skirts to display their wares. Appreciative drivers HONK.

Debra, wearing her business suit, approaches the girls on the street. They turn and break out familiar smiles.

SHANDA

Yo, looks who's back!

BELLA

Mamacita! Estás caliente!

GABRIELLE

Who'd you fuck? Dolce or Gabbana?

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

DEBRA

I let 'em both pull a train on me.

The girls laugh.

DEBRA

Listen, I have a confession to make...
I'm, uh... I'm not who you think I am.
I'm a cop.

The girls look at each other nervously. The Fourth Hooker turns and bolts, doing her best to run in high heels.

DEBRA

(calls after her)
Bridget, get back -- I'm not gonna
bust you! Bridget!

But she's gone. The others size up Debra, not buying it.

GABRIELLE

You're not a cop, you're a whore.

DEBRA

I'm not a fucking whore.

SHANDA

What's wrong with being a fucking
whore?

Bella reads the truth on Debra's face.

BELLA

Oh my God. She's telling the truth.

GABRIELLE

Of course, the white girl. It's
always the white girl.

SHANDA

Mother fuck! You come to arrest us?

BELLA

We trusted you, Brandy.

DEBRA

My name's Debra, and I'm not here to
bust you. I need your help. He hit
again... the Ice Truck Killer. He got
Cherry.

That quiets the girls. They all look at each other.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

BELLA
 (tearing up)
 Cherry?

22 INT. CAFETERÍA - NIGHT 2

22

A Little Havana Cafetería -- a colorful neighborhood cross between a cantina and restaurant -- where working men can relax after a hard week and meet friends to talk politics, sports or gossip. CUBAN MUSIC plays on a cheap boombox.

Debra sits with the three hookers over beers. Bella is still tearful. Some CUBAN MEN at the bar eye the girls.

*
*

GABRIELLE
 This shit's too crazy, I'm done. I got a sister in Ohio, runs a boutique fashion store. I'm on a bus tomorrow.

*
*
*
*

SHANDA
 I ain't closing my shop for no sick psycho bitch. Fucking woman hater. I was on this street before him. Fuck it.

*
*
*
*
*

DEBRA
 We can get him, you guys. You just gotta give me something. Any of you see Cherry with anyone the night before last?

*
*
*
*
*

BELLA
 (fighting tears)
 I saw Cherry get in a car. Come to think of it, she didn't come back. And I was working all night.

*
*
*

DEBRA
 D'you know the driver?

BELLA
 No. But... it was like an old-fashioned station wagon. With the wood panels on the side?

*
*

DEBRA
 (psyched)
 This is good, this is a lead. Now if I can just get that chode LaGuerta to listen.

GABRIELLE
 Who's LaGuerta?

*
*

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

DEBRA

My lieutenant, she hates my guts, but
I'm tight with the Captain. I'll go
to him.

Shanda whistles. The girls knowingly shake their heads.

DEBRA

What?

BELLA

Never piss off your pimp.

DEBRA

LaGuerta's not my pimp.

SHANDA

S'that right? The bitch tell you what
to do?

GABRIELLE

(off Debra's nod)

Is your pussy taking all the risks?

BELLA

(off Debra's shrug)

Does she steal what you earn?

DEBRA

She definitely does that.

GABRIELLE

Then she's your pimp, baby, and she
will mess you up if you play her.

DEBRA

I told you, I'm not a fucking whore.

SHANDA

Yeah you are.

(pissed again)

And what's wrong with being a fucking
whore?

Debra shakes her head. She can't win.

23 INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - DAY 3 (MORNING)

23

CLOSE on an open file with court transcripts and photos of
Jeremy Downs. REVEAL Dexter multitasking: working-out on an
exercise bike, eating an egg sandwich, and reading the file
at the same time.

(CONTINUED)

23

CONTINUED:

23

When his phone RINGS, he sets down his sandwich but, still engrossed in the file, takes it with him as he hops off the bike to answer the phone.

DEXTER
(preoccupied)
Hello...

INTERCUT:

24

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY 3 (MORNING) - CONTINUOUS

24

Rita sits at a bus stop, surrounded by the city's underpaid and underprivileged CITIZENS. She talks in a cell phone.

RITA
Oh, hi. Are you... is this a bad time? It's Rita.

DEXTER
It's fine. Hi. I'm just reading a... sad story. Everything alright?

RITA
Well, yes. But, here's the thing...

DEXTER
You want me to pick up Cody after school?

RITA
No, Colleen's taking him to karate with Hudson.

DEXTER
What about Astor's piano?

RITA
Jen's got that covered. It's Social Services. A case worker's coming by the house this afternoon. I should be home by four, but with the busses...

DEXTER
I'll be there. Don't worry about a thing.

RITA
Thank you, Dexter. I should be on time. It's just in case. You're a life saver.

Rita hangs up. Nervous, she stares at the street and starts discreetly snapping the rubber band against her wrist.

25 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 3

25

Packed with UNIFORM COPS and DETECTIVES, including Dexter, Debra and Batista. Doakes briefs the group from the front, with LaGuerta off to the side.

SGT. DOAKES

As you all know, a night watchman from the hockey arena's missing. Till now, we presumed he was abducted, or worse, by the Ice Truck Killer.

Doakes nods to someone offscreen, and a grainy SURVEILLANCE VIDEO starts playing on the HUGE SCREEN behind Doakes. The tape shows a MAN in a security uniform hauling chopped BODY PARTS across the ice and stacking them in the goalie's net.

