

D E X T E R

Episode 108

"Shrink Wrap"

Written by

Lauren Gussis

Directed by

Tony Goldwyn

Writer's Draft
8/04/06

DEXTER

"Shrink Wrap"

FADE IN:

OVER BLACK we hear the howling of WIND.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I've always felt safer in the dark.

A NARROW FLASHLIGHT BEAM REVEALS:

-- SPLASHES OF BLOOD on crisp white tile --

DEXTER (V.O.)
In the dark, secrets are easier to
keep.

-- A GUN on a blood-soaked bath rug, red spreading into plush
white softness --

DEXTER (V.O.)
In the light, you can't control
what people see. They say they
want the truth, but --

-- A NAKED WOMAN in an empty jacuzzi-sized bathtub, a PINK AND
RED BURST of brains splattered on the otherwise pristine tub.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Usually, the truth is pretty ugly.

BATISTA (O.C.)
It's like a horror flick.

The light finds BATISTA, looking at the body. REVEAL WE'RE:

INT. WEALTHY HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT 1

Modern minimalist. Except for some strangely shaped pieces
of blown glass.

BATISTA
Tropical storm. Power outage.
Naked dead chick in the jacuzzi.

The beam swings around, lighting DEXTER from under his chin.

DEXTER
All we need is a psycho killer.

BATISTA

Not tonight. This one looks like a suicide.

DEXTER

I wouldn't be so sure. Firearm suicides are usually committed by men. Women tend to slit their wrists. Take pills. Something more lady-like.

BATISTA

Okay, but women kill themselves twice as often as men do. Odds are, she did this to herself.

DEXTER

I don't play the odds -- I need to be sure.

A FORENSICS guy switches on a portable light stand, illuminating the entire scene. Dexter surveys the blood spatter pattern.

BATISTA

So? What do you see?

DEXTER

I'd say... it's a rhinoceros. You?

BATISTA

Bunny rabbit. See the two ears?

Dexter smiles, moves around the crime scene, taking pictures.

DEXTER

Fancy bathtub. Rich husband?

BATISTA

(shakes his head no)
House-husband. "Aspiring artist."

He holds up a piece of blown glass. Dexter makes a face.

DEXTER

Promising.
(off Batista)
So she supported him?

BATISTA

(nods)
Some kind of big time prosecutor.

Dexter pauses for a moment. Something's jogged his memory.

DEXTER
This is the third high-powered woman to shoot herself in the last two years. That's got to be above average.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Note to self...

BATISTA
(shrugs)
I only keep track of the homicides.

Dexter resumes taking pictures.

DEXTER
I will say, if she did this herself, she was very considerate. Using the bathtub makes for an easier cleanup.

BATISTA
Considerate? I would never, ever do something like this to my wife. Her husband's a wreck.

OFF THE BLOODY BODY --

INT. WEALTHY HOME - HALLWAY -- NIGHT 1

The storm continues to toss and tumble outside.

Amidst the bustle of crime scene TECHS setting up lights and gathering evidence, DOAKES talks to ALEX GAYLE, the victim's sexy but blood-soaked husband. Alex is ten years younger than his late wife. He can barely keep it together.

ALEX
I ran out to pick up some dinner. Vanessa said she was going to take a bath. But when I got back...
(tears forming)
I didn't know what to do. I tried to give her CPR, but...

DOAKES
Did your wife have any problems that you know of? Was she depressed?

ALEX

No. No way.

(off Doakes)

Look, I know what this looks like.
But Vanessa would never, ever do
something like this to herself.
She had everything going for her.

DOAKES

High profile jobs can be stressful.
Maybe she cracked under the pressure.

ALEX

(shakes his head no)

Somebody killed her.

(off Doakes, skeptical)

I read the papers. People stage
suicides all the time. Maybe one
of the criminals she put away --

DOAKES

We'll check it out, okay? In the
meantime, we need to take some photos
for evidence. Standard procedure.

Doakes nods to the CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHER who takes a photo
of Alex's bloody clothes. Off the FLASH of the camera --

INT. RUDY'S CAR - NIGHT 1

RUDY drops DEBRA off at the crime scene, lit mostly by
emergency vehicle bars. Wind whips the car and RAIN pounds
the windshield as Rudy puts the car in park. Debra reaches
for the door handle, but Rudy pulls her back for a kiss.

DEBRA

(smiles)

C'mon, I gotta go. There's a dead
body in that house.

RUDY

And there's a hot body in this car.

(eyes her)

This kind of weather makes me want
to stay inside. Order pizza. Pop
in a DVD. And not watch it.

The heat between them is palpable.

DEBRA

I so want to maul you right now.

RUDY

I so wish you could. Come over
when you're done?

DEBRA

(smiles)
I'll bring my handcuffs.

She kisses him again. Grabs her umbrella and ducks out of
the car --

EXT. WEALTHY HOME - NIGHT 1

Debra walks backwards towards the crime scene, still watching
Rudy. She bumps into Doakes, who's exiting the house with
MASUKA. They see her watching Rudy's car pull away --

DOAKES

How are things going with Mr.
Prosthetics?

MASUKA

Yeah -- you riding the baloney pony?

She turns around, shoots them a look.

DEBRA

I don't fuck and tell.

DOAKES

Since when?

Debra smirks, flips him off.

MASUKA

Hey, does he know any hot amputees?
I've always wanted to hump a stump.

They look at him. Freak. Debra turns to Doakes.

DEBRA

You gonna tell me why we're
standing out here getting wet?
(to Masuka)
Don't.

Masuka grins and heads back to the house.

DOAKES

I need you to canvass the
neighborhood. See what you can find
out about the vic's relationship with
her husband.

Dexter approaches, having exited the house.

DEXTER
It's always the husband, right?

DOAKES
Was I talking to you?
(to Debra)
It looks like a suicide, but you
never know. Younger guy.
Unemployed. Might be a boy toy who
killed her for her money.

DEBRA
I'm on it.

Doakes heads off. Dexter falls into step with Debra, who's still happily buzzing over Rudy.

DEXTER
Doakes is sending you away from a
crime scene in the pouring rain, and
you're not putting up a fight?

DEBRA
I'm a team-player.

DEXTER
You are?

She playfully hip-checks him and heads off, kicking puddles as she goes...

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 1

CLOSE ON A DOOR. It opens to reveal Dexter, wet and wind-tossed, fumbling with an umbrella in one hand and tray full of hot chocolate in the other. He's unpleasantly surprised to be greeted by PAUL.

PAUL
Dexter. Hey. Helluva blow-job.
(off Dexter -- huh?)
The wind...?
(still nothing)
Nevermind. Come on in.

As Dexter enters, he sees the room is dimly lit by candles. A COURT SUPERVISOR plays solitaire by candlelight.

DEXTER
Sorry, I thought your visit was
over at seven.

COURT SUPERVISOR

It was supposed to be --

PAUL

Rita's stuck in traffic -- power's out in half the city. I'm thrilled to stick around, but the Court Supervisor? Not so much.

(off Dexter)

You want something to drink?

DEXTER

(re: hot chocolate)

I brought my own.

An awkward beat.

PAUL

Listen, I feel bad about the last time we met. I was kind of a tool. Sorry.

(lowers his voice)

It's just... who wants to meet the guy who's banging your wife while you're in jail, you know?

DEXTER

Yes. That would be awkward.

PAUL

But since Rita let it slip that you guys aren't doing the bone dance, I'm totally good with things.

The Court Supervisor titters from the couch.

PAUL

It's cool -- I knew a bunch of gay guys in lock up.

DEXTER

Thanks for sharing, but I'm not gay.

PAUL

Seriously? But you and Rita have been hanging out for like, a year. What are you? A virgin?

Before Dexter can answer, RITA enters, shaking off the rain. She kisses Dexter.

RITA
Sorry I'm late.
(to Paul)
Thanks for holding down the fort.

The Court Supervisor approaches Rita --

COURT SUPERVISOR
Do you mind if I get going? I'm
happy to stay if you're not
comfortable, but I have kids of my
own to get home to.

