

DEXTER

"Heroes and Villains"

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Previously On Dexter: Dexter continues to successfully hide his secret life as a serial killer from the rest of the world. A while back, a comic was created entitled, "The Dark Defender." The Bay Harbor Butcher killings, murders that Dexter committed, inspired this character. When the author of the comic was killed, the idea for the Dark Defender seemed to die with him. Dexter will soon find however, that there is still some unfinished business with the Dark Defender.

DEXTER

"Heroes and Villains"

FADE IN:

ON A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF THE CITY OF MIAMI. It is a full moon night. Gunfire and police sirens can be heard O.S. After a moment --

DEXTER (V.O.)

They say we live in a world dominated by good and evil, black and white, heroes and villains. If you're not one then you're the other. Personally I think that philosophy is a load of bull.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE STREETS OF DOWNTOWN MIAMI, FL - NIGHT

An old newspaper lies on the vacant sidewalk. The front-page headline reads, "Tooth Fairy Killer Still at Large."

DEXTER (V.O.)

Sure, there's the honest, well-intentioned cops at Miami Metro who are essentially good. Then there's the irredeemable bastards that get a thrill out of hacking up prostitutes into little pieces. But what about the people that fall in the middle, the grey, those willing to do the immoral to set matters right? What about people like me?

PAN OUT

A YOUNG WOMAN wearing a purple trench coat cautiously walks down the sidewalk of the shabby neighborhood. Far too much makeup is plastered on her face and her hair is a mess. As the woman walks down the street, a HOODED MAN emerges from the dark alley. He coughs once to get her attention.

HOODED MAN

Hey, how much?

The woman, trying to remain vigilant, turns to the hooded man.

WOMAN

You a cop? Cause you have to tell me if you are.

HOODED MAN

Not a cop. Just a broken old man who needs to pay a pretty penny to get his kicks.

The woman eases towards the hooded man.

WOMAN

Two hundred an hour. A blow will cost you an extra fifty. I don't use whips or handcuffs. I don't take dumps or squeeze the lemon. None of that sick shit.

HOODED MAN

Don't worry. I'm not into any of that. I'm not even asking you for sex.

WOMAN

Oh great. You're one of *those* weirdoes. If you want me to watch you jack off...

HOODED MAN

You've got it all wrong. All I want is to see you smile!

The hooded man slams a gas bomb on the pavement. Before the woman can react, she finds herself engulfed in a fog of smoke. After a moment of coughing, the woman starts uncontrollably laughing. An insane, hysterical grin is imprinted on her face. As the smoke clears, the hooded man approaches the woman. He removes his hood to reveal his face composed of a hideous mouth of rotten teeth. This is the TOOTH FAIRY KILLER.

TOOTH FAIRY KILLER

Oh dear. This isn't very good at all. Have you been flossing like I told you to?

The woman attempts to call out, but just keeps laughing like a hyena.

TOOTH FAIRY KILLER

That's what I thought. Looks like we'll have to perform an emergency tooth extraction.

The Tooth Fairy Killer pulls out a rustic pair of dental pliers and lunges towards the woman.

TOOTH FAIRY KILLER

Would you like me to put you under?

The woman continues to uncontrollably laugh.

TOOTH FAIRY KILLER

No? Well good. That just makes it more fun. Now hold still. This is going to hurt you a lot more than it's going to hurt me.

A single tear emerges from the woman's eye as she continues to laugh. As the Tooth Fairy Killer is about to plunge the pliers into her mouth, an arm pulls him away into the dark alley. A struggle is heard off screen. The woman hears repeated stabbing followed by a body dropping to the ground. After a moment, the effects of the gas begin to wear off the woman. She gazes into the alley to see the dead body of the Tooth Fairy Killer. Although he received multiple stab wounds, his ghastly smile is still on his face.

PAN OUT

A DARK FIGURE looks down at the woman and the corpse from the top of a nearby building. He wears a leather hood and cape and wields a knife dripping with blood. A full moon resides behind him.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Does slaying the wicked justify my actions or have I become what I set out to fight against? I don't even know anymore.

