Episode 312
“Do You Take Dexter Morgan?”

Written by
Scott Buck

Directed by
Keith Gordon
Cast
“Do You Take Dexter Morgan?”
312
Final Collated – 10/23/08

DEXTER………………………………………….Michael C. Hall
DEBRA…………………………………………..Jennifer Carpenter
RITA…………………………………………….Julie Benz
LAGUERTA…………………………………Lauren Velez
BATISTA……………………………………David Zayas
MASUKA…………………………………….C.S. Lee
HARRY…………………………………………James Remar

Guest Cast
Quinn
Miguel
Astor
Cody
Anton
Syl
Gianna
Ramon

George King
Francis
Tammy
Karen
Tailor
Sara
Pratt
Sgt. Whitaker
Deputy #1
Uniform #1
Sets
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**INTERIORS:**

- Police Station
- Briefing Room (Day)
- Bullpen (Day/Night)
- Corridor (Day)
- Dexter’s Inner Lab (Day)
- LaGuerta’s Office (Day)
- Masuka’s Lab (Day)
- Records Office (Day)
- Dexter’s Apartment (Day)
- Bedroom (Day)
- Dexter’s Car (Day)
- Rita’s House
  - Living Room (Day)
- Anton’s Apartment (Day)
- Bride’s Room (Day)
- Groom’s Room (Day)
- Jail Interview Room (Day)
- Old Cigar Factory
  - Second Floor (Day)
- Restaurant (Night)
- Tailor Shop (Night)

**EXTERIORS:**

- Dexter’s Apartment
  - Balcony (Day)
- Police Station
  - Taco Truck (Day)
- Beautiful Old Florida Seaside Venue (Day)
- Old Cigar Factory (Day)
- Park (Dawn)
- Ramon’s House (Night)
- School Entrance (Day)
- Sheriff’s Car – Street (Day)
- Tailor Shop (Night)
DEXTER

“Do You Take Dexter Morgan?”

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON MIGUEL PRADO’S handsome face; eyes looking into LENS. Unblinking.

BEGIN LONG CORKSCREW RISE TO REVEAL the ligature marks on his neck. CONTINUE RISE and we realize we’re CRANING UP AND UP and that we’re --

EXT. PARK - DAWN - DAY 1

CAMERA CONTINUES TO CRANE UP and now we see Miguel’s entire body (pants and a tank top) on a spread of beautiful green meadow. It would be almost pastoral, almost serene, if we didn’t know that we’re looking at the body of a dead man.

DEXTER (V.O.)
There are few milestones in life that evoke a stronger response than our final act...

THE CRANE SHOT REACHES ITS APEX.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... death.

TIME LAPSE DISSOLVE as...

A JOGGER stops at Miguel’s body. Leans over to look, then runs off...

A PATROL CAR arrives. Then several others...

DEXTER (V.O.)
What was once moving, speaking, killing, and threatening... becomes nothing but an empty vessel...

UNIFORMS spool out yellow perimeter tape. PLAIN WRAP POLICE CARS pull up. A FIRE ENGINE...

TIME LAPSE CONTINUES as our Homicide Squad appears. BATISTA, QUINN, DEBRA. MASUKA gloves up and squats next to Miguel’s body. He’s joined by the forensics tech KAREN. They’re all disturbed, upset.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Which is not so different from how I’ve always felt.

FIND DEXTER, snapping photos. Utterly devoid of emotion.
NEWS VANS arrive. Their satellites telescoping upward.

A CORONER’S VAN pulls up some distance away.

END TIME LAPSE AND MOVE IN FOR COVERAGE.

MASUKA
Several small patches of skin removed from the shoulder area...

KAREN
Ligature marks on the neck.

DEXTER (V.O.)
We all react in different ways to death.

Dexter looks off and notes RAMON sitting on the hood of his car, looking lost and desolate. He locks eyes with Dexter, giving him a long, hard stare.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Some choose anger.

Dexter looks away, busies himself with taking photos.

ON DEBRA AND QUINN

DEBRA
Why the fuck would the Skinner kill Miguel Prado?

QUINN
Miguel was after Freebo. George King had to figure he knew something.

Dexter turns to see LAGUERTA step out of her car and approach Miguel. She gets halfway there and freezes. Then she makes the sign of the cross.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Others cling to ritual.

LaGuerta finds the strength to join her team.

Dexter leans in to take a photo. Batista sidles up to him, speaks in a hushed tone.

BATISTA
Dex, I know he was your friend. If you want to take a pass on this --

DEXTER
(somber)
It’s okay. I got it.
DEXTER (V.O.)
Me: I’ll play the grieving friend who
buries himself in his work.

Masuka motions to the EMTs that he’s done. They slide
Miguel’s body onto a stretcher and gently lift him up.

Batista, and all the nearby Unis respectfully remove their
hats. Others put their hands over their hearts.

Batista nods toward several of the Unis, and an impromptu
honor line forms, stretching all the way back to the
Coroner’s van. All work stops, everyone is silent.

The EMTs carry Miguel’s body down the line. It’s a somber,
ceremonial procession. Dexter starts for the Coroner’s van.

DEXTER (V.O.)
You can tell a lot about a person by
the friends he keeps.

Dexter meets Miguel’s body at the van, and solemnly looks
down at it.

DEXTER (V.O.)
This is my best friend... Goodbye,
Miguel.

Dexter starts to reach for Miguel, to close his eyes, but a
hand suddenly grabs his forearm in a vise-like grip. It’s
Ramon, glaring at him with pure hatred.

RAMON
Don’t you fucking touch my brother.

DEXTER
Let go of my arm... Now.

Ramon shoulders Dexter around to the side of the van, out of
view of the others. He gets right in Dexter’s face --

RAMON
I’m going to find out why this
happened.

Dexter meets his accusing glare.

DEXTER
We all want the same thing, Ramon.

Ramon gives him a contemptuous glare, turns and storms away.
Off Dexter, this isn’t over.
INT. RITA’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER - DAY 2

START CLOSE on the floral, cheery invitation to Rita and Dexter’s wedding, lying on the counter. Then a FUNERAL CARD is set next to it, which reads “Miguel Luis Prado.”

PULL BACK TO INCLUDE RITA who just laid it down. And Dexter who pulls off his suit jacket. They’re both in black, having just arrived home from a funeral.

DEXTER
Well, that was awkward. I’ve never been asked to leave a funeral before.

RITA
Ramon didn’t ask; he pushed you out the door.

DEXTER
He was drunk.

RITA
Yeah, I could smell the fumes. He’s just so angry.

DEXTER
He’s lost two brothers. Doesn’t know who to blame.

RITA
Well, certainly not you.

DEXTER (V.O.)
No, certainly not me.

Rita turns to Dexter.

RITA
How are you handling all this?

DEXTER
You know, a lot of different... emotions.

Rita gives him a comforting squeeze.

RITA
Even if Miguel wasn’t exactly the man you thought he was, you still lost a friend. You don’t have to be so strong.

DEXTER
Can’t help it.
RITA
Poor Syl. She’s got a lot to deal with.

DEXTER
I can only imagine.

RITA
She insists we go ahead with the wedding. Still wants to come to the rehearsal dinner tomorrow.

DEXTER
Life goes on.

She smiles, moves into the kitchen as Dexter notices a small stack of mail, on top of which is an envelope.

INSERT - ENVELOPE

It’s addressed to “Dexter Morgan and Rita Bennet.” The return address reads, “Gail Brandon, 321 Elmview Lane, Ashley, Michigan, 48806.”

DEXTER
From your mother?

RITA
She can’t make it down. She’s teaching again and can’t miss class. My loving mother.

Dexter opens the envelope, pulls out the card.

