

DEXTER

Episode 102
"Crocodile"

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DEXTER
102
"Crocodile"

1 EXT. LIMBO - DAY

1

THE SCREEN IS WHITE. CAMERA moves; more a *feeling* of movement than anything else.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I dream... I dream I'm floating on the
surface of my own life...

RESOLVE: CAMERA travels over STILL WATER until we find:
DEXTER, floating on his back. Pure leisure.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Watching it unfold. Observing it.
I'm the outsider looking in.

He turns, mildly curious. HIS POV: across flat water, a dock. Two teenage BOYS toss a young GIRL into the water. A fan of ripples widens from where she went in. Finally, she surfaces, screams at her tormentors.

GIRL
Such assholes!

But she's laughing, too. ON DEXTER. Watching the fun. The ripples reach him.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Look at them: they can laugh and play.
It comes so easily.

The boys lift the girl back onto the dock. Laughing, they turn their backs on the girl. She abruptly SHOVES THEM BOTH IN THE WATER: sweet revenge.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Even though I'm not one of them...

The boys come up, sputtering and grinning.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Even though sometimes I can really be
a monster...

ON DEXTER, watching the girl jump in to swim with the boys.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Today I'm just...

He allows himself to slip into the water; and, just before he goes all the way under, his eyes remain above surface level. Like a crocodile watching the world.

DEXTER (V.O.)
(playful)
... a sea monster.

And he sinks from view.

2 OMITTED 2

3 EXT. WATERWAY - EARLY MORNING 3

The '*Slice of Life*' bobs tranquilly at anchor. A beat. Then Dexter ERUPTS from the water and, in one graceful move, pulls himself onto his boat.

He crosses to the cooler, retrieves a gleaming red apple and takes a healthy bite. SLOW PUSH IN on the apple.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Soon enough I'll have to go back to
doing what I do.

THE SCREEN BLOOMS TO RED. Bright, translucent crimson.

DEXTER (V.O.)
So I make a point of enjoying days
like this when I have them.

SLOW PULLBACK and we realize we're looking at one of Dexter's slides. We're --

4 INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - MORNING 4

Dexter holds the blood slide up to the light. Admires it. A KNOCK at his door pulls him from the moment. He returns the slide to the box and puts the box in its hiding place behind the air conditioner.

Starting to cross, he spots the Doll Head on the refrigerator. He quickly tosses it into the freezer, goes to the door and opens. The chain catches. There's DEBRA.

DEXTER
Hey.

DEBRA
(holds up bag)
Bagels, brother. Lemme in.

Dexter unlatches the chain, letting his sister pass. She immediately pulls open the drapes.

DEBRA

Could it be more depressing in here?

Dexter regards her, amused.

DEBRA

Got anything to drink? It's hot as hell out there.

DEXTER

OJ?

DEBRA

... with ice.

Dexter grabs a glass.

DEBRA

So... how're you doing?

Dexter opens the freezer. There are the Doll Parts. He scoops up some ice.

DEXTER

Things are fine. Breakfast, which I already had, was fine.

He closes the freezer, crosses back to Debra and smears a bagel with cream cheese.

DEXTER

But you know me: always hungry.

He takes a messy bite, wipes his lips.

DEXTER

So... what's up, hotshot?

Debra grins, happy for permission to get down to business.

DEBRA

All right, get this: the Lieutenant is looking for that refrigerated truck in every swamp, glade and chop-shop from here to the Keys.

She pours the OJ over her ice.

DEBRA

Way I see it: the whack-job truck driver threw a severed head at your car for Chrissake. It's not as if he's shy.

DEXTER

(leading)

You think he's hiding the truck in plain sight? Wanting it to be found?

DEBRA

I could answer that if LaGuerta didn't have me back with my hookers looking for a...

(hand quotes)

... "wit-ness".

DEXTER

Finding that truck is your golden ticket into Homicide.

DEBRA

Tell me about it.

DEXTER

Look, just because she's got you talking to hookers on *her* time, doesn't mean you can't look for the truck...

DEXTER

... on *your* time.

DEBRA

... on *my* time.

Debra nods to several ties draped over the back of a chair.

DEBRA

What's with these?

DEXTER

I've got court.

She takes a healthy swig of her OJ.

DEBRA

Why is it we never talk brother-sister stuff?

DEXTER

Our dad was a cop. You're a cop. I work for the cops. For us, this *is* brother-sister stuff.

Debra picks up a green tie. Holds it up to Dexter's face.

DEBRA
Brings out your eyes.

Off Dexter, considering the green tie...

5 CLOSE ON DEXTER'S FACE.

5

VOICE (O.S.)
For the record, please state your name
and occupation.

DEXTER
My name is Dexter Morgan and I'm a
Forensics Specialist in Blood Spatter
Analysis for the Miami Metro Police
Department.

We're --

6 INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM 1 - DAY

6

Dexter on the stand; being questioned by a LAWYER.

LAWYER
And how long have you been doing blood
spatter analysis, Mr. Morgan?

DEXTER
Almost twelve years.

LAWYER
You've been involved in quite a few
cases then?

DEXTER
Two thousand one hundred and three.

LAWYER
(a joke try)
Give or take?

DEXTER
(complete deadpan)
No. Two thousand one hundred and
three.

LAWYER
(moving on)
Then it's safe to say: blood is your
life?

Dexter's lips curl into the slightest grin.

DEXTER
... safe to say.

7 INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - LATER

7

Dexter emerges from the courtroom and weaves through the crowded corridor.

DEXTER (V.O.)
The guys at the station hate coming
downtown to do the expert witness
thing. But I love it. It puts me in
touch with...

A Lowlife Prick bumps into him, glares and continues on.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... the common man.

DEXTER'S POV: Dozens and dozens of people -- some legit,
mostly the dregs -- teem through the halls.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I like the way people behave in
courthouses. Like someone turned down
the volume on the humanity soundtrack.
They're more subdued, less impetuous.

HIS POV: a SLOW-MOTION parade of shit-heads crossing from
every direction.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Everyone's on their best behavior;
like they're being watched...

Back to *NORMAL SPEED* as Dexter looks around.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... and they are.

A Bailiff tools by with an A/V Set-up. He passes a Family
(FATHER, MOTHER, and teenage DAUGHTER) and enters a
courtroom. Dexter stops, regards the Family. They're a
clenched-fist of unyielding grief -- the Girl and Mother
holding on to each other, the Father utterly bereft.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Some people would look at this family
and see only tragedy and heartbreak.
But I see so much more than that...

He nods to them; a mask of compassion darkening his face.

DEXTER (V.O.)
... I see opportunity.

The Father separates from his wife and daughter.

FATHER
(a hoarse ruined whisper)
I'll do this.

He crosses past Dexter and enters the courtroom. A beat.
Then, curious, Dexter follows.

8

INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM 2 - DAY

8

THE VIDEO SCREEN. Photo slides of a fresh-faced young man,
ALEXANDER PRYCE (18). The PROSECUTOR steps into the light.

PROSECUTOR
Alexander Pryce finished his homework,
kissed his mom and went for a jog. He
told her he'd be home in time to take
out the trash cans. Just another
night. Until...

He steps aside and the slides now show Alexander's body,
mangled and bloody, lying in a ditch.

ON DEXTER, in the back row of the darkened courtroom.
He's... stirred.

BACK TO SCENE:

PROSECUTOR
... until the defendant not only
struck him with his car -- a heinous
act in itself -- but fled the scene;
leaving Alexander Pryce alone and
dying for hours and *hours* before his
body was found the next morning.
(beat, for effect)
From heinous to unspeakable.

The defendant, MATT CHAMBERS (35), handsome and humble,
looks to the jury and lowers his head.

PROSECUTOR
The People will prove that, not only
did Mr. Chambers strike and kill
Alexander Pryce, but did so...

PHOTOS of a late model sedan, its hood caved, its
windshield cracked.

PROSECUTOR

... while once again under the
influence of alcohol.

He gestures toward Matt Chambers.

PROSECUTOR

Mr. Chambers has a history of problems
with alcohol here in the state of
Florida and the People plan to pursue
that aspect of this case vigorously.