The Dark Figure turns around and begins to run away. He charges forward, practically in slow-motion.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Hero, villain, call me what you will.
I choose to look at myself as the
stalker of the night. My blade of
vengeance turns wrong into right.
I am...

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT — COCONUT GROVE, FL — NIGHT

DEXTER stands at his kitchen counter, reading a comic book entitled, *The Dark Defender*. Everything that previously occurred was merely a fragment of the comic being played out in Dexter's head.

DEXTER (V.O.)
The Dark Defender, the superhero
inspired by the Bay Harbor Butcher
murders...the murders I committed. I
thought the idea for this comic died
with it's original creator when he
got his head bashed in with a snow
globe. Somehow though, it looks like
the comic has gone mainstream.

Dexter sets the comic down on the counter and observes the picture of the Dark Defender on the cover.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I still think it's ridiculous that
he's wearing black leather in Miami.

JAMIE enters the room, prepared to leave.

JAMIE
I put Harrison down for the night. If
you don't need anything else I'll be
on my way.

Dexter picks up the comic and presents it to Jamie.

DEXTER
Jamie, where did this come from?

JAMIE
It was just sitting on your doorstep
when I got here. Thought it was mail.

DEXTER

What? It was just on the doorstep?

JAMIE

Yeah. Is something wrong?

DEXTER

...No I just really hate getting junk mail. You can go now.

JAMIE

Okay, see you tomorrow.

Jamie exits. Dexter takes another look at the comic's cover. HARRY appears by Dexter's side.

DEXTER

Maybe it's a coincidence.

HARRY

Yeah. Just like it was a coincidence when you found the Ice Truck Killer doll in your fridge. Face it, somebody knows.

Dexter notices the author's name on the comic, ZACK HAYES.

DEXTER

Zack Hayes.

Dexter sits down at his computer and does a search for "Zack Hayes, Dark Defender."

HARRY

You think this guy is connected?

Dexter logs onto Zack Hayes' fan site, revealing a picture of him. Zack is a bearded man in his early thirties with a thick pair of glasses and man boobs.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Doesn't strike me as the master criminal type.

DEXTER

They never do.

Dexter scrolls further down the page and comes to a section that reads, "Upcoming Appearances."

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Look at that. He's signing comics tomorrow at Villain's Comic Book Shop. Either the planets lined up or we've got our guy.

HARRY

So you're just going to show up there tomorrow, exposing yourself in the open? Think you ought to wear a cape or mask or something?

DEXTER

Never gonna happen. Besides, I'm already wearing the only mask I'll ever need.

HARRY

Whatever you say, Superboy.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAIN'S COMIC BOOK SHOP – THE NEXT DAY – AFTERNOON

Dexter enters, taken aback to find that PEOPLE WEARING DARK DEFENDER COSTUMES populate the store. In his traditional button-down shirt, Dexter sticks out like a soar thumb.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Damn. Maybe Harry was right. The least I could have done is throw on a pair of thick glasses to throw people off.

Dexter begins to make his way towards a line of people when he suddenly bumps into MASUKA, who is wearing a Dark Defender costume.

MASUKA

Hey, watch where you're fucking...

Masuka looks up to find he has run into Dexter.

MASUKA

Dexter...hey...what's up, man?

Dexter tries to play it cool and picks up a Thing action figure on display.

DEXTER

I'm just here to buy Harrison's birthday present. He really likes the Hulk.

MASUKA

Actually, that's The Thing.

DEXTER

Of course. What are you doing here?

MASUKA

Oh you know me. Just looking for a Japanese love pillow to dip into.

DEXTER

Then why are you wearing that costume?

Masuka searches for an answer, but comes up with nothing.

MASUKA

Look, if you tell anyone at Miami Metro this I will hunt you down and kick your ass...

DEXTER (V.O.)

Thanks, Vince. I needed a good laugh.

MASUKA

I'm kind of a comic fanatic and just got my copy of The Dark Defender signed by Zack Hayes.

DEXTER

The Dark Defender? Didn't it's creator get his head bashed in with a snow globe?