DEXTER
(not really)
Too bad.

Dexter reads the card.

DEXTER
“Let’s hope the third one’s the charm.” What’s that mean?

Rita hesitates, then tries to cover.

RITA
Oh.

She indicates her stomach.

RITA
The third kid. The third one will be the charm.
DEXTER
Astor and Cody are charms, too.

RITA
Like I said: my loving mother.

Rita turns her back to Dexter, pretending to look for something in the refrigerator.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Did Rita just lie to me?

Rita returns to him, changing the subject.

RITA
Have you written your vows yet?

DEXTER
Not completely. What should I say?

RITA
You can talk about togetherness.

DEXTER
(falters)
Honesty. Right.
(off her look)
I’m going to go home and keep working on them.

He gives Rita a kiss. She hands him Miguel’s funeral card.

RITA
You should have this.

Dexter takes the card. Looks at Miguel’s picture.

DEXTER
Yeah. He gave me so much.

A3 INT. DEXTER’S CAR – DRIVING – DAY 2

Dexter composes vows in his head.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Darling Rita, once, you were a dream and a prayer. Now our future is as bright as the sun glinting off the morning dew, and I vow that I will --

He sighs, frustrated.

DEXTER
It sounds like I’m marrying a unicorn.
His CELL PHONE rings. He checks the caller ID, which only makes him more curious.

EXT. DEXTER’S APARTMENT - BALCONY - DAY 2

Dexter urgently makes his way toward his apartment. His expression pained. Arriving at his door, Dexter sees that it’s been kicked in. FOLLOW him inside --

INT. DEXTER’S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS - DAY 2

Dexter can’t believe what he sees -- his home has been trashed. Furniture overturned. Glass broken. Personal belongings destroyed.

Gloved UNIFORMS filter in and out of rooms. A TECH dusts Dexter’s overturned desk. Another TECH dusts the air conditioner. Before Dexter can protest, a plainclothes detective, PRATT, approaches.

PRATT
You the occupant?

DEXTER
Yes.

PRATT
Property manager called us. Found your door kicked in.

Dexter picks up a smashed picture frame from the floor.

DEXTER
I know. He called me too.

PRATT
We’re going to need you to take a good look around. See what’s missing.

Dexter picks up a picture of himself and Debra.

DEXTER
It’s hard to tell.

PRATT
Your neighbor...
(checks his notes)
... Mrs. Levin said she saw someone hanging around the mailboxes. Latin. Kinda burly. Shaved head. Ring any bells?

ON DEXTER. His jaw tightening.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Ramon Prado.
DEXTER
Nope. No idea.

PRATT
Well, if nothing’s stolen, it looks like someone has it in for you.

Dexter plays the hapless guy who has no enemies.

DEXTER
Honestly, I think whoever did this got the wrong apartment.

PRATT
Sucks for you.

DEXTER
Yeah.

INT. DEXTER’S APARTMENT - LATER - DAY 2

Dexter ushers out the cops.

DEXTER
Thanks. Please call if you find out anything.

Dexter manages to close the damaged door, then immediately goes to the air conditioner unit. He opens it, and is relieved to see his box of blood slides is intact.

HARRY
Well, that’s a relief.

Dexter turns to see HARRY next to him.

HARRY
But wow, what a mess. Miguel warned you that his death wasn’t the end of things.

Dexter lifts his desk, up-righting it.

DEXTER
So what, his plan was to make me call in my housekeeper an extra day a week?

HARRY
Dex, you better take this seriously. I mean, look around.

Harry follows Dexter into --
The mattress has been slashed, overturned. His wedding suit hangs in tatters.

HARRY
Your suit for the wedding. That's personal.

DEXTER
(minimizing)
There's no point to any of this.

Dexter pulls his trunk out of his closet, unlocks it, finds his kill tools undisturbed.

HARRY
Exactly. Ramon Prado's like a gut-shot animal. You know what you do with a wounded animal: you put it out of its misery.

DEXTER
I can't kill him. He doesn't meet the Code.

Dexter finds Ellen Wolf's ring, in an evidence baggie, in his trunk.

HARRY
Can't kill him. Can't ignore him.

Dexter picks up the ring, which is proof of Miguel's involvement in Wolf's murder.

DEXTER
I have no intention of ignoring him.

Off Dexter, heading for his door.

Dexter walks TOWARD CAMERA.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I can use the ring to tie Miguel to Ellen Wolf's murder, threaten to destroy Ramon's sainted brother's reputation forever. That's enough to get Ramon to back down.
We REVEAL that Dexter is outside Ramon’s house. SARA is checking through the mail as he approaches. She’s a wreck.

SARA
Dexter.

Dexter notes how fragile she looks.

DEXTER
Sara. Hi. How are you?

SARA
Honestly, not so great.

DEXTER
Sorry, I know. Is Ramon in?

Sara sadly shakes her head.

SARA
No.

DEXTER
Do you know when --

SARA
He didn’t come home with us from the funeral. Doesn’t answer his cell. He’s been on a bender, Dexter. I have no idea where he is.

DEXTER
Oh.

SARA
I’m worried about him.

DEXTER
Well, me too. That’s why I’m here.

SARA
He’s the only one left. It’s too much.

Dexter nods.

DEXTER
If you hear from him, will you let me know?

He starts to turn away.

SARA
And if you see him first?

Dexter turns back.
SARA
Tell him his family’s waiting for him.

Off Dexter, realizing this is more of a human issue than he’d like it to be.

INT. POLICE STATION - RECORDS OFFICE - MORNING - DAY 3  
Debra, sipping coffee, her bag over her shoulder, approaches the counter, as FRANCIS sorts through some file boxes.

DEBRA
Yo, Francis... any progress on my dad’s C.I. files?

FRANCIS
He knew a lot of folks. I’ll give him that.

DEBRA
Anyone of interest?

FRANCIS

DEBRA
How many are female?

FRANCIS
Haven’t culled through everything yet. Sure you want me to? Some things are better left in the box.

DEBRA
I just... want to put a face on her.

FRANCIS
Knowing all the details isn’t going to change the fact he was messing around on the sly.

DEBRA
(resolute)
I know that.

FRANCIS
I’ll send ‘em up as soon as I can.

DEBRA
Thanks, Francis.

Debra heads out.
CLOSE on a printer as it spits out an article. We see Ramon proudly standing with his old sheriff’s partner next to a table piled with a bounty of guns and drugs. Better days.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Ramon’s blood family doesn’t know where he is.

Dexter pulls the article out of the printer, reads the name of Ramon’s former partner: JESSIE WHITAKER.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Maybe his blue family does.

He hits the speakerphone button and dials.

SHERIFF’S DEPT. OPERATOR (O.S.)
Miami-Dade Sheriff’s Department.

DEXTER
Can you put me through to Sergeant Jessie Whitaker?

SHERIFF’S DEPT. OPERATOR (O.S.)
One moment please.

We hear tinny MUZAK coming over the phone. Dexter waits a beat, then reaches into his pocket and pulls out the envelope that Gail’s card was in.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Speaking of partners...

As he navigates to another WEB SITE -- Michigan Department of Records -- the MUZAK stops. The operator pops back on.

SHERIFF’S DEPT. OPERATOR (O.S.)
Sergeant Whitaker's in the field. Would you like to leave a message?

DEXTER
This is sort of important. I’m calling from Miami Metro Homicide. Is there any way to track him down?

The Operator SIGHS, the Muzak comes back up and Dexter turns his attention back to the web page.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Before she left Michigan, Rita Bennet would have been Rita...
(checks label)
... Brandon.
Several options pop up: Dexter clicks on ‘MARRIAGE LICENSES.’