VIDEO COMES UP. Alexander Pryce's birthday. He's opening
presents. A family happy, hopeful and whole. Alexander
holds up a heavy sweater.

ALEXANDER

Thanks guys, but it's like 80 degrees
out.

His Father slips into FRAME.

FATHER

But next year at this time? We're
coming to visit you at Harvard...

He puts his arm around his son.

FATHER

It's everything I've ever wanted for
you, Alexander.

ON THE FATHER IN THE COURTROOM. Unable to bear any more,
he hurries up the aisle. CAMERA follows him as he takes us
past the gallery -- all so deeply moved. In fact, there
isn't a dry eye in the house; until we come to... Dexter.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I see their pain. On some level I
even understand their pain.

(beat)

I just can't *feel* their pain.

He turns to watch the Father leave the courtroom.

9

FLASHBACK:

9

ON A FILET KNIFE shaking off blood and guts. We're--

EXT. MARINA - ON HARRY'S BOAT

Teenage Dexter uses the knife to clean and gut a sizable collection of freshly-caught fish. He tosses the guts overboard and rinses his bloody hands in a bucket of fresh water. Then he looks over to Harry, who's putting away tackle. Harry turns and grins at him.

HARRY

Good day today.

TEENAGE DEXTER

Yeah it was. And let the record show -
- the three biggest were mine.

HARRY

It ain't who caught 'em; it's who eats
'em. And we got a week's worth of
good eating here.

Teenage Dexter grins proudly at Harry.

HARRY

'Course, with your metabolism, we'll
be lucky if it lasts us --

The boat's radio SQUAWKS to life, interrupting him.

DAVEY

(from the radio)

Harry? You there? Yo, Harry.

Concerned crosses Teenage Dexter's face: he knows what this is.

HARRY

(into radio)

Yeah, Davey, I'm here. You ready?

DAVEY

(from the radio)

Waitin' on you, partner.

HARRY

On my way.

(to Teenage Dexter)

Gotta go earn a living.

He pulls his kit-bag from a boat locker, unzips it and drops a few things in.

HARRY

(re: the fish)

You good to get this stuff on ice?

Teenage Dexter notes the pistol and police badge in his father's bag, constant reminders of Harry's dangerous job.

TEENAGE DEXTER
(distracted)
... uh... sure.

Harry starts to go.

TEENAGE DEXTER
Dad...

Harry stops, turns around.

TEENAGE DEXTER
Be careful, okay?

HARRY
I'll be fine.
(a re-assuring smile)
Hey, I'm one of the good guys.

He smiles a big, confident smile at Teenage Dexter and steps onto the dock (passing Dexter's bicycle) and heads to his truck. On Teenage Dexter, watching his father go...

END FLASHBACK.

10 INT. COURTHOUSE - ELEVATOR - DAY 10

Matt Chambers and his Attorney ride the crowded elevator in silence. A beat. Then Chambers wipes the tears from his eyes, turns to his lawyer and, almost imperceptibly... smiles.

RACK TO: Dexter, against the back wall, only his predator eyes visible above the heads of the people in front of him. The doors open and everyone files out. Dexter hangs back, watching Chambers cross the lobby.

11 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - EVENING 11

CODY and ASTOR lie on the floor. Wet strips of papier-mache over their faces, they breathe through drinking straws. RITA sits cross-legged next to them, loving the connection Dexter has with her children.

DEXTER

You guys are doing awesome.

He deftly smooths water over the strips.

DEXTER

Couple more seconds and we will achieve total mask-ness.

Rita wipes trickling water from the children's necks.

ASTOR

Uh, mom, hello? Tickles.

RITA

Oops, sorry.

Dexter gently blows his warm breath over each of the masks. He lifts them off to reveal Cody and Astor's sweet faces. Then he places the masks on a piece of cardboard.

CODY

Stinks.

DEXTER

Only till you wash the gunk off.

ASTOR

Lemme see...

Dexter shows them the masks. Astor's face lights up.

ASTOR

It's... it's beautiful!

DEXTER

Like you.

Astor blushes. Dexter hands them their masks.

DEXTER

Put these under the light in your room
and think about which watercolors you
want to use when they're dry.

CODY

Still stinks though.

The kids go off.

RITA

You have a way, Mr. Morgan.

They sit on the couch.

DEXTER

They're such great kids; I'm just
following their lead.

Rita snuggles in. Dexter tentatively kisses her.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Lately, the thing that surprises me
most about Rita is... how much I like
being with her.

Rita responds to his kiss.

DEXTER (V.O.)

But, she's been trying to move us to
the next level. Physically. Problem
is: every time I've gone to that place
with a woman, it all goes wrong... for
both of us... and then the relationship
is over.

Rita separates; interrupting Dexter's train of thought.

RITA

I've got the early shift at the hotel
tomorrow. Some big convention coming
through.

Dexter takes Rita's hand, feigns sympathy.

DEXTER

I understand. You need the hours.

A beat as two damaged people hide their relief. Then --

RITA

Dex, it's been a long time since we've gone out -- really gone out -- and I want that. So, pick a date.

Dexter kisses her nose.

DEXTER

I pick you.

12 EXT. BENEATH PARALLEL CAUSEWAYS - DAY (SUNRISE) 12

CAMERA at street level. All is still. A beat. Then the tranquility is shattered when a BODY CRASHES into FRAME from somewhere above, slamming hard against the wet pavement.

13 EXT. BENEATH PARALLEL CAUSEWAYS - DAY (LATER THAT MORNING) 13

Detectives, Uniforms and Forensics, Dexter and BATISTA among them, swarm the body. LAGUERTA approaches.

LAGUERTA

Morning, Detective. We got an ID?

BATISTA

First on-scene pulled the wallet.
Still waiting.

Dexter leans over the body. LaGuerta moves in. He turns to her. She tilts her head at him.

LAGUERTA

Hello, Dex.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Our boss, Lieutenant LaGuerta. She worked the Trifecta of being, one: female, two: Cuban, and three: in the right place at the right time when promotions came around.

LaGuerta puts her hand on Dexter's shoulder, a squeeze.

DEXTER (V.O.)

In keeping with her total sense of entitlement, she has this, this *attraction* to me.

(beat)

And I thought *I* was creepy.

LaGuerta looks around, takes it all in.

LAGUERTA

Where'd he come from?

Dexter squats down for a closer look.

DEXTER

Given the skin rupture and secondary spatter distance, had to be a 50-60 foot drop.

He glances up, studies the Causeways overhead.

DEXTER

Eastbound is maybe 40 feet... not high enough for this kind of damage. So, best guess, originating point was the Westbound Causeway.

LaGuerta strides off, barking at her minions as she goes.

LAGUERTA

Get me a team on the Westbound Causeway.

BATISTA

(no she isn't)
She's good.

But Dexter's distracted. He leans over the victim.

DEXTER

There's something in his mouth.
Angel, lemme have your tweezers.

Batista passes them over and, as Dexter moves in even closer, the victim suddenly EXHALES -- spewing out a mist of blood that catches Dexter full in the face.

Dexter, his face covered in blood, turns to Batista. But Batista's already on the move.

BATISTA

Paramedicos, vengan!

As the EMTs rush in, Dexter stoops to retrieve what was in the victim's mouth.

EMT

Just a death rattle. He's gonzo.

Batista hands Dexter a towel, turns to the Paramedics.

BATISTA

Better check out my friend, too. No telling what that guy is carrying.

Dexter wipes his face, holds the tweezers up to the light.

DEXTER

Here's what he's carrying.

It's a three inch chunk of meat.

DEXTER

Call me crazy...

(beat)

... but I think this is human flesh.

14 INT. POLICE STATION - DEXTER'S INNER LAB - DAY 14

TIGHT ON Dexter. A beat. Then he sprays something on his face. He switches off the lights and we go DARK. Then the eerie glow of a *BLACK-LIGHT* comes on and we realize that Dexter has Luminoled his own face. He passes the blue-light wand in front of it. Fascinated, he observes the blood residual from the man in the alley.