MASUKA

Denny Foster, he was just the original co-creator. Since then Hayes has been developing the project solely. I tell ya, the man's a fucking genius. Dark Defender is in Watchmen territory.

DEXTER

Now wasn't the Dark Defender inspired by the Bay Harbor Butcher killings?

MASUKA

Yeah. And you know what the coolest part of the series is? All the villains are inspired by real-life serial killers. They've got the Ice Truck Killer, Trinity...I never thought of it before, but Miami has become the real life Gotham City.

DEXTER

So who is the Dark Defender?

MASUKA

They still haven't revealed his secret identity. But if they want to mirror real life it could be James Doakes.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Or somebody else at Miami Metro.

MASUKA

Well Dex, my meter is going to run out in a minute so I'd better hit the trail.

DEXTER

Right. I'll see you Monday.

MASUKA

Remember, not one word. It will ruin the image I have worked to achieve.

DEXTER

Lips are sealed.

Masuka gives Dexter a nod and exits.

DEXTER (V.O.)

After all, Masuka, who could possibly ruin *your* reputation?

Dexter removes the rolled-up Dark Defender comic he has been keeping in his back pants pocket. He gets into the back of the line to meet Zack Hayes.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'm not sure who that was more awkward
for. Still, at least I got some much
needed background information.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAIN'S COMIC BOOK SHOP – SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Dexter reaches the front of the line where he comes face to
face with the hairy, slightly overweight Zack Hayes. Zack
gives Dexter a big smile with his mouth of braces.

ZACK
Hi, old chum. Who should I make this
Out to?

DEXTER (V.O.)
(Sarcastic)
Yeah, this will be the man who brings
me down...right after Calendar Man
kills Batman.

Dexter hands Zack the Dark Defender comic book.

DEXTER
Kyle Fischer, he's my son.

ZACK
(winking)
Right your *son*.

DEXTER (V.O.)
I've met some unlikely foes that
possessed dark passengers. Family
men, motivational speakers. But
this guy? Give me a break.

Zack finishes signing the comic and hands it back to
Dexter. As Dexter is about to call it quits, confetti
begins to drop from the ceiling. All eyes are suddenly on
Dexter.

DEXTER (V.O.)
Oh God, what's going on? Is he going
to out me right here? I never should
have come.

Dexter is greeted by JONATHAN KEARNY, a balding man with the same build as Zack. He begins to shake Dexter's hand, making Dexter feel even more uncomfortable.

JONATHAN

Hello, sir. I'm Jonathan Kearny, Zack's agent, and you're the one hundredth person to get your Dark Defender comic signed today. That means you get to take home a limited-edition copy of The Dark Defender Issue 30: Trinity Strikes Back. Congratulations!

Zack presents Dexter with a comic in a plastic case. The whole room watches Dexter and applauds for him.

DEXTER (V.O.)

100th customer? Hayes has got to be setting me up somehow. No way is this all happening by chance. Smile...just smile and make it to the door as quickly as you can.

Dexter forces the most unnatural smile imaginable, revealing his teeth. AN EMPLOYEE takes a picture of Dexter and Zack with an iPhone

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Is it weird that stabbing someone through the heart has become more natural than smiling for me?

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT — COCONUT GROVE, FL — LATE AFTERNOON

Dexter enters in a daze with confetti still in his hair. He makes his way into the living room and plops down on the couch. Jamie enters from the bathroom.

JAMIE

Dexter, you're home. Didn't you say you'd be out late again?

DEXTER

My plans didn't quite come together.
You can go home early if you want,
Jamie.

JAMIE

Okay. I was just giving Harrison his
bath. I'll dry him off and get him
in his pajamas before I go.

DEXTER

Thanks.

Jamie reenters the bathroom.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Well today was a big bust. All
I managed to figure out is that
Masuka is a fanboy and there are
a lot of grown men in Miami that
need to sort out their priorities.

Dexter finally takes a book at the comic he won, which is
rolled up in his hand. He unrolls it to reveal the cover
that reads "The Trinity Killer's Last Stand."