The page loads. It reads RITA ANN BRANDON in the “wife” section, but in the “husband” section it reads JOHN ALAN ACKERMAN.

DEXTER

Ackerman?

Dexter absorbs this information.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Paul Bennet wasn’t her first husband. She was married before him. At sixteen.

Dexter navigates to DIVORCES.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Ending in divorce six months later. An impetuous teen marriage. Which makes me her third husband.

(beat)
The charm....

While Dexter considers this, he sees Debra hurrying across the Bullpen towards the Briefing Room.

As the hold Muzak continues...

INT. POLICE STATION - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY 3

Debra slides into the back of the bustling room. Also present are Batista, Quinn, RAMOS, SODERQUIST, Masuka and several Unis.

BATISTA
-- the brass has given us a blank check as far as overtime’s concerned until this man --

CLOSE ON A PROJECTED DRIVER’S LICENSE PHOTO OF GEORGE KING

BATISTA (O.S.)

QUINN
Nicaraguan embassy finally came through?

BATISTA
All it took was them extorting a decommissioned patrol car out of us...

(MORE)
Plus shipping. Turns out Orozco was a captain in the Resistencia Nicaragüense.

He clicks the remote and we see an enlarged photo of King in a military uniform, dating from fifteen years earlier.

BATISTA
The Contras. He headed an interrogation unit.

DEBRA
So he tortured people for a living.

Batista clicks to the next image, and a coroner’s photo of Miguel Prado’s face appears. There’s a quiet beat as they all react.

MASUKA
And killed them. My findings, combined with the Coroner’s report, conclude that Miguel Prado was definitely killed by the same man as our other skinning victims.

DEBRA
Now that we have his name, we can get his tax and social security records.

BATISTA
Put together a list of his former employers. Divvy it up. And keep working the streets. Make sure his photo is everywhere.

(then)
This was already a big case. With Miguel Prado’s murder, it’s officially huge.

Off Debra’s resolve...

Dexter is still on hold when suddenly the Muzak stops.

SGT. WHITAKER (O.S.)
This is Whitaker.

Dexter picks up the phone as we --

INTERCUT WITH:

SGT. WHITAKER stands outside his car, talking on his cell.
DEXTER

Hey Sergeant. My name is Dexter Morgan. I’m trying to track down your old partner, Ramon Prado.

SGT. WHITAKER

Why?

DEXTER

I’m a family friend. Sara told me he’s been missing since his brother’s funeral. With his problem and all --

SGT. WHITAKER

Gotcha. Actually haven’t seen him since he left. But I know a few places he used to hang out at; basically any bar within a ten mile radius. I can give you a few of his favorites --

DEXTER

I’m sure Sara would appreciate it.

Dexter grabs a pencil and starts to jot down Whitaker's information as he sees cops exiting the Briefing Room.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I’d love to help them with George King, but I’ve got a more pressing situation to deal with. Miguel’s wounded messenger. I’ll have to find time to hit a few bars this afternoon.

INT. POLICE STATION - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY 3

Batista calls out to Debra before she leaves the room.

BATISTA

Morgan. A minute?

DEBRA

Sure, Sarge.

He pulls her aside as the rest of the room empties.

BATISTA

So it took a couple months, and a lot of wrangling, but my budget request finally came through. Homicide’s going to have a little extra money.

DEBRA

That’s great. We should get a Crime-sight Imager. Have you seen them? The pictures are amazing --
BATISTA
Really? That’s what you’d spend it on? I was thinking we’d spend it by adding another detective to the squad.

DEBRA
Oh.

BATISTA
Maybe someone who saved the life of a C.I., who ID’d our Skinner --

She sees Batista’s smile, realizes he’s talking about her.

DEBRA
Oh!

Then as the realization hits home that her long held dream is about to come true.

DEBRA
I... don’t know what to say... I mean... Wow... Thanks...?

BATISTA
I’ve made my recommendation to Lieutenant LaGuerta. She’s just got to sign the paperwork.

Debra beams.

BATISTA
We could use a little joy around here.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 3

Quinn is at his desk, making notes, as Masuka leans in.

MASUKA
So last night I finally got to see a little of Tammy’s anger management problem.

QUINN
Putting together a list here, Vince.

MASUKA
We’re at this bar and some guy hits on her even though I’m sitting right there. She practically tore him a new asshole. And afterwards, the sex? Hot. Volcano hot.

Quinn just looks at him.
You don’t even know how jealous you are.

Debra moves past, headed toward Dexter’s lab.

Dexter is gathering his things, as Debra enters.

DEBRA
I got it! I got it!

DEXTER
I’m guessing “it” is something good?

DEBRA
My detective shield.

DEXTER
Oh, big news.

DEBRA
Big news? It’s fucking gigantic news! Soon as LaGuerta signs the papers, I’m gold. Well, silver.

DEXTER
We should celebrate.

DEBRA
Yeah, c’mon.

DEXTER
Um... I meant later. I have to get the kids, go to the tailor --

DEBRA
Yeah, yeah.

Dexter sees that Debra’s looking for something more.

DEXTER
You know Dad would be proud.
(off her look)
That still means something, no matter how flawed he was.

DEBRA
Yeah. Look at us. You’re getting married, I’m making detective. The Morgans are gonna be okay.

She gives him a squeeze.
DEBRA
I’ll see you at the rehearsal dinner.

Debra exits. Dexter follows.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS - DAY 3

Dexter is intercepted by LaGuerta.

LAGUERTA
Dexter, I need a word.

Dexter stifles his frustration, heads for --

INT. POLICE STATION - LAGUERTA’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - DAY 3

Dexter enters. LaGuerta closes the door.

LAGUERTA
The City Council has voted to name the freeway interchange near my house after Miguel Prado. I drive that way every single day.

DEXTER
He was a hero... to some.

LAGUERTA
He was a cold-blooded killer. He murdered my friend. And now he’s got an interchange.

A quiet beat.

LAGUERTA
I’m sorry. You’re the only other person who knows the truth.

(then)
Maybe it’s time to let others in on the secret.

DEXTER
(careful)
There’s nothing to link Miguel to Ellen Wolf’s murder except evidence that was obtained illegally, therefore inadmissible.

LAGUERTA
I’ll find something, tear his life apart if I have to.

DEXTER
He doesn’t have a life anymore. It would be his family you’d have to tear apart. The community.

(MORE)
The Cuban community. And you still might not be able to prove anything.

She hears the truth, but can’t accept it.

LAGUERTA
So I just keep it a secret.

Dexter just looks at LaGuerta as she stews.

LAGUERTA
I hate secrets.

DEXTER
We all have them.

LaGuerta gives Dexter a look. What could he possibly have to hide.

LAGUERTA
Then tell me, Dexter, how am I supposed to live with this?

DEXTER
You just... do.

LaGuerta considers his advice.

DEXTER
I gotta go pick up the kids...

LaGuerta nods, and Dexter exits.

EXT. POLICE STATION - TACO TRUCK - DAY 3

As Debra places her order, we SEE Dexter hurry past behind her, headed to his car.

DEBRA
I’ll have an everything burrito with a... side of...

Her voice trails off as she SEES -- ANTON heading toward his car. She moves toward him --

DEBRA
Anton?

He turns to see her approaching; meets her half way. There’s an awkward tension between them.

DEBRA
Hey.

ANTON
Hi.
DEBRA
You’re... here.

ANTON
Just picking up my stuff from Evidence. Watch, wallet, chapstick.

DEBRA
I coulda brought them to you.

ANTON
I got it. So how you doing?

DEBRA
(misses him)
I’m... alright.

ANTON

(then)
But hey, looks like I’m going to get my detective shield.

He smiles. Genuinely happy for her.

ANTON
Congratulations. That’s great.