SGT. DOAKES

However, we searched his apartment and found a stolen surveillance tape from the night of the murder. Chief of security at the arena confirmed it... the man you're looking at is Tony Tucci, the missing night watchman.

Dexter and Debra watch in shock. LaGuerta steps up.

LAGUERTA

Here's the best part. Tucci's got a record. Pulled a knife at a party in '97.

LaGuerta nods and the tape stops. A STILL IMAGE appears on the big screen -- the grinning employee ID photo of Tony Tucci, a simple blue-collar type.

LAGUERTA

Ladies and gentleman, I give you Tony Tucci... the Ice Truck Killer.

DEBRA

(whispers to Dexter)
Bullshit.

LAGUERTA

Captain Matthews is coordinating with the FDLE to launch a statewide manhunt as soon as we get clearances.

DEBRA

(out loud to LaGuerta)
Does he drive a station wagon?

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

LAGUERTA

Excuse me?

DEBRA

Tucci. What kind of car's he drive?
The last victim was seen getting in --

LAGUERTA

I don't recall asking for questions,
Miss Morgan. Thank you.

(to the room)

From this moment forward, all our
resources go into finding this man.
Your individual assignments will be
coming shortly. That's all for now.

The briefing breaks and the detectives start buzzing. Debra stands and turns to Dexter in frustration. Dexter stares at the projected photo of Tucci.

DEBRA

It doesn't make sense. After being so
careful for so long, why in the hell
would he leave recorded evidence?

Debra angrily turns to go and brushes past Batista.

DEBRA

Excuse me.

HOLD for a beat on Batista, who was listening to her words, before he heads out with everyone else. Dexter stays in his seat, staring up at the grinning face of Tony Tucci.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Of course, I agree with my sister.
But unlike her, I'm not upset. He's
still out there. And I'm waiting.
Breathless.

Off his reverie --

26 EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY 3

26

Dexter and Social Service worker LAURA SHAW, 40s, exit the house, where we hear Astor practicing PIANO inside. They start walking toward Laura's car on the street.

*
*

DEXTER

She should be here soon, any second
now. Her bus must be late. Can we
get you anything?

(CONTINUED)

LAURA

I'm fine. Are you the full-time care giver for the children?

*

DEXTER

No, Rita's usually home in time for the kids. I'm just back up.

LAURA

My files say Miss Bennet is supposed to have personal transportation.

DEXTER

Yes, well she did. And will again very soon. Probably next week?

LAURA

Nothing to worry about. Just have to make a note of it. Miss Bennet is doing an exemplary job. Wish all my home visits were this lovely.

DEXTER

So why are you still coming around?

LAURA

Routine follow-up for all domestic violence cases. We need to ensure a stable home environment exists.

DEXTER

Good thing. Just this morning I was reading about a case, so tragic. A boy abandoned by his mom when he was six. Sent to a foster home where the man of the house sexually abused him.

LAURA

Happens more than you want to know.

DEXTER

Your department got him out of there faster than you can say Jacko, thank God.

LAURA

Yeah but the damage was probably done. Lemme guess -- he got bounced from placement to placement, committed a crime, ended up in juvie.

DEXTER

A major crime. Murder. You're good.

(CONTINUED)

LAURA
(weary)
I try.

*
*

DEXTER
You should keep the faith. The system works, now and then. I was taken in by a wonderful family. No abuse. In fact, my foster father understood I had special needs. Without him...

LAURA
You'd be like that kid. You're lucky.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Lucky.

RITA (O.C.)
I'm here, here I come! Hi, everyone!

Rita comes running up the driveway, panting and smiling and looking eternally grateful to Dexter. She mouths "thank you" to him as she leads Laura into the house.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I am lucky. What do I know about abuse? Without the Code of Harry, I'm sure I would've committed a senseless murder in my youth. Just to watch the blood flow.

As a troubled Dexter watches Rita head inside --

FLASHBACK:

27 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

27

Dexter and Debra, both early 20s, stand over a hospital bed. Harry, looking green against the sheets, lies with his eyes closed, hooked up to an IV. A sturdy nurse named MARY -- the one we foreshadowed earlier -- fluffs up his pillows. On her way out, she whispers to Dexter and Debra.

MARY
*Just try to make him comfortable.
It's about all we can do now.*

DEBRA
(torn apart)
I don't understand. A week ago the doctor said he was getting better.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

MARY

(all-wise)

He is getting better, sweetie. A body
cannot suffer in sweet repose.

She pushes a nurse's cart out, past an unconscious OLD
PATIENT in the next bed. Annoyed, Debra calls after Mary.

DEBRA

What does that mean?

(to Dexter)

What the hell's that mean?

DEXTER

That she's weird?

Harry opens his eyes and rolls his head toward his children,
as if some invisible hand pushed it from the far side of the
pillow.

HARRY

Listen you two, I'm not gonna be
around much longer.

DEBRA

Dad, stop. You can make it through
this. If you fight.

Debra's grief can be seen in the tears she angrily brushes
back. Dexter holds his pain inside.

HARRY

I am fighting, honey. With every
breath.

(to Dexter)

When I'm gone, I can't stop you...
from being who you are. Sooner or
later, you'll -- need -- to do it.

Dexter nods, scared. But Debra has no idea what Harry is
talking about.