RITA
That's fine. Dexter and I are
here, go ahead.

PAUL
Drive safely.

The Supervisor nods, exiting into the rain. ASTOR and CODY
run in, playing flashlight tag --

ASTOR
Mom! Dexter! The lights are out!

DEXTER
They are?
(off their nods)
I brought you hot chocolate.

CODY
Dad already made us some.
(turns his light on Astor)
Tag! You're it!

And he takes off. Astor runs after him. Rita looks at Dexter,
feeling badly for him. She reaches for a cup.

RITA
I love hot chocolate.

PAUL
Take two. He has extra.

Cody slams into Paul's leg, hiding from Astor. Looks to Rita --

CODY
Mom? Can Dad stay and put us to
bed? Please?

RITA

I think that's why Dexter's here,
sweetie.

DEXTER

(he minds)
Dexter doesn't mind.

Cody looks up with puppy-dog eyes. Rita can't bring herself to say no.

RITA

Okay, but no stories, only a song.
It's way past your bedtime.

Cody's ecstatic, and even Astor gives a small smile. Paul turns to the kids --

PAUL

Come on, guys -- let's leave these
two alone. It's not like they
need a chaperone...

He chases the kids to their room. Off Dexter, watching this, troubled...

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 2

CLOSE ON A PHOTO OF NEIL PERRY.

MAYOR ALLEN (O.C.)

So this is the Ice Truck Killer?

PULL OUT TO REVEAL -- CAPTAIN MATTHEWS, standing in front of the big board, a picture of Perry at its center. Matthews is speaking to MAYOR ALLEN and the D.A.

MAYOR ALLEN

You actually got him to confess?

CAPTAIN MATTHEWS

That's right, Mr. Mayor. Neil Perry
is safely locked away until trial.

MAYOR ALLEN

Good. A serial killer on the loose
isn't exactly a tourist attraction.

Debra approaches, overhearing.

DEBRA

No, but we could add Perry's trailer
to the Miami Crime Scene Tour.

MAYOR ALLEN

(smiles when he sees her)
Debra Morgan. Beautiful and smart.
Your father would be so proud.

(indicates Matthews)

Too bad Harry wasn't around to see
Frank here catch the bloodiest
killer in state history, huh?

Matthews smiles, and catches LAGUERTA shooting him the evil
eye from across the bullpen.

MATTHEWS

Just doing my civic duty.

LaGuerta approaches, extends her hand.

LAGUERTA

Mr. Mayor --

MAYOR ALLEN

Good to see you, Lieutenant LaGorda.

LAGUERTA

It's LaGuerta.

MAYOR ALLEN

Right...

D.A.

Maria. When you get the chance, I
really need that D.A. worksheet
completed. I don't want any snafus
when we go to trial.

LAGUERTA

I'll get one of my detectives right
on it.

The Mayor nods, turns to the boys.

MAYOR ALLEN

C'mon, I'm dying for a donut. My wife
has me on this South Beach bullshit.
She thinks because we live in Florida,
it's a cultural obligation.

As the old boys club moves off, Debra turns to LaGuerta.

DEBRA

I can do the D.A. worksheet. I'll
update the witness information and
evidence inventory, too.

But LaGuerta isn't listening.

LAGUERTA

Fucking Matthews. I'm the one who got Perry to confess, and he's got the Mayor kissing his ass.

Angrily, she walks to her office and slams the door. Masuka sees this and passes, chuckling to himself as he heads to --

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN/LAB AREA -- CONTINUOUS

Dexter goes over Vanessa Gayle's blood spatter photos with Batista.

DEXTER

...Blood spatter's inconclusive. All I can tell is that she was shot at close range. Could have been suicide, but could have been someone who knew her.

BATISTA

I'll see what the ballistics guys have to say about it.

Masuka enters, tosses a set of FILES on Dexter's desk.

MASUKA

The photos you were asking about. Why the sudden interest in cold suicide cases?

DEXTER

Morbid curiosity.

Masuka shrugs. Moving on.

MASUKA

You guys totally missed it. Matthews just douched LaGuerta, bigtime.

DEXTER

I hope you're speaking metaphorically, because that would be a serious health code violation.

MASUKA

She's still got her tits in the wringer about Neil Perry.

DEXTER

I don't know what she's so upset about. Now Matthews will be the one with egg on his face.

BATISTA

You still think Perry's the wrong guy?

DEXTER

No doubt in my mind.

(off Batista)

I know you made the bust. But Perry's trailer trash. The Ice Truck Killer's got style. He'll kill again, it's only a matter of time.

MASUKA

Or, if you're right, the real Ice Truck Killer could use Perry as his get out of jail free card. Skip town.

This hadn't occurred to Dexter. He reacts with concern.

DEXTER

You really think that could happen?

BATISTA

Not much we can do except wait and see. Best case, if he's out there, he won't kill again.

DEXTER

(visibly nervous)

Then how will we find him?

(off their looks)

I mean, after all this work, it'd be a shame to let the guy get away.

MASUKA

First place I go when I need to find something? Craigslist. They got an ad for everything.

They're interrupted by A COURT OFFICIAL.

COURT OFFICIAL

Angel Batista?

BATISTA

That's me. What can I do for you?

The Official hands Batista a manila envelope.

COURT OFFICIAL
You've been served.

As the Official walks away, a bewildered Batista opens the envelope. Masuka looks over his shoulder.

MASUKA
Divorce papers?

And then -- silence in the bullpen. All eyes on Batista.

BATISTA
Thanks, amigo.

Batista exits, hurt and humiliated. Dexter turns to Masuka. Unaffected.

DEXTER
People actually read Craigslist?

MASUKA
Hell, yeah. I get everything off those ads. Pieces of furniture... pieces of ass. One stop shopping.

OFF DEXTER, considering...

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 2

Dexter, bathed in moonlight, restlessly scavenges his freezer for a snack. He scans containers of ice cream, but pauses on the BARBIE DOLL PARTS instead.

DEXTER (V.O.)
What if Masuka's right? What if the Ice Truck Killer disappears?

Dexter gently touches the Barbie mini-packages.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I can't just sit on my hands, waiting for something to happen. I need a distraction.
(grabs a pint of ice cream)
Nothing like a pint of Mint Chocolate Chip and a worthy new victim to clear out the old noggin.

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT - LATER (NIGHT 2)

Dexter sits on the floor eating ice cream from the container. AUTOPSY PHOTOS and POLICE REPORTS of the suicide cases he mentioned to Batista are spread out before him.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Meghan Brooks. Carolyn Jacobson.
And now Vanessa Gayle. All three
high powered women who shot
themselves in the past two years.
(he peruses the files)
They've got to have more in common
than career ambition and a fondness
of firearms.

And then Dexter spots the clue he's been looking for.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Fascinating. All three were seeing
the same psychotherapist -- Dr.
Joseph Meridian. He's either
terrible at his job...
(realizing)
Or, he's killing them and making it
look like suicide.

He sits back and admires the files.

DEXTER (V.O.)
An almost perfect crime. He could
even vouch for the fact that they
were suicidal. Truly inspired.
And now, so am I.

Dexter rises, scraping the last bite out of the bottom of the
ice cream container.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I'd love to get a little face time
with the good doctor. But what do
I have to discuss with a therapist?

Dexter looks around his tidy apartment for inspiration. On
the BULLETIN BOARD over his desk, he spots: A NEWSPAPER
STORY. The headline reads: "TEEN KILLER TAKES LIFE IN
PRISON," over a photo of Jeremy Downs.

*QUICKFLASH -- Dexter discovers the dead body of Jeremy, lying
in a pool of blood in his prison cell (Episode 107).*

DEXTER (PRELAP)
Thanks for squeezing me in.

INT. DR. MERIDIAN'S OFFICE - DAY 3

Dexter now sits across from DR. JOSEPH MERIDIAN (55), a
silver-haired man with a warm face.

DEXTER

I was worried I wouldn't get an appointment on such short notice.