He reaches to pat her shoulder, she thinks he’s going for a hug, moves to receive it but realizes that wasn’t his intention, and so sticks her hand out. He looks at it. Shakes it. They hold the shake a moment before releasing each other’s hands. A beat.

DEBRA

ANTON
You want to grab a coffee? -- I should go --

DEBRA

No, right. I’ll... see you.

They share awkward smiles, then he continues on to his car. Off Debra, longing in her eyes as she watches him go...

EXT. SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY 3

PARENTS pick up their CHILDREN. Dexter holds open the door to his hybrid as ASTOR and CODY climb in.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I stopped at four bars and got nothing but a new appreciation for how many alcoholics there are in Miami.

Dexter gets in, and as he drives away... a SEDAN pulls out behind them...

INT. POLICE STATION - CORRIDOR - DAY 3

Debra steps out of the elevator. Batista comes up.
BATISTA
Morgan.

DEBRA
What’s up?

BATISTA
Just found out the A.D.A.’s Office requested the logs from Anton Briggs’ surveillance detail. Didn’t know why, till I read them. You slept with our key witness?

Debra suddenly feels cornered.

DEBRA
The A.D.A.’s looking into it?

BATISTA
Miguel Prado was. Don’t know the status now, but it’s a conflict and you should have given me a heads-up. Especially before I sent LaGuerta my recommendation for your shield.

Debra’s face drops.

DEBRA
And now you’re spiking it.

BATISTA
LaGuerta has the final say. But she deserves full disclosure --

DEBRA
Disclosure, Sarge? Really? Did you disclose you met Gianna ‘cause you were out trolling for a hooker?

Batista’s gut-punched. Making Debra quickly regret her knee-jerk reaction.

BATISTA
Where’d you hear that?

DEBRA
I... know someone in Vice. But no one else knows... I think, and it’s not really that big a - fuck, I’m sorry.

But Batista’s in his own thoughts now. Making a decision.

BATISTA
It’s just my chickens coming home to roost.
Batista heads toward LaGuerta’s office.

LaGuerta looks over the Ellen Wolf file in front of her. She’s torn. Batista walks in, a man on a mission.

   BATISTA
   I met Detective Gianna while I was seeking comfort from prostitutes.

   LAGUERTA
   ... Excuse me?

   BATISTA
   I propositioned her, she revealed she was police and she had mercy on me. Let me off with a warning.

   LAGUERTA
   That was... pretty damn stupid, Angel.

   BATISTA
   It was a dark time for me.
   (then)
   I’d completely understand if you wanted to pursue a case against me.

LaGuerta looks down at her Ellen Wolf folder.

   LAGUERTA
   As cases go, laying you out for thinking with your dick is pretty low on my list of priorities.

   BATISTA
   Actually, I was looking for simple human connection -- no, right, you’re right.

   LAGUERTA
   We all have secrets we'd prefer not to share. Skeletons. Feel free to keep yours in the closet. Deep in the closet, Angel.

   BATISTA
   Thanks, Maria.

LaGuerta turns her focus back to the Ellen Wolf file. But Batista’s not leaving.
BATISTA
There’s something else you should hear from me, instead of the grapevine.

LAGUERTA
Jesus, Angel, how dark a time was it?

BATISTA
It’s regarding my recommendation of Debra Morgan for detective.

Off LaGuerta...

14 INT. DEXTER’S CAR - DRIVING - DAY 3
Dexter drives Astor and Cody home.

ASTOR
So, when you and Mom get married, what are we supposed to call you?

DEXTER
Well, I think Mr. Handsome would be a good name.

Cody and Astor laugh. Dexter then notices --

DEXTER’S POV - REAR VIEW MIRROR
A SEDAN following him -- it passes another car to pull in behind him.

DEXTER
Uhm, you can call me whatever you’d like.

Dexter speeds up just a little bit, makes a turn.

CODY
I think I’ll call you Dexter.

Dexter notes the sedan has made the turn as well. He tries to see who’s behind the wheel, but with the sun glinting off the windshield, he can’t get a good look at the driver.

DEXTER
That would be great.

DEXTER (V.O.)
(re: sedan)
Is that you, Ramon? Following me with kids in my car? Now you’re just pissing me off.
Dexter notes a GREEN LIGHT ahead. He slows, timing his speed accordingly... then he guns it and purposely runs a yellow light --

DEXTER (V.O.)
Stop or get a ticket, asshole --

The SEDAN follows, running a red light --

First the TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT CAMERAS FLASH twice --

Then BAM! Another car goes through the intersection and hits the sedan’s bumper and tire, immobilizing the sedan.

Cody and Astor spin backward at the sound --

CODY
Did you see that, Dexter?

DEXTER
That’s what happens when drivers do stupid things.

ASTOR
Should we go help?

DEXTER
Oh, maybe, just to make sure everyone’s okay.

Dexter makes a U-Turn in the next intersection.

DEXTER’S POV - As they approach, we see the door of the stricken car is open, the driver long gone.

DEXTER
Looks like he’s okay enough to walk away.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... Until I get a hold of him.

A15   INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT 3

(FORMERLY SCENE A25)

A small gathering of friends for cocktails before the rehearsal dinner. As hors d’oeuvres are passed around the room find Dexter, Rita, Masuka, TAMMY, SYL, and a couple of Rita’s FRIENDS from her old job.

RITA
It’s going to be a nice dinner, Dexter. Thanks for doing this.
DEXTER
Just doing what grooms are s’posed to do.

RITA
How’re you coming with your vows?

DEXTER
Still working on ‘em.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I’m going to lob this in nice and easy.

DEXTER
What kind of vows did you do the first time around?

RITA
(hesitant beat)
The first time? Paul and I just repeated what the pastor said.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Liar, liar, pants on fire.

Syl approaches Dexter and Rita from the dining room, her mood understandably subdued.

SYL
The maître’d says they’ll start serving in fifteen minutes.

RITA
Thanks, Syl. How’re you holding up?

SYL
Just putting one foot in front of the other. This is a happy distraction.

Just then, Ramon lurches into the restaurant. Everyone sees him and tenses. This can’t be good.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Why is it I can never find him, but he always finds me?

Ramon goes to Syl.

RAMON
Jesus, the day after you bury your husband and you’re out partying.

SYL
Ramon, you’re drunk.
Dexter tries to move Ramon out the door.

DEXTER
Why don’t we go outside and talk about this?

Ramon pulls a gun from beneath his shirt. Everyone moves for cover.

RAMON
Fuck you. You don’t tell me what to do.

Dexter stays close to Ramon, speaking in a quiet tone.

DEXTER
Look, these people have nothing to do with this. This is between you and me.

RAMON
I should put a bullet in your head in front of everybody... So they can see what it’s like to lose someone.

DEXTER
You don’t want to do that, Ramon.

He takes another step toward him. Ramon chambers a round. Rita calls out --

RITA
Dexter...

RAMON
Listen to her, pendejo. Back off.

DEXTER
C’mon, Ramon.

In the background behind Ramon, Dexter spots Batista and Debra arriving late to the party. Dexter choreographs himself so as to keep Ramon’s attention focused on him and away from Debra and Batista, who suddenly read the situation they are about to walk into.

DEXTER
You need to put the gun down before someone gets hurt.

Batista and Debra rush Ramon. They knock him to the ground, and Debra wrests his gun away. Batista handcuffs him.

DEBRA
Somebody call 911!
Dexter looks around the room at the startled guests.

THE SCREEN GOES WHITE. RESOLVE to a window, morning sun pouring in. RESOLVE FURTHER and we see metal bars on the window. We’re –

B15 INT. JAIL INTERVIEW ROOM – MORNING – DAY 4 B15

(FORMERLY SCENE B25)

Dexter, his anger barely in check, paces in front of the window – adrenaline personified.