DEBRA

Do what?

HARRY

(to Dexter)

Just remember our lessons.

DEBRA

What lessons? What're you talking
about?

(CONTINUED)

HARRY
(to Debra)
I never worried about you, Debra. You got your mom's spirit. But Dexter, he required extra handling.

DEXTER
(simply)
I can't make it without you.

HARRY
Yes you can. If you feel like you're slipping, you lean on your sister. She'll keep you... connected. You're a better person than you think, Dex.

As Dexter wonders if that's really true --

END FLASHBACK:

28 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 3 28

CLOSE on a TV screen showing the grainy surveillance tape of Tony Tucci carrying BODY PARTS across ice. REVEAL Batista closely watching the tape on a TV set in the mostly empty bullpen. Debra enters with her nose in a FILE.

DEBRA
Fucking forensics report.

BATISTA
What'd they find?

DEBRA
Tucci's hair and fibers.

She looks at the TV screen to see Tucci holding the victim's WRAPPED TORSO. Disgusted, she tosses the file onto a desk.

DEBRA
Of course his hair and fibers are on the body. He's hauling her around with his pork hands, isn't he? Pretty fucking peculiar behavior for a genius serial killer, if you ask me.

BATISTA
He's a mystery, all right.

DEBRA
The problem is, nobody asks me. Or listens to a goddamn word I say.

(CONTINUED)

BATISTA

No es verdad. Why do you think I'm going over this surveillance tape?

Intrigued, Debra moves over to Batista, who hasn't taken his eyes off the TV screen the whole time.

BATISTA

Come here. Watch carefully.

Deb stares at the screen. As Tucci places the wrapped torso inside the net, he subtly TURNS HIS HEAD as if responding to someone off screen, then adjusts the position of the torso.

BATISTA

You see that? Right before he repositioned the torso?

DEBRA

(excited)

He turned his head!

Batista rewinds and FREEZES FRAME on the head turned back.

BATISTA

Like someone's giving him directions.

DEBRA

Someone like the Ice Truck Killer holding a mother-fucking gun on his back. The killer's framing Tucci!

BATISTA

Looks that way.

DEBRA

LaGuerta's gonna lose her sheep shit when she finds out. She's gonna have to cancel her press conference.

BATISTA

And you know how LaGuerta loves her press conferences.

DEBRA

(an idea forming)

Can I borrow this tape?

Off her energy --

29 EXT. HOMESTEAD HALFWAY HOUSE - DAY 3 (DUSK) 29 *

A rundown boarding house with a sign that says: "Welcome to Homestead Halfway House." Jeremy and a somewhat frail boy named LUCAS -- an 18-year-old runt of the litter -- exit the house joking and laughing. *

30 OMITTED 30 *

31 EXT. MARSH - DAY 3 (DUSK) 31 *

CLOSE on the faces of Jeremy and Lucas behind chain-link. A REVERSE ANGLE reveals that they're staring into a secluded, marshy area. A "NO TRESPASSING" sign on the fence.

LUCAS
I don't know, Jeremy.

Lucas looks nervous.

JEREMY
What's wrong? I thought you wanted to see an alligator.

LUCAS
I do.

JEREMY
Well come on, it's in the marsh.
(impatient)
You pussing out?

LUCAS
No.

WAY DOWN THE STREET

A familiar car sits under a tree.

32 INT. DEXTER'S CAR - DAY 3 (DUSK) 32 *

Dexter sits inside, shadowing Jeremy. He watches as Lucas overcomes his fear and starts climbing the chain-link to break into the marsh. Dexter raises binoculars for a better look.

LONG-LENS POV

As Jeremy climbs, his shirt lifts and Dexter spots the GLINT of the skinning knife strapped to Jeremy's hip.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

DEXTER (V.O.)

Bingo. I know what happens next in this gruesome little scenario. Jeremy is trying to recreate his first kill, ritualize it. I've got what I need.

As Dexter puts his binoculars back in the case, PAN to the front window, through which we see the boys in the distance clear the high fence and run off into the marsh.

33 INT. POLICE STATION - VIEWING ROOM - DAY 3 (DUSK)

33

*

Debra shows CAPTAIN MATTHEWS the security tape FREEZE FRAMED on Tucci's turned head.

*

DEBRA

See the look on his face? Like he's scared. Like he's got a gun pointed at him.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

It's not much to go on, Debra. A look off camera?

DEBRA

There's more, one of my vice contacts, Gabrielle, I trust her, and she saw the victim get into a panel wagon the night of her death. That was the last time anyone saw the victim.

Debra, on a roll, hands a file to the Captain.

DEBRA

I checked Tucci's background report. He doesn't even own a car. I'm telling you, there's no fucking way he can be the Ice Truck Killer.

(catching herself)

Sir.

Captain Matthews appears impressed, but circumspect.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

What's Lieutenant LaGuerta think of all this?

DEBRA

I came straight to you, Captain.

(CONTINUED)

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
(frowning)
You went around the back of your
commanding officer?

DEBRA
(defensively)
LaGuerta doesn't listen to me. Every
time I open my mouth she --

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
I don't want to hear it, officer. You
don't violate the chain of command. I
gave you a shot in homicide because I
think you can make a halfway decent
detective, but I'll put you right back
on the street if you can't swim in
these waters. Got it?

DEBRA
Yes, sir.