MERIDIAN

I keep slots open for emergencies. Your message sounded urgent.

DEXTER

(nods)

I'm having trouble dealing with the death of a friend. A suicide.

MERIDIAN

You came to the right place.

However, Mr. --

(checks APPOINTMENT BOOK)

Ellis. I have to tell you. People's problems are rarely caused by one event. True change comes from digging deep, over a long period of time.

Dexter considers.

DEXTER

Well, I'm definitely hoping to dig up some secrets.

Meridian smiles, satisfied with Dexter's answer.

MERIDIAN

Good. So, tell me about your friend -- what was his name?

DEXTER

Jeremy. I was kind of... mentoring him.

MERIDIAN

Do you feel responsible for what happened to him, on some level?

DEXTER

I don't know, how do you feel when a patient commits suicide?

Meridian doesn't take the bait. Just shows a gentle smile --

MERIDIAN

I didn't mean to put you on the defensive. Why don't you just tell me how you're feeling?

DEXTER

Oh, sad, I guess. Depressed.
Abandoned.

Meridian eyes Dexter.

MERIDIAN

Really? You feel all of those
things? Or those are the emotions
you think you're supposed to feel?

Beat. On Dexter -- damn, this guy is good.

DEXTER

Actually, I'm feeling kind of
parched.

MERIDIAN

Let me get you a glass of water.

Meridian exits. When Dexter's sure the coast is clear, he
rises quickly from his seat and steals a look at Meridian's
appointment book.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Vanessa Gayle's estimated time of
death was 7pm on Monday. According
to his calendar, Meridian was in
session with Harris Solomon.

Dexter grabs a pen, writes "Harris Solomon" on his hand. He
hears Meridian coming and quickly shuts the book. Returns to
his seat. Meridian hands Dexter his water --

MERIDIAN

Now. Let's talk about your real
feelings.

DEXTER

Quite frankly, I don't like to talk
about feelings.

(off Meridian)

Typical American male. Par for the
course.

Meridian smiles, amused.

MERIDIAN

Then let's talk about your romantic
life. Are you married?

DEXTER

I have a girlfriend. Rita.

MERIDIAN

And are you two close?

DEXTER

We spend a lot of time together, if that's what you mean.

MERIDIAN

Actually, I was talking about physical intimacy.

DEXTER

That's personal.

MERIDIAN

Therapy's a good place to talk about personal things.

DEXTER

There's more to relationships than sex.

MERIDIAN

So you're... not having sex?

DEXTER

We're waiting.

MERIDIAN

It's rare in this day and age to wait for marriage.

DEXTER

Oh, I'm not a virgin.

Meridian regards him.

MERIDIAN

Sometimes people don't want anyone to get close to them. It's a way of exercising control.

(beat)

Have you ever been truly close to anyone?

Dexter considers.

DEXTER

Harry. My foster father. He's the only one who ever really knew me.

MERIDIAN

Great. Tell me about Harry.

DEXTER

He's dead.

Meridian's surprised by Dexter's bluntness.

MERIDIAN

I meant, tell me about your relationship. What kinds of things did you two do together?

DEXTER

You know. Normal father-son stuff.

FLASHBACK:

INT. MORGAN HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lit only by the glow of the refrigerator, HARRY scans its contents for a late night snack. He grabs a LOAF OF BREAD and a GLASS JAR of peanut butter.

From the shadows, a MASKED FIGURE springs out and pulls a TIE around Harry's neck. Harry drops the jar, which BREAKS on the floor. As the Intruder pulls tighter, Harry's face grows red. He sputters --

HARRY

Stop! Enough!

And miraculously, the Intruder lets go. Harry rubs his neck. The Intruder pulls off his mask to reveal -- TEENAGE DEXTER.

TEENAGE DEXTER

Are you okay?

HARRY

I'm fine, I'm fine.

(then)

Nice ambush. You chose the perfect point of attack.

TEENAGE DEXTER

I can't believe I finally got you.

(beat)

I won.

Harry looks at Dexter sternly.

HARRY

This isn't a game, Dexter.

TEENAGE DEXTER

No, I know. I just meant --

HARRY

It's not supposed to be fun. I'm trusting you with a lot. You have to be responsible.

(off Dexter)

I know your urges are strong, but you can't get caught up. You have to stay in control. Understand?

ON TEENAGE DEXTER -- nodding, taking this in...

PRELAP -- THE BUZZ OF A SECURITY GATE.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - VISITING ROOM - DAY 3

A GUARD leads LaGuerta in, pulling the security gate shut behind her. Waiting at a table for LaGuerta sits a handcuffed, orange-jump-suited NEIL PERRY. She joins him.

NEIL

I knew you'd miss me.

LAGUERTA

Don't flatter yourself, Neil.

She throws a FILE on the table.

LAGUERTA

I want to go over your case before trial. Comb through every detail. The Notorious Ice Truck Killer.

PERRY

I confessed. What more do you need?

LAGUERTA

Confession's never a slam dunk. We need to clarify some inconsistencies.

(opens the file)

For starters, we haven't been able to match your prints against the partial we got off the lozenge wrapper we found at the abandoned hospital.

Perry smiles. Shows her his fingers. THE TIPS ARE SCARRED.

PERRY

Liquid nitrogen. I used it to freeze the body parts. Extremely effective, but it burns like a bitch.

LAGUERTA

Or, you knew your prints wouldn't match, so you purposely burned your fingers to hide it.

PERRY

Are you suggesting I'm a liar?

LAGUERTA

Just covering my bases, Neil. We both want the same thing.

PERRY

Ten minutes with Angelina?

LAGUERTA

To see you get convicted.

She's taken Perry off-guard.

PERRY

Why the hell would I want that?

LAGUERTA

C'mon, Neil. You confessed. And you refused your right to an attorney. If you didn't want to get convicted, you would've at least put up a fight.

PERRY

I ran away from the cops.

LAGUERTA

Well, we both know you have a flair for the dramatic.

PERRY

(beat)

Look, your reputation is on the line. I understand you need to cover your ass. But what's in it for me?

LaGuerta sits back in her chair.

LAGUERTA

How about immortality?

(off Perry)

Look, bottom line? You're going down for murder. The police found your mother's body under your house -- minus a couple of limbs.

(MORE)

LAGUERTA (CONT'D)

So you can either go down as a pathetic loser who killed mommy, or as the bloodiest killer in Florida's history. Your choice.

Perry considers, decides.

PERRY

If I'm going to be a legend, I need to be memorialized.

(off LaGuerta)

I want a reporter to interview me. Front page.

LAGUERTA

You're not allowed to talk to the press before trial.

PERRY

If you want me to cooperate, I'm sure you'll find a way.

OFF LAGUERTA -- stuck...

DEXTER (PRELAP)

I hate situations that are out of my hands.

INT. POLICE STATION - LAB AREA - DAY 3

Dexter's working at his computer.

DEXTER (V.O.)

That's one thing Meridian had right -- I crave control. But the longer the Ice Truck Killer maintains radio silence, the less control I have. I need to find him before he's out of reach.

DEXTER presses CONTROL + SELECT on his Macintosh keyboard. He pulls up the Miami Craigslist "Missed Connections" ads.

DEXTER (V.O.)

It's desperate, I know. But apropos -- personal ads are filled with desperation.

(reading)

"Tyler from Key West" "Speedos tanning on beach." "Touched your Butt on Friday Night."

(considering)

(MORE)

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
At least these folks aren't just
standing by, waiting for something
to happen.

Dexter looks around to make sure no one's watching. And then
he clicks on "POST." Composes an ad. It reads: "Dear Ken,
I'm in pieces. Why the cold shoulder? Love, Barbie." And
then he clicks on "Post My Ad..."

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 3

Doakes and Batista question Alex Gayle.

DOAKES
Thanks for coming in, Mr. Gayle.
We just need to get our paperwork
in order. I got a forensics report
back that says your fingerprints
were on the gun.