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I've never been a big comic fan. But
how can I resist when I'm the star?

Dexter opens the comic to page one, and begins to read.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE — AN INCOMPLETED BUILDING — NIGHT

The events of the comic are once again played out in
Dexter's mind. An OLD MAN hammers a nail into the wall,
frustrated. An ANONYMOUS MAN calls out from the other side
of the room.

ANONYMOUS MAN

Excuse me, sir.

The Old man turns to find the Anonymous Man in the shadows,
wearing a construction hat.

ANONYMOUS MAN (CONT'D)

This area is closed.

OLD MAN

Damn-it, I don't care what you're policy is. I'm not retiring, even if it means I have to work after hours.

ANONYMOUS MAN

You have to leave now, sir.

OLD MAN

Fuck off!

ANONYMOUS MAN

Very well, have it your way.

The Anonymous Man pulls out a nail gun and shoots the Old Man in his legs. The Old Man drops his hammer and falls to the ground, crying in agony.

OLD MAN

You son of a cock-sucker!

The Anonymous Man comes forward to reveal he is ARTHUR MITCHELL aka TRINITY. In his left arm he carries an urn of his sister's ashes. In his right hand he wields the nail gun, which he drops to the ground. He lifts the construction hat from his head, exposing a trinity sign tattooed to his forehead.

OLD MAN

Wait...I've seen your mug shot on the news...you're the Trinity Killer.

TRINITY

Then I take it you know that I only need one more kill to my annual cycle complete.

Trinity notices the hammer on the floor. He puts the urn down and picks the hammer up.

TRINITY (CONT'D)

And what do you know, just the tool I've been looking for. Things are really starting to come together.

Trinity grins and lifts the hammer into the air. Unable to get up, the Old Man trembles in horror.

TRINITY (CONT'D)
It's hammer time!

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT — COCONUT GROVE, FL — SAME TIME

Dexter looks up from the comic with a raised eyebrow.

DEXTER
"It's hammer time?" If the real Arthur Mitchell had used a line like that, I never would have allowed him to live as long as I did.

Dexter shrugs and returns to the comic.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE — AN INCOMPLETED BUILDING — SAME TIME

Trinity is on verge of striking the old man with the hammer. But before he gets the chance, Trinity finds another hand pulling the hammer away. Trinity turns around to find the Dark Defender behind him. The Dark Defender punches Trinity square in the face, causing him to fall to the ground.

DARK DEFENDER
Didn't you read the caution sign, Trinity? Wear safety goggles at all times.

TRINITY
Well, if it isn't the Dork Defender. Nice to see you again.

DARK DEFENDER
This time I don't plan on letting you slip through my hands.

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT — COCONUT GROVE, FL — SAME TIME

Dexter continues to be baffled by the comic as he reads on.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Why are they talking so much? Just stab the guy with a needle for crying out loud. Save the theatrics for when he's strapped to a table.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE — AN INCOMPLETED BUILDING — SAME TIME

The dialog between the Dark Defender and Trinity continues.

TRINITY

I'll have you know that I didn't see any caution sign. Refresh my memory. Was it shaped like a...triangle!

Trinity quickly yanks a series of ninja stars out of his coat and chucks them at the Dark Defender. Each of the death stars notably has three spikes. The Dark Defender reacts fast, evading all of the ninja stars. The final one barely misses his ribcage, cutting through his cape. While the Dark Defender dodges the stars, Trinity puts the Old Man in a chokehold. The Dark Defender looks over, as Trinity is about to bash the Old Man's head in with a hammer.

DARK DEFENDER

Trinity!

TRINITY

Back away or else this building isn't the only thing that will need serious remodeling.

The Dark Defender considers his options and then notices the urn of ashes. He picks it up and lifts the urn over an incomplete wall of the building.

TRINITY (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

DARK DEFENDER

I know you're M.O. Trinity. The cycle won't be complete unless you scatter your sister's ashes by the victim.

The Dark Defender removes the top of the urn.

DARK DEFENDER (CONT'D)

Let him go or all the ashes get scattered right here, right now.