An O.S. door opens heavily. Dexter turns to SEE –

RAMON, in an orange jumpsuit, shambling in between two Sheriff’s Deputies. His face is bruised from the takedown at the rehearsal dinner. His wrists and ankles are shackled.

The Deputies lead him to a table. He sits and they cuff his wrist-shackles to the arms of the steel chair. DEPUTY #1 looks to Dexter with contempt.

DEPUTY #1
By the book, Mr. Morgan.
(then, to Ramon)
You need us, we’re right outside, Lieutenant.

The Deputies exit, leaving Dexter and Ramon alone. Dexter regards Ramon from the other side of the room. Finally –

DEXTER
How’s it feel, Ramon?

RAMON
How the fuck does what feel?

DEXTER
To wake up sober for the first time in a week.

RAMON
Like shit.

DEXTER
That shit? It’s called reality.

He closes in. The Deputy watches through the door’s window.

DEXTER
And it’s gonna be life as you know it for a long time.
RAMON
(a derisive snort)
I’ll be outta here in a couple of
days.

News to Dexter.

DEXTER
One last coupon from your famous
brother’s reputation?

Ramon shrugs. Dexter whips back the empty chair and sits.

DEXTER
You don’t have to bother with reality.
Must be nice.

Ramon leans forward, his jaw bouncing.

RAMON
Here’s my fucking reality: Miguel
takes me on as a bodyguard and I ask
him why. You know what he says?
(beat)
To protect him from you.

DEXTER
And did he tell you why?

RAMON
No.

Dexter meets Ramon’s eyes. Speaks clearly, evenly. It’s a
subtle and nuanced manipulation.

DEXTER
(shaking his head)
The only one Miguel needed protection
from was himself.
(feigns compassion)
The man was paranoid.

RAMON
That’s --

DEXTER
(cutting him off)
That’s true. And you know it as well
as I do.
(pressing)
Look, I spent a lot of time with your
brother. But it wasn’t 24/7. I don’t
know what he was up to when I wasn’t
around. Neither does Syl... Neither
do you.
Unseen by Ramon, Dexter reaches into his pocket and comes up with the evidence baggie containing Ellen Wolf’s ring.

DEXTER
But what I do know is this: you’ve got a shit-ugly history of kidnapping, brutality, and abuse. Then you trash my apartment. Follow me. Next thing I know you put a gun in my face. In front of my friends. My pregnant fiancee.

(beat)
Why, Ramon? What’s your end-game?

RAMON
To hurt you.

(beat)
Until you came into our lives, everything was fine.

Dexter clenches his fist, tight on Ellen Wolf’s ring.

DEXTER
Fine like what? Fine like Oscar’s drug habit. Fine like Miguel’s...

darkness?

RAMON
What do you know about that?

DEXTER
We were close, Miguel and I. He told me things. Like how he pushed your father down the stairs to protect you and Oscar. And that he enjoyed it.
Ramon shakes his head. Resentment building.

RAMON
It was me who did that to our father. Miguel took it from me and made it his story. Part of his goddamn legend.

Dexter sees he’s touched something deep. He prods Ramon.

DEXTER
Miguel always had to be the star.

RAMON
Sure, he got the looks, the charm. Maybe even the brains. But I got the strength. I spent my whole life trying to hold it all together. And now it’s all gone to shit.

DEXTER
It doesn’t have to.

RAMON
Bullshit!

(beat)
Those cases you’re talking about? The kidnapping, the brutality? That was me sweeping up after Miguel’s fuck-ups. He wasn’t making my problems go away. I was risking my ass to cover his.

His eyes well. Dexter has an opening. Goes for it.

DEXTER
I know the frustration, the disappointment, of wanting to help your brother and not being able to.

Ramon gives a half-nod. Dexter continues.

DEXTER
Thing is, you don’t have to do that anymore. It’s over. Miguel’s gone. Maybe it’s time you start taking care of the family you have left.

He slowly removes his hand from the table and slips Ellen’s ring back into his pocket.

DEXTER
Where’s your son right now?

RAMON
Soccer practice.
DEXTER
And your daughter?

RAMON
Pre-school.
DEXTER
Where do they think their father is?

RAMON
Sara told them something, I dunno.

DEXTER
Someday your kids will be old enough to see the truth for themselves. Like you did with your father. I know. I’ve been there.

He rises, starts for the door.

DEXTER
The sins of the father can go on forever. From kid to kid to kid. Unless someone... you... chooses to stop them.

Ramon sags. Weight of the world. Dexter regards him, then -

DEXTER
(softly)
Been there, too.

He pulls the door open.

DEXTER (V.O.)
You don’t always have to destroy a wounded animal. Sometimes you just remove the thorn.

He exits.

15 OMMITTED

16 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 4

Debra slams down her phone as Quinn enters, carrying a breakfast burrito to his desk.

DEBRA
They all say the same thing: “King was a very polite gardener. I can’t believe he’s the Skinner.”

QUINN
I hate polite killers. So hey, I heard you took down Ramon Prado last night... again.

DEBRA
Yeah, the Prados must really love me.

Masuka enters as her phone RINGS. Debra answers --
DEBRA
(into phone)
Morgan --

-- as Masuka beelines for Quinn's burrito.

MASUKA
You gonna eat this?

QUINN
Not anymore, thanks. Thought you were having breakfast with Tammy.

Masuka sits on his desk, eating as --

MASUKA
She got pissed off at the waiter for his "poor attitude" and threw a pancake at him. They kicked us out.

QUINN
(laughs)
This girl is trouble.

MASUKA
trying to downplay it
Nothing I can't handle.

Debra hangs up, eagerly turns to her computer.

DEBRA
That was Robbery. There was a hit and run fender-bender involving a stolen car. Traffic enforcement camera caught the driver's face -- guess who?

QUINN
El Fierro.

DEBRA
They're sending me the photo now.

Debra's email program PINGS, and she opens the email.

INSERT - COMPUTER IMAGE

It's a photo of George King in the sedan, running the red light.

Debra ZOOMS in on King's face.

DEBRA
Definitely him. Robbery's bringing the car in now.
MASUKA
I’ll grab my kit.

Debra and Quinn start out. Masuka grabs Quinn’s half-eaten portion of the burrito. Quinn catches him --

MASUKA
What, I have low blood sugar.

Off them, mobilizing --

OMITTED

INT. POLICE STATION - MASUKA’S LAB/BULLPEN - DAY 4

CLOSE ON A MONITOR showing a microscopic view of a brown strip of... something.

MASUKA (O.S.)
Those dark lines? Reticulated veins.

REVEAL Masuka as he peers into a microscope. Debra and Quinn hover nearby, watching the monitor.

DEBRA
Holy shit, it is skin.

MASUKA
No. More like... leaf.

QUINN
You gotta be kidding me.

DEBRA
Only evidence we got from the car the Skinner stole is a friggin’ leaf? Great.

MASUKA
Yup. Tobacco leaf.

DEBRA
Tobacco -- wait, fuckin’ A -- wait, there was --

QUINN
A cigar company -- King’s former employer -- what was the name --

Debra and Quinn head toward the Bullpen.

MASUKA
Thank you, Vince. You’re welcome.
Debra grabs a file off her desk, finds what she’s looking for.

DEBRA

QUINN
It’s a longshot, but...

DEBRA
Fuck longshot. Let’s go.

They haul ass out of there.

AA19 INT. TAILOR SHOP – NIGHT 4

(FORMERLY SCENE 25)

In stocking feet and wearing a suit with an open shirt collar, Dexter stares at his reflection in a full-length mirror. WIDEN to reveal a TAILOR next to him.