ALEX
I told you, I took the gun out of
her hand. I tried to give her CPR.

DOAKES
I want take you at your word.
Unfortunately, that's not how this
works.

And then Alex realizes --

ALEX
I'm a suspect?

BATISTA
We're just trying to be thorough --

DOAKES
You're the one who suggested
someone else killed Vanessa, Alex.

ALEX
I didn't mean me. I'm a widower, and
you're treating me like a criminal.

Batista feels for the guy. Leans in to Doakes --

BATISTA
(sotto)
Maybe we should cut the guy a break,
James. He just lost his wife.

DOAKES

(sotto)

Maybe you should leave your
personal shit at home, Detective.

OFF BATISTA, chastened --

EXT. FRUIT STAND - DAY 3 (EVENING)

CLOSE ON TWO MELONS. A HAND squeezes one. REVEAL Dexter --
testing melons next to a HOT YOUNG MAN in a sleeveless shirt
and cargo shorts. This is HARRIS SOLOMON. Dexter eyes him.

DEXTER

I know you.

Harris turns to look at him and smiles.

HARRIS

Lame line. You can do better.

DEXTER

No...

(pretends to search his
memory)

Ohmigod, this is embarrassing.
I've seen you at Dr. Meridian's.

(off Harris)

Monday nights? You're always
leaving your 7 o'clock while I'm
arriving for my eight. But you
weren't there last week, right?

HARRIS

No, I was there. But I don't
remember ever seeing you.

(beat)

Which is surprising. Usually I'd
remember such an attractive guy.

Harris takes a step closer to Dexter. Squeezes a melon.

DEXTER

So... how do you like him?

HARRIS

Meridian? Best thing that's ever
happened to me. So far.

(smiles at Dexter)

How about you? You finding him
helpful?

DEXTER

I'm a sociopath. Not too much he can do.

HARRIS

(smiles)

Cute and funny. And, let me guess. Taken.

DEXTER

(nods)

Girlfriend.

HARRIS

(shakes his head)

Lucky girl.

Harris walks away, throwing one last look over his shoulder --

DEXTER (V.O.)

So Meridian's got a confirmed alibi and a glowing professional recommendation. But I'm still not buying it. My bet is, forensics will back me up.

INT. DEBRA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 3

Debra's on top of Rudy, holding his hands over his head. As they move together, her hands squeeze his. Their movements become more intense. And then... release. She collapses on top of him. He runs his hands over her body.

RUDY

I love your body. Your legs... Your arms. Couldn't have made them better myself.

And then he hears Debra sniffing. Realizes --

RUDY

Hey. Are you crying?

She is. She covers her face, mortified. Rolls away from him.

DEBRA

I'm fine.

RUDY

Then why are you --

DEBRA
(embarrassed)
I don't know.
(then)
I'm sure this is really hot.
Crying after sex.

RUDY
Everything about you is hot.

He rolls her back towards him. She covers his eyes.

RUDY
Tell me what you're feeling.

DEBRA
It's just... every time I've ever been
naked with someone, we just... fuck.

RUDY
(gets it)
But not this time.

DEBRA
It's just different. It feels like...
(uncovers his eyes)
Jesus, I hate saying this, it
sounds so freakin' cheesy.

RUDY
It feels like making love.

DEBRA
Ew.
(smiles)
Yes, but ew. Promise me you'll
never say that again.

RUDY
What if I do? Are you going to cry
about it?

Debra smiles, tackling him for another round.

DEBRA
Oh, you are so fucked.

RITA (PRELAP)
Four times?

EXT. PARK - DAY 4

Rita and her kids walk across a grassy field, Astor holding her right hand and Cody holding her left.

RITA
You didn't get sick?

CODY
No way. I love roller coasters. Just like my dad.

Rita gently does some digging with Astor, who's been walking along, her eyes fixed on the grass.

RITA
So... how about you? How are the visits going with your father?

ASTOR
Fine, I guess. Boring.

RITA
You can tell me the truth, sweetie. You don't need to worry about hurting my feelings.

Astor looks up at her. Really? Rita nods.

ASTOR
Actually... they're kind of fun.
(off Rita's nod)
Are you mad?

RITA
Honey, no. I want you to have fun.

ASTOR
It's just, he's different now, you know?

Rita nods. And then they hear --

PAUL (O.S.)
What's up, rockstar?

REVEAL PAUL, sitting alone on a park bench. Cody runs over, jumps on him. Astor sits down next to Paul. He kisses her cheek. Rita frowns --

RITA
Where's the Supervisor?

PAUL

She just called my cell and cancelled. Bummer. Not.
(turns to the kids)
Who wants to go on the swings?

As Astor and Cody ad-lib "Me!" and race to the swings. Rita tries to say this nicely:

RITA

Paul. You know you're not allowed unsupervised visits.

PAUL

Yeah, I know. Big Bad Paul needs a baby-sitter.
(off Rita)
It's your day off, right? How much do you charge per hour?

RITA

I have lunch plans with Dexter.

PAUL

Make it dinner, and I'll foot the bill.
(off Rita)
C'mon, it'll be fun. I'll do tricks for you on the monkey bars.

Rita's torn. Cody, sitting on the a swing next to Astor, calls to them.

CODY

I need a push!

Rita looks at her children. Those puppy-dog eyes.

RITA

I guess I could call Dexter...

Paul looks at Rita, genuinely appreciative. Smiles.

PAUL

It's official. I'm nominating you for Mom of the Year.

Rita nods, and looks to her children, eagerly awaiting a push. Paul steps behind Cody and Rita behind Astor.

PAUL

Let's see who can swing higher. Boys against girls. Just like old times.

Rita can't help but smile, giving Astor a good shove. Off this increasingly less-fractured family tableau...

INT. POLICE STATION - INNER LAB - DAY (D4)

Behind a closed door, Dexter works at his computer. His cell phone vibrates. It's a text from Rita: "Can't make lunch. Supervisor cancelled. Baby-sitting Paul." Dexter pulls out a protein bar. Takes a bite.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Just as well -- I prefer eating alone.
Especially when I have reading to do.

Dexter calls up a temporary E-mail account he's set up for his Craigslist responses: FrozenBarbie@hotmail.com. He's delighted to find twelve new responses.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Then again, it is nice to have
company...

And he opens one. It reads: "Hey, Barbie. How'd you like to suck my cock?" His face falls.

DEXTER
Or not.
(scans the other responses)
Clearly, none of these philistines
is my old friend.

The door opens and Masuka enters. Dexter hits a key and calls up a screen-saver --

MASUKA
Hey, you were looking for me?

DEXTER
What's the word on Vanessa Gayle?

MASUKA
Gunpowder on her hand. High angle
trajectory. No drugs in the tox
screen. It all points to suicide.

Dexter furrows his brow.

DEXTER
No chance it was murder?

MASUKA
Nope. I had the husband pegged for
a boy toy, too.
(MORE)

MASUKA (CONT'D)

Hoped to get tips on how to score a sugar momma. Already tried Craigslist. Nothing but cat-ladies and saggy tits.

DEXTER

I hear LaGuerta's got a lot of money in 401K's...

MASUKA

I think I just threw up in my mouth.

As Masuka exits, disgusted --

DEXTER (V.O.)

Masuka's not the only one left with a bad taste. Something's not adding up. Meridian's alibi held up -- and now forensics indicates it was a suicide.

On his computer, Dexter pulls up a profile of DR. MERIDIAN.

DEXTER (V.O.)

My powers of perception are rarely wrong. But there's a first time for everything.

(beat)

Perhaps my therapist can shed some light on my doubts...

INT. DR. MERIDIAN'S OFFICE - DAY 4

Dexter sits across from Meridian, struggling to maintain a calm demeanor. But his frustration is apparent --

DEXTER

I'm not getting what I came here for.

MERIDIAN

Oh?

DEXTER

You keep trying to talk about feelings, but I came to talk about suicide.

Meridian eyes Dexter.

MERIDIAN

You seem angry.

DEXTER

I'm not.