Panicked, Trinity lets the Old Man go. Still unable to walk, the Old Man begins to crawl away from the area.

DARK DEFENDER (CONT'D)

Now slide the hammer over here.

Reluctantly, Trinity drops the hammer onto the ground and kicks it over to the Dark Defender.

DARK DEFENDER (CONT'D)

That's a good boy.

The Dark Defender throws the urn off the building, causing the ashes to get swept away in the wind.

TRINITY

No!

Trinity rushes over to the other side of the building. He hysterically plummets to the floor in tears as he reaches for his sister's ashes. The Dark Defender takes this opportunity to stab Trinity in the back. Trinity lets out a shriek of agony and the Dark Defender chucks him off the building. A thump is heard O.S. as Trinity meets the pavement. Pan to Trinity's corpse, splattered all over the sidewalk.

DARK DEFENDER (V.O.)

Everyone thinks that New York is the hotspot for super villains. But at least it's overpopulated by heroes. Spider-Man, Iron Man, those wacky turtles. I'm just a solitary soldier caught in a raging war on crime.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING — ALMOST DAWN

The Dark Defender slips through a window into his apartment as the sun begins to rise.

DARK DEFENDER (V.O.)

Here in Miami we have to deal with demented dentists, trinity killers, and the greatest enemy man has ever known...

Breathing heavily, the Dark Defender removes his mask. He covers his face with a towel however, keeping his identity unknown to the audience.

DARK DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...The heat. God, is it unbearable in these clothes. But at least tonight I managed to cross one enemy off the list.

The Dark Defender removes the towel from his face. The audience still only sees him from behind though. As he enters his kitchen, the Dark Defender notices a message posted on the fridge.

DARK DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

With Trinity gone I can take a break and...wait...Oh God...

ZOOM IN on the message, which reads in magazine clipped letters, "I know who you are, Dark Defender. Meet me at 8300 Park Boulevard, April 3rd, 8:00 P.M. Yours truly, The Investigator."

DARK DEFENDER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It appears crime never takes a vacation, whether you're a hero, a villain, or somewhere in between.

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT — COCONUT GROVE, FL — DUSK

Dexter looks up from the comic with an expression of realization on his face.

DEXTER (V.O.)
April 3rd.

Dexter removes his cell phone from his pocket to look up the date.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
That's today. I knew this all couldn't be a coincidence. Hayes gave me this comic to send a message. He wants to meet face to face.

Dexter checks his phone yet again.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I still have an two hours until eight. That should give me just enough time to find this address and get their early.

Jamie reenters, fully prepared to leave.

JAMIE
Harrison's all set. Unless you need anything else...

DEXTER
Actually, I hate to do this to you, but I just got a call. They need me at Miami Metro. Is there anyway you can stay another couple hours?

JAMIE
Yeah, I guess. Harrison's ready for bed and I was just going to sit on the couch and watch TV tonight anyways. Might as well do it for a fee.

DEXTER
Thanks, Jamie. I owe you one.

JAMIE
I'll be sure to hold you to that.

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S CAR — OUTSIDE AN ABANDONED WAREHOUSE, FL —
AROUND 7:30 P.M

Dexter pulls up to an old abandoned warehouse. Nobody else occupies the deserted area.

DEXTER (V.O.)
8300 Park Boulevard. Not the most
sophisticated lair for a villain.
Then again, I plot my endeavors in
an apartment. Who am I to judge?
Time to make a house call. But not
without my two trusty sidekicks.

Dexter opens the glove compartment to reveal a knife and
needle.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE, FL — MINUTES LATER

Dexter enters the warehouse. A number of newspaper
clippings regarding famous serial killers and missing
persons are posted on the walls. Dexter explores the era in
fascination, scanning the articles.

DEXTER (V.O.)
The Domsday Killer, Jordan Chase...
This guy's been tracking me for God
knows how long. But how? How did he
never show up on my radar?

INVESTIGATOR (O.S.)
Welcome, Mr. Morgan.