TAILOR
What do you think?

DEXTER
Thanks for doing this so fast, Bruno.

TAILOR
Happy to help.

He hands Dexter a tie.

TAILOR
Now, you do that and I’ll get your shoes.

As the Tailor crosses away, Dexter lifts his collar, wrapping the tie around his neck. Distracted, Dexter’s first attempt tying his tie is a bust. As he tries again...

HARRY
Remember what I taught you?

In the mirror’s reflection Dexter sees Harry, who’s also in a suit.

DEXTER
Hard to forget. It was Mom’s funeral.

HARRY
The rabbit hops over the log.

Dexter follows along, guided by Harry.
HARRY
Your mother would be so proud. Both of them.

He helps Dexter with the tie.

HARRY
The rabbit crawls under the log.

DEXTER
Then the rabbit runs around the log.

HARRY
One more time, because he's trying to outsmart a fox.

DEXTER
The rabbit dives through his rabbit hole...

Dexter puts the end of the tie through the loop, pulling down while simultaneously tightening the knot.

DEXTER
... safe and sound.

TIGHT on the reflection of father and son.

HARRY
Safe and sound.

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - NIGHT 4

Debra enters with Quinn. They stop at Debra’s desk where Quinn tosses a box of cigars down. Batista approaches.

BATISTA
What’s this?

QUINN
All we got out of searching the cigar factory.

DEBRA
Total waste of time.

BATISTA
No sign of King?

QUINN
Security guards there round the clock. No way King gets in or out.
Batista sees Gianna in the corridor. She gives him a wave.

**BATISTA**
Keep working the list of previous employers.

Batista hurries out to Gianna.

**DEBRA**
Did he seem mad at me?

IN THE CORRIDOR - Batista gives Gianna a kiss.

**GIANNA**
So any blowback since your heart-to-heart with LaGuerta?

**BATISTA**
Nah, I think we’re good.

**GIANNA**
Again, I’m sorry. I told my partner before I officially met you --

**BATISTA**
Hey, you did me a favor. I feel... lighter.

He smiles at her, she at him. Off them --

---

**EXT. TAILOR SHOP - NIGHT 4**

With his suit in a garment bag, Dexter makes his way to his car. He pauses to breathe in the night air.

**DEXTER (V.O.)**
The night before my wedding day. Some men would be excited. Others panicky. Me, I feel... okay.

Opening the back door of his car, Dexter hangs his suit on the coat hook, but when he turns back around – there’s GEORGE KING. BAM! A mag-lite crashes into the side of Dexter’s head. BLACKNESS.

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**INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - MORNING - DAY 5**

ON THE ELEVATOR DOORS as they open, Debra steps out. She enters the Bullpen, empty but for Masuka, working in his lab. (LaGuerta’s blinds are closed).

**DEBRA**
What’re you doing here on a Saturday?
MASUKA
Re-analyzing some of the evidence from
King’s stolen car.
   (off her look)
And avoiding Tammy till the wedding.
She’s starting to scare me.

Debra goes to her desk --

DEBRA
Thought I’d get some work done too
before the... wedding...

-- then she finds A PILE OF EIGHT FILES.

INSERT - THE PILE OF FILES -- A POST-IT is attached to the
top file. It reads: Detective Harry Morgan – C.I.’s.

ON DEBRA - A little afraid of what she might find.

DEBRA
   (to herself)
Francis came through.

She tentatively fans out the files (we don’t see them) --

LAGUERTA (O.S.)
Morgan.

Debra and Masuka jump. SEE LaGuerta leaning out of her
office.

LAGUERTA
Glad you’re here. Wanted to talk to
you.

LaGuerta nods Debra into her office, then goes inside.

MASUKA
   (sotto)
Shit, I didn’t know she was here. Did
I say anything bad about her?

DEBRA
You’re not the one she’s gonna ream.

Debra takes a breath before entering --

INT. POLICE STATION - LAGUERTA’S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS - DAY 5

-- Debra enters stiff, defensive. LaGuerta sits on top of
her desk.

LAGUERTA
Sit.
DEBRA
That’s okay.

LAGUERTA
It seems the A.D.A. noticed your personal and professional lives were colliding.

DEBRA
Alright, listen. Anton wasn’t even an official C.I. when it happened.

LAGUERTA
So... it was a one time thing.

DEBRA
... no.

LAGUERTA
Still going on?

DEBRA
Not sure.

LAGUERTA
You want it to?

Debra’s confused at this line of questioning.

DEBRA
Um... I don’t... I... he could be a key witness in my case.

LAGUERTA
Doesn’t have to be your case.

Debra looks at her, then throws up her hands.

DEBRA
You know what? Go ahead. Take away my case. Take away my shield. I don’t care anymore. Because it wasn’t a wrong decision. I wanted to be with Anton. I still want to be with him. There’s no possible way that us being together is a mistake.

Beat. LaGuerta smiles.

LAGUERTA
Which means you’re not sacrificing your personal life to work. Good for you.

Then LaGuerta reaches to her desk, picks up a detective’s shield and loops it around Debra’s neck.
LAGUERTA
Congratulations, Detective Morgan.

DEBRA
(stunned)
I... what?

LAGUERTA
You’re one of the smartest, hardest working, most annoying pain in the ass cops in my department. You’ve earned that.

DEBRA
What about the A.D.A. and his ethics probe?

LaGuerta walks around to her desk to pull open a drawer, but sees -- ON TOP OF HER DESK - ELLEN WOLF’S CASE FILE.

LAGUERTA
The A.D.A. is dead.

DEBRA
May he rest in peace.

Beat, as LaGuerta closes Ellen’s file and puts it in the drawer, her hand lingering on it, but ultimately deciding it will forever be her secret.

LAGUERTA
Rest in peace.

At the same time, she pulls from the drawer -- A PASTRY BOX. She opens it for Debra. Cupcakes.

LAGUERTA
Try that one. Ganache frosting.

Debra takes the ganache cupcake. Sits. LaGuerta takes a cupcake herself. Sits back in her chair.

LAGUERTA
You hang on to that personal life. Reminds us what’s important.

DEBRA
Cupcakes?

LAGUERTA
Absa-fucking-lutely.

Off their laughter, the two women, a bonding moment...
CLOSE ON DEXTER’S FACE - eyes closed. Then... abruptly, he blinks awake. Beat.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Such a familiar situation...

INCLUDE him lying face-up on a table, his hands dangling off the sides, wrists securely tied with rope. The factory is long-abandoned. It’s filled with the junk that squatters would leave behind: a few old bedrolls, a rickety table with a couple chairs, garbage from various meals. An elevated catwalk extends off into the distance. King’s truck is parked below.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Such an unfamiliar perspective.

He pulls his right hand up, it yanks his left hand down. They’re tied with the same rope that runs under the table.

Finally, he cranes around to SEE George King, across the room, standing by a window, watching Dexter. Just looking at him. No emotion.

DEXTER (V.O.)
George King. So Ramon wasn’t the only one following me. I underestimated Miguel after all.

King continues to stare.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Ah yes. This is the part where my fear is supposed to build. I know his M.O. by heart.

HARRY (O.S.)
But you’re not afraid.

Dexter looks over to find Harry standing next to him, face filled with concern, grief.

DEXTER
No. I’m not.

HARRY
I am. I’ve been scared of it coming to this your whole life. A violent end. I tried to protect you.

DEXTER
And you did. This is my fault for not trusting you. Instead I trust Miguel fucking Prado?
HARRY
You did the best you could.

Harry, emotional, moves closer to Dexter.

HARRY
And I need you to understand... so did I. The very best I could.