15 INT. POLICE STATION - DEXTER'S LAB - DAY 15

Dexter working at his desk. Debra hovering, snooping.

DEXTER

Tried calling you last night.

DEBRA

I hooked up with Sean.

DEXTER

Cable guy Sean?

DEBRA

God no. He smelled like cheese.

DEXTER

So, then mechanic Sean?

DEBRA

Yup. He came over. Two things led to another and next thing I know we're doing the...

Dexter keeps busy, not really focusing on his sister.

DEBRA

You really want to hear this?

DEXTER

Actually... no. But if you guys are getting serious, I'd like to meet him.

Debra takes something from his desk. He takes it back.

DEXTER

How about you and Sean the mechanic join me and Rita the girlfriend for dinner tomorrow night?

In the b.g., Batista works at a nearby desk.

DEBRA

Why, so you can tell me later that he's not good enough for your little sister?

DEXTER

You're the one who was going on about brother-sister stuff this morning.

DEBRA

And that becomes brother-sister double-dating? What exactly goes on in that head of yours?

DEXTER

Come on. It'll be fun.
(beat)
Please.

DEBRA

An official 'please' from my brother? Fine, we'll go; but I'm not promising I'll have any fun.

DOAKES enters from the stairwell; moving past Dexter, Debra and Batista with a scowl.

BATISTA

What crawled up his ass?

DEBRA

He hates lab rats.

Batista turns to Dexter.

BATISTA

Here's the headline: it's you lab rats that make us cops look good.

LaGuerta comes out of her office. Somber.

LAGUERTA

Listen up. We just got an ID on the body from the alley. His name was Ricky Simmons... he was a cop.

A hush falls over the room. Everyone shocked to learn they lost one of their own. Especially Doakes.

16 OMITTED

16

17 EXT. SIMMONS HOUSE - DAY

17

LaGuerta and Doakes pull up in her car. Before they get out:

LAGUERTA

Ask you something?

SGT. DOAKES

... yeah.

LAGUERTA

When we were partners, you came up with every excuse in the book to get out of making a next-of-kin notification...

SGT. DOAKES

I knew Ricky from the Department softball team. He was a good guy, a good cop. Least I can do.

They get out, head up the walk and climb the porch steps. LaGuerta rings the bell. No answer. Again. Nothing. Doakes goes to a window, looks inside. A beat. Then he sees something.

SGT. DOAKES

Motherfuck!

He pushes past LaGuerta and, pulling his weapon, KICKS in the front door.

18

INT. SIMMONS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

18

Doakes and LaGuerta burst in. LaGuerta stops.

LAGUERTA

Jesus mio.

KARA SIMMONS (30) lies in a pool of blood. The walls and floor are a mosaic of blood spatter. Barely alive, Kara stares, weak and terrified, at Doakes and LaGuerta.

SGT. DOAKES

Call it in!

He rushes to Kara and drops to his knees. There's a bullet wound high in her chest. Doakes compresses the wound with the heel of his hand and looks to a shocked LaGuerta.

SGT. DOAKES

CALL IT IN!

LaGuerta grabs her walkie.

LAGUERTA

3H77 to Dispatch. GSW at my 20. Need EMT and police back-up now!

SGT. DOAKES

Check the house.

LaGuerta pulls her weapon and moves down the hall. Doakes whispers softly to Kara.

SGT. DOAKES

Kara, Kara? It's me, James. Help is on the way.

Kara tries to speak, can't. The light in her eyes fading.

SGT. DOAKES

You're okay, Kara...
(not believing it)
... you're okay.

PULL BACK AND UP as Doakes cradles her in his arms. As we CONTINUE TO CRANE UP, Laguerta steps into FRAME and takes in this anguished Pieta.

19

INT. COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM 2 - DAY

19

Matt Chambers on the stand. He addresses the jury.

CHAMBERS

... and yes I've made mistakes with alcohol in the past. I'd never try to hide that. But you heard from my AA sponsor...

He gestures to a kind-faced Elderly Man.

CHAMBERS

I've been sober for over a year now.

His eyes well with tears.

CHAMBERS

Look, I'm not disputing it was my car that hit Mr. Pryce. But I reported it stolen earlier that same night.

ON DEXTER slouched in the back row. Crocodile eyes peering between the heads of the people in front of him. He studies the jury.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Men like Matt Chambers know how to pull on the invisible mask of sympathy -- even empathy -- and otherwise right-thinking people don't stand a chance... a concept not entirely foreign to me.

His pager vibrates. He slips out of the courtroom.

20

INT. SIMMONS HOUSE - LATER

20

Dexter examines the bloody floor where Kara was found.
Batista comes up.

BATISTA

This is fucked-up, man: going after a
cop's family. Who'd do such a thing?

Dexter clicks off a rapid series of PHOTOGRAPHS.

DEXTER

'Swhy we're here.

But Batista is shaken.

BATISTA

It's still fucked-up.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS snaps his cell phone shut, turns to
LaGuerta and Doakes.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

Major Crimes says Ricky Simmons was
under deep cover in Carlos Guerrero's
family. He'd been working the gig for
10 months and everything was good.

LAGUERTA

Until Ricky face-planted in an alley
from 60 feet up.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

Shitty as it is, taking Simmons out
could fall under the risk of doing
risky business. But this...

He indicates the bloody crime scene.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

... Guerrero's crossing a whole new
line. He's sending us a message --

SGT. DOAKES

Yeah: 'back the fuck off'. That ain't
happening, is it Cap?

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

Not on my watch. Guerrero's been
living the life, working the system,
way too long. But now he's pissed off
the entire Miami Police Department.

Dexter and Batista listen in as they work.

SGT. DOAKES
What's the word on the wife?

LAGUERTA
Should be in surgery by now.

DEXTER checks the screen on his digital camera, clicking through photos he's taken.

BATISTA
Que paso?

DEXTER
There's an inconsistency somewhere.

BATISTA
And that would be?

DEXTER
Not sure, but it's the answer to a question we haven't thought of yet.

Something on his camera screen grabs his eye: a thin streak of blood on the floor, ending at the couch. Dexter moves to that section of the floor and finds the streak -- thick where Kara's body was; almost translucent at its other end. He drops to one knee and looks under the couch.

DEXTER
... Angel.

Batista joins him. Shines a flashlight on a bloody cell phone. Using his pencil, Batista slips it out into view.

BATISTA
Uh, Lieutenant.

LaGuerta and Doakes come over. See the phone.

LAGUERTA
Whose is it?

SGT. DOAKES
Check last number dialed.

Batista presses a button with the pencil's eraser. The readout shows: 'Ricky'. Doakes flips his cell open.

SGT. DOAKES
I want Ricky Simmons' cell phone out of property and on my desk right away.
(MORE)

SGT. DOAKES (CONT'D)
(looks to Batista)
Good work, Angel.

BATISTA
It was Dexter who...

But Doakes moves off. Batista bags Kara's phone.

LAGUERTA
Have the tech guys get me a complete
history on *both* cell phones. Incoming
and outgoing. Land-lines too.

She goes. Dexter steps up.

DEXTER
Angel, when can I get back in here to
do my red-string thing?

BATISTA
We got a shitload of work to do. I
can't release this scene till
tomorrow. *Lo siento, bro.*

Dexter nods and leaves the house.

21 INT. COURTHOUSE - ROTUNDA - LATE DAY

21

Chambers steps out of the elevator. He notices the Pryce family, crosses to them and humbly offers his hand. Wanting no part of him, they move off. Chambers shrugs and heads for the exit doors.

PAN to Dexter at a shoe-shine stand. Watching, studying... *making sure.*

DEXTER (V.O.)
Not guilty. Matt Chambers may have
found a way to beat the system... but
so have I.

A22 INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

A22

ON THE LOUVRED WINDOWS sweating with condensation. As we PAN to find Dexter asleep in his bed, we HEAR the AC working overtime, already fighting the early morning Miami heat and humidity.

The phone RINGS. Dexter stirs, checks the caller ID and answers. INTERCUT with Debra on a street corner.

DEXTER
Sister.

DEBRA

So Miami is the haystack and the ice truck is the needle, right?