Captain Matthews turns to go, then pauses --

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
Your father never would've pulled the
shit you just did. *

That hurts. The Captain exits, leaving Debra chastised.

34 EXT. MARSH - SWAMPY AREA - DAY 3 (DUSK) 34 *

An extremely LOW ANGLE, an inch above water, gazing out over
the blackness of a swampy WATER HAZARD. On the far side,
close to the water, stand Jeremy and Lucas. It all feels
creepy.

LUCAS
I don't see it.

Jeremy points right INTO CAMERA.

JEREMY
It's right there. See its eyes
sticking up?

AT THE WATER'S EDGE

Lucas looks into the murky water. Jeremy stands slightly
behind him.

JEREMY
You have to get closer.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

Lucas nervously steps right to the water's edge. Any closer and he'd fall in. Lucas looks out over the water.

LUCAS

I still don't see it.

JEREMY

Really? Huh. Maybe I was wrong.

Lucas looks back at the bigger boy, suddenly realizing.

LUCAS

There's no gator here, is there?

Jeremy shrugs. Dark. Menacing.

JEREMY

I don't know, Lucas. Is there?

It's a tense, uncomfortable moment. Lucas is helpless. He knows it. We know it. Jeremy smiles, the smile of a predator in control --

VOICE

Excuse me!

They turn to see Dexter materializing out of the trees as he walks toward them. He strolls right up to the boys, who are frozen by his sudden appearance.

DEXTER

Anyone see a Frisbee? It flew in here somewhere.

Jeremy impulsively takes off running. Lucas follows a beat behind. Dexter watches the boys run away. After they flee from sight, he looks around at his surroundings.

DEXTER (V.O.)

What am I doing out here?

Dexter is about to head back, when he hears a SPLASH behind him. Dexter turns -- as a 12-FOOT ALLIGATOR lunges out of the water. Dexter leaps away but trips, falls, and quickly scrambles back to his feet.

DEXTER

Son of a bitch!

35 EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY 3 (DUSK)

35 *

Dexter, angry and wet, limps across the empty parking lot.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

DEXTER (V.O.)

All I had to do was drive home. Have
a taco. Plan my attack. Instead,
dearly deluded Dexter tried to act
human. Like it's my job to save
lives.

*

He reaches his car -- to find the passenger window SMASHED.
Oh hell. Dexter opens the door and more glass falls from
the window. Dexter checks the glove box. Emptied out.

*

DEXTER (V.O.)

The Code of Harry never covered this.
At least I know what Jeremy is -- and
what I need to do.

As Dexter angrily slams the glove box closed --

FLASHBACK:

36 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

36

CLOSE ON a hypodermic needle filling up with liquid. The
needle slowly rises to face of Mary, who's holding the
syringe. She squirts out the air bubble. *RACK FOCUS* to
Harry, lying behind her in bed, looking very close to death.

HARRY

(very faint)

Wait...

FIND Dexter sitting on the edge of the bed. Dexter turns to
his dying father to see a small spark shining in his eyes.

DEXTER

What Dad?

HARRY

Don't let her...

Mary, not hearing Harry (or ignoring him), turns with the
needle and gently lifts Harry's frail arm.

MARY

Okay, my brave little soldier. Let's
get this nasty shot over with.

HARRY

No... no shot...

Dexter sees the horror in his father's eyes. Just before
Mary plunges the needle into Harry's raised blue vein,
Dexter reaches out and restrains her arm.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER

Wait.

In SLOW MOTION, Mary's eyes snap to Dexter and fix him with a look of cold rage. It mirrors the rage we watched earlier in Jeremy's eyes. Dexter registers the look, before we RESUME NORMAL SPEED and Mary breaks out a granola smile.

MARY

What is it, honey?

DEXTER

He doesn't want the shot.

MARY

Your father is very sick. He's in a lot of pain.

She holds up the needle, and a melodramatic SHAFT OF LIGHT from the window shines through it like her own Holy Grail.

MARY

He needs a shot.

Harry's hand slowly reaches for Dexter's hand and gives it a squeeze. Dexter looks down at his frail father, fighting his way up through the fog.

HARRY

I want... pain.

Dexter smiles and looks at Mary.

DEXTER

He wants pain.

Mary forces down a savage roar and replaces it with a petulant shake of her head.

MARY

I'll have to tell the doctor. He won't be happy that you're refusing your medication.

*
*
*

She turns on her heels and sails out into the hallway like some large and deadly bird. Dexter looks back at Harry.

HARRY

You... can tell.

DEXTER

About the nurse? Yeah. She's like me. How could you tell?

(CONTINUED)

HARRY

*She gives... too much...
(he gasps in pain and
closes his eyes)
...too much morphine. It's making me
worse.*

DEXTER

*(realizing)
She's drugging you. Killing by
overdose, right?*

HARRY

Not just me... others, too.

Harry swivels his head and nods at the other bed. Dexter looks over -- and we reveal for the first time that it's EMPTY. The old patient gone. Dexter turns back to Harry.

DEXTER

What should I do?

Harry gives Dexter's hand a squeeze.

HARRY

Stop her.

DEXTER

*(cautious)
What do you mean "stop her"?*

HARRY

*The way I taught you. It's time,
Dexter... to put your lessons to
use... before she hurts anyone else.*

Off Dexter. Whoa.

