

DEXTER

Episode 104
"Let's Give the Boy a Hand"

Written by
Drew Z. Greenberg

Directed by
Robert Lieberman

Writer's Draft
5/11/06

DEXTER

"Let's Give the Boy a Hand"

FADE IN:

EXT. PETRIE BEACH - EARLY MORNING

ON DEXTER, bathed in the warm, golden light of sunrise. He walks alongside the ocean.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Daybreak. I know it should be inspiring. Everything comes alive, people stumble out of their homes to find their place in the world.

As he walks, he notices YOUNG ROLLERBLADERS up on the boardwalk and SHOPKEEPERS greeting each other "good morning."

DEXTER (V.O.)

I imagine it's beautiful when you're a part of it. But I'm not. I'm not like other people.

He walks past a YOUNG ROMANTIC COUPLE, HOLDING HANDS, watching the sunrise at the horizon.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I go through the world by myself. I have no place in it, no real way to connect. For me, daybreak is just another reminder...

He looks down the beach -- PAN OVER, reveal his destination: an array of UNIFORMS and YELLOW CRIME SCENE TAPE.

DEXTER (V.O.)

... that I'm always alone.

He approaches the crime scene, moving past the yellow tape, flashing his ID to a UNIFORM. Finds a group of UNIFORMS in a tight circle. Surrounding something he can't see --

BATISTA (O.C.)

Dexter.

Dexter turns, finds BATISTA, steno pad in hand, approaching.

BATISTA

Glad you're here. We need you, bro.

DEXTER
I live to serve.

BATISTA
Yeah? Well, here we go.

He leads Dexter toward the knot of uniforms. As they approach, the officers part, revealing

A CHAISE LOUNGE

facing the ocean and the rising sun, reclined only partway. On the lounge: a PAIL AND SHOVEL, an inflated BEACH BALL...

... and a HUMAN HAND, its fingers curled down... except the middle one, up in a "FUCK YOU" position.

Crime scene PERSONNEL scour the area for any evidence -- a TECH dusts each of the items on the chaise as:

DEXTER (V.O.)
I can hear my heart pounding in my chest...

The hand rests upright against the back of the lounge, as if calmly watching the sunrise. BLOOD pools at the wrist.

DEXTER
What do we know?

BATISTA
Well... we know it's a hand.
(serious)
Lifeguard called it in this morning when she showed up for work. 'Bout seven-thirty. Beach was deserted, no one here.

DEXTER
Couldn't have been here too long -- blood's still reddish and wet. Guy probably left here just before the lifeguard found it.

BATISTA
Like he planned it. The timing.

TECH
And sir? There's nothing on 'em. Any of these. Wiped clean.

BATISTA
Quite a set-up the guy left us.

DEXTER

Look at this. It's deliberate.
Artistic. Almost like...
(turning to Batista)
Could this be our guy?

BATISTA

Wait, who?

DEXTER

The Ice Truck Killer.

BATISTA

Naw, dude, I doubt it. He's gonna
be in Mexico by now. Statewide
manhunt, his face everywhere. He
couldn't scratch his ass without
the news wires picking it up.

TECH

There was also this. In the pail.

Using a gloved hand, he hands a PHOTOGRAPH to Batista.

BATISTA

Huh. Well, this is... weird.

He holds it up for Dexter to see: it's a photograph of the scene itself, the chaise lounge, the beach accessories and the bloody hand.

DEXTER

Yeah... it is.

BATISTA

(handing back the photo)
Bag this. Go ahead and get the
prints off the hand.

As the prints expert sets about INKING the hand's fingers...

BATISTA

We'll have an ID soon, that oughta
tell us something. I hope you're
wrong. Last thing we need is that
psycho coming back to haunt us.

FLASH CUT: YOUNG DEXTER, standing off to the side on this very beach, watching YOUNG DEBRA building a sand castle. HARRY approaches Dexter, a plastic pail in hand, and --

RESUME SCENE, as Dexter reels, something not quite right.

DEXTER (V.O.)
But it's happening. He's back.
(turning back to the hand)
And it looks like he's got
something to say.

INT. POLICE STATION - LAGUERTA'S OFFICE - MORNING

ON A TELEVISION SCREEN airing a MUTED morning newscast -- the ANCHOR talks to a MEDICAL EXPERT, and a CHYRON at the bottom of the screen reads "HUMAN HAND FOUND ON BEACH".

PAN ACROSS to find LaGuerta at her desk on the phone.

LAGUERTA
... then tell the governor he's more than welcome to increase our funding. The more manpower we put out on the street, the sooner we locate Tucci and bring him in...

She looks up to see CAPTAIN MATTHEWS enter her office.

LAGUERTA
Kelly, I'll have to get back to you.

She hangs up, turns to the captain.

LAGUERTA
Captain. You look like you swallowed a lemon. What's the --

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
ID came back on the hand at the beach.
(tossing a lab report on her desk)
Tony Tucci.

LAGUERTA
What? No. No fucking way. It's gotta be a mistake.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
No, the mistake, Maria, was unleashing a high-profile manhunt for Tucci and declaring him the Ice Truck Killer. I warned you to tread lightly.

LAGUERTA
I made a judgment call based on
what I knew --

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
Which was precious little. Now
look at you. You spent a week
demonizing the Ice Truck Killer's
newest victim. We'll be
backpedaling for months.

LAGUERTA
We still don't know for sure he's
not the killer, this could be --

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
Don't.
(quiet)

You screwed up. You wanted to be
on TV. You wanna be the new face
of the department? Fine. But do
something to rein this thing in.
Fast. Do your job.

LAGUERTA
I --

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
Start by talking to Tucci's mother.
She defended her son to the press
all week. You go talk to that
woman. You tell her what you did.

He leaves, and LaGuerta, fairly stunned, doesn't move.

EXT. PETRIE BEACH - CRIME SCENE - MORNING

FULL-BLOWN CRIME SCENE. Helicopters. K-9 unit. Uniforms at
the crime-scene tape to ensure onlookers don't get past. FIND
Batista walking to the scene with DOAKES:

BATISTA
... Espenson was the first officer
on the scene, she reported both
points of entry over there --
(he points to TWO PATHS
leading to the street)
-- were clear at the time. Witness
didn't see anything there, either.

Doakes looks over to the street, distracted for a moment...

DOAKES

Right. Just get me your notes...

... by TWO, TOUGH GUY THUGS standing across the street. Not moving. Watching him. Without taking his eyes off them:

DOAKES

Make sure Espenson checks in with me, too.

MOVE PAST, FIND DEBRA and Dexter, walking past the chaos:

DEBRA

I knew Tucci wasn't the killer! I knew it! Man, I wish I coulda been there to see LaGuerta get bitch-slapped. You think she cried?

DEXTER

I don't know if that's --

DEBRA

I bet she cried. Dammit, I always miss the good shit.

DEXTER

You're here for this. Pretty exciting stuff. Ice Truck Killer makes his next move.

DEBRA

Yeah. No, you're right. Kind of a new thing for him -- blood, the hand, the photo. Makes you wonder what the message is.

(re: the hand, still flipping us off)

I mean, other than the obvious.

DEXTER

Yeah, not a lot of room for interpretation there. But the larger message... I don't know.

DEBRA

Could be that's it. Just payback.

DEXTER

Could be. Guy's pissed, LaGuerta started a statewide manhunt, got all this media attention --

DEBRA

All for a fuckwit rent-a-cop.
Killer probably thinks we insulted
his intelligence or something.

DEXTER

We did. But it's a lot of change.
I think he's trying to say
something else, too.

A beat as they think about that, let it sink in. Then:

DEBRA

I wonder if Matthews yelled at her
in her office or out where everyone
could hear. Dude, I'm so pissed.

(calling)

Hey! Dantas! It's a fuckin' oven
out here, any place to grab a soda?

OFFICER DANTAS, a fresh-faced young uniform, runs over to Deb, eager to help.

OFFICER DANTAS

Yeah, you wanna hit the Mack Shack
about a block over. Burger joint.
Supposed to be famous or something.

DEBRA

Wait, I thought the Mack Shack was
over at Rand Beach. Isn't this
Petrie Beach?

OFFICER DANTAS

Oh, Petrie Beach is Rand Beach.
They renamed it a few years back.

DEBRA

Shit. I didn't know that. You
know that?

DEXTER

No. Didn't Dad used to take us
here all the time?

DEBRA

Yeah. I didn't even recognize it,
it's so built up and stuff.

Dexter turns, his eyes sweeping the street in front of him.

DEXTER

Yeah. Me either.

INT. TUCCI HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

LaGuerta, sympathetic and sincere, faces a tearful MRS. TUCCI, mother of the ice-rink guard.

MRS. TUCCI
But then... where's the rest of his body?

LAGUERTA
We're looking for it now. I'm so sorry. All of Miami Metro is here for you, and we will stop at nothing until we catch the animal that did this to your son.

Mrs. Tucci doesn't respond; she covers her face with her hands, as if hiding her grief. LaGuerta reaches for her...

LAGUERTA
I can't imagine how difficult this must be for you.

At LaGuerta's touch, Mrs. Tucci BACKS AWAY. She pulls away her hands, eyes LaGuerta.

MRS. TUCCI
Yes. It is difficult.
(stiffening)
Almost as difficult as it was watching you on TV all week, calling my son a killer.

ON LAGUERTA: busted.

LAGUERTA
I -- oh, Mrs. Tucci, I'm sorry you got that impression, we'd hoped to find your son because the department considered him a person of interest --

MRS. TUCCI
How dare you? How dare you come to my home with your sympathy and your "stop at nothing"? You called my boy a killer every day.

LAGUERTA
This is a hard time for you, I'll --

MRS. TUCCI

He was a good boy, and you
destroyed his name. And now he's
dead. Get out of my house.

LaGuerta, shaken, goes to the door and hurries outside.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dexter and Rita on the floor, against the couch. Close.
Young Frankenstein on the TV. Rita laughs...

DEXTER (V.O.)

Generally, laughter doesn't do much
for me. Truth be told, when most
people laugh, it's pretty annoying.
But not Rita. Her laugh is
different. It's pure.

... and she leans on Dexter's shoulder.

RITA

(along with the TV)

He! Was! My! Boyfriend!

DEXTER (V.O.)

And it's a nice break. Even if I'd
rather keep working on finding my
new friend.

Dexter smiles at her giddy enthusiasm, strokes her hair.
Outside, a DOG HOWLS. Rita rolls her eyes.

RITA

Great...

DEXTER

What? What was that?

RITA

The horrible woman next door. It's
her dog. Poor thing. She leaves
it out in the yard all day, all
night.

DEXTER

That's terrible.

RITA

I just think it's so sad.

The dog HOWLS again, more plaintive than before.

DEXTER

Tell you what, why don't I go talk
to this woman?

RITA

No. Don't do that.

DEXTER

Why not?

RITA

You know... good fences, all that.

The dog howls again. Rita turns to Dexter: she's at a loss.

RITA

I don't want to pick a fight with
my neighbor. You've gotta pick
your battles.

ASTOR and CODY stumble in, half-awake. Upset.

RITA

Oh, babies, did the dog wake you?

CODY

Yes. He's sad.

ASTOR

And loud.

RITA

I know, honey.

Dexter looks from the kids' sleepy faces to Rita's utter frustration. He stands.

DEXTER

Be right back.

EXT. BONNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dexter approaches, but as soon as he steps on the neighbor's property, the dog starts BARKING furiously. Undeterred, Dexter knocks, and the door opens, revealing BONNIE, a petite, twentyish, impatient woman.

DEXTER

Hi. I don't think we've met --

BONNIE

Yeah. Boyfriend of the chick next
door. Hey.

DEXTER

Yes. Hello. I was hoping we could talk for just a moment. That dog you just got...

BONNIE

Yeah, Limp Bizkit. I know he didn't get out, I can hear him.
(shouting)
Shut! Up!

DEXTER

No, no, nothing like that. But he does cry. A lot. It's upsetting the kids, and I was hoping we could figure something out.

(then)

Cute name. Limp Bizkit.

BONNIE

Look -- dogs make noise. It's what they do.

DEXTER

Yes. But that's a lot of noise.

BONNIE

I'm right in the middle of something...

DEXTER

Well, maybe tomorrow. We could work together, find a way to help him.... not cry.

(getting no response)
The kids can't sleep.

BONNIE

Maybe that's 'cause they think their crackhead father's gonna come back and beat them up again.

(off Dexter's surprise)
Try ear plugs.

She SLAMS the door shut. After a beat, Dexter turns. ON HIS FACE -- for a quick beat, he wears a familiar, cold, reptilian expression.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I could make things so much easier for Rita.

Dexter takes a deep breath.

DEXTER (V.O.)
But that would be wrong.

The moment passes, Dexter turns from the house, walks back to Rita's...

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - MORNING

LaGuerta strides through the room, head buried in a progress report, when Captain Matthews approaches her.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
Here.

He hands her a copy of the Miami Herald.

LAGUERTA
What am I looking at?

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS
Page one. Today's Josh Adams column. I think you'll find it particularly insightful.

He stays a beat, shaking his head. Disappointed. As he walks off, LaGuerta looks down, sees the headline: "LATEST BLUNDER HIGHLIGHTS TROUBLES IN PD BRASS". She's pissed.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - MORNING

A GROUP OF REPORTERS stands around, waiting impatiently for news. LaGuerta rounds a corner, pissed, and they rush her:

REPORTERS
Lieutenant! Any news?/Where did the killer leave the rest of the body?/Has the family been notified?

LAGUERTA
(ignoring them)
Josh Adams.

JOSH ADAMS, 30, boyish grin, deceptively jovial, turns.

LAGUERTA
Come with me.

She drags him -- not entirely gently -- around the corner, away from the other reporters. Slams the Herald on a table.

LAGUERTA
What the hell is this?

JOSH
Lieutenant, good morning. Nice to see you. And I believe that's a newspaper.

LAGUERTA
"Maria LaGuerta spends so much of her time on camera --"

JOSH
You read my column? I'm flattered --

LAGUERTA
"-- that one local news station offered to put her on the payroll."

JOSH
(shrugging)
I hear those TV gigs are hard to get, sounds pretty sweet to me.

LAGUERTA
We have a city-wide crisis on our hands, there's a lunatic running around torturing and killing our citizens. I'm trying to stop him.

JOSH
Oh. That's what you were doing.

LAGUERTA
You wanna wear a badge and go after him? Be my guest. 'Cause so far? All I see is someone standing on the sidelines criticizing me for trying to keep people safe.

But as she turns to walk away:

JOSH
You know what's interesting, Lieutenant? You're so upset that I called you a camera hog.

She stops, turns back to Josh. Not sure where he's going.

JOSH
I also slammed you for jumping on Tucci as a suspect before you gathered all the facts. But that part doesn't seem to bother you.

LaGuerta stares at Josh for a beat, about to answer when her CELL PHONE RINGS. Without a word to Josh, she answers.

LAGUERTA

What.

(she listens/her face falls)

Shit.

Without even a glance toward Josh, she hurries away, back to her office...

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE PARK - MORNING

A HUMAN FOOT.

It's posed against a concrete bench, surrounded by a baseball bat, and cap. Cut at the shin, sporting a bloody running shoe, it's as horrifically designed as the hand at the beach.

REVEAL Dexter, the calm, pensive center of an ongoing storm of investigators on the scene, the fingerprints expert there, too, DUSTING the objects and INKING the toes. Suddenly:

SGT. DOAKES

Not paying you to stand around and goddamned stare.

Dexter turns, sees Doakes behind him. Smiles at him.

DEXTER

Sorry. Just taking it in before I get to work. Don't mean to be in the way.

(off Doakes' look)

I thought Angel was working this case.

SGT. DOAKES

That was before we knew it was the Ice Truck Freak. Then LaGuerta put me on it. So I'm on lead now.

DEXTER

Great! Welcome!

Doakes just stares at Dexter for a beat, not sure what to make of his friendliness. Finally:

SGT. DOAKES

Just do your thing.

Dexter crouches next to the prints expert and gloves up.

DEXTER

Right off? Same kind of cutting
tool as the hand. Cut's
smooth, almost surgical. Guy did
this carefully.

SGT. DOAKES

But what about the blood, Blood
Boy? Guy gives us body after body
with no blood in it, why's he
suddenly making the switch now?

DEXTER

I don't know that.
(reaching out)
But there's this.

He carefully lifts the cap to reveal ANOTHER PHOTO
underneath: the foot arrangement, baseball items and all.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I know these photos are part of the
message. But I still don't know
what the message is. What is he
telling us?

Dexter looks closely at the photo: in the background, a
building across the street, and on its roof, a giant, neon-
scripted sign: "AMANDA SNACK CAKES, SINCE 1943".

Dexter looks around curiously, sees the building across the
street from the park. Sees the AMANDA SNACK CAKES sign.

SGT. DOAKES

Guy's making his crime scenes into
works of art.

DEXTER

Maybe. I don't know...

FLASH CUT: YOUNG DEXTER, surrounded by friends on a BASEBALL
DIAMOND -- but under the AMANDA SNACK CAKES SIGN. Right
here. At this location. They pose for a picture, and FLASH!

RESUME SCENE: Dexter stares at the photo, shocked.

SGT. DOAKES

Bag the photo and finish up. ME's
waiting to get in there. Rest of
us don't have all goddamned day.

But Dexter stays focused on the photo.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I need to get home...

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Dexter rushes in, goes right to the bookshelf. He's got his cell phone to his ear, trying to multitask:

DEXTER
Angel, hey, I was just at the crime scene... yeah, the new one... no, I'm gonna be right in, I just had to swing by my place and pick up some lab reports.

He starts rifling through books on the shelf, looking for something specific...

DEXTER
Okay, sure, I'll be in soon as I can.

He hangs up, pulls out from behind other books A PHOTO ALBUM.

FLASHBACK:

INT. MORGAN FAMILY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - 1990S - DAY

Dexter, 20s, next to Harry on the couch. Dexter holds the FAMILY PHOTO ALBUM in his hands, staring at it. Like it's an alien artifact. Which, of course, it kind of is.

DEXTER
Well, gee, Dad. This is -- uh...

HARRY
You hate it.

DEXTER
No. No, I don't know what to do with it.

HARRY
Try opening it.

Dexter does: the pages are filled with MORGAN FAMILY PHOTOS.

HARRY
I know I'm not exactly the scrapbooking type, but your mom helped a little.

DEXTER
You guys did this?
(off Harry's nod)
Why?

HARRY
You may not understand right now.
But these photos represent your
family and your connection to us.

He smiles warmly at Dexter.

HARRY
Connection's important, Dexter. I
want you always to remember that
you're loved, that your family
cares about you.

Dexter looks from the book up to Harry.

HARRY
When you feel lost in your life,
connection is what will tether you.
It's what will keep you from
spinning out of orbit. Okay? Will
you promise to remember that?

Off Dexter, silent...

END FLASHBACK:

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Dexter sitting at his desk, looking through the photo album.

DEXTER (V.O.)
And I did remember.

Years' worth of MORGAN FAMILY PHOTOS flip past us...

DEXTER (V.O.)
I've never been an overly-
sentimental type. Obviously. So
it's not like these photos mean
that much to me.

Dexter opens to one page with photos of his day as a young boy at the baseball park with his friends. (We don't focus on them, but some photos from the day should include Harry.)

DEXTER (V.O.)

But having family photos is a way
to maintain my cover, appear to
have human emotions.

FIND one photo: Young Dexter, uncomfortable, and his group of friends, one holding a ball, another a bat. Towering above the group in the background across the street is the same AMANDA SNACK CAKES sign we saw earlier.

DEXTER (V.O.)

And he used it. He recreated
photos from my family album. Same
locations and props and even
framing. Meticulous. It's not a
message to the city of Miami. It's
a message to me.

Dexter flips back a few pages in the album...

DEXTER (V.O.)

He was in my apartment a few weeks
ago. Maybe he looked through the
album then, which is, of course,
extremely violating. And also kind
of sweet.

... and finds a PHOTO of Harry, DORIS, YOUNG DEB and Young Dexter at the BEACH. The kids and Harry on the sand,
surrounding Doris -- on a chaise lounge.

DEXTER (V.O.)

All this work, and the only one who
can truly appreciate it is me.
It's all for me.

The photo is set up exactly like the one found at the first
crime scene on the beach.

DEXTER (V.O.)

It's hard not to be flattered.

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Rita comes in in her hotel reception uniform, finds the kids at the table: Astor's resting her head on her hand, exhausted. Cody's actually got his head down on the table, asleep next to his cereal bowl.

RITA

Guys! Come on, we gotta go!

The kids barely move. They're wiped out. OFF Rita, feeling awful.

INT. POLICE STATION - OFFICERS' LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Doakes enters, moves to a locker. Then McNamara enters in a towel, freshly-showered. Takes a locker down the row. Doakes does his best to ignore the guy, but, after a beat:

SGT. DOAKES
I've been trying to keep quiet
outta respect for your sister, but
now? You're some kinda goddamn
asshole, know that?

MCNAMARA
(brightly)
Hey, man. What's up? Fuck
anyone's wife lately?

SGT. DOAKES
What you're doing? Letting
Guerrero think I'm responsible for
the attack on his guy? You know
what that means for me.

McNamara just shrugs, keeps toweling off.

SGT. DOAKES
I got his guys following me now,
did you know that? Trailing
everywhere I go.

MCNAMARA
Fuck, James. That sounds pretty
bad. You should definitely alert
the police. Unless maybe there's
some reason the officers of Miami
Metro wouldn't be interested in
helping you.

SGT. DOAKES
He will kill me. When, not if.

MCNAMARA
(pulling on shorts)
Hey, man. Not my problem.

SGT. DOAKES
(losing it)
Motherfucker!

McNamara tries to walk past Doakes on his way to the sinks. Doakes steps into the aisle, blocks him.

SGT. DOAKES
Listen to me, you shitball. Your sister's husband chose his undercover life over her.

MCNAMARA
I --

SGT. DOAKES
Over. Her. She begged him to come home, and he told her no. He wasn't there for her when she was alone and scared. And she ended up murdered because of it.

He steps aside, but McNamara doesn't move.

SGT. DOAKES
Because of him. I cared about her. Shit all over me as much as you want, but I cared about her.

Doakes turns back to his locker.

MCNAMARA
Yeah? Well fuck that, she never said anything like that to me.

SGT. DOAKES
Because she didn't think you'd take it too good. Go fucking figure.

Doakes, his anger vented, turns and walks from the room.

INT. POLICE STATION - LABORATORY - DAY

CLOSE ON the severed foot. A SWAB moves in, wipes at the exposed bone.

DEXTER (V.O.)
So I know the killer's talking to me. And now I just need to figure out what he's saying.

Dexter, gently places the swab into a protective tube.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Why those photos from my album?
Why a hand and a foot? How is it all connected?

Batista enters.

BATISTA
Hey, bro, you busy?

DEXTER
Nope. Looking for possible foreign bodies. Anything that might've gotten in there that could tell us where the killer kept this guy.

(still focusing)
Hey, did you see the spatter on the sneaker?

BATISTA
Dude? You've gotta find a hobby.
Something outside this building.

DEXTER
I like helping. Arrest me.

BATISTA
All right, well help me. Got this anniversary coming up with the wife. Ten years.

DEXTER
(not looking up from his exam of the foot)
Wow.

BATISTA
Yeah, only I don't know what to get her. Gotta be something good. You know how women are about these things.

DEXTER
Hang on, check this out.

BATISTA
Me, I couldn't care less. Way I see it, I kinda wonder why she's not just happy with the gift I give her every night, know what I mean?

DEXTER
No, wait, come look at this.
(as Batista joins him)
The lack of coagulation. Spatter on the hand, spatter on the foot. Both extremities were taken from a body that was still alive.

BATISTA

Yeah, well, we knew that. Guy's a mean sonofabitch, we figured he chopped the victim up, who knows how many pieces he's still got --

DEXTER

No.

Dexter pushes past him, goes to the computer at the side of the room. Brings up a rotating, 3-D IMAGE of the HAND from the beach: complete with bruises and discolorations and all.

DEXTER

Look.

BATISTA

What? I don't see --

Dexter TAPS the screen, urgency edging into his voice.

DEXTER

Look. The lividity. The bruising, the grayness there, it's the same on the hand and the foot. Each turned up looking the same. Almost no decomposition.

BATISTA

Wait... no decomposition. On both?

The same?

(afraid of the answer)

But... we found them a day apart.

DEXTER

I know.

Batista turns back to the foot, horror in his voice:

BATISTA

Madre de dios...

SMASH TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

LaGuerta and Doakes work at the BIG BOARD, covered with pictures of crime scenes, victims' candids, Miami maps. They look up when Batista and Dexter come careening over.

SGT. DOAKES

The hell...

BATISTA
L.T. You gotta listen to him.

DEXTER
It's the guard. Tucci. I think he's still alive. I think the killer is keeping him alive somewhere while he... while he performs the amputations.

LAGUERTA
Bullshit. Bullshit, the guy's a killer, not a doctor.

DEXTER
Maybe he's both.

SGT. DOAKES
(to Batista)
You got someone in the lab checking on this? Someone else, I mean?

BATISTA
Yeah. But they're gonna say he's right.

DEXTER
Clean cuts, like an amputation, blood pooling and lividity consistent with blood flow at the time of amputation in both cases --

LAGUERTA
Shit. He's still alive...

BATISTA
There's something else.

DEXTER
If the hand came off yesterday at 7 am, and the foot came in this morning at 7 am, then --

SGT. DOAKES
-- then we're gonna be getting another body part tomorrow at 7 am.

DEXTER
Yeah.

LAGUERTA
But he's still alive. I still have a shot --

She gets up, moves to leave.

BATISTA
A shot at what?

LAGUERTA
It's nothing. Yet.
(to Doakes)
Let the captain know. And let him
know I'll be back in a couple
hours.

She hurries from the room...

EXT. TUCCI HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Mrs. Tucci opens her door and reacts -- LaGuerta stands on the front porch. LaGuerta appears nervous, even excited.

LAGUERTA
Mrs. Tucci? I have some news. I
think your son might still be
alive.

MRS. TUCCI
What?

LAGUERTA
I'd like to talk to you about it if
you don't mind.

Mrs. Tucci says nothing... tears well up in her eyes.
LaGuerta notices her holding very tightly to the door, as if she doesn't even trust her own ability to stay standing...

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

As the officers on the case assemble, facing the Big Board, Batista, sitting with Dexter towards the back, leans in:

BATISTA
Still don't know what to get my
wife. It's a big deal, you think
of anything?

DEBRA
(slipping in next to them)
Tenth anniversary? Lingerie. Get
her lingerie. Let her know you
still think she's hot.

Batista sits back, grinning: that's it. Doakes at the board:

DOAKES
So what do we know?

Everyone settles it, instantly serious. Coming together.

DOAKES
We have a beach and an office park.

DEB
And we have a hand and a foot.

DOAKES
Right. Theories?

BATISTA
Beach is play, office is work.
Maybe it's something about work
versus play.

DOAKES
Maybe. But they're gonna keep
coming, long as Tucci can stand it,
and I don't see a third prong
there. What else?

BATISTA
There's blood. He's leaving blood
now, that's new.

DOAKES
Right.

FINGERPRINT EXPERT
And the photos, they're new.

DEBRA
He wants to be remembered. You use
photos to memorialize things.

Dexter stays very still, not giving away his connection to
the photos... yet.

BATISTA
But it doesn't help us with the
question of what's next, where the
next body part will show up.

DOAKES
Let alone where the psycho is
keeping Tucci. So far, every
object left by our guy gives us
nothing. No prints, no residue.
Nothing about where he is.

BATISTA
Least that part is consistent with
his M.O.

DOAKES
Right. It's the only part that is.
He's changed everything else.

DEBRA
He's changed everything else.

She turns to Dexter, beaming. She's got it.

DEBRA
He's changed everything else. And
the places have changed, just like
he did.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen? My sister.

DEBRA
The beach changed names, the office
park used to be a place for kids.

Doakes nods admiringly.

DEBRA
Locations that have changed.
That's what we're looking for.

PUSH IN on Dexter's face, the realization hitting him...

INT. DEXTER'S LABORATORY - LATER

Dexter at his desk, slowly laying out the TWO FAMILY
PHOTOGRAPHS from his album.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I know things they don't. I know
it's about me, about places I went
as a kid. So I should find a place
I've been... that's changed.

He pulls his photo album from his backpack, holds it.

DEXTER (V.O.)
The only person who can find Tucci
is me. I know this. His life is
in my hands. It's a burden, one
I'm used to... just not this way.

EXT. BONNIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Bonnie's door FLIES open, and she stands there, pissed, facing a determined, though nervous, Rita.

BONNIE

What?

RITA

Um, hi. I'm here to discuss your dog --

BONNIE

Yeah, I'm shocked. I'm sorry he's noisy. It's just the kind of dog he is. I can't help you.

RITA

Well, I think you can. Like maybe you could take him inside.

(off her scoffing)

He's causing a disturbance for everyone.

BONNIE

Everyone? 'Cause far as I can tell, you're the only one complaining.

RITA

That's not the point --

BONNIE

Except when you tried sending your boyfriend over to fight your battles for you.

RITA

He doesn't fight my battles.

(steeling herself)

Look. My kids are exhausted. So you need to put that dog in at night, feed it on a schedule, give it some exercise now and...

(realizing)

I'm sorry, is something funny?

Indeed, Bonnie has started laughing.

BONNIE

No. It's sad. But you're funny. Look at you. All tough.

RITA
I'll -- I'm going to call the police.

BONNIE
And they'll tell me to keep the dog quiet, and I'll say I will, and they'll leave, and the dog will go back to doing what he does. There's nothing they can do. There's nothing you can do. But you are funny.

She shuts the door in Rita's face. Rita stands for a beat. Furious, she turns to her house and sees, right in front of her, the fence separating her yard from Bonnie's.

And, poking through the slats in that fence: a wet, dark DOG'S NOSE. Rita stares for a moment, watching the poor thing sniffing, then she turns and hurries back to her house.

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Come around Dexter, on the couch, in his pajama pants, looking through his photo album...

DEXTER (V.O.)
A place I went as a kid. A place that's changed. What would have caught...

Continue pulling around, pushing in, as Dexter settles on one page... and full stop. His face relaxes. Success.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... my playmate's eye?

EXT. MIAMI CONDO COMPLEX - FRONT GATE - MORNING

Dexter approaches the front gate of the building, looks off in the distance to see a LARGE ORANGE TREE. A CRUDE SMILEY FACE has been carved into its trunk.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I used to love this place. But it wasn't cheap condos back then.

CLOSE ON a photo in Dexter's hand: Young Dexter, happy and smiling into the camera. In the background: A LANDFILL, two BULLDOZERS packing waste into the ground. In the distance, we see the smiley orange tree.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Watching the bulldozers press the
garbage, layer after layer, right
into the earth itself. Burying it.
I found it soothing.

He walks to the exact spot where the old photo was taken,
lining up the position of the tree to match the old framing.

DEXTER (V.O.)
It's all changed now. Like the
other places.

He looks to his feet, looks around him, searching for the
latest delivery from the killer. Nothing out of order...

DEXTER (V.O.)
It's seven-thirty-five, well past
the killer's regular drop-off time.
Did I miss him? Did he hide it
somewhere?

He catches himself, grins.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Look at me. I'm actually excited.
The thrill of the chase, maybe.
Only I give chase all the time.
This is different. It's --

A BUZZING SOUND distracts him -- his pager. Uh oh.

EXT. OUTDOOR MIAMI CHRISTMAS DISPLAY - MORNING

From inside the crime scene this time, on Batista with Doakes
once again. Find Dexter, working his way through the curious
crowd toward us, his face giving away his shock and
disappointment: he got it wrong. Deb intercepts him.

DEBRA
Hey, Brother.

DEXTER
What'd they find?

Reveal a LARGE, ORNAMENTED CHRISTMAS TREE, part of a public,
city-square-type display. The prints expert is in the
tedious process of dusting EVERY ORNAMENT.

DEBRA
Ankle to knee. He's moving up the
leg.

REVERSE POV: among the candy canes and glittery ornaments on the tree, find a BLOODY, PARTIAL LEG hanging from the boughs. From the ankle to the shin: not much, but still disturbing.

DEBRA
Have a holly, jolly, fucking Christmas, huh?

DEXTER
What about the photo? Did he leave a photo?

DEBRA
Next branch over.

They move closer, find a photo of the tree itself: it's almost festive, except for the bloody limb hanging on it.

DEBRA
Batista's giving Doakes the first officer report, but it's all the same. No prints, no residue. No evidence.

DEXTER
And the bruising's the same. Cut this morning no doubt.

DEBRA
Yeah, one good thing that's come out of this? You made us all fuckin' lividity experts, bro.
(beat)
You think Tucci's still alive?

DEXTER
If he is... he won't be much longer.

DEBRA
I wanna find this guy. I just don't see how some Christmas display fits the pattern. How're we supposed to know what the next place is gonna be?

Dexter stares at the tree. Fascinated, but disappointed.

DEXTER
I honestly don't know.

INT. POLICE STATION - LABORATORY - DAY

ON DEXTER, his face reflecting a cool, flickering GLOW. In his hand, a PHOTO of Harry, Doris and Young Adult Dexter in front of the CHRISTMAS DISPLAY. EARLY NINETIES. The tree is smaller, the surrounding city more modest... PULL AROUND...

DEXTER (V.O.)
I screwed up.

... REVEAL Dexter stands in front of THREE COMPUTER MONITORS.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I got the killer's message wrong.

The monitors each display a different rotating 3-D image: a body part found during the investigation.

DEXTER (V.O.)
But the thing that bothers me isn't so much that I didn't figure it out, although, let's be clear, that is troubling. What bothers me...

PAN ACROSS the images, revealing the similar bruising and discolorations on each.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... is that I suddenly feel... lonely. I want to share all this, talk about it, but the only person I want to share it with, the only person to whom I feel that connected...

CONTINUE PULLING AROUND until we come back to Dexter's face, iridescent, thoughtful... and still.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... is someone I've never even met.

EXT. DOAKES' APARTMENT BUILDING - GARAGE ENTRANCE - DAY

Doakes in his car, about to pull into the gate. He turns, sees the THUGS sitting in a parked car across the street.

SGT. DOAKES
Fuck this...

He throws his car into park, slams open the door. His hand reaching for his holstered gun, he marches across the street.

SGT. DOAKES
What? You waiting for me,
assholes?

But the men start the car and drive away.

SGT. DOAKES
Hey! Hey!

He watches them go...

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Dexter's car drives up and parks: Dexter gets out with Astor and Cody, schoolbags over their shoulders, and, as they head for the house:

ASTOR
So when's Mom coming home?

DEXTER
I don't know -- she just said she had an important errand to run. I had to beg and beg to come pick you up. She wanted you to ride a giraffe home.

CODY
(laughing)
No she didn't!

DEXTER
You're right, you're right. My mistake. She said elephant.

ASTOR
Dexter!

DEXTER
Camel?

As the kids giggle, we hear:

BONNIE
Limp Bizkit! Limp Bizkit, where the hell are you, you goddamned --

Dexter and the kids look over, see Bonnie, in her work clothes, walking up the street.

DEXTER
(whispering)
Maybe Limp Bizkit finally got smart
enough to pick the lock and make a
fast getaway.

The kids giggle, as Bonnie keeps yelling:

BONNIE
Limp Bizkit! I will cut you into
steaks and eat you for breakfast!

ASTOR
Maybe he dug an escape tunnel with
his dog dish.

They all giggle some more -- and Bonnie wheels around.

BONNIE
(to Dexter)
You. What'd you do with my dog?

DEXTER
Me? Nothing.

Bonnie tosses one more withering look at Dexter, then stalks off. Dexter does his best to smile reassuringly at the kids.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

A car goes past, and we see, sticking his head out the window, delighted by the sudden freedom: LIMP BIZKIT. The car, a familiar 1970s pimped-out Caddy, pulls into

EXT. YELINA'S DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

... where it comes to a stop. The driver's door opens, and Rita, in her reception uniform, steps out. YELINA, a co-worker in a hotel uniform matching Rita's, and TWO YOUNG GIRLS come running from the house. Rita beams.

RITA
Hey. Here he is. Just remember to
feed him, bathe him and take him
out at night. Okay?

The girls, shy but thrilled, stand back, awed by the dog.

YELINA
My nieces are shy sometimes.
Girls, say thank you to Rita.

The girls mumble quick HELLOS, and Rita smiles at them. She opens the car door, and Limp Bizkit carefully walks to the girls -- as if he recognizes fellow gentle souls.

They bend down and hug him softly. He starts kissing them.

RITA

I knew this'd be a good match.

YELINA

It's a wonderful thing you've done.

Rita can't take her eyes off the girls with the dog. Smiles. Proud of herself.

EXT. POLICE STATION - FRONT STEPS - DAY

Mrs. Tucci stands nervously at a podium in front of a SMALL CROWD OF REPORTERS -- including Josh. And behind Mrs. Tucci, LaGuerta stands uncharacteristically silent. Just listening.

MRS. TUCCI

... told me yesterday that my son might be alive, but they asked me not to release a statement then in order to protect him.

(tearing up)

Now, as time runs out, it's become more important we get the word out.

REPORTER

So would you say you're happy with the way Miami Metro has handled your son's case?

Mrs. Tucci sighs, thinks for a moment. Then:

MRS. TUCCI

Do I wish the department had handled my son's disappearance better at first? Of course.

ON LAGUERTA, remaining enigmatically stoic.

MRS. TUCCI

But these officers also discovered Tony might be alive. They're wasting no time looking for him now. We have new hope because of them, and for that, I am grateful.

The reporters CLAMOR to ask the next question, but the voice that ends up rising above the others is Josh's:

JOSH
Question for Lieutenant LaGuerta,
how much longer do you expect Mr.
Tucci to be able to stay alive?

Mrs. Tucci blanches at the insensitive question. She turns to LaGuerta, who steps to the podium and speaks quietly.

LAGUERTA
For the sake of Mr. Tucci and his family, I'd ask you to refrain from speculation at this point.
(considering)
Spend some time talking to this remarkably brave woman. You'll have plenty of chances to hear from me later.

She steps back. Finished. ANGLE ON Josh's face: surprised by LaGuerta's move. LaGuerta looks around, sees

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

on the sidelines. He NODS to her, approving. LaGuerta remains serious, but it's clear the nod means a great deal. As the reporters clamor to ask Mrs. Tucci another question...

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ON DEXTER at his desk. Just the light of his desk lamp illuminating his face. Frustrated. COME AROUND, see he stares at the THREE FAMILY PHOTOS, arranged in front of him.

A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. Dexter looks up, sweeps the photos under a blotter, goes to the door. Opens it to see

RITA
Hey.

DEXTER
Hey yourself. This is a... nice surprise. To what do I owe the honor?

RITA
(shrugging)
I don't know. I was in a mood. I know you're hard at work on your case, thought I'd come check on you.
(MORE)

RITA (cont'd)

(then)

Can I come in?

DEXTER

Oh. Sure. Yes.

She brushes past him. Uncharacteristically sexy. Dexter watches her, closing the door behind her. Intrigued.

DEXTER

You took care of your... mission?

RITA

Indeed I did. Limp Bizkit is safely tucked away in the puppy protection program.

(grinning)

It was kind of a rush.

She moves around to the desk. Dexter tenses, watches her.

RITA

Have there been any leads?

DEXTER

No. And I just keep going around and around on this thing. Can't seem to get it out of my head.

Rita looks over at Dexter, sees the tension on his face.

RITA

I'm so sorry. I wish there was something I could do to help.

DEXTER

I don't think there's anything you can do.

RITA

Oh, I don't know. I'm a dog-napper now. I can do all sorts of things.

Rita slides off his lap. Sexy smile. Kneels on the floor.

DEXTER

Okay... what... what are you doing?

She starts unbuckling his belt.

RITA

Whatever I want.

With a smile, Rita drops out of frame. Dexter's expression is one of confusion --

DEXTER (V.O.)
I've come to appreciate the comfortable moments with Rita, the easy, quiet -- oh.

-- and then, surprising even himself, pleasure.

DEXTER (V.O.)
This... might be better.

EXT. BATISTA'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Batista, a wrapped gift in one hand, a small, tasteful bouquet of flowers in the other. The door opens, Batista grins wide... but NINA, his wife, does not.

NINA
Angel.

BATISTA
Happy anniversary, baby.

He holds out the gifts. She makes no move to take them.

NINA
You know you shouldn't be here.

Batista's face falls.

BATISTA
I just thought... it's our anniversary, maybe tonight we could put that behind us.

NINA
(in Spanish)
It doesn't matter what night it is.
You can't be here.
(in English)
You know the terms of the separation agreement. You have to leave.

BATISTA
(resigned)
Okay. I know.

He turns, gifts still in hand, back to his car. Nina watches him go, her face softening. Clearly hating this. Then:

NINA
Angel. Long as you're here, you wanna see the kids?

OFF Angel's face: quiet relief.

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

In the afterglow. Dexter, spent, looks up at the ceiling, his arm around Rita, who rests her head on his chest.

DEXTER
So that was... unexpected.

RITA
Yeah. For me, too.

DEXTER
I have no problem with unexpected.

RITA
(grinning)
You certainly don't.

She gets up, tousles Dexter's hair, straightens her clothes.

DEXTER
What about... I mean, are you... ?

RITA
I got exactly what I wanted. I couldn't be more satisfied...
(sitting on the desk)
... tonight.

The blotter slides, revealing the three photos beneath it.

RITA
What are these?

DEXTER
Oh, just... I've been reorganizing my photos a little, so --

RITA
You were so cute!

DEXTER
I... yeah. Thanks.

RITA
Your dad seems nice.

DEXTER

My dad?

RITA

Yeah, in the pictures.

DEXTER

Well...

(getting up, putting on
his pants)

He's in two of them, but --

RITA

No, didn't you tell me he used to
take you and your friends to the
park to play ball? I just assumed
this was one of those. Didn't he
take this one?

DEXTER

(staring at the picture)

Yeah. He did.

He looks up, smiling at Rita.

DEXTER

You're a genius.

He gives her a kiss. She beams, confused but happy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Later, alone now, Dexter stares at the three PHOTOS on the coffee table.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Harry. That's what ties the photos
together. I never even thought of
it. And if you follow the train of
thought...

Dexter leafs through the pages of the photo album.

DEXTER (V.O.)

... it takes you here.

... REVEAL a photo of EARLY TWENTIES DEXTER standing next to Harry in front of a large, rusted FREIGHTER being lowered by a crane into DRY DOCK.

DEXTER (V.O.)
The last photo Harry took with me.
He wasn't comfortable taking photos
of himself after this. He started
getting sick.

PUSH IN FURTHER on the expressions on the men's faces in the photo: Harry beaming, proud, Dexter trying hard. Too hard.

DEXTER (V.O.)
This is the endpoint, the place
where the killer's game must end.

ON DEXTER, his face resolved.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. DRY DOCK - DAY

Dexter, 20s, walks beside Harry.

HARRY
Come on, you're gonna wanna see
this.

DEXTER
Yeah, I'm sure it's great, but I've
got chemistry homework, my
professor's already kicking my ass --

HARRY
Dexter. Look.

PULL AROUND to see the same freight boat, less-rusted, more-presentable, being lowered by a MONSTROUS CRANE into the dock. Just like in the photo.

DEXTER
Yeah. It's cool.

HARRY
Cool? Dexter, it's not just cool.
This is the same freighter on which
my father -- your grandfather --
worked for thirty years, just to
put me through college.

DEXTER
I know.

HARRY
It's our connection to him, and
they're retiring the ship forever.
(MORE)

HARRY (cont'd)
Come on, let's get a picture.
 (calling to a DOCK WORKER)
Hey! 'Scuse me, would you mind
taking our photo --

DEXTER
Dad! Stop it!

Harry turns, knows he's embarrassed his son.

DEXTER
I don't need a picture. I don't
want it. It's not important to me.

Harry's face can't hide his hurt. But Dexter presses on:

DEXTER
I look at those photos you gave me,
and I wish I felt what you want me
to feel. But I don't. I don't
feel connection. I don't feel
anything. They're just photos.

But the dock worker is already there, smiling at the two.

DOCK WORKER
Y'all ready?

Harry wordlessly hands him his camera, and the two men pose,
awkward, Harry forcing a smile. The FLASH goes off --

END FLASHBACK:

INT. BATISTA'S HOUSE - KIDS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Batista stands over the side-by-side beds of his sleeping SON, 7, and DAUGHTER, 4. Completely at peace.

BATISTA
 (quietly)
Lo siento, mis hijos, lo siento, lo
siento, lo siento, lo siento...

NINA (O.S.)
Angel? Honey, I'm sorry, I need
you to go now, okay?

Batista lingers -- then nods. He places the flowers on the night stand, then walks, resigned, from the room.

INT. DOAKES' APARTMENT BUILDING - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Doakes pulls in, parks in his space. He gets out.
 Exhausted.

Looks to the street, where the thugs waited before. They're not there. Doakes exhales, turns around to lock his car --

-- where TWO SETS OF HANDS GRAB HIM, throw a BLACK BAG over his head and roughly shove him into a WAITING CAR.

EXT. DRY DOCK - NIGHT

ON DEXTER, approaching the dock. PULL AROUND, reveal a large, rusted, abandoned FREIGHT BOAT rising before him. Dexter stops, staring at the image before him.

Dexter pulls the last PHOTO from his pocket, Harry and Dexter in front of this very freighter held by the crane.

ANGLE ON the photo: the same view of the MIAMI SKYLINE, the same marker, BUOY 13, floating in the ocean.

DEXTER (V.O.)
This is the place.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The car from Doakes' garage rumbles to a stop next to a dark, still LIMO. The same two Guerrero thugs get out of the car, open the trunk and roughly shove Doakes, his head still covered, to the ground. Doakes doesn't move.

GUERRERO (O.C.)
Hello, James.

GUERRERO steps out of the limo and calmly walks over to Doakes, reaching out and GRABBING the bag off Doakes' head. Doakes blinks in the glare of the cars' headlights as:

GUERRERO
Why'd you hafta go and be such a
pain in the ass?

He slaps Doakes lightly across the face. Toying with him. Doakes doesn't react. Guerrero PUNCHES him -- hard -- in the jaw. Doakes falls over, still not saying a word.

Guerrero begins KICKING Doakes: violent, merciless.

EXT. DRY DOCK - NIGHT

Dexter inhales sharply and walks toward the ship.

DEXTER (V.O.)
And the punch line in all this?
Harry's pictures made me feel
nothing. But the new ones, the
ones the killer's been leaving?

He climbs the ladder leading up to the ship's deck.

DEXTER (V.O.)
They make me feel something. They
make me feel connected.

He disappears over the top of the ladder, onto the deck...

DEXTER (V.O.)
Life can be so odd.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The thugs pull Guerrero to his feet. One pulls out a gun and holds it to the back of Doakes' head. Guerrero moves in closer to Doakes.

GUERRERO
What gets me about pricks like you is that you think you can break the rules. You went after my guy. You went after my daughter.

SGT. DOAKES
And you killed a cop's wife.

GUERRERO
I break the rules sometimes, I allow for that. But I break the rules, it's for a good reason. You break the rules and --

The back of Guerrero's head EXPLODES with a POP in a mist of blood. Startled, Doakes and the thugs look up, the thug with the gun pulling it off Doakes, raising it --

Doakes ELBOWS him in the kneecaps, and another POP takes down the thug. Another POP and the second thug goes down, too. Doakes whips around... to see McNamara and his men surrounding the scene, guns drawn.

While the other guys call in the bodies, Doakes catches his breath, stares at McNamara. He stands, facing the other cop. A moment of thick, barely-contained tension as the two stare each other down, then:

SGT. DOAKES
I was bait. Is that it?

He turns...

MCNAMARA

Doakes. Doakes! James!
(calling after him)
I could've let Guerrero kill you.
I could've waited till his guys
shot you in the head and left you
in a swamp.
(getting no response)
But I didn't. We're done now,
Aaron. Five by five.

If Doakes finds any relief in that, any comfort at all, his face certainly doesn't give it away.

INT. RUSTED FREIGHTER - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Dexter cautiously enters the room, a cramped, abandoned living space. RATS scurry about as he enters, fleeing the room. He looks around: plaques and maritime paintings on the wall, a small wooden desk, and on a small bed...

TONY TUCCI.

Pale, drawn, weak. Blindfolded. Arms restrained, hooked to an IV, the left one ends at his wrist -- a bloody, bandaged stump. His right knee also a bloody bandage. There's a stillness here -- as if death waits just outside the door.

DEXTER (V.O.)

He was left here for me to kill. A gift. One I can't accept, of course. This man doesn't deserve it.

Upon hearing Dexter's footsteps, Tucci FLINCHES.

TUCCI

Look... please. Just kill me.
I've suffered enough. I'm ready.
(pained)
Just finish it and kill me.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Because the way I am connected to Harry is the way that matters. In his code of right and wrong.
That's a bond no one can break --

From out in the hallway, we hear a loud CLICK, and a CAMERA FLASH goes off. Dexter wheels around: what was that?

INT. RUSTED FREIGHTER - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Dexter moves quickly in swift pursuit. But not swift enough: we get a quick glimpse of someone, could be anyone, rounding the corner at the end of the corridor. Dexter hustles after his prey, but we already hear footsteps on a ladder.

Dexter moves faster, rounds the corner himself. Gets to the ladder leading up to the deck. Climbs it, getting to

EXT. RUSTED FREIGHTER - DECK - NIGHT

Dexter emerges from the hold, looks around. No one. The place is desolate. Until he's distracted by an ENGINE'S ROAR from the nearby parking lot. Dexter whips around to see

A WOOD-PANELED STATION WAGON barreling out to the street. The driver just a shadow.

DEXTER

Dammit!

He turns and sees something near the edge of the deck. Walks toward it. REVEAL: a POLAROID CAMERA. With a DEVELOPING PHOTO sticking out of the picture slot.

Dexter crouches, pulls the photo from the slot, stares at it as the picture FADES IN. Dexter reacts:

It's a photo of Dexter, moments ago, in the Captain's Quarters, standing over Tucci's bed. But something else gets Dexter's attention. We don't see it... yet.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DRY DOCK - NIGHT

Dexter watches EMTs wheel Tucci past on a stretcher. LaGuerta follows. They get to Batista, entering the scene.

LAGUERTA

Angel. Thanks for coming in last minute. Doakes had this run-in with Guerrero --

BATISTA

Shit. He all right?

LAGUERTA

It'll be a while before he gets back to heavy lifting at the gym. But he'll be fine. Meantime, I just need you to run lead on this.

BATISTA
You got it.

LAGUERTA
Hey... sorry to pull you out of
your anniversary. Your wife's not
gonna kill me, is she?

BATISTA
Nah, come on. She understands.
Married to the job first, right?

He heads off with a bright, reassuring smile just as Mrs. Tucci comes through the nearby crowd, goes to her son. She stops, her smile pasted on her face. Frozen. Tears form in her eyes. LaGuerta seems caught, wanting to reach out...

The EMTs wheel them to the waiting ambulance, and LaGuerta realizes she's facing a CROWD OF REPORTERS.

REPORTERS
Lieutenant! Couple questions about
the rescue./Can Mr. Tucci identify
his attacker?

LAGUERTA
What's important is that we
reunited Mr. Tucci and his family.

She smiles, moves to walk away. But then:

JOSH
Lieutenant. Please. Just the
basic details of what happened?

LaGuerta turns, thinks for a moment. Smiles. Demure.

LAGUERTA
Well, since you said please. At
eleven-fifteen this evening...

And as she continues to speak, we see a hint of accomplishment in her eyes. Like she got exactly what she wanted -- they asked her to brief. ON JOSH, seeing it too...

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - NIGHT

Deb walks past a GROUP OF UNIFORMS AND PLAINCLOTHES, backslapping and congratulating a beaming McNamara: he took down Guerrero, and he saved Sgt. Doakes in the process.

Deb turns, sees Doakes alone at his desk. His face is bruised, his movements stiff. She approaches him.

DEBRA

Heard you were here. Aren't you supposed to be home wrapping your ribs or something?

SGT. DOAKES

Nothing broken. Paperwork won't kill me. I'm strong like that.

DEBRA

Usually kills me.

SGT. DOAKES

(not looking up)

You did well in the briefing.
Impressive.

DEBRA

Thanks. That's my new thing. No more men, no more friends. Gonna bury myself in work from now on. Only thing that doesn't bite back.

SGT. DOAKES

Are you still talking?

Captain Matthews approaches the celebration, hands a cigar to McNamara, beaming, slapping him on the back...

DEBRA

You believe these guys? Dancing around like they won Game Seven?

SGT. DOAKES

McNamara got Guerrero tonight.
He's earned the right to blow off some steam.

DEBRA

(reading him)

Come on, Doakes. I get it.

SGT. DOAKES

Whatever "it" is, I'm pretty sure you don't.

DEBRA

You feel conflicted. This guy McNamara's been tormenting you for weeks. Oh, don't look so surprised, it's a police station, people gossip.

Doakes makes a show of ignoring her, but she goes on:

DEBRA

Then this same guy saves your life
and kills the guy who killed the
woman you love. You feel
conflicted.

SGT. DOAKES

Sure. Or maybe a week ago I buried
the woman I love. And all this
celebrating is fine, but she's
still in the ground. And I'm still
here alone.

He looks off toward McNamara and the others.

SGT. DOAKES

(quietly)

Nothing else matters.

As he turns back to his work, the conversation over, stay on
Deb for a beat watching him, his words and attitude impacting
her... surprising her.

EXT. DRY DOCK - PARKING AREA - NIGHT

Dexter, surrounded by BLACK & WHITES and UNMARKED CARS. He
gets to his car, unlocks it -- slips the Polaroid into his
pocket. As he shuts the door and drives off:

DEXTER (V.O.)

I've always been alone in this
world.

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Rita enters, closes the door behind her. Takes off her coat.
Smiles. Wide. Unable to contain her newfound giddiness:

DEXTER (V.O.)

Connection is something meant for
other people. And it works for
them. It can mean finding strength
they didn't know they had...

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - NIGHT

Deb sits at her desk, distracted, watching Doakes move
stiffly about the office, keeping his pain inside.

DEXTER (V.O.)
...or learning a secret about
someone they thought they knew.

EXT. DRY DOCK - MAKESHIFT PRESS AREA - NIGHT

DEXTER (V.O.)
They find connection in learning a
new way to reach people...

LaGuerta speaks to the press, getting along swimmingly with them... Josh watching her admiringly...

EXT. DRY DOCK - CRIME SCENE - NIGHT

DEXTER (V.O.)
... and they fight to keep it, even
when it's slipping away...

Batista moves about the scene, issuing directives to officers... no home to rush back to tonight...

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dexter sits on the couch, staring intently at the Polaroid.

DEXTER (V.O.)
But it always eluded me.

ANGLE ON the Polaroid: Dexter with Tucci...

DEXTER (V.O.)
It was foolish of my playmate to
think I would turn my back on
Harry's code, something I could
never do. He obviously doesn't
know me as well as he thinks.

PUSH IN on the photo, the wall behind Dexter, a shiny BRASS PLAQUE hanging just above the bed...

DEXTER (V.O.)
But still, he was reaching out to
me. A friend. Something I've
never had before.

PUSH IN on the reflection in the brass: a dark smudge,
featureless -- but clearly a human face.

DEXTER
And for the first time in my life,
I feel excited. I feel connected.

The person in the photo holds a camera. It's our first view of the ICE TRUCK KILLER.

DEXTER (V.O.)
And I feel like suddenly...
anything is possible.

OFF Dexter, staring at the photo, just breaking into a smile:

BLACK OUT.

END OF EPISODE