DEXTER

... o-kay.

DEBRA

Then, brother... I just found the fucking needle!

22

EXT. MIAMI STREET - DAY

22

Dexter walks with Debra. OVER THEIR SHOULDERS: an ice truck parked near a busy street corner.

DEXTER

How'd you find it?

DEBRA

I put the word out with patrol. You know, the whole hide-in-plain-sight thing? Juan-Pierre flagged this one and called me.

DEXTER

Busy street. Anyone see the driver?

DEBRA

Kinko's guy said it was here when he opened up this morning. Abandoned and idling. Is this the one you saw?

DEXTER'S SLO-MO POV: moving closer to the truck.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I feel like a kid at his own surprise party. This *is* the same truck. Happy Birthday to me.

He turns to Debra. Covering.

DEXTER

Maybe. It all happened kinda fast.

DEBRA

Let's go out on a non-Forensic-geek limb and assume it is. Why's the engine still running?

DEXTER

Keeps the back compartment refrigerated.

GO TO BLACK. We're --

23

INT. ICE TRUCK - LATER

23

A Uniform Cop POPS THE LOCK AND THE DOOR FALLS OPEN. Dexter, Debra and Batista climb in. In the b.g., we can see the area is now a full-blown crime scene with LaGuerta and Captain Matthews huddled nearby.

BATISTA

Cold in here.

DEBRA

Duh, ice truck.

But Dexter is looking below CAMERA.

A BLOCK OF CLEAR ICE. Our guys squat down and peer into it.

BATISTA

Dios mio.

DEBRA

Looks like candy.

PUSH IN ON THE ICE. There are five multi-colored jellybeans suspended in the frozen water. Then we understand what we're looking at: five *fingertips*, each nail painted a different cheerful color. Debra jumps back.

DEBRA

Holy shit, they're fucking fingertips!

DEXTER

(looking closely)

Clean slices. No Blood. I'm guessing he drained it from the body before these cuts were made.

DEBRA

How's he do that? Some kind of pump?

BATISTA

Nope. Forensics did a work-up on the last victim. Our guy's old school.

DEXTER

He hoists them up and severs the jugular. Lets the heart do all the work. It's the most effective method, really.

Debra and Batista turn to go.

DEBRA
Fucking butcher.

They exit the truck, leaving Dexter alone with the grisly find.

DEXTER (V.O.)
There are 206 bones in the human body.
He could have left any of them.

Dexter circles the block of ice, looks at the fingerprints.

DEXTER (V.O.)
But he gave us exactly what we need to
identify the victim.
(beat, a smile)
Like he's leaving a trail of bread
crumbs.

24

EXT. ICE TRUCK CRIME SCENE - DAY

24

Captain Matthews and LaGuerta watch Batista climb back into the truck.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

Who made the find?

LAGUERTA

(kills her to say)

... Officer Morgan.

The Captain looks across to where Debra fills out a report.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

Harry's daughter? Must be in the genes. Her and her brother. This truck is a good get. We finally have a solid lead.

LAGUERTA

I encourage *all* my officers, uniform and detectives, to think outside the box. Paid off big time.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

Nice work, Lieutenant.

(looks at his watch)

I've got the Deputy Mayor.

Congratulate Morgan for me.

BACK OF THE ICE TRUCK. Dexter steps from the cold into the sun. He looks to the sky.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Another beautiful Miami day: mutilated corpses with a chance of afternoon showers.

He sees LaGuerta crossing toward Debra.

DEBRA LOOKS UP, expectant, as LaGuerta approaches.

DEBRA

Chalk one up for Miami Metro, eh, Ma'am?

LAGUERTA

Last time I checked, Morgan, *I'm* the Lieutenant. That means my officers keep me apprised at all times on all things. You pull a stunt like this truck thing again, it won't matter who your father was.

She storms off. Debra turns to Dexter in the maw of the ice truck. All he can do is shrug a smile her way.

25 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

25

Batista moves through, on his cell phone.

BATISTA

What, a man can't call his wife three times in one day?

(listens, melts a little)

Si, claro. Bueno, kiss my baby and tell her Daddy will be home para la cena. I'm getting beeped. Te amo.

(clicks call-waiting)

Batista.

(listens)

De veras? I'm there in two minutes!

He hurries out, taking us to Dexter's Lab.

DEXTER studies his photos from the Kara Simmons shooting.

DEXTER (V.O.)

To some cops, blood spatter analysis makes about as much sense as using a napkin. 'Drip pattern'. 'Cast-off'. 'Point of origin'. But a single drop of blood...

He closely examines one of the photos.

DEXTER (V.O.)

... can tell a whole long story.

He swivels in his chair until he's facing the Bullpen.

HIS POV: Doakes at his desk. Headphones on, he listens to a digital recorder. His face a solemn grimace of concentration.

A bulletin board behind him displays the '*GUERRERO CRIME FAMILY TREE*'. At the top of the pyramid is a photo of CARLOS GUERRERO. Tanned, handsome, imposing.

LaGuerta comes out of her office, puts a hand on Doakes' shoulder. He takes off the headphones, looks up.

LAGUERTA

She's still in surgery. The doctors are... hopeful.

Doakes takes a beat, then plugs the digital recorder into a small speaker and presses 'play'.

KARA'S VOICE
(an urgent whisper)
Ricky! Someone's in the house! Shit,
Ricky, where are you?
(her panicked breathing)
Okay, I'm gonna try for the back
door... Oh God! He saw me!

Everyone in the Bullpen stops their work to listen.

KARA'S VOICE
(a desperate plea)
... please don't hurt me...

Then it comes... the sound of a GUNSHOT. Doakes looks to his colleagues. Everyone's stricken. A beat, then --

Batista bursts in. Breaks the silence.

BATISTA
Lieutenant...

He holds up a specimen jar with the chunk of flesh from the alley.

BATISTA
National Database kicked back a DNA
match.

He crosses to the '*GUERRERO CRIME FAMILY TREE*' and points to a photo halfway down the pecking order.

BATISTA
Norberto Cervantes.

Doakes grabs his jacket and hauls ass out of there.

26 EXT. DOMINO PARK - DAY

26

A public park where Latin men of all ages play dominoes.

PAN OFF the mist of sprinklers shimmering in the late-day sun to FIND NORBERTO CERVANTES at a concrete table playing dominoes with crime boss CARLOS GUERRERO. Each man has a stack of hundreds in front of him Two Bodyguards hover nearby as Cervantes lays down a tile.

Note: this scene will play in Spanish (without subtitles).

GUERRERO
Es tu dia de buena suerte. (Today's
your lucky day.)

He slides a hundred toward Cervantes.

GUERRERO

Estoy agradecido por tu lealdad. (I am grateful for your loyalty.)

He pushes the rest of his money toward Cervantes.

CERVANTES

El gusto es mio, patron. (It is my pleasure, patron.)

As he reaches for the money, he notices a red dot on his hand. Then one on his shirt. Guerrero spots this, quickly rises and turns to see --

Emerging through the sprinkler spray, five MIAMI SWAT OFFICERS approaching in a tense crouch. Each has his MP-5 9mm rifle laser-locked on Cervantes' body. Cervantes rises, arms outstretched, the smug grin of an untouchable on his lips.

The Bodyguards start to move; and each is immediately laser-locked on the forehead by a SWAT Member.

Doakes comes up from behind. A little excessive force and Cervantes is cuffed.

GUERRERO

Is that necessary?

SGT. DOAKES

It's a dangerous world.

GUERRERO

And one can't be too careful,
Detective.

Doakes levels him with a glare, hustles Cervantes away.

27

INT. SPORTS BAR - LATE AFTERNOON

27

Dexter sits at the bar.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Happy hour, there's a misnomer.
People don't drink to feel happy; they
drink to not feel anything at all.

(beat)

Me? I've got other vices.

REVEAL... Matt Chambers, two stools away, sipping a drink.

DEXTER

(to Bartender)
I'll have what he's having.

CHAMBERS

A wise choice.

He swigs his drink, savors it. Dexter regards him.

DEXTER

Celebrating?

CHAMBERS

Something like that.