END FLASHBACK:

37 INT. POLICE STATION - LAGUERTA'S OFFICE - DAY 4

37

LaGuerta sits at her desk going over paperwork. A KNOCK.

LAGUERTA

*(don't bother me)
Yeah, what is it?*

The door opens and Captain Matthews enters.

LAGUERTA

What can I do for you, Captain?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

37

He takes a seat on the couch, assuming control of the room.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

Did you know one of your officers has information that casts some doubt on this manhunt of yours?

LAGUERTA

(derisive)

Who? Morgan?

*
*

Captain Matthews patiently ignores the disrespect.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

I realize you're something of a folk hero around here, Maria. But it would be a mistake to ignore the work of a promising officer to further your political career.

LAGUERTA

S'that what you think I'm doing?

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

All of Cuban Miami knows what you're doing. You give hope to every refugee who ever hugged an inner tube. For Chrissake, you're the face of the new Miami-Metro PD.

LAGUERTA

Jealous?

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

No, worried. You were a middle of the pack detective before the press got a hold of you.

LAGUERTA

Thanks for the vote of confidence.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

It's a reality check and you need it.

LAGUERTA

And I got it. Now let's cut to the chase. Are you telling me to call off my manhunt? 'Cause I will remind you that Jeb Bush himself signed off on this, okay?

Captain Matthews sighs. She just doesn't get it.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

You can hold your press conference,
 Maria. The people of this city need
 to know we're doing something about
 this mess. But don't expect me to
 bail you out if that night watchman
 turns out to be a dead end.

*

He rises and exits, leaving LaGuerta to stew on his words --

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

A statewide manhunt is under way right
 now in Florida...

38 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 4

38

CLOSE on a TV SET. The FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR sits behind her
 desk, delivering a breaking news report.

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR

According to police, a night watchman
 is on the run after the dismembered
 body parts of a young South Beach
 woman were found Tuesday stacked on
 the home ice of the Miami Blades.

*

CAMERA ROAMS the bullpen to reveal detectives -- including
 Doakes, Batista and Debra -- watching on various TVs.

FEMALE NEWS ANCHOR

The woman is believed to be the latest
 victim of the notorious Ice Truck
 Killer, now responsible for five
 deaths in the greater Miami area.

LaGuerta's image comes up on TV, with a graphic that says:
 "Lt. Maria LaGuerta, Miami Metro Homicide."

*

LAGUERTA

These terrible attacks have to stop --
we have to stop them. With Tony Tucci
 now linked to the murders, it's our
 mission here to find him.

*

*

Debra can't stand to watch.

DEBRA

Fucking joke.

She angrily turns and exits, walking past Doakes. HOLD on
 Doakes, watching TV. Det. McNamara steps up next to him.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

DET. MCNAMARA

I'm going out tonight with the guys,
blow off a little steam. You in?

SGT. DOAKES

Yeah, man. Sounds good.

DET. MCNAMARA

I'll pick you up at eight.

McNamara slips away. As Doakes turns to the TV, now showing
the videotape of Tucci hauling body parts across the ice --

39 INT. HOTEL - FRONT DESK - DAY 4

39

Rita, working behind the front desk, inserts a pair of flat
hotel keys into a folder and hands it to a YOUNG COUPLE with
a smile.

RITA

Elevator's around the corner to your
left. Enjoy your stay with us.

Her cell phone RINGS and she answers it.

RITA

Hello?

TEACHER'S VOICE

Rita? This is Mr. Curtis. Are you
coming to pick up Astor?

Rita speaks low and turns away from the lobby for privacy.

RITA

No, a friend of mine's picking her up.
Denise. She's not there?

TEACHER'S VOICE

Afraid not. But your daughter is.
She's the last kid left here at
school.

RITA

Oh no. I don't have a car. How's
Astor?

Rita's eyes fill with tears. She feels like the worst mom.

TEACHER'S VOICE

She's just fine, but we can't keep her
much longer.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

RITA

Okay, okay... I'll work something out.

HARD CUT TO:

40 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY 4

40

Dexter runs through the house with a child under each arm, like he's a twin-engine airplane. Astor doesn't look any worse for the wear. Dexter sets them down in the kitchen.

ASTOR

Do it again! Again!

DEXTER

Only if you eat all your porridge for supper.

(to Cody)

Now Master Cody, let's see what we can do about that splinter. Sit.

Cody sits at the kitchen table. Dexter pulls a washcloth from his pocket and unrolls it to reveal tweezers, a needle, cotton, a Band Aid -- echoes of his kill tools. Dexter takes Cody's hand and gently touches his RED FINGER TIP.

DEXTER

It's a deep one. Might sting a bit, but the magical Splinter Fairy will soon make you forget all about it.

Dexter tries to get hold of the splinter with the tweezers.

ASTOR

Who's the magical Splinter Fairy?

DEXTER

Second cousin of the Tooth Fairy. She leaves candy if you put your splinter under your pillow at night.

In the background, Rita enters the house with groceries.

CODY

I know there's no Tooth Fairy. She's make believe, like the Boogey Man.

RITA

(entering)

Hi babies.

The kids turn to say hello. With Cody distracted, Dexter yanks the splinter free. Cody jumps.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

CODY

Ow!

Dexter holds up the gnarly SPLINTER, with a drop of blood.

DEXTER

You're right Cody, no such thing as the Boogey Man. But the Splinter Fairy? She's the real deal.

Big crocodile tears start brimming in Cody's eyes.