MERIDIAN

You're denying your feelings again.
Just like you did in your last visit.

DEXTER

(rolls his eyes)
Denial? Anger? Let me guess, next
I'll start bargaining. I read
Kubler-Ross, too, Doc. Psyche 101.
(off Meridian)
I'm just frustrated. Things in my
life are not going as planned.

MERIDIAN

Can you be more specific?

DEXTER

I had a theory about a case at
work, but it's not holding up.

MERIDIAN

What do you do?

DEXTER

Blood spatter for Miami-Metro PD.

MERIDIAN

Fascinating. Most people can't
stand blood.

DEXTER

I hate it.

MERIDIAN

Then you must find organizing and
analyzing it very soothing.

Dexter's surprised at Meridian's astuteness.

DEXTER

I do, actually.

MERIDIAN

(nods)
So, you're frustrated at work.
What else isn't going your way?

Dexter regards Meridian. And then figures -- why not?

DEXTER

I have this... friend. We have a lot
in common. But he's been out of
touch.

(MORE)

DEXTER (CONT'D)

And I don't know how to find him -- no phone number, no e-mail address. I'm afraid he may have left town for good.

MERIDIAN

That must be very upsetting. Especially since your other friend killed himself.

(off Dexter's nod)

What about Rita? Is that going off the tracks as well?

DEXTER

She cancelled lunch with me today. To be with her ex-husband.

MERIDIAN

Ouch. Sounds like a lot of things aren't in your control right now. It's no wonder you're feeling angry. It's much easier than feeling powerless.

ON DEXTER -- this actually makes sense. He leans in, genuinely curious.

DEXTER

So then what should I do?

MERIDIAN

Accept that certain things are out of your hands.

(beat)

Let go.

PUSH IN ON DEXTER --

TEENAGE DEXTER (PRELAP)

Let go!

FLASHBACK

INT. SCHOOL - DAY

Teenage Dexter tries to make his way through the hallway unnoticed, but JOSHUA MORTON, a tough-looking kid with an attitude, holds onto Dexter's back pack. Dexter slides out of the straps, breaking free --

TEENAGE DEXTER

C'mon, man. I'm late for class.

JOSHUA

What are you gonna do about it, freak?

ON DEXTER -- he can think of a few things he'd like to do...
But he holds it together. Takes a deep breath.

TEENAGE DEXTER
Just... give it back, okay?

Joshua drops the backpack. Dexter reaches for it, but Joshua lunges at Dexter, who flinches.

JOSHUA
You scared?

Dexter shrugs -- not really. And without warning, Joshua CLOCKS Dexter in the face.

JOSHUA
How 'bout now?

OFF TEENAGE DEXTER, CUT TO:

INT. MORGAN HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTERNOON (FLASHBACK)

As Harry examines Dexter's wound --

HARRY
What did I tell you about keeping a
low profile. And you get into a
fist-fight?

TEENAGE DEXTER
Just stop, okay? It wasn't my fault.
I could've kicked his ass, but I
didn't touch him. Because of you.

Harry's anger dissipates.

HARRY
What do you mean?

TEENAGE DEXTER
I knew that if I hit him, I
wouldn't be able to stop.
(beat)
I wanted to kill him.

HARRY
But you didn't.
(off Dexter -- no)
It must have been tough to walk
away.

Dexter furrows his brow. Troubled.

TEENAGE DEXTER

*But I still want to kill him, Dad.
When's that going to go away?*

Harry regards Dexter, concerned.

HARRY

It might not.

TEENAGE DEXTER

So what do I do?

Harry looks at Dexter, sternly.

HARRY

*Nothing.
(off Dexter)
It's over, Dexter.*

OFF TEENAGE DEXTER, his blood still boiling...

INT. COUNTY JAIL - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY 4

LaGuerta watches from behind the one-way mirror as Neil Perry finishes up an interview with a REPORTER. The Reporter exits, passing LaGuerta as she enters.

LAGUERTA

How was the interview?

PERRY

Fine.

LaGuerta joins Perry at the table, tosses down her file.

LAGUERTA

So let's talk about the case.

PERRY

Sure. As soon as I get to talk to a reporter.

LAGUERTA

You just did.

PERRY

Give me a break. That poser was one of your cop buddies. But nice try.

ON LAGUERTA -- caught. But she recovers quickly.

LAGUERTA

In case you forgot? You're the one in jail. I call the shots.

PERRY

Wrong. I could invoke my Miranda rights at any time -- lawyer up.

LAGUERTA

Except you won't. If you were going to do that, you already would have.

Perry eyes her.

PERRY

I know what you're up to, Lieutenant. You think I'm a fraud, and you're trying to prove it. But the truth is, you're the one who's a fraud.

LAGUERTA

Excuse me?

PERRY

I did a little research on you -- found out how you got promoted. You and that Sergeant Doakes, you were partners, right?

(off LaGuerta)

Doakes got the drop on a major coke dealer and brought you along for the ride. Perp bailed from a third story apartment.

LAGUERTA

How did you --

PERRY

Doakes took the fire escape and sent you down the front stairs, just in case. I'm guessing he figured that was the safe route. But you got lucky and nailed the guy. Took full credit for the bust. And so the legend began.

(off LaGuerta)

I wonder if Doakes would have made a good Lieutenant.

LaGuerta fumes.

LAGUERTA

I deserved that promotion.

PERRY

Sure you did -- it was a big bust. Not as big as catching me, of course. But let's be honest, you didn't catch me. Captain Matthews did. I watch the news.

OFF LAGUERTA... leveled...

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 4

Debra talks into her cell phone outside LaGuerta's office.

DEBRA

You're cute.

(beat)

No, you are.

She sees Doakes approaching, gets flustered.

DEBRA

I gotta go.

(beat)

No, you are. Bye.

As she hangs up --

DOAKES

How's the boyfriend?

DEBRA

He's not my boyfriend.

DOAKES

Whatever you say, Morgan.

DEBRA

Blow me.

Doakes smiles at her.

DOAKES

That's better. I thought you were getting all girly on me. Don't want you to start crying and shit.

Debra brushes him off with an uncomfortable laugh. LaGuerta yells from her office --

LAGUERTA

Morgan! Where the hell's that DA worksheet?

Debra jumps, hustles into LaGuerta's office.

Doakes joins Batista at his desk. Alex Gayle sits across from them, his face in his hands. Doakes leans in to Batista --

DOAKES

(sotto)

You told him about the forensics report?

BATISTA

(nods, sotto)

I hate seeing another man weep.

DOAKES

(to Alex)

I'm really sorry, Mr. Gayle.

ALEX

I just can't believe I didn't know she was so unhappy. I should have been able to help her.

Batista puts a comforting hand on Alex's shoulder.

BATISTA

It's not your fault. If someone's gonna do something that selfish, you're probably better off without her.

Alex is stunned.

ALEX

How can you say that? I loved my wife.

DOAKES

(to Alex)

I'm sorry, Mr. Gayle, will you excuse us for a second?

As Doakes drags Batista to --

INT. POLICE STATION - SMOKING PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Batista tries to apologize to Doakes --

BATISTA

I'm sorry. It's just --

Doakes holds up a hand --

DOAKES

Don't.

(off Batista)

I know you're going through some
shit, man. And I feel for you.
But this job don't give a rat's ass
about your marriage. Divorce is a
big enough problem. You get fired?
You got two problems. Understand?

OFF BATISTA, feeling like a shit...

INT. MERIDIAN'S OUTER OFFICE - NIGHT 4

A DOORKNOB JIGGLES. A CLICK, and the lock releases. The
knob turns, and Dexter enters, wearing gloves and holding a
flashlight and a screwdriver -- he's broken in.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I can't let go. Not when I'm this
close to getting what I want.

As Dexter quietly shuts the door, his cell phone vibrates.
It's a text from Rita: "Where are you? :) "

DEXTER (V.O.)

Oh, breaking and entering.

He slips the cell phone in his pocket and heads into --

INT. MERIDIAN'S INNER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dexter shines the light around.

DEXTER (V.O.)

There's got to be something useful
here. Files, medical records...

As Dexter looks through the piles of paper on the desk, he bumps
the computer mouse. The monitor comes to life, casting an eerie
glow. Dexter looks at the screen and is shocked when he sees a
streaming video of an empty couch in an office --

DEXTER (V.O.)

Holy blogaholic, Batman. He's got
a hidden web-cam.

Dexter steps away from the computer, into --

INT. MERIDIAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

-- Where he scans the empty office. He moves to the corner, holding up his hands in the shape of two "L"s -- a mock camera. He points it at the couch, looking through it. Sure enough, the image and angle match Meridian's streaming video.

Dexter looks behind him. In the bookshelf is the CAMERA...

DEXTER (V.O.)
Now what's he recording for
posterity's sake?

Dexter heads back into --

INT. MERIDIAN'S INNER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

searches the computer for movie files, and sure enough, he finds a folder for each client. He deletes a folder labeled "Michael Ellis."

DEXTER (V.O.)
Goodbye, Dexter.

And then he reads through the other names. Finds Meghan Brooks, Carolyn Jacobson, and Vanessa Gayle.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Hello, ladies.

He clicks open Vanessa's file. ON THE SCREEN -- Vanessa, an attractive thirty-something in a power suit, sits on Meridian's couch, weeping.

VANESSA
I feel like I'm spinning out. Before
therapy, I had my life under control.

Meridian talks to Vanessa from off-screen --

MERIDIAN (O.S.)
Control is an illusion.

VANESSA
I felt better when I was on the
anti-depressants. Why did you take
me off them so suddenly?

MERIDIAN (O.S.)
Because I was respecting your
wishes. You didn't want to take
them in the first place.
(MORE)

MERIDIAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You said they were a crutch. I think you were right.

VANESSA

But now I can't get out of bed in the morning.

(beat)

Sometimes I think about killing myself. But I don't think I could go through with it.

MERIDIAN (O.S.)

You've never shied away from a challenge before.

VANESSA

I'm just so confused.

(beat)

Do you think I should just end it?

MERIDIAN (O.S.)

I can't make that decision for you. But I do understand the appeal. No more pain. No more responsibility...

Dexter pauses the video. Leans back in the chair.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Clever. Pulling her off anti-depressants, making her suicidal. After that, all she needed was a little extra push. I wonder if this is how he killed them all...

Dexter feels his cell phone vibrating again. He pulls it out -- another text from Rita: "Come over. I need you!" He puts it back in his pocket, and begins dragging and dropping the video files onto a flash drive.

DEXTER (V.O.)

This is all the proof I need. After tomorrow night, the doctor will be out. Permanently.

Dexter puts the flash drive in his pocket and heads off...

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 4

Rita, wearing a sexy nightgown, opens the door to find Dexter.

DEXTER

Hey, I got your texts. Is everything --

And much to Dexter's surprise, she pulls him into a passionate kiss. After a moment he pulls away --

DEXTER

-- Okay?

RITA

(grinning)

It is now.

As Rita closes the door, Dexter sees the room is lit by candles.

DEXTER

Power out again?

RITA

No...

(leading him to the couch)

I wanted to see you. I felt badly about missing lunch to be with Paul and the kids. I hope you didn't get the wrong idea...

DEXTER

No, of course not.

(then)

How did it go?

RITA

Really good. And incredibly scary. For the first time in a while, I felt how easy it would be to go back to my old life.

DEXTER

Why's that's scary?

RITA

Because. I like my new life. I finally feel like I'm in control. I never felt that way with Paul.

(off Dexter)

I do with you.

DEXTER

(forcing a smile)

That's great...

Rita pulls him into another kiss, crawling on top of him.

DEXTER (V.O.)

This is a disaster. I chose Rita because she was damaged. If she heals, I'll lose her for sure.

DEXTER

Wait... Astor and Cody...

RITA

They sleep through thunderstorms, remember?

She starts unbuttoning his pants.

RITA

I'm ready, Dexter.

DEXTER

For what...?

And then she takes off her nightgown. Stands there naked. Dexter realizes --

DEXTER

Oh...

RITA

I don't know what I've been so afraid of. You're the perfect boyfriend.

(beat)

I want you to spend the night, Dexter. For real.

She leans in for a kiss, but Dexter pulls away --

DEXTER

What happens in the morning, when the kids find me here?

RITA

We'll figure it out...

She leans in again, and Dexter pulls away... again.

DEXTER

I'm sorry...

(off Rita)

I came over because I thought something was wrong. But tonight's really not a good night. I'm in the middle of a lot of work --

RITA

Now? It's late?

DEXTER

All the more reason to get back to it. Clock's ticking. I'll call you tomorrow, okay?

He kisses her, exits. OFF RITA, confused, watching him go --

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

As Dexter shuts the front door behind him, exiting Rita's --

DEXTER

Shit!

As he walks to his car --

DEXTER (V.O.)

I can't have sex with Rita. Every time I sleep with a woman, she sees me for what I really am. Empty. And then it's over.

He opens the car door, gets in. Sits. Thinks.

DEXTER (V.O.)

But I like seeing Rita. Which means I'm going to have to deal with this.

(shuts the car door)

I can't kill Meridian tomorrow. I need another therapy session.

INT. HOSPITAL - PROSTHETICS LAB - DAY 5

CLOSE ON a screw, turning. Rudy's putting the final touches on a prosthetic arm. Debra knocks on the door frame. Enters. Rudy smiles, picks up the arm.

RUDY

Stay where you are. I'm armed.

DEBRA

With bad puns?

(kisses him)

You said you needed a favor. What's up?

As Rudy places the arm with several others --

RUDY

Take off your pants.

DEBRA

(laughs)

I should have known it was that kind of favor. You never ask me to drop by before work.

RUDY

No, but I like the way you think.

(off her smile)

I have a patient who lost both her legs in a car accident. Really brutal.

DEBRA

Like your mom.

RUDY

(smiles, she remembered)

Right. Which is why I want to do something special for her. Give her a smokin' new pair of legs.

(beat)

Yours.

Debra's eyes go wide.

DEBRA

No. No way.

RUDY

Just let me take a cast. Twenty minutes, tops. Please?

He brings her to an examining table next to a tray full of plaster of Paris. Stirs it.

DEBRA

I don't know... It looks... goopey.

RUDY

C'mon. Quit being such a chick.

She smirks, sighs, shrugs, nods. Gently, he unbuttons her pants. She uses his shoulders to balance as he pulls them off, one leg at a time. He gestures to the examining table.

RUDY

Lay down.

She does, and watches as he coats her leg with plaster.

DEBRA
It actually feels kind of good.

As he works his way up her leg --

RUDY
(smiles)
We can play with it later, if you want. That'd be a helluva story to tell in the bullpen, huh?

DEBRA
I haven't told anyone about us.

RUDY
Embarrassed to be banging Captain Hook?

DEBRA
Not even a little.

Rudy stops working, looks at her. Waiting for an answer. Clearly, he's offended. She gathers her courage --

DEBRA
I guess it's because... this actually matters to me. So if I talk about it, and it goes away, I'm actually losing something.
(beat)
Is that retarded?

RUDY
No. But I'll tell you right now --
You've got nothing to worry about.

He kneels down, so he's eye level with her. Puts his hand on her face.

RUDY
I'm not going anywhere.

DEBRA
Seriously?

He nods. Debra's touched. After a moment --

RUDY
Neither are you, by the way. I've got your leg.

She laughs and kisses him...

INT. POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY 5

Debra exits the elevator and falls into step with Doakes. As they walk down the hallway, she's got a big smile on her face.

DOAKES
Where were you?

DEBRA
With my boyfriend.

Doakes raises an eyebrow as they head into the bullpen.

DOAKES
Boyfriend?

DEBRA
Yup. We just fucked in his office.
We're having dinner later.

The other COPS overhear -- catcalling her --

DEBRA
(louder)
And he's got a monster cock.