Chambers looks this curious, charming stranger over.

CHAMBERS

Have we met?

DEXTER

Doubt it. I just moved to Miami.
Needed a new start.

CHAMBERS

Girlfriend? ... uh, boyfriend?

The BARTENDER sets a drink in front of Dexter.

DEXTER

Ex-wife. Said I drank too much.
(a wink)
Hence the ex part.

Chambers raises his glass. A toast.

CHAMBERS

Fuck her.

He drinks. Dexter barely touches the glass to his lips.

DEXTER

She was all over me to change. Like
she'd never done anything wrong in her
life.

(beat)

Besides marrying me.

CHAMBERS

We all make mistakes. Unfortunately
mine usually involve lawyers.

A football game plays on a TV above the bar. The crowd
roars. Touchdown.

CHAMBERS

Goddammit.

DEXTER

I thought I was the only one who hated the Hurricanes. Take it you didn't grow up down here?

CHAMBERS

I've had to move around some.

DEXTER

Say no more.

CHAMBERS

But home is where my ass is. And I'm getting mine out of town. Enjoy Miami.

He wobbles to his feet, fumbles for his wallet.

CHAMBERS

Remember: there's nothing a new city can't cure.

DEXTER

You got that right.

He plunks down a twenty.

CHAMBERS

Thanks, buddy. Next one's on me.

DEXTER

You good to drive?

CHAMBERS

I've been a lot worse.

He goes. Once Chambers is out the door, Dexter lifts his glass from the bar and pockets it.

Then he cranes his neck to look out the window and watches as Chambers passes a family getting into a mini-van. Clearly drunk, he gets in his car and fishtails away.

28

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

28

Dexter's VO carries us through a series of DISSOLVES as he lifts fingerprints from Chambers' drinking glass and scans them into his computer.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Matt Chambers is accused of *committing* a crime in Florida. He was *arrested* in Florida and is being *tried* in Florida.

ON DEXTER'S MONITOR: the *NATIONAL CRIME DATABASE*.

DEXTER (V.O.)

So the good people of Florida only went as far as validating their own assumptions: that Matt Chambers is a *Florida* bad guy.

The fingerprints match positive to two other crimes in two other states. Dexter prints-out the results. We see news clippings and photographs:

'1997: *SANTA FE WOMAN PARALYZED IN HIT-AND-RUN DUI*'

'2000: *OFF-DUTY FIREFIGHTER KILLED IN WRONG-WAY COLLISION. SOUTH BOSTON MAN ARRESTED*'

Dexter taps at his keyboard and two NEWS PHOTOS appear.

'*MATT BREWSTER OF ALBUQUERQUE WAS APPREHENDED...*'

'*MATT RASMUSSEN OF SOUTH BOSTON WAS ARRESTED AT THE SCENE OF...*'

ON THE PHOTOS of Brewster and Rasmussen. Each is a picture of a younger... Matt Chambers.

Dexter leans back in his chair, swivels toward CAMERA.

DEXTER (V.O.)

(mocking)

'Nothing a new city can't cure.'

PRE-LAP KARA'S VOICE in the phone message to her husband.

KARA'S VOICE

... please don't hurt me...

29

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - NEXT MORNING

29

A seething Doakes clicks off the recorder, scowls at an arrogantly stoic Cervantes. LaGuerta hovers nearby.

SGT. DOAKES

Way we see it: you're in at the kill of Ricky Simmons. But that's not enough for you... or for Guerrero...

CERVANTES

Ricky is dead? That saddens me.

SGT. DOAKES

Shut the fuck up!

The door opens and a Cop hands something to LaGuerta. As she pockets it, Cervantes glances through the open doorway and sees half a dozen other cops watching him with unconcealed contempt.

CERVANTES

Wait, you're not implying that Ricky Simmons was a cop, are you? I'm truly... disappointed.

LaGuerta shifts her weight. A subtle reminder that she's there and that Doakes has to stay professional.

30

INT. SIMMONS HOUSE - MORNING

30

Dexter considers his web of red strings. Batista watches, fascinated.

BATISTA

You musta been a motherfucker at cat's cradle.

DEXTER

Never played it.

(back to work)

Okay, Kara Simmons was shot while she was running. Her phone call tells us that; her blood tells us that.

He walks through and around the maze.

BATISTA

She was running for the back door...

They're in the kitchen now. Batista nods to the door.

BATISTA

There.

(beat)

Then she sees the shooter.

DEXTER

And the shooter sees her.

(beat)

She's shot high in the chest. She stumbles, throwing blood on the walls: here and here. And leaving this blood-trail on the floor. But her forward momentum only brings her to...

He steps back into the living room; to the bloody spot where Kara was found.

DEXTER

... here.

He ponders this. Then, charged, he whips around.

CLOSE ON THE KITCHEN FLOOR. A tiny dark red dot. TILT UP as Dexter kneels down to study it. Batista leans in.

BATISTA

(dawning, hushed)

Kara Simmons never got this far.

DEXTER

Ergo: this is not her blood.

Batista takes out his utility knife. Together, they slice a wedge containing the red dot out of the linoleum. Dexter holds it up to Batista.

DEXTER

Angel, meet our shooter.

31

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - MORNING

31

Doakes has moved closer in on a still-defiant Cervantes.

SGT. DOAKES

Not only do I have a dead cop, someone broke into his house and shot his wife.

CERVANTES

Word out in the world, Sergeant, is Simmons' wife was fucking around. Maybe he tried to kill the bitch himself; then felt so bad about it, he committed suicide.

An evil grin as he leans forward.

CERVANTES

Cop murder-suicide. It's like a health crisis for you guys, ain't it?

Without warning, Doakes PUNCHES Cervantes, sending him reeling. LaGuerta grabs Doakes, but he's too far gone. Other cops rush in and separate Doakes and Cervantes. Doakes, straining against their grip, screams at Cervantes.

SGT. DOAKES

You think it's a fucking coincidence you're in here? We've got you on the roof the morning Ricky Simmons died.

CERVANTES

Bullshit.

LaGuerta steps in. She RIPS Cervantes' shirt sleeve up to his elbow, exposing a bandaged wound on his forearm. Then she tears the bandage off. The gash in Cervantes' arm is just the right size.

LAGUERTA

We don't deal in bullshit. We deal in good police work and...

She pulls the specimen jar with the chunk of flesh from her pocket.

LAGUERTA

... good science.

32

INT. POLICE STATION - LAGUERTA'S OFFICE - LATER

32

Dexter and Batista do a computer slide show for LaGuerta and Doakes. Slide one:

BATISTA

DNA from the flesh in Ricky Simmons' mouth.

Click. Next slide.

DEXTER

DNA from a rogue drop of blood we found in the Simmons' house.

Click. Side-by-side slides. Doakes leans in.

SGT. DOAKES

(to Dexter)

Tell me you're sure about this.

DEXTER

100 percent.

SGT. DOAKES

Game... set... fuckin' match.

He turns to LaGuerta, filled with purpose.

SGT. DOAKES

This puts Cervantes at both crime scenes. Let's nail his coffin and ship him.

He starts out.

LAGUERTA

Hang on, Sergeant.

Doakes stops, turns to her. Dexter and Batista stand there like two kids watching their parents argue.

LAGUERTA

We get Cervantes to roll-over on Guerrero, then we own them both.

SGT. DOAKES

You're talking about throwing a deal at Cervantes? And what then, he walks?

LAGUERTA

He does, we pick him up on a hundred other charges. If he gets us Guerrero, it's win-win.

SGT. DOAKES

Gets us Guerrero? We can't catch the guy! We'll never catch the guy. He's un-fucking-touchable!

(gathering himself)

C'mon Lieutenant, we've already got a win.

LAGUERTA

No, you've got a win. I want the big picture.

DEXTER looks out to the Bullpen. The Cops out there move slowly, dented by the death of a brother.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I've seen this before. Whenever a cop is killed, it's like everyone's life has been stopped in mid-sentence.

33

FLASHBACK:

33

CLOSE ON HARRY in his dress blue uniform. Hat, medals, etc. BEGIN SLOW PULLBACK.