CODY

Will she still leave candy if I cry?

DEXTER (V.O.)

I hate to see children cry.

Dexter opens his arms and Cody slips into them, burying his head in Dexter's shoulder. As Dexter soothes him --

DEXTER (V.O.)

If I had a heart, it might be breaking right now.

Rita, hugging Astor now under her arm, smiles at this man taking care of her son. They almost look like a normal family. Well, almost.

41 EXT. CALLE OCHO - DAY 4 (DUSK)

41 *

Debra roams the sidewalk alone, searching the street. Weaving through HOOKERS hawking their wares. CUBANO MEN sipping espressos. TEEN RUNAWAYS looking for handouts.

ACROSS THE STREET

She spots a classic Fleetline STATION WAGON, light color with paneled wood sides, trolling the street in SLOW MOTION.

AN SUV

Pulls up, blocking Debra's line of sight. She runs around the SUV and bolts into the street. A car SLAMS ITS BRAKES, nearly hitting Debra. The DRIVER curses out the window. Debra holds up a hand, sorry, and races across the street, forcing another car to swerve and HONK.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

AT A STOP LIGHT

She reaches the rear of the Fleetline Station Wagon stopped at the light and hurries along the side, trying to peer in, but the windows are tinted. When she reaches the passenger window, which is rolled down, Debra looks inside --

-- and sees a wrinkled ANCIENT MAN behind the wheel, with his AGED WIFE riding shotgun. She smiles a creepy toothless smile at Debra and waves in SLOW MOTION, as the light turns green and the Fleetline drives away. Off Debra --

42 EXT. UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT 4

42

A plain-wrap SEDAN cruises through an oasis of quiet stately homes in Coral Gables. It pulls to a stop outside a house.

43 INT. SEDAN - NIGHT 4

43

McNamara turns off the engine and shuts off the headlights. Doakes rides shotgun with McNamara's two beefy cop friends from the cemetery sitting in back.

SGT. DOAKES

Who we picking up now, man? He ain't sitting on my lap.

DET. MCNAMARA

We're not picking up anybody.

SGT. DOAKES

Then what are we doing in the Gables?

DET. MCNAMARA

I told you, blowing off some steam.

(looks out window)

This is it.

McNamara reaches under his seat, produces four rubber CLOWN MASKS, and starts passing them around. Doakes looks down at the goofy grinning mask in his hands.

SGT. DOAKES

What's this?

DET. MCNAMARA

It's a disguise.

(nods to house)

One of Guerrero's top lieutenants, he lives here. We're gonna fuck him up.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

43

SGT. DOAKES

Whoa. I thought you just wanted to go out and get shit-faced.

McNamara pulls a brown-bag bottle from his jacket and takes a shot. *

DET. MCNAMARA

I am shit-faced.

COP FRIEND

Hey, how do I look?

As McNamara passes the bottle to the backseat, Doakes turns to see one of the cops has donned his clown mask. It's an eerie effect. Doakes turns to McNamara. *

SGT. DOAKES

I'm all for sending a message, but this ain't the way.

DET. MCNAMARA

Why the hell not? The guy's scum.

McNamara and the cops exit the car WEARING THEIR MASKS.

44 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT 4 (CONTINUOUS)

44

Doakes follows the cops out, still holding his mask.

SGT. DOAKES

Yo listen up, I showed my face to Guerrero, man. To his whole church. He's gonna think I was behind this.

One clown jumps up and down, testosterone flowing.

COP FRIEND

That's part of the plan, dumb-ass.

SGT. DOAKES

(confused)

The plan?

McNamara puts a friendly arm around Doakes.

DET. MCNAMARA

You fuck my sister. You fuck a cop's wife. Now...

(he starts laughing)

...you're just fucked, buddy.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

The other clowns join McNamara in derisive laughter as they turn like three linebackers from a huddle and bound up the walkway toward the house, leaving a tortured Doakes by the car. He hears the door BUST OPEN, furniture THROWN, then a man YELLING.

SGT. DOAKES

Shit, man.

Doakes throws the clown mask into the car, backs away, then turns and hurries down the sidewalk. As CRIES OF PAIN and SOUNDS OF A BEATING echo behind him --

45 EXT. HOMESTEAD HALFWAY HOUSE - NIGHT 4

45

The rundown boarding house is mostly dark. We hear the SOUNDS of a classic arcade game, along with a current ALTERNATIVE MUSIC song.

46 INT. HOMESTEAD HALFWAY HOUSE - RECREATION ROOM - NIGHT 4

46

An UNSEEN POV creeps along the back wall of a drab and faded rec room with a "Homestead Halfway House" sign. Its shabby contents include a ping pong table with a sagging net, a weathered foosball table, and an donated community TV bolted high in the corner of the room, playing a fuzzy MUSIC VIDEO. *

On the far side of the rec room, we see Jeremy playing a 1980s arcade machine, like Centipede, with his back to us. *

CLOSE on Jeremy. As he struggles with the game, the LIGHTS and TV go out, plunging the room into shadows and darkness. Jeremy turns around, more bored than scared.

JEREMY

Quit fucking around! Turn on the lights!

Beat. Jeremy starts feeling a little nervous. He steps away from the machine, deeper into the room, his eyes searching.