Doakes chuckles as he heads into LaGuerta's office --

INT. POLICE STATION - LAGUERTA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Doakes finds LaGuerta at her desk.

DOAKES
You were looking for me?

LAGUERTA
Yes. Shut the door.
(as he does)
Did you tell anyone about our bust?
The one that got me promoted?

DOAKES
No --

LAGUERTA
Nobody in the press?

DOAKES
Maria. We talked about this when it happened. It'd fuck up your rep, and I'd look like a whiny bitch. All kinds of bad for both of us.

LaGuerta nods. She believes him.

LAGUERTA

So then, the only way to access that information would be to look at the police report, right?

DOAKES

(shrugs)

I guess.

LaGuerta takes this in.

LAGUERTA

I'm going to have to get our firewall checked.

DOAKES

Why?

LAGUERTA

Just a hunch.

OFF LAGUERTA, wheels turning...

INT. MERIDIAN'S OFFICE - DAY 5

Dexter sits across from Meridian, mid-session. Still shaken.

DEXTER

It was the first time Rita ever asked me to spend the night. I didn't know what to say.

MERIDIAN

Maybe she just wanted the company.

DEXTER

(shakes his head no)

She definitely wanted the sex.

MERIDIAN

So what'd you do?

DEXTER

Made up an excuse. Got out of there, toot sweet.

Meridian regards him. Curious.

MERIDIAN

Don't you like her?

DEXTER

That's just it. I do.

MERIDIAN

But you're still not ready to take things to the next level.

(off Dexter -- right)

You don't want her too close to you. You're afraid she won't like what she sees.

DEXTER

(amazed)

Yes. Exactly.

MERIDIAN

I feel like this is connected to your control issues. By not having sex, you're exerting your power.

Dexter leans forward, interested.

DEXTER

I don't understand.

MERIDIAN

There are four instances in which human beings completely surrender control. Sneezing, falling asleep, orgasm, and death. I believe that you avoid sex because you don't want to let go.

A silent beat. And then --

DEXTER

I don't know how.

(beat)

I mean, how to let go. I know how to have sex.

Meridian nods -- now they're getting somewhere.

MERIDIAN

I'd like to try talking you through a deep relaxation technique. It might help bring some things to the surface.

DEXTER

(cautious)

What kind of things?

MERIDIAN

There has to be a time in your life when you felt powerless. I believe that if we can access that memory, we might find the root of your control issues.

(off Dexter's hesitation)

These kinds of exercises can be very helpful if you're willing to take a chance.

Dexter figures, it couldn't hurt...

DEXTER

Sure. Just tell me what I need to do.

Meridian gets up. Dims the lights.

MERIDIAN

For now, just close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Count each breath in... one. And out... two.

(off Dexter -- seriously?)

Just give it a try. And in... one... and out... two.

Tentatively, Dexter closes his eyes. Begins breathing.

DEXTER (V.O.)

In... one. This is ridiculous. I could be killing him right now. Out... two.

MERIDIAN

Now think of a time you felt completely, utterly powerless.

DEXTER (V.O.)

In... one. I will say, it is soothing... Out... two...

As Dexter inhales again, relaxing into it --

FLASHBACK:*EXT. PARK - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)*

Joshua Morton shoots baskets by himself at a school playground. But he's not alone. REVEAL -- Teenage Dexter, watching from the bushes. Gripping a knife at his side.

Joshua finishes up and starts to walk away, dribbling the ball. Dexter listens to the rhythmic BOUNCE. BOUNCE. BOUNCE... and readies himself to pounce.

Dexter's taken off-guard when a FIGURE tackles him from behind. He falls to the ground, struggling against a firm police chokehold. REVEAL -- Harry, pulling tighter around Dexter's neck. As Dexter fights for breath --

HARRY

You said you walked away. That should have been the end of it.

DEXTER

(coughing)

I couldn't help it.

HARRY

And now look what happened. You got caught.

(pulls tighter)

This? Right here? This is how it feels to get caught. Powerless.

Dexter's now bright red, about to pass out. As Harry lets go, Dexter collapses. He gasps for breath, doubled over --

HARRY

You stay in control, Dexter. If you want to survive, you need to stay in control. No exceptions. Understand?

Dexter nods, still struggling. OFF TEENAGE DEXTER -- never wanting to feel that way again...

END FLASHBACK

INT. DEXTER'S CAR - NIGHT 5

Dexter grips the steering wheel, white-knuckled, at a stoplight.

DEXTER (V.O.)

I can't believe he got that out of me. He's good. And I'm... confused. Why did I bury that memory? That... feeling.

(realizing)

And since when do I have feelings?

Dexter looks up at the red light, waiting for it to change.
PUSH IN ON THE GLOWING REDNESS.

QUICKFLASH: Impressionistic red. AN INFANT, sitting in blood. Trying to crawl. Powerless. The baby cries out and then a HORN HONKS --

RESUME - INT. DEXTER'S CAR - NIGHT 5

Dexter snaps to. He's drenched in sweat, panting, and terrified. The horn HONKS again. Dexter looks up -- the light has turned green. He steps on the gas...

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT 5

Rita, wearing only an over-sized T-shirt, answers the door to find a bleary-eyed Dexter.

RITA

Hey... are you okay?

He answers with a passionate kiss. She pulls away to look at him, curious and confused. And then returns his kiss with even greater passion.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 5

Rita's on top of Dexter, as they make love for the first time. Terrified, Dexter never takes his eyes off of her. For Rita, this makes it all the more intimate. She puts her hand on his face, holding his gaze.

As her movements get more intense, Dexter starts to panic. He grabs her, trying to slow her down, but she misinterprets his forcefulness for passion. He struggles with her, his face contorting. He looks like any other man about to come, but --

DEXTER

I can't --

RITA

(breath heavy)

It's okay... I want you to...

Dexter grabs her, rolling on top of her, trying to regain control. Struggling, almost thrashing. But it's too late. He thrusts hard, groans, and collapses on top of her. And in a moment, it's over...

INT. COUNTY JAIL - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY 6 (MORNING)

LaGuerta enters, carrying a cooler. Sits down with Perry.

PERRY

I hope you came here to apologize.

LAGUERTA

Nope. Came for a consult.

She puts the cooler on the table.

PERRY

You brought beverages?

LAGUERTA

(ignoring him)

I got this on loan from the morgue.
I could use an expert opinion.

From the bag, she pulls out a MAN'S SEVERED HEAD. Perry flinches.

LAGUERTA

Autopsy says this guy was dead
before his head came off. Any idea
how the killer did him?

NEIL

(panicking)

No --

LAGUERTA

Really? I figured you would. I mean,
you cut people up into pieces.

(off him)

Hang on, let me get a pad and pen.
I want to take notes.

She reaches into the knapsack and bumps the head. It starts to roll towards Perry. He flinches.

LAGUERTA

Shit.

She grabs the head and props it up, facing Perry. Perry's eyes go wide. LaGuerta takes out her pen and pad. Perry's really struggling to keep it together.

LAGUERTA

What's wrong? You've seen worse.

Perry turns away from the head, fighting his gag reflex. LaGuerta eyes him. Shakes her head. Tsk tsk.

LAGUERTA

You're not a murderer at all, are you, Neil?

PERRY

I'm the Ice Truck Killer.

LAGUERTA

I talked to the medical examiner. He couldn't confirm how your mom died. Just that the body was cut up. He said she could have died of a heart attack. And I think that's exactly what happened.

PERRY

I killed her, that bitch.

LAGUERTA

You wanted to get your mom back for everything she put you through. The abuse. The name calling. Making you feel like a failure. But you didn't have the guts.

(off Neil)

After she died, you tried to cut her up, but you didn't have even have the stomach for that.

PERRY

Fuck you.

LAGUERTA

So when the Ice Truck Killer came along, you saw a way to make a name for yourself. Without doing all the dirty work.

PERRY

Bullshit. I know all the details of the case. Things that weren't published in the newspapers.