HARRY

... Davey Sanchez was a fearless and dedicated cop. Davey Sanchez was a son, a husband... a father...

PULLBACK REVEALS Harry rehearsing into a mirror. We're --

INT. MORGAN HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Harry glances at his notes.

HARRY

*... Davey Sanchez was my partner.
Davey Sanchez was my... hero.*

CONTINUE PULLBACK. There's Teenage Dexter on the edge of the bed. Harry glances to him in the mirror.

TEENAGE DEXTER

That... that was great.

Harry sits on the bed next to his son; blows a huge sigh.

TEENAGE DEXTER

What, Dad?

HARRY

It's just that ever since Davey was killed, my world feels out of control.

TEENAGE DEXTER

How do you fix it?

HARRY

Two ways, I guess: honor Davey's memory. And catch the bastard who did this to him.

He rises and straightens his coat.

HARRY

It's not about vengeance, it's not about retaliation or balancing the books... it's about something so deep inside, so microscopic, that it's as pure as truth. As perfect as nature.

He hugs his son and goes.

END FLASHBACK.

34 OMITTED

34

35 INT. LIMBO STORE - DAY

35

Dexter readies the abandoned space for his upcoming kill.

DEXTER (V.O.)

*Harry said nature is perfect...
(serious as death)
I'll be perfect too.*

He sets up the table, the rubber sheets, the plastic.

DEXTER (V.O.)

If God is in the details... and if I
believed in God, then he's in this
room with me.

He lays out the lethal power tools. Then stretches out the
cord to the rechargeable battery and looks for an outlet.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I just wish he'd brought an extension
cord.

He fills the syringe, presses out the air bubble.

36

INT. HOSPITAL - KARA'S ROOM - DAY

36

We watch through the observation window as Kara lies in her
bed, heavily bandaged and heavily sedated. Doakes appears,
nods to the Uniformed Cop on protection-detail and enters.

He looks across to Kara and stops, absorbing the sight of a
fragile life so cruelly damaged. Then he sits next to her
and takes her hand.

He talks softly to her. Her eyes glisten as she tries to
smile. Doakes looks to the Uniform. The Cop makes himself
scarce.

Kara points to a glass of water. Doakes retrieves it and,
holding the back of her head, helps her drink. A tender
moment.

Doakes turns to put the water down. When he turns back, Kara is... mercifully... asleep. Doakes touches the back of his hand to her cheek.

LAGUERTA IN THE CORRIDOR; watching this tableau through the observation window.

37

INT. LOCO'S CRAB SHACK - DAY (MAGIC HOUR)

37

Dexter, Rita, Debra and her date, SEAN at a table.

DEBRA

This guy is toying with us, bro. And LaGuerta's too fucking dumb to see it.

SEAN

Deb says this psycho cut off that chick's fingertips. Man, that's gotta suck.

Dexter glances over to see a GOOMBAH throw down some cash and grab a large take-out box of live lobsters. Dexter's eyes follow the guy outside where he climbs into a black Escalade. Sitting in the back seat: Carlos Guerrero.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Guerrero taking home lobsters to boil alive. Not his style... He usually leaves the killing to someone else.

Guerrero looks blankly back at Dexter - not registering him at all - and powers up his tinted window.

A beat as Dexter realizes everyone's waiting for him to respond. But Rita goes for the subject change.

RITA

So, how long you two been going out?

Sean forks up the last remnants from Debra's plate, chews.

SEAN

Coupla weeks maybe.

He pulls Debra into a rather moist kiss.

DEXTER

Uh, Deb never mentioned how you met.

SEAN

She brought her car into my shop.

Rita puts her hand on Dexter's leg, an attempt at affection. Dexter looks down, at a bit of a loss.

DEXTER

Oh, you run your own place?

SEAN

I wish.

Rita withdraws her hand.

DEXTER

Someday, huh?

DEBRA

Dex, enough with the inquisition.

SEAN

Hey, if I had a sister with legs like yours, I'd be checking out the dude she's seeing too.

DEBRA

Is this guy a keeper or what?

She kisses Sean, bites his lower lip. An awkward beat between Dexter and Rita. Such effortless intimacy sorely missing in their relationship.

38

INT. LOCO'S CRAB SHACK - LATER

38

Dexter, Rita, Debra and Sean get ready to leave. Debra kisses her brother; then hugs Rita.

DEBRA

Let's do this again sometime.

She mouths the words 'No Way' to Dexter.

RITA

I'd like that.

Sean puts a possessive arm around Debra.

SEAN

C'mon, babe. Papa wants dessert.

Debra kisses him and, laughing, they exit.

DEXTER

Seems like a nice guy.

He goes to put his hand on the small of Rita's back, but she doesn't notice. She looks off, lost in thought.

RITA

They could barely keep their hands off each other.

She seems small and alone as she heads for the doors.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I can kill a man, dismember his body, and be home in time for Letterman. But knowing what to say when my girlfriend's feeling insecure? I'm totally lost.

39

INT. COUNTY JAIL - NIGHT

39

Cervantes in his cell, lying on his cot. The sounds of caged men echo off the walls. A GUARD approaches.

GUARD

Off your ass, Cervantes. Hands behind your back; walk backwards and assume the position.

Cervantes is an old pro at this. Walking backwards, he puts his hands through the slot in the cell door and the Guard cuffs him.

GUARD

Step away.

Cervantes steps away and the Guard unlocks the door.

GUARD

Exit the cell.

CERVANTES

Where we going?

GUARD

Call came down: they want you moved to a more secure block.

Cervantes smiles as the Guard leads him away.

40

INT. COUNTY JAIL - ANOTHER CORRIDOR - NIGHT

40

The Guard and Cervantes continue, Cervantes jabbering.

CERVANTES

You think that call to take care of me came down from the warden?

(MORE)

CERVANTES (CONT'D)

Who the fuck you think the warden
listens to? Get used to it because...

The Guard **SHOVES** Cervantes into a dark alcove and **SLAMS** a shiv into Cervantes' chest. Again and again and again. It's alarmingly vicious and thorough. Cervantes slumps to the floor. Already dead.

The Guard drops the shiv and walks away.

HOLD ON CERVANTES' BODY as a *LULLABY* comes up. A male voice singing '*FRERE JACQUES*.'

*"Are you sleeping, are you sleeping;
Brother John, Brother John..."*

41 OMITTED 41

42 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - KIDS' BEDROOM - NIGHT 42

Dexter sings to Astor and Cody as they drift off to sleep. He has a beautiful, haunting, voice.

DEXTER

*"Morning bells are ringing,
morning bells are ringing.
Din Din Don... Din Din Don"*

Astor and Cody are now asleep. Dexter notices the papier-mache masks beneath the night-light, each brightly painted with watercolors, and smiles. Then he sees Rita in the doorway, moved by the tenderness in her man.

43 INT. RITA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER 43

Dexter and Rita watching TV, her head resting peacefully on his shoulder. Dexter turns to her and smiles that smile of his. Then he puts his arm around her and pulls her close as they resume watching TV.

A beat as Rita makes a decision. She clicks the TV to 'mute', then lifts her head and nibbles Dexter's earlobe.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Every time a woman tries to do this to
me it... tickles.

Rita flicks her tongue in his ear.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Still, it's not entirely unpleasant.

He turns to her; hesitates.

RITA

What?

DEXTER

The kids.

RITA

They sleep through thunderstorms.

She kisses him on the lips, her tongue searching. Dexter, in his way, responds. He cups her breast, kisses it. Then he starts unbuttoning her blouse and slips his hand inside.

Dexter brings his head up and, closing his eyes, kisses her lips. Rita catches her breath, stiffens. At first, Dexter thinks it's a desired response. But Rita doesn't unstiffen. Dexter opens his eyes. Rita looks away.

RITA

I'm sorry.

DEXTER

(softly)
... tell me.

RITA

I can't do this.

Dexter gently takes her face in his hands.

DEXTER

It's okay. I'm okay. It's okay.

Rita sits back, emotion filling her eyes.

DEXTER

We have an elephant in the room and its name is sex. Far as I'm concerned, that elephant can just sit in the corner and mind its own damn business.