JEREMY

Come on, man. Turn on the fucking --

From seemingly nowhere, a FAMILIAR SHADOW blindsides Jeremy, who lets out a reflexive grunt, and pile-drives him into a column. REVEAL Dexter, the real Boogey Man, holding Jeremy firmly from behind. He leans close, whispers menacingly.

DEXTER

You're mine now.

(CONTINUED)

JEREMY
(terrified)
What do you want?

DEXTER
Silence.

Dexter SLAMS his body into Jeremy, flattening the boy's face against the column, so that he can pull the SYRINGE from his jacket pocket. As he raises it to Jeremy's neck --

JEREMY
(acting tough)
You gonna fuck me, faggot? 'Cause I
killed the last guy who raped me.

Shocked, Dexter pauses with the needle hovering.

DEXTER
What guy?

Jeremy, afraid, doesn't say anything. Dexter lowers the syringe with one hand and forcefully spins Jeremy around with the other, so he's looking into his eyes. No time for bullshit here.

DEXTER
He raped you? The boy you killed when
you were fifteen?

Jeremy, his face lit by a SHAFT OF LIGHT beaming through a high window, struggles valiantly not to cry.

DEXTER
Why didn't you tell someone?

JEREMY
(burning with shame)
Would you? He fucked me and I killed
him and if you try I'll kill you, too.

Despite Jeremy's best effort, tears start rolling down his face. Dexter stares at his victim with sudden realization.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I understand now. Why didn't I see it
before? Jeremy didn't murder that boy
four years ago...

Jeremy suddenly TRANSFORMS into Teenage Dexter, and for an instant, Dexter holds his own young life in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER (V.O.)
...he was taking out the garbage.
Just like I do.

Young Dexter TRANSFORMS BACK to Jeremy. Dexter, rattled, slides the lethal syringe into his pocket without Jeremy ever seeing it. He doesn't, however, loosen his grip around the kid's neck.

DEXTER
(still scary)
Look, I really don't wanna cancel all my credit cards, and I hate waiting in line at the DMV, so give me the wallet you stole from my car -- or I'll break your fucking neck.

JEREMY
In my backpack.

Dexter lets go of Jeremy and unzips his backpack. As Dexter digs for his wallet, Jeremy watches Dexter, trying to figure out who this guy is and what he's about. Dexter finds his wallet, tosses the backpack to Jeremy, and walks out of the room. Jeremy can't believe it.

47 INT. HOMESTEAD HALFWAY HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT 4

47 *

Jeremy catches up to Dexter about to leave the building and calls after him.

JEREMY
Is that all?

Dexter stops and turns back to Jeremy. An overhead LAMP holds them both in a pool of light, with the rest of the area fading dramatically into darkness.

DEXTER
You want more?

Jeremy nervously shakes his head no. Dexter stares at him for a beat.

DEXTER
That boy who raped you four years ago.
Did he deserve to die?

Jeremy thinks and then nods with unerring certainty.

JEREMY
Yeah... he did.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

DEXTER

Well, the boy last night didn't.
Remember that. It might save your
life one day.

With that, the Boogey Man turns to go. As he walks INTO
CAMERA, showing no emotion --

FLASHBACK:

48 INT. ONE-BEDROOM APARTMENT - NIGHT

48

*The back kitchen door opens and Mary enters, dressed in her
hospital wear. She deadbolts the door behind her, sets down
her purse, and looks around.*

*

MARY

Mr. Tinker? Where are you, Mr.
Tinker?

She hears a faraway MEOW.

*

MARY

Mr. Tinker?

*Mary walks through the dark, shadowy kitchen. It's a sweet
place really, full of cute and craftsy knickknacks, but they
only add to the building sense of dread. Mary hears another
MEOW.*

*

*

MARY

Are you hiding behind the couch again,
Mr. Tinker Stinker?

*

*

She walks toward the living room and sees --

*

MARY'S POV

*Every conceivable inch of the living room, from floor to
ceiling and everything between, is covered in PAINTER'S
PLASTIC. The clear polyethylene film makes everything in
the room appear both shiny and blurry, like a dream of a
room. Sitting atop the plastic-covered couch is MR. TINKER,
who MEOWS.*

*

*

MARY

*Only has a confused and horrified beat to take all of this
in -- before twentysomething Dexter MATERIALIZES from the
shadows behind her. But Mary hears him and turns to see
Dexter wearing a surgical mask, gloves and cap, and holding
up a SYRINGE, just like the one she was using on Harry.*

*

*

*

(CONTINUED)

There's a surprised, awkward beat -- before Dexter plunges the needle into Mary's neck. But before he can press the plunger, the big-boned Mary twists free and yanks the needle from her neck.

*
*
*
*

The terrified Mary opens her mouth to scream -- but Dexter tackles her to the ground before she can make a sound and covers her mouth with his hand. As the two awkwardly roll around on the plastic --

*

DEXTER (V.O.)

Things were a little messy in the beginning. Hey, perfecting a new craft takes time. But I was trained well. Those who witnessed my early stumbles never had a chance to tell.

Unable to get Mary under control, Dexter, palm still firmly over her mouth, finally grabs her head with both hands and SLAMS it into the floor. ONCE. TWICE. BLACK.

FADE FROM BLACK - A SHORT TIME LATER

Mary stirs awake to find herself lying naked on her plastic-covered dining table, wrapped tightly in clear plastic that straps her arms to her side. Her mouth is stuffed with thick wads of white gauze.