DEXTER
Dad, I... forgive you. I hope to be half as good a father to my son...

HARRY
Your son.

Dexter looks at him, sees tears in his eyes.

DEXTER
I've never seen you cry.

HARRY
They're not my tears, Dex. They're yours.

DEXTER
I know. But I don't know why. I've never... felt this.

HARRY
You've never had a son before. You want to see him come into the world...

DEXTER
(realizing)
... Yes. To raise him with Rita. Watch him grow up. Protect him...

HARRY
I know.

DEXTER
I didn't. Till now. When it's all going to be taken away. I want to be there for him. I've never wanted anything so much in my life.

Harry and Dexter share a meaningful look.

Then determination settles into Dexter's face. He looks over at George King who simply watches him with cold, emotionless eyes. Off Dexter, his mind working...
WE HEAR A KNOCK, and Anton crosses to the door. He opens it to REVEAL Debra.

DEBRA
Hi. Thanks for letting me come over.

ANTON
Come in.

Debra steps in, Anton closing the door behind her.

DEBRA
Just wanted to say - you’re completely different from me. Laid back, musician-y, unambitious. You’re like Valium.

ANTON
You’re like Red Bull.

Debra smiles. He always makes her laugh.

DEBRA
And you’re the best thing that’s happened to me.

He takes this in. But is still wary.

ANTON
I’m still a witness in your case.

DEBRA
Not my case anymore. I recused myself.

ANTON
You? Gave up a case? This case?

DEBRA
Don’t worry. My department’s all over it. They’re gonna catch the bastard...

(then)
But I had a choice - either you or George King. Not even close to a tough decision... I choose you. Your turn.

ANTON
I’ve already chosen. Just waiting for your hyperactive little mouse brain to catch up.

She grins.
ANTON
So what now?

DEBRA
I kiss you...
   (she kisses him)
... We rip each other’s clothes off. Then you come to my brother’s wedding with me. As my boyfriend.

ANTON
Excellent plan.

-- but Debra’s cell phone RINGS. She looks at it --

DEBRA
So not part of the plan.

She whips her phone open --

DEBRA
What?

INTERCUT WITH --

31 INT. POLICE STATION - MASUKA’S LAB - DAY 5

MASUKA
Shouldn’t you be more cheery on your brother’s wedding day?

DEBRA
I’m busy, Masuka -- what?!

MASUKA
George King wasn’t at that cigar factory.

DEBRA
Fucking duh. And it’s not my case anymore. (then)
Why?

As Anton kisses her neck.

MASUKA
I re-ran that tobacco we took off King’s stolen car -- turns out it’s at least a dozen years old. I called that cigar factory -- they only moved there three years ago.
DEBRA
Again, not my case --
(then)
Where were they before?

Off Debra -- glancing at Anton. He shrugs, amused, knowing where this is going.

INT./EXT. OLD CIGAR FACTORY - SECOND FLOOR - DAY 5

Dexter pulls at the ropes on his wrists. The knots are too tight to slide his hand through. He looks over at George King again.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I know that look. I’ve had that look.
He likes control, needs it.
(beat)
So I’ll take it away from him.

Then Dexter speaks to George King, matter-of-factly --

DEXTER
I killed Freebo.
(beat)
Sorry ‘bout that.

King blinks. That got his attention. King slowly rises, walks toward Dexter, studying this very different animal lying on his table as --

DEXTER
I tied him up, not unlike this.
Stabbed him in the left carotid artery. Used a sixteen inch carbon steel bone saw to separate his limbs --

GEORGE KING
I don’t believe you --

DEXTER
Divided them equally amongst six biodegradeable trash bags. Which are now long gone, carried north on the Gulf Stream.

King leans on the table -- it rocks, its legs uneven. Dexter takes note.

GEORGE KING
You’re lying.

DEXTER
Usually. But not now. No point.
GEORGE KING
Why would you have done such a thing?

DEXTER
I have excuses, justifications. But really? I just... need to. Like you do. I mean, you have your flimsy excuse -- to find Freebo, get back your money -- but you know he’s dead. You know there’s no money -- so you’re really just a killer -- a monster -- the stuff of nightmares --

GEORGE KING
I could kill you now.

DEXTER
If you can convince yourself I’m lying. That you have to skin me to get information out of me --

He leans on the table again. It rocks again. Dexter notes it again.

GEORGE KING
You are lying -- you know where he is.

DEXTER
Miguel Prado tell you that? (off King’s look)
He wanted me dead. So he used you.
Played on your obsession. Wasn’t that hard. I mean, you are a little single-minded --

King pushes away from the table abruptly.

GEORGE KING
I hope you’re this talkative once I get my tools.

King ascends to the catwalk and goes to his toolbox to pick out a knife. Dexter starts rocking the table from side to side.

DEXTER (V.O.)
A wolf would chew off its own paw. Its survival instinct is that fierce.

He positions his hand along the side of the table, and starts rocking it more dramatically.

DEXTER (V.O.)
So is mine.

King sees what Dexter is about to do, races back --
No...

And with one big thrust, the table TIPS ON ITS SIDE -- BAM! It CRUSHES Dexter’s hand!

He strains in agony, and immediately starts pulling his limp, shattered hand through the knotted loop of rope, freeing it just as --

George King comes at him, knife in hand, lunges --

Dexter dodges, manages to KICK King away, long enough to use his good hand to pull the rest of the rope free.

A fierce fight ensues. King is fast and wiry, Dexter bigger, but injured --

Dexter finally manages to wrap the rope around King’s neck. King begins to strangle, writhing and flailing with the knife --

He NICKS Dexter’s injured arm, but Dexter holds on, fighting the searing pain in his hand --

As Dexter struggles with King, he spots three cars bursting into the far end of the cavernous warehouse. Two cop cars - light bars ablaze - and Debra’s car just behind.

DEXTER
Shit. She finds you stabbed, too many questions --

He redoubles his efforts and overpowers King.

DEXTER
-- Alive, you have too many answers --

Wrapping his good arm around King’s neck and coupling it with his injured arm, Dexter deftly snaps King’s neck. Killing him.

THE CARS SCREAM CLOSER.

THINKING QUICKLY, DEXTER DRAGS KING’S BODY TOWARD THE CATWALK.

INSIDE DEBRA’S car as they hurtle forward. She picks up her walkie --

DEBRA
King’s truck’s at eleven o’clock.

INSIDE ONE OF THE PATROL CARS. The Cops speed through the building.
The Driver starts to reach for his walkie when something falls in front of his car -- GEORGE KING! The car SLAMS INTO him. Crushing him and dragging him twenty feet.

THE CARS ALL SKID to a stop. Debra and the cops leap out, weapons drawn.

QUICK CUTAWAY TO DEXTER lowering himself out of an unseen window. He takes one last look at the mess he’s leaving behind.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Enough people have passed through this place to make it a forensics nightmare.

He disappears out the window. Safe at last.

BACK TO THE CARS. Debra and the cops approach King’s body.

UNIFORM #1
That him?

DEBRA
Yeah.

UNIFORM #1
Jesus, Officer. Scraped his fucking skin off.

DEBRA
Goes around, comes around.

She holsters her gun.

DEBRA
And it’s Detective.

INT. BRIDE’S ROOM - DAY 5

Astor helps Rita, who looks stunning, put together the final details of her wedding ensemble. Syl enters.

SYL
Dexter’s here. Just drove up.

RITA
Finally.

SYL
Nothing to be concerned about, but he kinda had a little accident.

Rita’s immediately concerned.
RITA
What happened?

SYL
He took a tumble down the stairs, 
broke his hand. A little bump on the 
head --

RITA
Oh my God!

SYL
He’s fine, Rita. He can’t wait to get 
mARRIED.