LaGuerta eyes him. Gets up. Sits on the table, puts the head in her lap, and looks him in the face.

LAGUERTA

I had Miami Metro's firewall checked. Someone hacked into the computer system. But you already knew that, didn't you, Neil?

(off his stunned silence)

(MORE)

LAGUERTA (CONT'D)

You had everything covered -- even bought a paneled car. Nice touch, by the way.

Perry's now sweating.

PERRY

Why are you doing this? I cleared your case for you...

LAGUERTA

He was your hero. You wanted to know what it would feel like. To be him. And then you thought, maybe you could. So you broke into the system. Found out all the details. And waited to get caught.

(off Perry)

But you're no killer. You're a coward.

Almost as punctuation, she puts the head in his lap. Finally, Perry begins to sputter and weep.

PERRY

You're right, okay? I lied. Now please, just take this thing away?

LaGuerta looks at him -- a shattered shell of a man. Off this victory --

INT. RITA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY 6 (MORNING)

Morning light pours in through the window. Dexter sleeps soundly next to Rita. She rolls over, draping her arm around him. Dexter's eyes pop open at the touch. As he takes in his surroundings, he realizes -- they had sex. He came. And he's fucked.

Dexter nervously slides out of bed. Starts putting on his clothes. As he sits on the end of the bed to put on his shoes, Rita stirs. She wakes up and sees him. Smiles.

RITA

You're sweet.

DEXTER

(caught)

I am?

RITA

Next time we'll figure out what to tell the kids. So you don't have to sneak out like this.

Beat. Dexter is stunned.

DEXTER

You want a next time?

RITA

And a time after that.

(then, insecure)

Don't you?

DEXTER

No. I mean, yes. I just... I
didn't freak you out?

RITA

(smiles)

You don't need to worry about that
kind of thing with me, Dexter.

You're not going to scare me away.

OFF DEXTER -- who can't believe he escape unscathed...

INT. POLICE STATION - LAGUERTA'S OFFICE - DAY 6

LaGuerta stands proudly before Matthews and the D.A.

MATTHEWS

This better be good, Lieutenant.
We've got a lot to get done before
Perry's trial.

LAGUERTA

No need.
(off them)
I got Perry to recant.

MATTHEWS

You... Wait, what? When?

LAGUERTA

I went to visit him at county. He
told me gave us a false confession.
(off the two of them)

He's a poser, Frank. Just wanted
his fifteen minutes. That's all.

The D.A. and Matthews share a look.

MATTHEWS

And how do you know which time he was
lying?

(off her)

(MORE)

MATTHEWS (CONT'D)

All due respect, Maria, but if we dropped charges every time someone recanted a confession, our jails would be empty. We're going to trial.

LaGuerta's pissed.

LAGUERTA

As much as I hate to challenge your megalomania, Captain, that's not really up to you. It's up to the D.A.

Matthews and LaGuerta turn to the D.A.

D.A.

I reviewed the D.A. worksheet, Maria. The evidence is conclusive. We'll move forward with the trial, as planned.

OFF LAGUERTA, fuming...

INT. DR. MERIDIAN'S OFFICE- DAY 6

Dexter sits before Meridian, ecstatic.

DEXTER

You were right about letting go.
(off Meridian)
I took the next step with Rita.

MERIDIAN

That's wonderful.

DEXTER

And now that I think about it, I stopped worrying about that friend of mine who's out of touch. Can't control other people, you know?

MERIDIAN

Those sound like real breakthroughs, Dexter. You should be proud.

DEXTER

I am. Truth be told, I never expected to make progress in therapy.

MERIDIAN

I'm not sure that's entirely true. If it were, you never would have come in the first place.

Dexter smiles. Stands. Starts pacing the room.

DEXTER

There's more. I'm going to tell you
something I've never told anyone.

Meridian leans forward, intrigued. Dexter inhales deeply --

DEXTER

I'm a serial killer.
(amazed)
Wow, it feels good to say that out
loud.

MERIDIAN

(smiles)
You really are letting go. I've
never heard you make a joke before.

DEXTER

Freud says there are no jokes.
(off Meridian)
Hey, you said to let go, so I'm
letting it all fly.

Meridian looks over his shoulder.

DEXTER

Are you looking for the camera?
Because I disabled it.

MERIDIAN

I don't know what you're talking
about.

DEXTER

Maybe if you focus on your
breathing, you'll remember.

Dexter reaches into the BAG he's brought with him. Pulls out
a portable DVD player. Presses PLAY. ON THE SCREEN --
Vanessa Gayle sobs.

MERIDIAN (O.S.)

You've never shied away from a
challenge before.

VANESSA

I'm just so confused.
(beat)
Do you think I should just end it?

MERIDIAN (O.S.)

I can't make that decision for you.
But I do understand the appeal. No
more pain. No more responsibility...

Dexter presses STOP.

MERIDIAN

Those sessions are confidential.
How did you -- ?

DEXTER

Call me a control freak -- I broke
into your office. Watched all the
videos. Impressive skills of
persuasion, Doctor. But a real abuse
of power, don't you think?
(off Meridian)
No wonder you're so well-versed in
control issues. You've got a textbook
God complex.

MERIDIAN

I'm calling the police.

As he reaches for the phone, Dexter rises.

DEXTER

Don't get me wrong, Doc. If you're
a pot, I'm kettle. We're both
black...

Dexter grabs Meridian's arm. Meridian drops the phone,
shocked by the physical contact.

DEXTER

But you really helped me realize
something. The fact that I'm a
killer? That's just something I
can't control.

Meridian tries to pull his arm away. But Dexter holds tight.

DEXTER

Which means even though you've been
incredibly helpful -- I'm still
going to have to kill you.

Dexter lets go of his arm, smiles. Once free, Meridian
immediately takes off. Runs into --

INT. DR. MERIDIAN'S OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

But there's no escape. Dexter has covered it in plastic, and his tools are waiting. As Meridian realizes that Dexter is, in fact, a serial killer -- Dexter grabs him.

DEXTER

I'm sorry, Doctor. But I have to let you go.

Meridian's eyes go wide. Dexter shuts the office door. PUSH IN on the hanger that reads: "IN SESSION." HEAR the RIP of duct tape and then -- FADE TO BLACK. A beat.

FADE IN TO:

INT. DEBRA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT 6

Debra blasts "I'm So Excited" on her stereo as she bops around her bedroom in a pair of jeans and a bra. As she chooses clothes from her closet, she sings along --

DEBRA

I'm so excited. And I just can't hide it. I'm about to lose control and I think I like it...

Her phone RINGS. She answers.

DEBRA

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RUDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 6

CLOSE ON RUDY.

RUDY

Is that The Pointer Sisters?

DEBRA

(turns down the volume)

No. What's up?

RUDY

I'm running a little late. I'm in the middle of some housework, and if it's not done before I see you, it'll drive me crazy all night.

DEBRA

I never knew you were so anal.

RUDY

And I'm a neat-freak.

DEBRA

(laughing)

You're full of surprises, huh?

RUDY

You have no idea.

(beat)

I'll be there as soon as I can.

As Debra hangs up the phone, happy --

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Rudy's housework: He drags LARGE PLASTIC TUBS OF BLOOD to an over-sized refrigerator -- humming "I'm So Excited" as he works. He passes:

-- A BULLETIN BOARD: PHOTOS of dead hookers, Toni Tucci, and their respective crime scenes.

-- AN OVERSIZED CHAIR populated with BARBIE DOLLS

-- A CART FULL OF SURGICAL PARAPHERNALIA

A veritable scrapbook of our series so far. Rudy is the Ice Truck Killer! And then we realize, oh shit -- is Debra next?

Still humming, Rudy sits down at a computer, The Miami Craigslist Missed Connections are pulled up on the screen.

On his screen: "Dear Ken, I'm in pieces. Why the cold shoulder? Love, Barbie." Rudy smiles. Hits respond. And types: "Barbie - Be patient. One day we'll share a cold one." He hits send, and grins --

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END