Dexter looks up at catwalk above him to find THE
INVESTIGATOR. This mystery man wears a black trench coat,
leather gloves, boots and a fedora. He conceals his
identity with a faceless mask and speaks through a voice
modifier.

INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)
Glad to see you got my invitation.
I thought you'd be here early.

Dexter is weary about what to say, then finally responds.

DEXTER

You can take the mask off, Hayes.

INVESTIGATOR

In due time, Mr. Morgan. But first you need to take off your mask.

DEXTER

I'm not wearing a mask.

INVESTIGATOR

Oh, but you are, Mr. Morgan. You wear your mask everyday you go into work, everyday you buy donuts for your so-called friends, and every night when you tuck your son into bed. It seems like the only time you aren't wearing your mask is when you're plunging a knife through a fellow killer's heart.

Dexter stands there, shell-shocked and unsure how to counter.

INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)

You don't have to ask. I know what you're thinking. How could I possibly know about this? Well it all started about a year ago.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIAMI RIVER, FL — FLASHBACK — NIGHT

A MAN jogs down the street near the Miami River. He wears a hoodie over his head, keeping his identity unknown. He comes to a stop as he spots Dexter drowning NICK, the convict who killed BROTHER SAM, in the river.

INVESTIGATOR (V.O.)

I was jogging down the beach one lonely night when I saw you ruthlessly drown a man in the Miami River. My initial reaction was too call the police. But then I began to wonder, how does a man take another human being's life and then smile about it.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE DEXTER'S APARTMENT - COCONUT GROVE, FL -
FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Dexter pulls his car into the driveway. PAN and ZOOM IN on another car that is already situated outside the building.

INVESTIGATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I followed you home that night.
Observing your rituals started to become my hobby. I was careful to keep my distance of course. How interesting was it for me to discover that the man in the river wasn't a one-time deal.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE, FL - PRESENT

The Investigator continues to tell his story, as Dexter grows more concerned.

INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)

Murder is another day at the office for you. As the weeks went by, I realized that all of your victims were far from innocent. They too shared the same lust for death. Upon further research, I noticed that there have been hundreds of killers and people here in my Miami who have not been seen from in eons. In many ways Dexter, you are the real-life Dark Defender.

DEXTER

So why the hell did you call me here.

INVESTIGATOR

Because, every great superhero and super villain needs an origin story. I want to get into your head, Dexter. Tell me your whole story as a serial killer, from when your first kill to this moment.

DEXTER

So you can print it all in that crappy comic. I don't think so.

INVESTIGATOR

I understand, you need a little time to think it over. What do you say we meet this time tomorrow.

DEXTER

Are you delusional? I'd much sooner kill you.

INVESTIGATOR

But I don't meet you're code.

DEXTER

Codes were meant to be broken.

INVESTIGATOR

Just think about it. Now if you'll excuse me, I have another appointment I have to keep.

The Investigator slams a gas bomb on the ground, temporarily causing Dexter to shield his eyes. As the smoke clears, Dexter looks up to find that the Investigator has disappeared.

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S CAR — OUTSIDE ABANDONED WAREHOUSE, FL — MINUTES LATER

Dexter climbs into the driver's seat of his car, draped in sweat and breathing heavily. PAN to the left to reveal Harry sitting in the passenger's seat.

HARRY

You let him get away.

DEXTER

I wasn't expecting him to drop a gas bomb. Besides, it's like he said, he doesn't meet the code.

HARRY

You said codes could be broken.

DEXTER

I figured it might get him to lay off.

HARRY

They never "Lay Off", Dexter. This guy isn't like anyone else you've gone after before. You have to end it as soon as possible.

DEXTER

I don't know enough about him.

HARRY

Really, because he knows plenty about you. Your only options are to kill Hayes now or wait for him reveal your identity to the world. Better yet, he knows where you live. He could be going after Harrison as we speak.

DEXTER

Would you leave me alone so I can think?

HARRY

It's all up to you, boy wonder.

DEXTER

Stop calling me that!