*

Wide eyed, Mary rotates her head to see Dexter sitting on a dining room chair in surgical wear, flipping through a frilly photo album full of OBITS FOR ELDERLY PATIENTS.

*
*

DEXTER

I've been reading through your photo album. Hope you don't mind.

Panicked, she tries to speak, but it sounds like GRUNTS with the gauze in her mouth. Dexter indicates the album.

DEXTER

Are all your victims in here?

(off her GRUNTS)

I'm sorry, let me help you with that.

Dexter starts to remove the gauze, then pauses, remembering something. He pulls the SKINNING KNIFE from his youth out of his pocket and holds it close to her face.

DEXTER

Scream. And lose a tongue.

He removes the gauze. Mary bursts into tears.

(CONTINUED)

49

CONTINUED:

49

MARY

I helped them, all of them... They were sick... I took away their pain.

DEXTER

(smiles)

I understand.

Dexter stuffs the gauze back into her mouth.

DEXTER

And now it's time to take away your pain. I've been waiting a very long time for this.

Mary launches into a primal struggle against her bonds but it's useless. Dexter secured her well. He raises his knife and looks over her body in anticipation, trying to decide where to begin. PUSH INTO Dexter. As he makes his first cut, blood spurts onto his chest. He looks down. That was unexpected.

DEXTER (V.O.)

It was messier than I anticipated, but still a special day. The Nurse was my first playmate -- and I'll always be grateful to her for opening up so many magnificent new doors for me.

As Dexter speaks, PAN to Mr. Tinker watching impassively from atop the plastic-wrapped couch. Off the cat's MEOW --

*

50

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

50

Twentysomething Debra bursts from the hospital room pushing Harry in a wheelchair, his color and strength back again.

DEXTER (V.O.)

But of course it was really Harry, wise and wonderful Harry, who paved the road to my salvation.

A jubilant Debra spins Harry in a circle, laughing.

HARRY

For God's sake, Debra. You're gonna put me right back in the hospital.

Dexter steps out of the hospital room. He leans against the doorway and smiles, watching his father and sister together.

(CONTINUED)

50

CONTINUED:

50

*DEXTER (V.O.)**With the Nurse put down, Harry lived another year before hardening arteries squeezed the last bit of life from him. But his lessons never failed me.***END FLASHBACK:**

51

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY 5

51

Doakes exits the police station. Across the street, he sees a DANCING CLOWN -- with floppy shoes, a big nose, and full face makeup -- waving around a HUGE SIGN that says "Condos for Sale."

*DEXTER (V.O.)**Harry taught me that death isn't the end. It's the beginning of a chain reaction that will catch you if you're not careful.*

As Doakes walks by staring, the Dancing Clown stops dancing. He eerily looks Doakes in the eye, holds his fingers in the shape of a gun, and fake fires at Doakes. A message from Guerrero.

52

INT. CAFETERÍA - DAY 5

52

The down-low neighborhood joint we established on Calle Ocho. LaGuerta sits on wooden chairs with a group of OLD CUBAN MEN, smoking hand-rolled cigars and speaking Spanish.

*DEXTER (V.O.)**He taught me that none of us are who we appear to be on the outside. But we must maintain appearances to survive.*

LaGuerta laughs with the old men. Just one of the guys. In the corner, nobody even notices the big TV with a NEWSCAST of LaGuerta talking about the Ice Truck Killer.

53

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - YARD - DAY 5

53

CLOSE ON a stream of water. PULL BACK to find lovely Rita watering the vibrant new LEMON TREE in front of her house.

*DEXTER (V.O.)**But there was something Harry didn't teach me. Something he didn't know. Couldn't possibly know.*

On the sidewalk, Astor and Cody sit behind a crude homemade Lemonade Stand with a pitcher of ice-cold lemonade and cups.

(CONTINUED)

53 CONTINUED:

53

DEXTER (V.O.)

The willful taking of life represents
the ultimate disconnect from humanity.

The family hears a CAR HORN play "Hallelujah" and they turn to see Dexter pulling into the driveway in a 1970s Cadillac convertible, pimped out with chrome spinners and airbrushed artwork, including a sanguine picture of Jesus on the hood.

DEXTER (V.O.)

It leaves you an outsider. Forever
looking in. Searching for company to
keep.

CLOSE on Dexter's keys hanging from the ignition -- with the BARBIE DOLL HEAD from the Ice Truck Killer attached as a keychain.

Astor and Cody and Rita run over to check out the car, which says "Christo Salva" on the back. Dexter gets out to greet them.

CODY

Sweet ride.

ASTOR

Is it yours?

DEXTER

Actually it's yours. Until your mom
can afford a new one.

(to Rita)

Borrowed it from impound. Right
before auction.

He slips the key off the Barbie Doll Head keychain and hands it to a misty-eyed Rita.

RITA

Dexter...

CODY

Can we get in?

DEXTER

You better.

Dexter watches the overjoyed children hop into the car and feel the red-velvet seats.

(CONTINUED)

DEXTER (V.O.)
All you can do is play along at life
and hope that sometimes you get it
right.

Dexter looks back at the luminous Rita, who is staring at
him, touched beyond words.

RITA
Thank you...

Her eyes brim with tears as she kisses Dexter.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Score one for the little wooden boy.

Dexter puts his arm around Rita and they turn to watch the
kids playing with the FUZZY CROSS that hangs from the rear
view. Off this fractured family tableau --

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE