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D E X T E R

Episode 202
"Waiting To Exhale"

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DEXTER

"Waiting To Exhale"

FADE IN:

1 MUSIC UP: COOL E-Z LISTENING JAZZ. 1

THE SCREEN STROBES BLACK, WHITE, BLACK, WHITE. In each of the 'WHITES' we see DEXTER for a split-second.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I love the night. The stillness of my
dreamless sleep.

INT. DEXTER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 1 - (JUST HOURS AFTER 201 ENDED)

Shooting through the CEILING FAN down to Dexter in bed.
He's awake. Wide awake.

DEXTER (V.O.)
...usually...

The fan's THRUPPING becomes the SOUND OF A HEART BEATING.
He puts his hand on his heart.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I've got a hamster wheel spinning in
here. Okay, then. Waiting for
Morpheus. Here we go.

He waits. Fidgets. Waits some more.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Counting sheep... Lullaby and
goodnight... Hey, Mr. Sandman, little
help?

THE STROBE EFFECT AGAIN: BLACK, WHITE, BLACK, WHITE, then --
Dexter's eyes close as blessed sleep finds him. MUSIC OUT.

RADIO ANNOUNCER
You're listening to *Miami Nocturne*. In
local news: a shocking and gruesome
discovery off the coast of...

ON DEXTER. His eyes pop open.

FADE TO BLACK.

2 OMITTED

2

3 EXT. EAST KENDALL STREET - DAY 2

3

A fully involved Homicide Scene. Our cops doing their thing. Angry on-lookers staring them down.

DEXTER PARKS HIS GREY TAURUS next to a Fire Truck. He gets out with his kit, looks around.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Back in the belly of the beast.
Little Chino's home turf. Riskier
than I'd like...

He pulls a Miami Metro cap low over his forehead.

DEXTER (V.O.)
But duty calls.

He scooches under the yellow perimeter tape. BATISTA and MASUKA fall into step.

MASUKA
Eight confirmed.

DEXTER
Eight confirmed... here?

BATISTA
No, here it's just one.

MASUKA
I'm talking eight confirmed victims of
the Bay Harbor Butcher.

DEXTER (V.O.)
(a sigh)
My beautiful bodies of work.

DEXTER
Bay Harbor Butcher?

MASUKA
That's what the press is calling
whoever dumped those bodies offshore.
Has a nice ring to it, no?

DEXTER
Well, it's a little... lurid.

BATISTA
Lurid and possibly wrong. Part of me
is hoping they found the Ice Truck
Killer's dumping ground.

DEXTER

Tell me about it. Last thing Miami needs is another serial killer.

DEXTER KNEELS NEXT TO A BODY. Batista raises the tarp. It's EVA ARENAS (201). Badly hacked-up. Dexter can't help but be a little fascinated. Batista's disgusted.

DEXTER

Death by machete... again.

BATISTA

Eva Arenas. All she wanted was justice against the 29th Street Kings for whacking her son.

(shakes his head)

First she was the messenger...

DOAKES COMES UP.

SGT. DOAKES

... now she's the goddamn message.

BATISTA

I got a B.O.L.O. out on Little Chino. Gang Crash Unit. Local patrol. Everyone's looking for that *carajo*.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Last thing I want is for the cops to bring Little Chino in. He's mine.

DEXTER

Here's hoping.

He stares at the body - almost remorseful.

SGT. DOAKES

Why don't you take a picture, Morgan. It'll last longer.

Dexter snaps out of his reverie and raises his camera.

DEXTER

What would I do without you, Sergeant?

DEBRA INTERVIEWS AN OLD CUBAN WOMAN.

OLD CUBAN WOMAN

Cada semana, cada noche, violencia esta en mi vecinidad. Y por que? Porque la policia no hace nada!

DEBRA

Please, *Senora, mas despacio*. Please slow...

JOEY NUNEZ (14, full of swagger) sidles forward.

JOEY

She's saying you fucking cops don't do nothing.

DEBRA

Grandma really talks like that?

JOEY

Not exactly. But you get the point, right *bitch*?

And he's gone, weaving through the crowd. Debra's steamed.

DEXTER opens his kit and goes to work. Debra storms up.

DEBRA

Fucking people don't want our help.

DEXTER

Concentrating here.

Debra peers at the body, recoils in recognition.

DEBRA

Shit, she has a little girl.

DEXTER

I know.

DEBRA

And this stuff never gets to you?

DEXTER

I'm more of a crying on the inside kind of guy.

Masuka leans in to look at Eva's body.

MASUKA

Wow. Makes the Ice Truck Killer look like a goddamn artist.

Dexter and Batista shoot him a look.

MASUKA

Oh. Sorry, Morgan.

DEBRA

What? I'm so over that.

She goes off, anything but over that. We follow her past PASCAL in her car. She's on the phone, in a seething conversation. LAGUERTA taps on her window. Pascal lowers it, clearly stressed. Says into her cell --

PASCAL

I'm putting you on hold.

LAGUERTA

The fiancee?

PASCAL

Incarnate. Could he pick a worse time?

LaGuerta regards her. Sees that she's struggling.

LAGUERTA

Esmee, how 'bout you take off and I handle this?

PASCAL

I couldn't do that.

LAGUERTA

I'll write up the report and email it to you for signature. Okay?

Pascal's eyes fill with gratitude. She glances off to Debra.

PASCAL

Tell Morgan I want to see her first thing in the morning.

(off LaGuerta's nod)

Thanks, Maria. I owe you.

DEXTER PHOTOGRAPHS Eva's body.

A Woman in a 'Child Services' windbreaker passes by the perimeter tape. She's carrying Eva's daughter MARISSA (201) in her arms. Marissa's eyes lock on Dexter.

MARISSA

Mama? Donde esta mi Mama?

Dexter is mesmerized by her as she's carried away from him.

QUICK POP (FROM 112): *THE SHIPPING CONTAINERS.* Dexter stands in the middle of his waking dream as a uniformed HARRY (30s) carries YOUNG DEXTER (3) away from the horrifying scene in the container.

HARRY

Get in there! Somebody else get the
hell in there now!

Dexter stares at his younger self as Harry carries him away toward the vintage police cars.

MATCH CUT TO:

DEXTER IN THE PRESENT watching as Marissa is carried away toward the Social Worker's car. Then --

BATISTA

Pobrecita. Seeing her mother like that, can you imagine?

DEXTER

I can't even go there, Angel.

TIME LAPSE:

4 EXT. EAST KENDALL STREET - LATER (NIGHT 2) 4

Eva's body is loaded into the Coroner's Wagon. Batista shakes his head as the Fire Truck pulls up.

BATISTA

This one's on us, man.

DEXTER (V.O.)

If I had been on my game with Little Chino last night, this never would have happened.

Looking from beneath the bill of his cap, he squints into the crowd. Eerily silhouetted faces glare back.

DEXTER (V.O.)

And I wouldn't be exposed like this.

Firemen train their hoses on the blood left behind by Eva's body. Dexter watches as the diluted red stream slides toward the storm drain, where it ripples past yellow perimeter tape and drops from sight.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I've gotta find Chino, before he finds me.

His face turned away from the onlookers, he heads for his car. PRE-LAP: news-radio.

4 CONTINUED:

4

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

... bringing to an even dozen the
number of bodies found offshore...

5 INT. DEXTER'S CAR/EXT. STREET - NIGHT 2

5

Dexter driving, listening.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Captain Matthews of Miami Metro
Homicide issued this brief statement
earlier today --

MATTHEWS (V.O.)

"I want to assure the citizens of
Miami that whoever committed these
dreadful crimes will be brought to the
swiftest and harshest justice."

Dexter reacts.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

So far authorities have no clue as to
who that criminal might be.

DEXTER (V.O.)

And I have no clue as to why I'm going
through this time-warp mind-trip. Got
to stay focussed.

He looks off to a street corner where a group of Gang
Bangers hang. Surly, smoking, drinking, staring back at
him.

Suddenly, a ribbon of light bounces off his rearview and
slashes across his eyes. Dexter adjusts the mirror. As he
does, the trailing car's headlights go out.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Shit. Little Chino. He did see me.
Timing could be better. That, plus I
don't have my tools, but...

He swerves into an alley, swings to a stop; blocking it.

DEXTER (V.O.)

... it does give me the chance to tie
up one massive loose end.

He grabs his Taser and a longneck Mag-light, jumps out and
strides toward the trailing car as it screeches up. Dexter
hefts the Mag-light, about to demolish the driver's window,
when it abruptly powers down to reveal... Doakes.

5 CONTINUED:

5

DEXTER

Oh, it's you, Sergeant.

SGT. DOAKES

Who else you got following you?

Dexter looks around.

DEXTER

Apparently no one.

Doakes eyes the raised Mag-light.

SGT. DOAKES

Go ahead. Try it. I've been waiting.

They lock gazes for a beat. Then Dexter heads for his car.

DEXTER

This part of town? Full of crazies.
I'd lock my doors.

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

6

Dexter sits at his meticulously uncluttered desk, watching news video of the body recovery process on his laptop.

DEXTER (V.O.)

This is quickly losing its appeal.

Debra enters, fully dressed, towelling off her hair.

DEBRA

Bathroom's all yours.

DEXTER

Sort of always was.

He taps at his keyboard, changing the image on his screen. Debra opens the fridge, pulls out the OJ and chugs.

DEXTER

We out of glasses?

DEBRA

Clean ones.

DEXTER

C'mere a sec. Found a couple of places on Craigslist you might like.

THE SCREEN. A virtual tour of an apartment appears.

DEBRA TOSSES HER TOWEL onto the floor; looks over Dexter's shoulder, while taking another swig of OJ.

DEXTER

Two bedrooms, two baths. Limited water views. Has its own gym.

DEBRA

Hate it.

He brings up another virtual tour.

DEXTER

One bedroom, one bath. Art Deco building.

Debra barely looks, sets the OJ bottle on Dexter's desk.

DEBRA

Shitty neighborhood.

DEXTER

It's got morning sun.

(beat)

C'mon, Deb, give it a chance.

DEBRA

I appreciate the brotherly love, Dex. But I've got the Lieutenant in like an hour. See you at the job.

And she's gone. Dexter picks up the OJ. It left a ring on his desk. He practices a smile. Then, dripping with irony --

DEXTER (V.O.)

I will not kill my sister. I will not kill my sister.

His cell phone rings. The readout: 'Rita'. INTERCUT (INT. RITA'S HOUSE) as he puts the OJ back in the fridge.

DEXTER

(into phone)

Hey you.

ASTOR

... Dexter?

DEXTER. Immediately alert.

DEXTER

Astor, sweetie. What's the matter?

ASTOR
Mom's acting all weird and stuff.

DEXTER
What kind of weird?

ASTOR
She keeps talking to people on the phone about my dad? But she starts yelling at them. Then she yells at me and Cody.

DEXTER
I'm on my way.

He rings off, grabs his keys by the Barbie doll head.

7 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - DAY 3 7

RITA on the phone. Astor watching TV. CODY somberly stacking Russian nesting dolls, one inside the other.

ASTOR
You're doing it wrong.

She reaches to help. Cody pushes her away.

CODY
No one asked you.

Rita paces. Still on the phone. At her wit's end.

RITA
(into phone)
No. 'Calm' is what I was when I called *thirty-five* minutes ago.
'Pissed' is what I am now.

The door opens and Dexter bustles in with grocery bags.

DEXTER
Who wants Eggos? Blueberry or chocolate or both?

ASTOR
Both.

CODY
Don't care.

Dexter slips the Eggos into the toaster. Rita finishes her call and slams the phone down.

RITA

Assholes. Did everything but help.

DEXTER

Which...

(lowers his voice)

... 'assholes'...

(normal voice)

... were you talking to?

RITA

Funeral home assholes.

DEXTER

You're having a funeral for Paul?

RITA

For Paul. For the kids. For me. We had this old insurance policy. It's only five thousand; but it should cover everything.

DEXTER

Y'know, the County will bury Paul for free. I mean, he wasn't even your husband... anymore... technically.

Rita reacts. Dexter doesn't notice. Pushes on.

DEXTER

Then the insurance money can go toward a starter scholarship for the kids.

RITA

Dexter, I didn't ask for your help... or your advice.

She's pushing Dexter away, but he misreads it.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I'll never understand how people deal with death. Why they just can't...

He watches Cody slip the last nesting doll home.

DEXTER (V.O.)

... put it in its place.

Then he flips an Eggo onto a plate and offers it to Rita.

DEXTER

Hungry?

8 INT. POLICE STATION - DEXTER'S LAB - LATER (DAY 3) 8

DEXTER AT HIS COMPUTER scrolling mug-shots of Little Chino.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Now I have to find someone who knows I'm looking for him. Not exactly ideal in the 'element of surprise' department. And I have to find a new way to dispose of Little Chino's body.

A flicker of doubt clouds his eyes.

DEXTER (V.O.)

If I can close the deal this time.

ANGLE INTO PASCAL'S OFFICE. Debra's getting her ass handed to her by the Lieutenant. LaGuerta balefully looks on.

PASCAL DISMISSES DEBRA and she bursts out of the office, LaGuerta on her heels. Debra wheels on her --

9 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS 9

DEBRA

You totally douched me in there.

LAGUERTA

You clocked some guy in a bar because he *touched* your arm. I told the Lieutenant you weren't ready for active duty yet.

DEBRA

Thanks for the fucking vote of confidence.

She splits. Masuka checks out her butt, then announces --

MASUKA

Thirteen confirmed!

ON DEXTER, the pressure mounting. He looks over to --

LAGUERTA, DOAKES AND BATISTA across the bullpen.

BATISTA

Buzz in the halls is the Feds are coming in on the Bay Harbor bodies.

LAGUERTA

Figures. FBI does the heavy lifting, Captain Matthews takes the credit.

(MORE)

9 CONTINUED:

9

LAGUERTA (cont'd)

Nice political move when you're bucking for Deputy Chief.

SGT. DOAKES

Any idea who the FBI's sending?

BATISTA

Some guy named Lundy.

SGT. DOAKES

Frank Lundy? He's a rock star. Green River Killer, D.C. Sniper; if the case was impossible, he broke it.

LAGUERTA

I'm damaged goods around here, James, but you should do whatever you can to get on Lundy's task force. It's a career-maker.

BATISTA

Just visualize the door of opportunity opening wide for you, bro. Then walk right through it.

SGT. DOAKES

You keep up with this woo-woo shit, Angel, I'm gonna walk through you.

Just then, the elevator opens and LITTLE CHINO (the stitches on his freshly slashed cheek and his newly broken nose adding to his menace) and his LAWYER emerge. The man-giant struts his way into the Bullpen. Dexter ducks down as if he dropped something.

HIS POV, looking up: Little Chino, big as a redwood.

DEXTER (V.O.)

This guy is officially the highest point in all of Florida. But what's he doing here?

LAGUERTA AND BATISTA are immediately on their feet. DOAKES rests his hand on the butt of his pistol. PASCAL comes out of her office. The Lawyer steps forward, addresses her.

LAWYER

People tell me you're looking for my client.

PASCAL

People tell you right.

In the b.g.: Dexter slips into the inner lab.

10 INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM/BULLPEN - LATER 10

LaGuerta and Batista packed into the small space with Little Chino and the Lawyer. INTERCUT with Debra, Pascal and Doakes watching the MONITOR. Dexter hovers.

DEBRA

Fuck, he's big.

DEXTER

The harder they fall.

LaGuerta studies Little Chino's ravaged face.

LAGUERTA

That come with a story?

LITTLE CHINO

Cut myself shaving.

Batista can hardly conceal his contempt.

BATISTA

You should be more careful, *amigo*.

The Lawyer steps forward.

LAWYER

Lieutenant, My client has been repeatedly harassed by this department and, frankly, we're considering filing a...

LAGUERTA

Cut the horse-shit, Raul.

LAWYER

There was another murder in East Kendall yesterday and --

LITTLE CHINO

Word on the pavement is you're looking for me regarding this... tragedy.

BATISTA

You bet your ass we are. The victim was the mother of one of your *compadres*, who we know you killed.

LAWYER

But can't prove. Right, Officer?

BATISTA

It's Detective. And can't prove yet.
But someone, some time is gonna
whisper something in our ear and --

LITTLE CHINO

Show them the disc.

The Lawyer snaps open his briefcase and presents a DVD.

11 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - LATER (DAY 3)

11

Dexter and the Homicide cops watch the DVD of Little Chino
at a barbecue. He's in every frame.

LAGUERTA

Time stamp has this as yesterday
afternoon. Same time as --

PASCAL

Eva Arenas's T.O.D.

BATISTA

Bullshit. Anyone can reset a time
stamp.

DEBRA

Check it out.

THE TV. Little Chino points to a buddy who holds up a Miami
Tribune. Debra pulls one from recycle. Same headline.

DEBRA

Yesterday's paper. The perfect
fucking alibi.

LAGUERTA

The perfect fucking pre-alibi.

They look at the other monitor. Little Chino and Raul
passing time in the Interrogation Room.

BATISTA

Arrogant prick knew we'd peg him for
Eva Arenas's murder, so he covered his
ass and had someone else do the deed.

DEBRA

Makes him an accomplice, right?

LAGUERTA

Not without evidence.

She zaps off the TV and flings the remote on her desk.

PASCAL
Cut him loose.

A12 INT. DEXTER'S INNER LAB/MASUKA'S LAB - LATER A12

Dexter slips into his lab as Raul, smug as can be, and Little Chino, even smugger, pass the furious cops and exit. Dexter watches safely from behind the blinds.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Red Rover, Red Rover... send Chino
back over.

Masuka pops his head in.

MASUKA
Yo, Dex. Check it out.

Dexter crosses into Masuka's lab to see new POLICE VIDEO of the underwater meadow of Hefty bags. Dexter, fascinated, deflects with --

DEXTER
You believe this Little Chino stuff?

MASUKA
I've got bigger fish.
(points to pictures)
Thirteen and counting. They're so
swamped up there, they had to bring in
outside talent.
(taps his own chest)
Which would be *moi*.

Dexter's attention is drawn to the underwater burial site. It's the first time he's ever seen it. Masuka joins him.

MASUKA
Bet this guy never expected his work
to see the light of day.

DEXTER
Bet you're right. Still, it can't be
easy to hide a body nowadays.

MASUKA
You shitting me?

DEXTER
No, not shitting. Hypothetical:
you're the Bay Harbor Butcher.
(MORE)

DEXTER (cont'd)

How do you make sure a disposed body stays disposed?

MASUKA

Tons of options: Everglades, alligators, pig farm, sulphuric acid, wood chipper, incinerator... Hell, even meat pies. The mind boggles.

DEXTER

But don't all of those run the risk of contact with the outside world?

MASUKA

Got a better idea?

DEXTER

... no.

DEXTER (V.O.)

And that's the problem: where do I put Chino when I'm done with him?

Their attention is drawn to Pascal's office as her door opens and she and her fiance (BERTRAND) exit. Tense, but trying not to show it, they leave the bullpen.

12 INT. COUNTY FUNERAL HOME - DAY 3

12

Bland and bleak. Where people without means bury people without means. Rita, putting on a brave front, sits with the overly-busy DIRECTOR. She passes him a clothing bag.

RITA

I think he'd rather be buried in these than some cheap suit he never owned.

Without looking up from his ancient monitor, the Director takes the clothes. Awkward beat. Rita forges on.

RITA

I also want an open casket, so my children can say a proper goodbye to their father.

DIRECTOR

Of course, it's always best. A sense of closure; that's so important to the little ones, Mrs. Benson.

RITA

It's Bennet. I'm here for Paul Bennet.

Now the Director looks up. He taps at his keyboard.

DIRECTOR

... oh, God.

RITA

'Oh, God' what?

DIRECTOR

I'm so sorry Mrs. Bennet. It's just that, here at County, we're so busy and so understaffed. First place they cut-back is always --

RITA

Can you please just tell me what you're talking about?

DIRECTOR

Your husband suffered significant head trauma. Our technicians did their best, but there's only so much...

The Director continues; as kindly as possible.

DIRECTOR

Times like these, I find that the family can receive equal comfort with a favorite photograph on top of a closed coffin.

ON RITA as she absorbs just how violently Paul died.

13 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 3

13

Debra charges through the stairway door. Sees Dexter.

DEBRA

Captain's coming up with that FBI guy. And he's got a fucking entourage.

The elevator doors part and out steps CAPTAIN MATTHEWS. Followed by three FBI Agents. They turn and head for the Briefing Room. Then FRANK LUNDY emerges. The last thing anyone would expect: 50's, rumpled, half-glasses.

DEXTER (V.O.)

So this is the man who stands between me and death row.

MATTHEWS LOOKS INTO PASCAL'S OFFICE. Asides to LaGuerta --

MATTHEWS

Where's your Lieutenant?

LAGUERTA
(covering)
She's liasing with the Gang Crash Unit
on the Arenas murders.

Matthews makes a mental note, then addresses the troops.

MATTHEWS
Listen up. Briefing room in two
minutes for show-and-tell.

14 INT. POLICE STATION - BRIEFING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

14

DEXTER, DEBRA, BATISTA AND MASUKA against the back wall.
Matthews stands in front of the huge screen while Lundy
reviews his notes. The FBI Agents have set up a power-point
presentation.

DEBRA
Oh, wow, fucking A/V day.

MATTHEWS
The Bay Harbor Butcher case is now a
Miami Metro case...

The cops react; intrigued, up for it.

MATTHEWS
... and it's shaping up to be the
biggest in our history. We're now at
fourteen confirmed.

Dexter reacts.

MATTHEWS
The FBI has sent over their top man,
Special Agent Frank Lundy, to help
solve this crime. This will not be a
jurisdictional circle jerk. It will
be a shining example of two agencies
working together for the public good.

DEXTER'S POV: Lundy steps forward and surveys the mosaic of
faces looking back at him. His eyes meet Dexter's. A
slight neighborly tilt of the head, then --

LUNDY
Hello everyone. There is no such
thing as the perfect crime. Not in my
experience anyway. With your help and
with God's grace, we'll find whoever
did this awful thing.

BACK TO SCENE.

LUNDY

I need everyone in every department
up to speed on what we're doing while
I review your files and put together
our task force.

LaGuerta glances to Doakes. He nods: message received.

LUNDY

So, let's get a jump-start on the Bay
Harbor Butcher. A moniker which, by
the way, repulses me.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Well, we have something in common.

LUNDY

Could someone get the lights?

Doakes, eager to please, switches off the overheads. An
image comes on the screen: an ominously bulging HEFTY BAG.
Next image: a well-preserved human torso. Next image:
several SEVERED LIMBS.

LUNDY

First report from the field had these
parts as coming from one body.

ON DEXTER, captured by the images of his work.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Actually, it's two.

BACK TO SCENE.

LUNDY

Actually, it's two.

Dexter flicks a glance to Lundy. Uh-oh. More images of the
Bay Harbor bodies play out.

LUNDY

There's been speculation that this...
human harvest... might be connected to
a case you've recently solved.

Dexter feels Debra stiffen beside him. An image of one of
the ITK's bloodless and dismembered hookers appears.

LUNDY

But, there are several inconsistencies between the two sets of bodies...

SIDE-BY-SIDE PHOTOS: Dexter's victims and Brian's victims.

LUNDY

... gender, ex-sanguination, specific methods of dissection...

DEXTER (V.O.)

Not to mention my guys deserved it.

LUNDY

The evidence just isn't there to piggy-back this onto the Ice Truck Killer.

A photograph of BRIAN comes up. Pleasant, smiling. The cops steal glances toward Debra. Upset, she does all she can to withstand her own roiling emotions.

LUNDY

We're looking for a different suspect.

DEBRA, her bottom lip pulled in and trembling, looks to Dexter for support. He glances to her, then is irresistibly drawn back to the picture of the brother he killed.

HIS POV: THE SCREEN. Brian's still photo comes to life. He looks right at Dexter.

BRIAN

Miss me, brother?

DEXTER FLINCHES. Shaken, he looks around the room. Then back to the screen. Brian's photo is back to normal. This was all in Dexter's head.

LUNDY

Lights please.

Doakes obliges. PUSH IN ON DEXTER.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I can't afford to lose it like this. Not with Special Agent Rock Star on my case. I need to clear the decks - and my head.

Debra starts toward him, but he separates from her and hustles to his lab. Opens his laptop. Little Chino.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I'm coming for you tonight, my friend.
And, this time, I'll be ready.

15 INT. POLICE STATION - WEAPONS CAGE - AFTERNOON (DAY 3) 15

Dexter with MACK (30). Mack holds up what looks like an over-sized pistol. He loves his work.

MACK
You just slam your CO2 cartridge into
the hollow grip --

He jams a cartridge home.

MACK
Put in your tranq dart; and let 'er
rip. Wham, bam, lights-fucking-out.

Dexter takes the weapon; feels the heft.

MACK
So, gators giving you trouble, Dex?

DEXTER
(laying it on)
They took my puppy.

Mack reaches beneath the counter, comes up with a TRANQ STICK (looks like a spear with a needle at the end).

MACK
This sucker? Load her up right and
you could bring down a goddamn
grizzly. 'Course you may have ta get
closer'n you'd like. But it'll do the
job. I promise you that.

Dexter examines the Tranq Stick, testing its weight.

MACK
So, which'll it be?

Dexter looks from the Tranq Pistol to the Tranq Stick.

DEXTER
Both.

16 INT. GYM - LATE AFTERNOON (DAY 3) 16

Debra churns away on the elliptical machine; 18 miles and climbing. She notices a boxing class breaking up.

DEBRA APPROACHES THE HEAVY BAG. She assumes the position and throws a few jabs. The bag just hangs there, not moving. Debra stares at the bag, her gaze setting. And she pounds her fist into it. Too hard. Promptly jamming her wrist.

DEBRA
Mother-fuck!

A hot Latino boxing trainer (GABRIEL, 30) comes up.

GABRIEL
First time?

DEBRA
Sorta.

GABRIEL
I been boxing since I was ten.

DEBRA
Tough neighborhood?

GABRIEL
Tough family.
(a twinkle)
And those were just my sisters.

Debra suppresses a smile.

GABRIEL
So... want some help?

DEBRA
I'm doing enough damage on my own.

GABRIEL
That a yes or a no?

Debra sizes him up. What the hell?

DEBRA
That was a yes that sounded like a no,
but... yeah, sure.

GABRIEL
Good answer. First we've gotta wrap
your wrists. Don't want you to hurt
yourself again.

He reaches into his bag and comes up with a roll of athletic tape. Grabbing the end, he gives a pull and 'RIIIIPPPP'!

ON DEBRA. That sound. Haunted by visions of Brian --

DEBRA

Uh... this... I'm not... sorry...

And, freaked, she hurries out of there.

17 EXT./INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 3 17

Dexter approaches and hears the tell-tale POUNDING of Debra on the treadmill. He shakes his head.

He keys the door (we note the Barbie head) and pushes. The door catches on the chain.

DEXTER

Yo Deb!

Debra trudges to the door, closes it in Dexter's face, unchains and opens it.

DEBRA

Scared the shit out of me.

Dexter enters. Debra's edgy and unsettled. A beat. Then --

DEXTER

How you doing?

DEBRA

I saw the man I thought I loved. No wait. *Did* love - up on some goddamn screen with a gallery of the women he murdered and cut into pieces.

DEXTER

Deb, I --

DEBRA

Don't. You fucking asked. So... how am I doing? I'm just fine, Dexter.

She starts for the door, turns back.

DEBRA

And how are you today, *brother*?

She stomps out, SLAMMING the door. SFX: MUSIC, LAUGHTER.

18 EXT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT 3 18

In the strobe of a tropical Miami lightning storm, a crazy-ass party spills out of the house, onto the veranda and into the front yard. Booze, sex, dope, dancing, more sex.

LITTLE CHINO getting a lap dance. The GIRL wriggles out of her halter top and writhes even harder.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Little Chino, hiding in plain sight.
Nothing to fear but...

DEXTER (in stalk mode) SITS IN AN OLD PIECE OF SHIT JUNKER.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... me.

He gets out of the car. It looks like most of the other cars in the neighborhood.

DEXTER (V.O.)
One thing my father taught me: blend in.

Little Chino brushes his Girl away. High and/or drunk, he wobbles into the street. Dexter retreats into the shadows. Watching. Waiting. He comes up with the Tranq Gun.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Attaboy, Chino. A little closer.

Dexter holds out his other hand. His fingers tremble ever-so-slightly. A trace of worry etches his face.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Either performance anxiety. Or...

Little Chino moves closer still.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... the thrill of the kill.

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING. Little Chino sees Dexter. Unafraid, Little Chino strides forward.

DEXTER'S ABOUT TO FIRE when the Gun is knocked from his hand.

LITTLE CHINO
I've been waiting for you.

Gang Members appear from nowhere. It's a trap! Dexter starts for his junker; but a Gang Member throws a Molotov Cocktail into it. The car bursts into flames!

Dexter turns. Four or five Gang Members advance on him. One grabs his shirt. Dexter tears away. Another moves in. Dexter elbows him in the face. He bolts away. Lightning crackling again as the Gang Members hurtle after him.

DISSOLVE TO:

19 EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT 3 19

The Gang Members search yards, porches, under cars. PUSH IN UNDER one of the cars they've checked and there's... Dexter's face. At street level. He's standing in a storm drain. Abandoned ribbons of crime scene tape billow from the grating like tiny flags. He slips from sight. CRANE UP TO REVEAL this is the street where Eva Arenas died.

20 INT. STORM DRAIN - SAME (NIGHT 3) 20

Dexter in this dripping tomb-like space... the occasional arc of a flashlight sweeps the moldy cement above. His cell RINGS. The readout: 'Rita'. He quickly turns it off.

21 EXT. THE STREET - SAME (NIGHT 3) 21

A Gang Member twigs to the sound of the cell, sees a comrade on his phone... and moves on.

22 INT. STORM DRAIN - SAME (NIGHT 3) 22

Dexter in the gunk. His spirits sinking.

DEXTER

What the hell is wrong with me?

As Dexter sinks even lower, we --

FADE TO BLACK.

In the total darkness we HEAR a child's voice whispering.

CHILD'S VOICE

Dexter, someone's coming!

A FLASH OF LIGHTNING. Dexter opens his eyes and gasps.

CHILD'S VOICE

It's okay. I've got you.

THE SCREEN FILLS WITH LIGHT. We're --

23 INT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - DAY (FLASHBACK) 23

The doors whip open to REVEAL YOUNG DEXTER and YOUNG BRIAN sitting in the blood, among the body parts. These poor boys have been here for days. A MAN'S SILHOUETTE appears in the maw of the container. His shadow falls across the boys. Young Brian grabs Young Dexter's hand and shouts --

YOUNG BRIAN

Please don't hurt us!

The MAN, his body wrapped in light, steps into the container and bends to the boys. His hands reach out and grab for Young Dexter. He lets out with a tiny scream.

YOUNG DEXTER

NO!

AND NOW WE SEE IT'S HARRY as he tugs Young Dexter away from his brother. ON THE BOYS' HANDS, clasped in fear and trust. Their fingers separate as Young Dexter is pulled away.

Harry hefts Young Dexter to his shoulder. YOUNG DEXTER'S POV as he leaves his brother behind: YOUNG BRIAN, receding from CAMERA, reaches out.

YOUNG BRIAN

Don't leave me...

YOUNG DEXTER

Biney!

HARRY AND YOUNG DEXTER exit the shipping container, leaving Young Brian alone in the blood and the gore.

YOUNG BRIAN

Dexter... PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME!

There comes the sound of Harry's voice from outside.

HARRY'S VOICE

Get in there! Somebody else get the hell in there now!

The blinding sunlight pouring through the doors MATCH DISSOLVES TO A LIGHTNING FLASH and we're --

24 INT. STORM DRAIN - NIGHT 3 (RESUME)

24

DEXTER, stunned by this sub-conscious fever-dream, sits up.

DEXTER

... Brian...

A beat. Then he rises and peeks out. The gang is still there. Dexter slips back down into the slime and pulls his knees to his chest. This will be his longest night.

25 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - NEXT MORNING (DAY 4) 25

LAGUERTA, PASCAL, DOAKES AND BATISTA at a bulletin board; examining photos of the Rafael and Eva Arenas murders.

PASCAL

Someone had to see something.

LAGUERTA

Seeing and talking are two different things.

BATISTA

Want me to knock on some doors?

SGT. DOAKES

And maybe some heads.

The stairwell door opens and Debra hurries in.

DEBRA

Sorry I'm late, but...

She trips over a briefcase. Stubs her toe.

DEBRA

What fucking asshole left this here?

She kicks the briefcase into a wall. Beat. Liquid starts leaking out. Lundy enters from his office; retrieves the dripping briefcase and holds it over a waste basket.

LUNDY

It's Special Agent fucking asshole.

He opens the briefcase, drops his broken thermos into the trash and shakes out his soggy paperwork. Lundy looks to Debra, his old-soldier eyes crinkling.

LUNDY

Morgan, right?

Debra's intimidated. Batista swoops in. Grabs her elbow.

BATISTA

We've got witnesses to interview.

As he leads her off --

DEBRA

You seen my brother?

Lundy watches them go, then heads for the kitchen.

THE SMOKING PORCH. Masuka puffing on a cigarette, chatting with a Forensics Tech. Doakes enters, waves away the smoke.

SGT. DOAKES
What the fuck's that smell?

MASUKA
Clove. What's up, Sergeant?

SGT. DOAKES
Still waiting on Forensics from the Arenas murders.

MASUKA
I'm kind of, uh, underwater with the Bay Harbor bodies.

LUNDY OBSERVES THIS EXCHANGE as he makes tea.

SGT. DOAKES
We're all busy, Masuka. Make it happen.

He re-enters the bullpen. Masuka turns to the Tech --

MASUKA
Somebody needs his knob polished.
(beat)
Besides me.

DOAKES STRIDES ACROSS TO LUNDY.

SGT. DOAKES
'Scuse me, sir. Got a minute?

LUNDY
Or three. Good tea takes time.
What's up, Sergeant?

SGT. DOAKES
It's about your task force. I think I could bring something to it.

LUNDY
I've looked into your jacket, Sergeant. Some fine work here in Homicide. Miami Metro is lucky to have you.

SGT. DOAKES
Thank you, sir. I've always tried to --

LUNDY

But I don't think you'd be a good fit
for my team.

SGT. DOAKES

But you just said I'm qualified.

LUNDY

I said you've done some fine work in
Homicide. Frankly, Sergeant, you're
more of a leader than a team member.
I'm just not convinced you play well
with others.

He plops his teabag in the sink. End of discussion. As
Lundy heads for his office, LaGuerta and Doakes exchange a
look. Doakes shakes his head and goes off.

26 EXT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - MORNING (DAY 4) 26

Dexter, looking like hell after his night in hell, hustles
toward his front door. He's covered in dirt and grime.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Please, Deb, don't be home. I can't
deal with anyone right now.

Rita, wearing a simple black dress, comes from around the
corner. Dexter sags as she takes in his ragged appearance.

RITA

I called you for hours.

DEXTER

I kind of pulled an all-nighter.

RITA

Dexter, I called the station.

DEXTER

I was off the clock. There's this
huge case I'm working...

He indicates his ratty clothes; shrugs.

DEXTER

It's taking me places I never thought
I'd go.

But Rita just looks at him. His appearance, his trying too
hard. Whatever he's selling, she's not buying.

DEXTER

What?

RITA

I've been thinking - a lot - about Paul's death. How I'm going to deal with it.

DEXTER

And?

RITA

First of all, I'm not going to let the County bury him. I'm using the insurance money for a proper funeral. It's in an hour.

Dexter struggles as he tries to wrap his brain around this.

DEXTER

Rita, Paul was such a destructive force. Why can't you just put him behind you?

RITA

It's about saying goodbye. Goodbye to him and to the grip he had on my life. It's called moving on.

She nods to his grubby clothes.

RITA

Go clean yourself up. The kids are expecting you.

DEXTER

But I'll make you late.

Rita's self-control evaporates into frustration.

RITA

Dammit, Dexter! I need you there, too. You have no idea what this feels like.

DEXTER

Actually...

Dexter looks down to the Barbie head on his keychain. The morning light catching it. Something awakens within.

DEXTER

Gimme ten minutes.

27 EXT. EAST KENDALL APARTMENT HOUSE - MORNING (DAY 4)

27

DEBRA AND BATISTA arrive at a door.

DEBRA

Can't wait to get another door slammed
in my face.

BATISTA

If I lived in this neighborhood? I
wouldn't talk to the cops either.

DEBRA

Brave guy like you?

BATISTA

It's about survival. These people
have families, kids. Not so easy to
be talkative with the 29th Street
Kings playing whack the witness.

DEBRA

Just takes one, right?

BATISTA

Put *that* out into the universe.

He does a quick one-two knuckle rap on the door.

BATISTA

Miami Metro. Can we talk to you?

FEMALE VOICE

Go to hell!

BATISTA

Okay, but before we do that, Ma'am.
Could we ask you a few questions?

FEMALE VOICE

How many is a few?

DEBRA

Uh, three. But one's a two-parter.

The door knob jiggles. Debra and Batista look at each other.

FEMALE VOICE

Go away before I call the police!

DEBRA

We are the fucking police!

A long beat. Then --

FEMALE VOICE

I ain't talking to no one. Language
like that.

Debra's about to pound the door with the heel of her hand.

BATISTA

Look on the bright side.

DEBRA

What bright side?

BATISTA

Karmically? We're batting a thousand.
Something balancing about that kind of
consistency.

Debra rolls her eyes and heads off.

28 EXT. EAST KENDALL APARTMENT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS (DAY 4) 28

Debra rounds the corner and spots the kid, Joey Nunez,
marking up her unmarked with spray painted gang symbols.

DEBRA

God-damn it!

Joey drops the can and bolts. Debra bounds after him.
Batista comes into view.

BATISTA

Morgan!

Too late; she's already taken off. The chase is on.

29 EXT. EAST KENDALL STREETS AND ALLEYS - SAME (DAY 4) 29

Joey, young and fit, tears away. But Debra's possessed and
the kid can't put any real distance between them. He keeps
looking back, not believing this lady's keeping up with him.

But Batista isn't. He lags far behind.

ON DEBRA, her fury building with each stride. Finally, Joey
falters as he careens into an alley and Debra is on him like
a puma. Dragging him down from behind, she straddles him
and draws her gun - her mind amped with irrational anger.

DEBRA

You think you can just spray paint your gang crap on a police car and get away with it!

JOEY

Get offa me, lady. Unless you want to fuck me like you fucked the Ice Truck Killer!

Wrong thing to say, kid. Debra jams her gun into his neck.

DEBRA

You little gangbang wannabe piece of shit; you wanna get shot? 'Cause I'll fucking shoot you, asshole!

Debra's in a blind rage.

DEBRA

Every single goddamn one of you fuckers who keep fucking with me!

JOEY

(nervous now)
What do you want?

Debra, her finger twitching on the trigger, shrieks at Joey.

DEBRA

WHAT DO I WANT? I WANT TO PUT A BULLET IN YOUR BRAIN!

In the face of such unbridled intensity, Joey crumbles.

JOEY

No! Please! I'll tell you...

DEBRA

Tell me what?

JOEY

Where the shit is. The drugs and shit... Please don't shoot me, Miss!

His adolescent terror snaps Debra back to her senses. Jesus, she almost shot this kid. She withdraws her pistol from Joey's neck and rises. Just as she starts to reholster her gun, Batista comes huffing around the corner. He sees that Debra had her weapon out.

ON DEBRA. Her heart-pounding, she secures her pistol and looks across to the kid as Batista yanks him to his feet.

Joey Nunez has pissed his pants.

30 EXT./INT. CHURCH - DAY 4 30

Rita herds the kids inside. Dexter pauses at the threshold.

HIS POV: a small sad empty church. Rita moves down the aisle. Paul's casket up front, a smiling photograph on top. The crucifix - Christ in his divine and bloody agony.

ON DEXTER. Working it out.

DEXTER (V.O.)

If I believed in God, if I believed in sin... this is the place where I'd be sucked straight to hell...

(beat)

If I believed in hell.

BACK TO SCENE. Cody turns to Dexter, holds out his hand.

CODY

C'mon, Dexter. It's all right.

Dexter steps over the threshold. Waits to see if he'll be struck dead. He isn't. Then he goes up the aisle. Cody takes his hand and guides him to a seat next to Rita and Astor. Rita, eyes wet, smiles and puts her hand on his leg.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER. CODY'S LEGS SWINGING BENEATH THE PEW. ARM UP to find the boy playing with the Russian nesting dolls as a PRIEST who never knew Paul drones on.

DEXTER looks from Cody (on his right) to Rita (on his left). She's weeping softly. Dexter puts his hand on her back. She leans into it and puts her own arm around Astor.

PRIEST

... and now the family will come forward for a moment of silent prayer.

Rita and the kids move up. Dexter respectfully remains behind. He watches as Rita touches the coffin.

RITA

I hope you find your peace, Paul.

ASTOR puts a rose on the coffin. Then, unable to say anything, presses back into her mother.

CODY hands Astor the nesting dolls. He takes Paul's picture down and stares at it. Then, simply --

CODY
... bye, Dad.

Dexter watches, oddly affected. The Priest comes up. Takes Dexter's hands in his.

PRIEST
I'm so sorry for your loss.

DEXTER
Thank you... Father.

The Priest moves away. HOLD ON DEXTER.

VOICE
I'm not sorry.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE BRIAN, seated in the pew beside Dexter.

DEXTER
(unnerved)
You're still here?

BRIAN
I've never left.

DEXTER
Yeah, you did. I killed you.

BRIAN
No, you just took my life.

Dexter nods. Understands.

DEXTER
So, how do I make you go away?

Brian gestures to Rita; crying, comforting the kids.

BRIAN
Why don't you try what these people are doing?

DEXTER
I'm not like them.

Brian shakes his head, softly chuckles.

DEXTER
Okay, now you're just annoying me.

BRIAN
If it helps, I can tell you that it's
not your fault. What you did to me.

DEXTER
I never said it was.

BRIAN
But you feel it.

DEXTER
How do you know?

BRIAN
It's human nature.

DEXTER
I'm not human.

BRIAN
No, you're just fucked-up.

DEXTER
You got me there.

Dexter absorbs all of this. Not sure what to do. Then --

BRIAN
You need to let go.

Dexter's eyes fill.

DEXTER
You think it's that simple?

BRIAN
Nothing's simple. But it's what you
need to do.

A beat as Dexter struggles with this. Then --

BRIAN
(gently)
Dexter, you don't need me anymore.

DEXTER
(realizing)
... goodbye...

As the brothers stare at each other, BRIAN DISSOLVES AWAY.
Dexter looks to the coffin. Rita steps into FRAME. Moved
by his seeming empathy, she smiles, appreciative. Cody
clanders onto Dexter's lap.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Rita was right: it's about letting go. Moving on. And now I'm free to move on to Little Chino. No distractions. No mistakes.

The elevator stops.

DEXTER (V.O.)

After him, I'll be totally prepared to deal with an even bigger challenge --

The doors part and there stands --

DEXTER

Special Agent Lundy.

Lundy smiles and steps into the elevator as Dexter exits.

LUNDY

Somebody's having a good day.

The elevator doors close. Curious, Dexter turns to --

32 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - SAME (DAY 4) 32

It's empty. DEXTER'S POV as he looks around, taking in the eerily deserted squad room. Just before he hits 360, he sees where everyone is: all of the cops and support personnel are at the windows, looking down at something.

DEXTER CROSSES TO THEM. Looks out the windows too.

33 EXT. POLICE STATION - PARKING LOT - SAME (DAY 4) 33

Shackled gang members being perp-walked into the building.

34 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - SAME (DAY 4) 34

Dexter scanning the Gang Members. Turns to Batista.

DEXTER

29th Street Kings?

BATISTA

Yeah, we got 'em.

LaGuerta breaks away, addresses her colleagues.

LAGUERTA

SWAT did a sweep of some Auto Body shop those animals were using as a front.

(MORE)

34 CONTINUED:

34

LAGUERTA (cont'd)

Maybe we didn't get them on murder,
but we busted their asses on drugs,
weapons and money laundering.

PASCAL

Half of them are three-strikers.
They're going away forever.

She puts her hand on Debra's shoulder.

PASCAL

Thanks to Officer Morgan here.

Dexter looks to Debra as the cops congratulate her. She's
somewhere between humbled and troubled. Batista comes up.
A beat as he figures out how to tell Dexter --

BATISTA

Something you should know... Deb
pulled a gun on an unarmed boy to
get him to give up the gang.

Dexter watches as Debra, clearly upset, slips out of the
station. He looks to Batista.

DEXTER

Thanks, Angel. I'll talk to her.

BATISTA

I'll give her one thing though: she's
in motherfucking good shape.

SGT. DOAKES

Here comes another one.

They look out as a SWAT van disgorges another string of gang
prisoners. Dexter watches intently. In the far b.g. Lundy
gets into his car, looks up to our window and drives off.

DEXTER

We get Little Chino too?

BATISTA

Cocksucker wasn't there.

Dexter does his best to restrain his pleasure.

DEXTER

That's... too bad.

The group breaks up. Dexter heads for his lab, Pascal for
her office. A Runner hands LaGuerta an Inter-Departmental
envelope. She opens it, reads the contents and goes into --

35 INT. POLICE STATION - PASCAL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS (DAY 4) 35

LAGUERTA

'Scuse me, Esmee? Opened this by mistake. It said 'Lieutenant'...

PASCAL

No worries, Maria. Today's all about the win. Let's enjoy it.

But LaGuerta doesn't go. Pascal looks up.

LAGUERTA

You stop me when you think I'm speaking out of turn... or above my station... but we really don't use department resources for personal matters around here.

PASCAL

What are you talking about?

LaGuerta hands her the envelope.

LAGUERTA

Let's, for argument's sake, say these phone records belong to your fiancé; it could open a shit-ugly can of worms you might not be able to close.

PASCAL

Only if someone mentions it.

She holds LaGuerta's gaze. LaGuerta offers a slight smile.

LAGUERTA

Then, this is me not mentioning it.

She starts to go. Pascal stops her with --

PASCAL

Maria... I'm new at this. New at not trusting the man I thought I loved.

(beat)

I just want to say... I appreciate your support.

A silent moment of understanding passes between them.

36 INT. POLICE STATION - DEXTER'S LAB - DAY 4 36

Dexter on the phone while he works on his computer. We see what looks like a nautical chart on the monitor, a red wavy swath snaking through a field of blue.

DEXTER

Deb, it's me. Again. You're probably at the gym. Again.

He taps the keyboard. Photos of Little Chino come up.

DEXTER

I've got some unfinished business outside the office; so I'll be a little late. We'll catch up later.

He rings off, pushes away from his desk and rises.

37 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - SAME (DAY 4) 37

Doakes at his desk. Batista comes up.

BATISTA

Maria told me about the task force. They say when you don't get what you want, it's the biggest sign the universe is giving you a gift.

Doakes looks up at him, ready to rip his head off.

BATISTA

After I been through what I been through, way I see life? For every door that closes, another one opens.

The door to Dexter's lab opens. He sees Doakes staring at him. Dexter smiles and shrugs that shrug of his.

38 INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - NIGHT 4 38

THE TOP FLOOR. Joey Nunez sprays gang symbols on the bare walls. A ratty mattress, fast-food bags and a boombox tell us this is where the kid lives.

DOWN BELOW. The Chrysler 300C crunches into FRAME. Little Chino emerges, as big as a silo. He reaches into his car for his machete and heads for the Freight Elevator.

39 INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - FREIGHT ELEVATOR - SAME 39

Little Chino enters, pulls the iron grating closed and presses '10'. The car ascends.

39 CONTINUED:

39

Suddenly, it shudders to a stop at the second floor. Little Chino impatiently pokes at the control panel. Nothing.

Dexter appears. He quickly secures the iron grate with a pair of handcuffs, trapping Chino. Brandishing the TRANQ STICK, he jams the business end into Chino's neck. The big man roars and grabs the stick. Enraged, he pulls on the stick. Dexter is yanked against the cage, the Tranq Stick all that separates him from this huge wounded animal...

THE TOP FLOOR. The elevator arrives. Joey turns, startled. But it's empty.

40 INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - LOADING DOCK - SAME

40

Dexter wheels the unconscious Little Chino on a four-wheeled construction dolly.

DEXTER (V.O.)

It was simple really. All I had to do was put myself into the mind of a killer. Hardly a stretch.

He dumps Little Chino into the Chrysler's trunk.

DEXTER (V.O.)

It was only a matter of time before Little Chino went after Joey Nunez.

He jumps down, climbs into the Chrysler and starts it. The car pulls away from CAMERA, the rear-end visibly sagging.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I'm gonna need a bigger boat.

ON DEXTER IN HIS KILL-GARB. We HEAR an hydraulic motor. Little Chino's prostrate body RISES INTO FRAME. We're --

41 INT. AUTO BODY GARAGE - NIGHT 4

41

The massive Little Chino is bound to an auto lift.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Thanks to my sister's exuberant police work, this place became available. I'll have to find a way to thank her.

The lift jolts to a stop. Little Chino opens his eyes, looks around. Photos of Eva Arenas, Rafael Arenas and his other victims are propped behind votive candles. Each victim has a blood-red teardrop weeping from his or her left eye. Little Chino struggles mightily against his restraints. Dexter steps into his field of vision.

DEXTER

Trust me, you are not going anywhere.

LITTLE CHINO

Who the fuck are you?

DEXTER

That kind of talk is only going to bring you closer to your victims.

Little Chino's eyes dart to Eva's photograph.

LITTLE CHINO

You a cop? 'Cause I was cleared on that bitch.

DEXTER

Maybe you didn't do the deed. But her blood is on your hands. A lot of blood is on your hands.

LITTLE CHINO

What do you care about these people?

DEXTER

Actually...

He SLICES Little Chino's stitched-up cheek. A crimson thread of blood appears in the wound.

LITTLE CHINO

Fuck!

DEXTER

... I don't.

LITTLE CHINO

Then why are you doing this to me?

DEXTER

I'm not so much doing this to you; as I'm doing this *for* me.

He prepares the blood slide and puts it on a table. Then he lights another votive. When he clears, we see a photo of Eva's daughter, Marissa. Dexter returns to Little Chino. Killing tools at the ready, he nods to Marissa's picture.

LITTLE CHINO

I never killed no kid.

DEXTER

No, but you killed most of her. Her brother, her... innocence. You leave pain behind wherever you go.

LITTLE CHINO
You kill me, what do you leave behind?

DEXTER
A world without you.

He draws back his knife. Regards his hand. No tremor.

DEXTER
Look at that, steady as a surgeon.

He sucks in a long deep breath. Then confidently presses the knife into Little Chino's chest.

CLOSE ON DEXTER. A long beat. A smile comes to his face. At last. Another beat. And he finally allows himself to exhale. A cleansing rush of air escaping his lungs.

ON LITTLE CHINO'S TATTOOED ARM. Christ on the crucifix, the blood-red teardrops. A beat. Then Little Chino's own blood courses over the tattoo, totally obscuring it from sight.

42 EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT 4 42

Dexter pilots the '*Slice of Life*' across the inky waters.

DEXTER (V.O.)
All in all, a good day: I've said
goodbye to my brother. I've changed
from Heavy Duty to Industrial Strength
for the proper disposal of...

He looks to a stack of plastic bags, lumpy with his secret.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Big parts of Little Chino.

He examines his depth scanner. We recognize the same underwater image we'd seen on his monitor at work - the red wavy swath snaking through the blue field.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Oh, and I found a newer, safer place
to dump my trash.

He stops the boat and lifts the first bag to the gunnel.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Moving at over four miles an hour, the
Gulf Stream is one of the world's most
powerful deepwater currents.

He lets the bag fall into the water. Gets the next one.

DEXTER (V.O.)

This time tomorrow, Little Chino will
be north of Palm Beach.

The next bag is dropped overboard.

DEXTER (V.O.)

After that, it's on to Georgia, South
Carolina, North Carolina; until
eventually... well, let's just say the
North Atlantic's a pretty big place.

He releases the last bag. Watches it go. His cell rings,
breaking the spell. 'Rita'. Dexter answers. INTERCUT.
She's intent, full of purpose.

DEXTER

Hey you.

RITA

I need to see you.

DEXTER

I'm just... dropping someone off. Can
it wait?

RITA

No, it can't.

DEXTER

All right, then.

He rings off, starts the boat and pulls away.

43 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 4

43

Dexter enters. Rita's at the table, sipping coffee. He
goes to kiss her. She gives him her cheek. Dexter sits down.

RITA

There's one more thing I need to do
before I can really move past Paul.

She reaches under the table and comes up with a brown men's
shoe. Size 11. Dexter stares at it, not recognizing it.

DEXTER

A shoe. You need to do something with
a shoe.

RITA

It's Paul's shoe.

DEXTER

Oh. Okay. So what do we do with it?

RITA

Paul kept insisting to me that you knocked him out, dragged him to his motel and shot him up with drugs.

DEXTER

Sounds like one of his stories, huh?

She slides the shoe closer to Dexter.

RITA

He wanted me to look in the yard for his shoe. Finally, I did.

DEXTER

Maybe --

RITA

(calmly)
Let me finish, Dexter.

A long soul-searching beat as she chooses how to go on.

RITA

I didn't have a lot to hope for until I met you. You gave me something to believe in when I didn't even believe in myself. Maybe I was so desperate that I looked the other way.

(beat)

Paul *begged* me to help him and what did I do? I hung up on him.

She pushes her coffee away, done with it now.

RITA

And then he was so upset he got into a prison fight and was beaten to death with a pipe.

DEXTER

That's not your fault.

RITA

Part of it is. Part of me thinks that Paul, with all his flaws, paid the price for my dreams.

(then)

Did you attack him, Dexter? I'd understand if you did, he attacked me.

Dexter looks into her eyes. She's doesn't waver. Finally --

DEXTER

I hit Paul to protect you and the kids. Totally an act of impulse.

RITA

(wow)
Okay, okay.
(then)
Where'd you get the drugs?

DEXTER

Stolen. From the evidence locker.

RITA

Wait, wait, wait -- first you tell me you acted on impulse. Then you tell me you stole the drugs from your own police station. What are you saying: that you *planned* to act on impulse?

DEXTER

It's all kind of jumbled now, but --

RITA

How'd you know how to cook the heroin?
How'd you know what dose to give a big guy like Paul?

Dexter doesn't have an answer.

RITA

Oh my God. How did I miss this?
(beat)
They were *your* drugs. Now it makes sense: that's what you do when you disappear at all hours of the night like Clark fucking Kent.

She leans across the table, urgent.

RITA

If there's anything left between us, you need to answer me one question; and you better tell me the truth... are you a drug addict?

Dexter stares at her, groping for the right words. Then --

DEXTER

Yes. I have an addiction.

Rita sits back hard, taking it all in. This is their moment of truth. Is it the end of them?

Then, to Dexter's surprise, a change comes over her. A calm sense of familiar purpose. She rises and goes to him.

RITA

Oh, Dexter. That's the first step.
Admitting you have a problem.

(she hugs him)

We'll get you into a program. We'll
get you the help you need. And I will
be there for you.

Bewildered, Dexter returns the hug. Rita looks deep into his eyes. DEXTER'S POV: Rita's eyes, searching.

DEXTER (V.O.)

If the eyes are the windows to the
soul, then grief is the door.

44 INT. GYM - NIGHT 4 44

A long PUSH IN on Debra's back as she furiously works the heavy bag.

DEXTER (V.O.)

As long as it's closed, it's...

CAMERA comes around. Tears stream down her face.

DEXTER (V.O.)

... the barrier between knowing and
not knowing.

45 INT. POLICE STATION - DEXTER'S INNER LAB/BULLPEN - NIGHT 4 45

Dexter deletes and shreds everything pertaining to Little Chino and his new Gulf Stream body dumping scheme.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Walk away from it and it stays closed
forever...

A light coming on draws his attention. He spreads the blinds and looks across to see Special Agent Frank Lundy burning the midnight oil in the Briefing Room.

DEXTER (V.O.)

... but open it, walk through it...
and pain becomes truth.

Lundy sits there, staring at the photos of the Bay Harbor Butcher's 'sunken treasure'.

DEXTER switches off his light. Sits in the semi-darkness.

DEXTER (V.O.)
And now I'm faced with the struggle
for my own survival that I always knew
was coming.

He rises, exits his lab and crosses the bullpen. Lundy looks up, nods with a benign smile. Dexter nods back. Then he steps into the elevator, turns and looks into CAMERA.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I've been preparing for this my entire
life.

The doors slide closed.

46 INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 4 46

Dexter slips Little Chino's blood slide into the box; runs his index finger along the other slides.

DEXTER (V.O.)
When all is said and done, Chino,
you're the same size as everyone else.

He closes the box and is about to put it back in the AC unit, when the front door opens. The chain catches.

DEBRA
Hey, Dex. What the fuck?

Dexter jams the slide box home and reassembles the AC unit.

DEXTER
Hang on. I'm coming.

He crosses to unchain the door.

DEXTER
(re: the chain)
Annoying, isn't it?

Debra enters. She's wearing sweaty workout clothes.

DEBRA
Not taking the bait.
(beat)
You're up late.

Dexter nods to his open laptop.

DEXTER
Just surfing. You go to the gym?

Debra looks at her own messy clothes.

DEBRA
Duh.
(beat)
Then I was sort of driving around.

DEXTER
Around what?

DEBRA
Around town.

DEXTER
Because?

Debra goes to the refrigerator, takes out the orange juice. She swigs from the carton, then puts it on top of the mail.

DEBRA
I saw a couple of buildings with 'For Rent' signs. Gonna check 'em out.

She notices Dexter looking at the OJ carton and returns it to the fridge. Then she gestures around the apartment.

DEBRA
Then Chez Dex-ter can return to its original semi-lived-in, museum-quality state.

DEXTER
Deb, you don't need to do this.

DEBRA
Yes I do.

DEXTER
Then you don't need to do this now.

DEBRA
What about the video tours of eligible apartments?

DEXTER
Temporary insanity.

DEBRA
You sure?

DEXTER
No. Get out.

A beat. Then he smiles.

DEBRA
Asshole.

Debra, sweaty and smelly, hugs her brother.

DEXTER (V.O.)
This way I can take care of my sister
the way Harry would have wanted. But,
c'mon...

He tolerates the hug as long as he can, twists out of it.

DEXTER
You really reek.

Debra peels off her grungy sweatshirt and drops it onto
Dexter's laptop. She sniffs her pits.

DEBRA
You're right. I smell like a fucking
sewer.

And she heads toward the bathroom. Dexter looks after her
as she goes in and SLAMS the door. Dexter grins.

DEXTER (V.O.)
For every door that closes...

Debra sticks her head out.

DEBRA
Fuck. Sorry.

She shuts the door, gently this time. Dexter lifts her
sweatshirt off his laptop. MUSIC: A LILTING, HAUNTING THEME.

DEXTER (V.O.)
It was always right there...

47 EXT. DOCK - NEXT MORNING (DAY 5) 47

Dexter back on the 'Slice of Life', tied up to the dock.
Deep in contemplation as he tidies up, he kneels down and
retrieves something we don't see.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... I had to say goodbye in order to
re-connect...

HE UNFURLS HIS FINGERS and there's... the Barbie head.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... with what's really important...
with who I was...

He inserts a lead fishing sinker into the Barbie head.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... with who I have to be.

He drops the Barbie head into the water. Then he leans over
to watch it sink, making sure. All is right in his world.

SUDDENLY A HAND ERUPTS OUT OF THE WATER AND GRABS DEXTER'S
WRIST. A fearsome deep sea predator.

BRIAN'S FACE COMES INTO VIEW JUST BELOW THE SURFACE. He
struggles to pull Dexter into the water.

ON DEXTER. Everything about him as tranquil as the still
waters of Miami Bay. He offers a tolerant smile to Brian.

DEXTER
Rest in peace... I am.

AND HE RIPS HIS HAND OUT OF HIS BROTHER'S GRASP. BRIAN,
rejected for the last time, slips away.

DEXTER LEANS OVER THE RAIL. HIS POV:

THE BARBIE HEAD. Staring back at us as it goes down, down.
Until, slowly, the darkness takes it.

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END