RITA

Easier said than done.

DEXTER

Yeah, but it needs to be right for both of us. Or it won't be right for either of us. I don't want that, do you?

RITA

Uh... no... *whew*... y'know?

She brushes away a tear. Dexter pulls her close. We see, but Rita doesn't, the look of relief on Dexter's face.

RITA

I just can't believe I found the one good, truly decent man still left on the planet.

As Dexter kisses the top of her head, he notices that the local news is on. He remotes the volume higher. A REPORTER stands in front of a dull grey building that we recognize as the County Jail.

REPORTER

... was found dead in a basement hallway of the Miami Metro Jail. Norberto Cervantes was a known associate of reputed drug lord Carlos Guerrero.

VIDEO plays of Guerrero and Cervantes.

REPORTER

Speculation is that another inmate...

44 OMITTED 44

45 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - MORNING 45

ON THE *GUERRERO CRIME FAMILY TREE*. WIDEN to include Doakes staring at the photos, disappointment and anger pulling at him. He steps up, removes Cervantes' picture and, frustrated, drops it into a drawer.

Then he looks over. Dexter's watching from his lab. Instead of showing his usual disdain for Dexter, Doakes simply nods. Dexter nods back. A fleeting connection.

Debra enters the bullpen and crosses to --

46 INT. POLICE STATION - DEXTER'S LAB - DAY 46

Dexter turns away from Doakes and presents a tray with the severed fingertips. Back in his element now, he's drawn to them.

DEXTER

See how the skin is gloving around the joints?

Debra leans in.

DEBRA

And that's important because?

DEXTER

Sure sign of post-mortem severance.
Meaning: she was already dead when
she was relieved of her fingertips.

DEBRA

But why the different nail polishes?
What the hell's this guy thinking?

DEXTER

Don't know yet. You have an ID?

DEBRA

Shari Taylor. Another hooker.

DEXTER

At least he's consistent.

DEBRA

Yeah, killing young women who have to
sell their bodies just to survive...
or feed their kids.

She turns away, moved and angry.

DEXTER (V.O.)

My sister puts up a front so the world
won't see how vulnerable she is. Me?
I put up a front so the world won't
see how vulnerable I'm *not*. I don't
care who these fingertips belong to.
Only what my new friend out there is
trying to say.

They're interrupted by UNIFORM #1.

UNIFORM #1

Morgan, Captain wants you.

Both Dexter and Debra move toward the door.

UNIFORM #1

Her.

Brother and sister share a look. This can't be good.
Debra goes. Dexter looks after her, then leaves.

Debra enters to find LaGuerta and the Captain waiting for
her. She's fully prepared for a serious reprimand.

DEBRA

You wanted to see me, sir?

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

Lt. LaGuerta has something she wants to tell you.

LaGuerta forces a smile. Hating this.

LAGUERTA

Officer Morgan, you've shown tremendous initiative these last few days. Because of you, we were able to track down that ice truck and we now have an ID of the latest victim. The Captain believes you should be re-assigned from Vice to Homicide.

Debra can barely believe what she's hearing.

LAGUERTA

And I concur. Congratulations.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

You're a good cop. Like your old man.

Debra can't contain herself. She gives the Captain a hug.

DEBRA

Thank you, sir. Thank you so much.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

Keep it up and I see a Detective's shield in your future.

DEBRA

I won't let you down, sir.

She bolts from the office.

LAGUERTA

I hope you know what you're doing.

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

I promoted you, didn't I?
(beat, gruff)
Now find me this ice truck sonofabitch.

He leaves. LaGuerta goes out to the bullpen where Doakes moves other photos up higher in the '*GUERRERO CRIME FAMILY TREE*', replacing the void left by Cervantes' now-missing picture. She clocks his expression: utter desolation. Then she continues on to --

48 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN KITCHEN - NIGHT 48

Batista pours himself a cup of coffee. LaGuerta enters.

Note: This scene will play in *SPANISH* (without subtitles).

LAGUERTA

Carmen y tu hija, estan bien? (Carmen
and your daughter, they're good?)

BATISTA

Estan... maravillosos.
(They're wonderful.)

LAGUERTA

Ellos tambien te necesitan.
(They need you too.)
(guides him to the door)
Vete a casa, Angel. (Go home, Angel.)

49 EXT. CHAMBERS' HOUSE - NIGHT 49

Dexter watches Chambers pull into his driveway. He takes the syringe from his pocket and holds it up to the light; admiring the amber fluid.

DEXTER (V.O.)

In slaughter houses, they stun the animals before butchering them. It's the humane thing to do. Those animals? They're the lucky ones.

ANGLE ON Chambers, weaving up his steps and disappearing into his house.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Gone to rest his weary head. Good news is he'll still be here when I come back for happy hour.

50 INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - NIGHT 50

Doakes at his computer, searching the database for more information on the Guerrero Crime Family. As a name and a photo come on-screen, he turns to the bulletin board and notes something on the family tree. Back to the computer, back to the bulletin board and... there's LaGuerta.

LAGUERTA

Burning the oil?

SGT. DOAKES

I clocked out.

LAGUERTA

Why're you going at this so hard?

SGT. DOAKES

Someone comes after one of us, he
comes after all of us.

LaGuerta pulls a swivel chair from an empty desk and sits.
She takes a long beat, casting for the right words.

SGT. DOAKES

I know that look, Maria. Whatever
you've got to say, say it.

LAGUERTA

I just got off the phone with the
hospital...

Doakes turns to her -- trapped between hope and dread.

LAGUERTA

Kara Simmons suffered massive heart
failure 30 minutes ago.

Doakes grabs his jacket and starts to rise. LaGuerta puts
her hand on his leg, keeping him in place.

LAGUERTA

James... she died.

Doakes struggles with his ricocheting emotions: anger,
outrage... grief. He closes his eyes, his lips quivering
for the briefest moment.

LAGUERTA

You and I rode together for years.
Shared a lot of shit, good and bad.
You helped make me the cop I am today.

(beat)

And it's the cop in me who has to ask
you... was Cervantes right? Was Kara
Simmons sleeping with someone other
than Ricky?

Doakes looks away. LaGuerta presses on...

LAGUERTA

(almost a whisper)

... was it you?

Doakes stands up; looks from his computer to the board to
LaGuerta. And then, finally... he nods.

LAGUERTA

What the fuck were you thinking?

SGT. DOAKES

And what the fuck business is it of yours?

LAGUERTA

My precinct. My cops... *My* business.

Doakes takes a long, reflective pause.

SGT. DOAKES

Kara was going to ask for a divorce as soon as Ricky finished his undercover. She didn't want to hurt him while he was on the case.

(beat)

She still had love for him.

LaGuerta is humbled by such a rare confession from this stoic man.

LAGUERTA

And you loved her.

Doakes turns to her, his eyes red.

SGT. DOAKES

... completely.

LaGuerta takes a beat. Regards Doakes carefully.

LAGUERTA

If I go by the book, I take you off this case.

Doakes looks at her, his jaw set.

SGT. DOAKES

(softly)

Fuck the book. There's no one in this building who's more motivated to get...

LAGUERTA

Revenge?

SGT. DOAKES

Justice.

LAGUERTA

Good answer. Then I want you to take point on Guerrero.

SGT. DOAKES

Thank you, Maria.

LaGuerta rises, puts a hand on his shoulder and leaves.

51 INT. LOCO'S CRAB SHACK - NIGHT

51

Dexter and Debra hammering their way through a pile of crabs.

DEBRA

(mouth full)

God these things are so good.

DEXTER

Not as good as your good news.

He hoists his beer. They clink.

DEXTER

(a loving tease)

My little sister's all grewed up and transferred to Homicide.

DEBRA

And the best part? LaGuerta had to say the actual words. I thought her head would explode.

DEXTER

I'm really proud of you.

DEBRA

You had my back the whole way and I appreciate it. I mean that. You're the best; and I wanted you to be the one to share this moment.

DEXTER

So then... Sean was busy?

Debra wipes her hands. Sips her drink. Takes a beat.