ASTOR
(affectiOnately)
Dexter’s such a dork.

RITA
But he’s our dork, honey.

Just then, Dexter enters, looking disheveled, carrying his 
suit, his hand in a cast. The women are surprised, 
Horrified.

RITA/SYL/ASTOR
Dexter!/What are you doing?/Your room 
is down the hall --

Syl goes to Dexter, tries to push him out of the room. But 
he’s stopped dead in his tracks. Staring at Rita.

DEXTER
Wow. You look... wow.

Astor jumps in front of Rita, trying to hide her.

ASTOR
You can’t see her before the 
Wedding... It’s bad luck!

Dexter holds up his cast arm.

DEXTER
Think I’ve got that covered, sweetie.

RITA
You poor baby. Are you okay?

DEXTER
More embarrassed than anything. 
(then, to Rita) 
Can I talk to you? Alone?
Rita nods to Syl and Astor. It’s okay. Syl puts her arm around Astor, leading her out of the room...

SYL
C’mon, hon. We’ll do your makeup.

Dexter waits until they’re alone. Then --

DEXTER
I am so sorry.

RITA
Dexter, it’s okay...

DEXTER
You’re not... angry?

RITA
Why would I be? It’s not like you broke your hand on purpose...
(off Dexter)
I’m just glad you’re here. Safe.

DEXTER
(she has no idea)
Me too.

RITA
Besides. Something was bound to go wrong. Now that it has... I can relax. Enjoy the day. Can’t get worse than a broken limb, right?

Dexter considers that for a short beat.

DEXTER
Nope, I guess not.

They gaze at each other for a beat.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I should feel bad, hiding the truth. Today, of all days. Then again... Rita’s hiding something from me, too. White lies for a white wedding...

RITA
Now go. Get dressed.

DEXTER
Right. Be ready in a jiffy.
(leans in close)
You really do look beautiful.

She smiles. He heads out of the room --
DEXTER (V.O.)
She wants to hold onto her secret...
(deciding)
And I’m going to respect that. It seems only fair given the secrets I keep from her.

He steals one last look at her --

DEXTER (V.O.)
We all have secrets. In that way, I’m just like everyone else. Sorta.

And he closes the door...

INT. GROOM’S ROOM - DAY 5

Dexter looks in the mirror, trying, unsuccessfully, to tie his tie. A cast on his right hand pokes out from underneath his jacket sleeve.

DEXTER (V.O.)
No one’s watching me. No one’s threatening me. All that’s left is to get married.

Debra rushes in, frantically trying to zip up her dress.

DEBRA
Jesus fuck. I heard about your little fall. You okay?

DEXTER
I’m fine. I heard you nabbed George King.

DEBRA
Yeah. Great big scary Contra boogey man gets surrounded and takes the chickenshit way out. Death by cop.

DEXTER
I’m glad he was the only one who got hurt.

DEBRA
Me, too.
(then)
Me in a dress? I feel like a transvestite.

Debra crosses to him, begins tying his tie for him. They notice their reflection in a nearby mirror, and smile at each other. Debra says to herself by rote...
DEBRA
Rabbit goes under the log, hops over
the log, again, then through his
hole...

DEXTER
... safe and sound.

She tightens the knot. Perfection.

DEXTER
Thanks. I was going to give it
another eight tries before I gave up.

DEBRA
Just remember. Cody has the rings.
And don’t lock your knees when you’re
standing up there or you’ll drop like
a goddamn stone.

(then)
Wait, where are your vows?

Dexter taps his head.

DEXTER
In here.

She takes in her brother. Overcome with emotion, Debra
pulls Dexter into a hug.

DEBRA
I am so happy for you. I just wish
Dad could be here.

Through the open door, Dexter catches a glimpse in the
courtyard. There’s Harry, a proud smile and a wave.

DEXTER
I have a feeling he is.

DEBRA
Okay, enough of this sappy shit.
Let’s get you fucking hitched.

EXT. BEAUTIFUL OLD FLORIDA SEASIDE VENUE – LATE DAY 5

Simple, pretty decor. Nothing overly expensive or ornate,
just... warm, reflecting the bride’s personality. Dexter
and Rita stand at the altar. Debra stands next to her
brother. Astor and Cody next to Rita.

The gathered guests sit on white chairs: Batista and
Ramos. Soderquist. Others from the precinct. Syl. Rita’s
friends. A few kids.
Rita has already placed the ring on his finger and is finishing her vows.

RITA
I honor you. I love you... I marry you.

Dexter’s turn. He takes a ring from Cody and slips it onto Rita’s finger.

DEXTER
I promise...
(a beat, thinking)
... to be... the very best husband and father I can be. Always.

It’s pure truth. And she can see that. She smiles. Tears in her eyes. And they kiss. Deep and sure and true.

DEXTER (V.O.)
A completely, utterly honest vow.

They turn to the assembled, who rise as one and applaud.

ON DEXTER AND RITA. Beaming.

He and Rita step down from the altar and are surrounded by their loved ones.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE RECEPTION. Rita sits as Dexter removes her garter. He SLINGSHOTS it into the adoring crowd.

MASUKA reflexively catches it. He glances at Tammy. Beat. He tosses it to Batista.

Rita FLINGS her bouquet over her shoulder.

DEBRA snags it mid-air. Looks to Anton.

Debra crosses to the microphone.

DEBRA
Hey everyone. I am so fu..., uh so thrilled to introduce for their first dance as husband and wife... Mr. and Mrs. Dexter Morgan!

The band plays ‘Tennessee Waltz’ as Dexter leads Rita onto the dance floor. With his good hand, he takes her hand, gingerly wrapping his broken hand around her waist. They begin to dance. Slowly, magically, floating on the good will of their friends and family.
DEXTER (V.O.)
A new life, a new family...

A SERIES OF DISSOLVES as:

Dexter separates from Rita and takes Debra into his arms. Rita goes to Astor and dances with her.

Debra then moves to Anton and Rita goes to Cody. Dexter bows and asks LaGuerta to dance. Smiling, she joins him. On her way to being whole again.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Not that I can re-boot my life. I’m still... who I am.

Other couples flow onto the dance floor.

Quinn passes out cigars from the box he had at the station.

Tammy argues with a waiter. Masuka tries to calm her.

Dexter hands LaGuerta off to Quinn and finds his new wife. Again putting his injured arm around her waist. She lovingly rests her head on his chest as they dance.

DEXTER (V.O.)
But, today I’m... more, than I’ve ever dreamed. Maybe tomorrow, as well.

He spreads his good hand, the one with the wedding ring, across Rita’s tummy. Rita, moved, kisses him.

The guests form a circle around Dexter and Rita.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Maybe I’m inching toward normal... filling in the blanks, though there are so many left...

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - SAME - DAY 5

PUSH IN on Debra’s desk. FIND THE EIGHT FILES Debra was looking at earlier, partially fanned across her blotter. Each has a photograph stapled to the front. All taken years ago. All women.

CONTINUE PUSH IN to the fourth file from the top. And we SEE a picture of someone we recognize... LAURA MOSER! Stamped across her photo in RED INK is the word “DECEASED.”

DEXTER (V.O.)
But in this moment, I’m content. Maybe even happy.
Dexter and Rita dance.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Who knows? Maybe I can have it all.
Because I have to say, right now...

TIGHT ON DEXTER’S CAST resting on Rita’s back. A tiny drop of blood emerges from the edge of the cast.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... life is good.

Unseen, the blood-drop lingers for a moment, then falls onto the back of Rita’s pristine white dress. Nothing will ever be normal in Dexter’s world.

Dexter turns Rita and there’s a slight smile of satisfaction creasing his face as he looks into CAMERA.

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END