DEBRA

Turns out there was another woman.

DEXTER

Who?

DEBRA

... me.

DEXTER

Sean the mechanic is married?

DEBRA

Technically... okay, yes. Imagine me falling for the wrong guy, huh?

She blinks away a tear.

DEXTER

And you and he are...

DEBRA

So over. I dumped his married ass.

She blows her nose into her napkin.

DEBRA

I just wish I could get into a healthy relationship like you and Rita. You know, without the drama and the tension and the uncertainty.

DEXTER

Yeah, I'm a lucky guy.

Debra goes back to her meal. Just then, the front door opens and Carlos Guerrero and his Driver enter. Patrons either stare or avert their eyes as Guerrero makes his way to a long table in back. The other guys at the table rise. They offer him the respect due a powerful and dangerous man. Then Guerrero peels off and heads for the restroom.

FLASHBACK:

52

EXT. RURAL ROAD - LATE DAY

52

Teenage Dexter stands next to his bike in the teeming Miami rain. Harry's truck pulls up, slams to a stop. Teenage Dexter whips open the door.

TEENAGE DEXTER

Jesus, Dad, it's called being on time, ever heard of it?

He throws his bike into the bed of the truck, climbs in and YANKS the door shut.

HARRY

I was having a bad day. Captain and I had to have a discussion.

TEENAGE DEXTER

Yeah, well, maybe you shoulda --

Only now does he notice his father's face, ashen and strained.

TEENAGE DEXTER

Wait. What kind of bad day?

Harry stays still, staring off into the pelting rain; the wipers whapping back and forth. Too angry to answer; too angry to drive. Teenage Dexter studies his father, then, dawning...

TEENAGE DEXTER

It's about the guy who killed Davey, isn't it? His trial started today.

Harry finally turns, looks to Teenage Dexter. Doesn't say a word.

TEENAGE DEXTER

What happened?

HARRY

Judge said the bust wasn't righteous and let him walk.

TEENAGE DEXTER

A bad guy kills a cop and nothing happens?

HARRY

That's how it looks.

TEENAGE DEXTER

But that's totally not fair!

HARRY

Life's not fair, Dexter.

TEENAGE DEXTER

God, Dad, can't anyone do anything? Can't you do anything?

HARRY

No. Not now.

TEENAGE DEXTER

So, what? The world keeps spinning out of control?

HARRY

No. The world can always be set right again.

TEENAGE DEXTER

How?

HARRY

It's all about the choices you make.

He turns back to the road, slips the truck into gear and drives off. On Teenage Dexter, next to him, that truth sinking in. **END FLASHBACK.**

53

RESUME - INT. LOCO'S CRAB SHACK - NIGHT

53

as Dexter rises from the table and turns back to Debra. Crab-focused, she missed Guerrero's entrance.

DEXTER

Back in a sec.

DEBRA

I'm kind of running the gamut here, emotion-wise. And you're leaving me?

Dexter gestures toward the bathroom and shrugs.

DEXTER

Nature calls.

54 INT. LOCO'S CRAB SHACK - BATHROOM - NIGHT

54

Guerrero at a urinal. Dexter's head rises part-way into FRAME, our crocodile shot, and we realize we've been looking in a mirror. Dexter finishes washing his face.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Sometimes the universe plays itself out in beautiful mystery. It's like fate has chosen to speak just to me.

He grabs some paper towels, wipes his hands.

DEXTER (V.O.)

All the planning, the making sure... does it go away because I have a chance to rid the world of a cop-killer and balance the books?

He tosses the paper towels in the trash.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Do I just ignore everything my father taught me about how to do this right, about how to stay safe so I can do it again?

(beat)

I just need a sign.

Just then, Guerrero's cell phone rings. He answers.

GUERRERO

Yeah.

(listens)

I don't give a shit about your problems. Do your goddam job and take care of him.

Guerrero sees Dexter staring at him in the mirror.

GUERRERO

The fuck you looking at?

Dexter simply holds his look, his eyes giving nothing away.

SMASH CUT TO:

55 INT. KILLING ROOM - NIGHT

55

PAN ALONG the legs of a naked man's body, up his torso, to his face. *Matt Chambers* lies on the killing table. A nearby laptop plays the Christmas footage of his last victim, Alexander Pryce, and his family. News clippings of his New Mexico and Massachusetts victims line the walls.

Dexter steps into FRAME, dressed to kill. Chambers gasps.

CHAMBERS

You!

DEXTER

(a taunt)

And... *you*. We meet again.

Dexter SLICES his cheek with the scalpel.

DEXTER
For the last time.

He draws blood for his slide. Chambers is frantic.

CHAMBERS
I didn't do anything!

DEXTER
Some people believe that. Problem is:
I don't.

CHAMBERS
But it's true.

He tries for the charm that has gotten him this far in
life... even the tears. Let's call them crocodile tears.

CHAMBERS
I was set-up.

DEXTER
By whom?

CHAMBERS
That family. They needed someone to
blame. It's the natural thing to do
when you're grieving.

DEXTER
Then none of this is your fault?

CHAMBERS
I swear.

DEXTER
And you have no remorse?

CHAMBERS
How can I? I already told you: I
didn't do anything.

DEXTER
Thank you.

CHAMBERS
For what?

DEXTER
For making this easier.

CHAMBERS

What do you mean?

DEXTER

I have no remorse either.

He reaches for the surgical power saw.

CHAMBERS

Please! Wait, wait... okay. It was me... only it *wasn't* me. It was the booze...

(weeping now)

It... it takes me over.

DEXTER

A point of view to which I'm not unsympathetic. Neither you nor I is completely in control of our own destinies. Although, at this moment...

He brings the vibrating blade to Chambers' neck.

DEXTER

... I seem to have the upper hand.

CHAMBERS

NO! I'm sorry. Really, I'm so sorry.

DEXTER

Oh, that's nice...

He nods to the photos of the New Mexico and Massachusetts victims.

DEXTER

... but you've done this too many times to be sorry.

(he looks into his eyes)

You are beyond forgiving.

He kills Matt Chambers.

56

INT. LOCO'S CRAB SHACK - NIGHT

56

CAMERA TRAVELS over the late-night crab lovers. FIND Guerrero and his mob reveling at their long table.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Carlos Guerrero has chosen to live in a dangerous world. That's his truth. My truth is: that world doesn't need me to balance its books.

PUSH IN on the Wiseguy, none the wiser.

57 INT. KILLING ROOM - NIGHT 57

Dexter packs up: his equipment, the bloody plastic -- pieces of Matt Chambers.

58 EXT. ABANDONED STRIP MALL - NIGHT 58

Dexter crams the Hefty Bags into his trunk, gets in his car and pulls away. As he leaves the empty parking lot, we CRANE UP to see just where he performed this last deed.

There, above the storefront, is the broken, ramshackle sign of an old Liquor Store.

59 INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 59

Dexter slips his newly-won slide into the box, then places the box behind the AC unit.

DEXTER (V.O.)

The problem with spending so much time on the outside looking in... watching people, studying them...

He crosses to the refrigerator and opens the freezer. There are the Doll Parts, each so carefully wrapped.

DEXTER (V.O.)

... is that I almost always know what they're going to do.

He takes out the Doll Head, smiles, and puts it back on the freezer door. He starts to close the freezer; stops.

DEXTER (V.O.)

So when someone does something I didn't see coming...

THE TINY WRAPPED DOLL HANDS. Dexter unwraps one. Nothing unusual. He unwraps the other.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I really have to stop and...

The fingernails are painted with the same colors as the fingertips from the block of ice.

DEXTER (V.O.)

... appreciate the moment.

GO TO WHITE and we're --

60 INT. LIMBO - NIGHT

60

CAMERA slowly moves over still water (reminiscent of the opening shot). CAMERA FINDS Dexter again submerged up to his eyeballs. The human crocodile.

DEXTER (V.O.)

There are no secrets in life.

The breath from his nostrils ripples the water. We're --

61 INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

61

Dexter in his bathtub.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Just hidden truths that lie beneath
the surface.

And he sinks into the water, disappearing from view.

END OF EPISODE