Dexter turns to the passenger's seat to find that Harry is gone. Frustrated, Dexter puts the keys in the ignition and drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT — COCONUT GROVE, FL — LATER THAT NIGHT

Jamie sits on the couch, watching television. As Dexter enters, she shuts the TV off and greets him at the door.

JAMIE

Hi, Dexter. Welcome back.

Jamie notices that Dexter looks completely distraught and pale.

JAMIE (CONT'D)

Jesus, you look like you've seen a ghost. Was it a bad one?

DEXTER

Yeah...

Dexter pulls out his wallet and hands Jamie several dollars.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Here. A little extra for staying late.

JAMIE

Oh you don't have to...

DEXTER

It's the least I can do.

JAMIE

Thanks. Same time tomorrow?

DEXTER

Sure.

JAMIE

Okay...Oh almost forgot. A package came while you were gone.

Jamie points Dexter's attention a package sitting on the counter.

DEXTER

When did that come?

JAMIE

Thirty, forty minutes ago. When I answered the door nobody was there. The package was just sitting on the doormat. It had no return address or anything though. Really bizarre.

DEXTER

Thanks. I've actually been expecting for that to come.

JAMIE

Alright, well see ya.

Jamie exits. Dexter approaches the package and gazes over it.

DEXTER (V.O.)
 Thirty, forty minutes ago. But that's
 when I was meeting with the Invest...
 Hayes...but he couldn't be two places
 at once. A sidekick maybe?

Dexter continues to inspect the package. After moment, he carefully opens it. Inside he finds a note, which he gradually picks up.

DEXTER (V.O.)(CONT'D)
 (reading the note)
 In case you change your mind, meet
 me at the warehouse same time
 tomorrow for an exclusive interview.
 And this time be sure to come in
 costume.

Dexter is confused about the last sentence of the note. He digs further into the package to find an outfit. He pulls it out to reveal a Dark Defender costume.

DEXTER (V.O.)(CONT'D)
 Unbelievable. It's as if somebody
 else has taken over my world and
 written me into a piece of bad fan
 fiction.

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S APARTMENT — COCONUT GROVE, FL — DEXTER'S
 BEDROOM — EARLY MORNING

Dexter lies in his bed, asleep. He is wakened by the sound of his cell phone ringing. The groggy Dexter reaches for his phone on the nightstand and answers it. On the other line is the voice of DEBRA.

DEXTER
 Hello?

DEBRA (O.S.)
 Dex, we've got a dead woman
 downtown.

DEXTER
Is there blood?

DEBRA (O.S.)
(lovingly)
Would I be calling you if there
wasn't, dumb shit?

Dexter reaches for a pen and notepad on the nightstand.

DEXTER
Give me the address. I'll be there
as soon as Jamie gets here to watch
Harrison.

DEBRA (O.S.)
Alright, just keep in mind that this
one is more fucked up than usual...
even for us.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ALLEY IN DOWNTOWN MIAMI — ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES
LATER

Dexter cross the yellow tape to enter the alley. POLICE
OFFICERS examine the area. Dexter is greeted by a worn-out
Debra.

DEBRA
Dex, it's about fucking time. We have
an ID on the victim, Charlene Miller.
She lives just outside the apartment
building a block over.

DEXTER
And the cause of death?

DEBRA
It's insane. Somebody plucked every
tooth from her mouth and she
apparently bled out over night.

Dexter stops dead in his tracks and he sees the corpse of
CHARLENE MILLER on the ground. Her mouth is covered with
dried up blood and her extracted teeth are sprinkled around
her body.

DEXTER

Oh my God...

DEBRA

I know. And it gets even weirder.
Look at this note we found.

Debra hands Dexter a note that has been secured in a plastic evidence bag.

DEXTER

(reading the note)

For everyday the Dark Defender does
not reveal his identity, another will
die.

DEBRA

Have you ever seen anything like it?

DEXTER (V.O.)

Well actually...

MASUKA (O.S.)

Say, Debra.

Debra turns around to find Masuka behind her.

MASUKA (CONT'D)

Can I talk to you for second.

DEBRA

For fucks sake, Masuka, you're
really going to hit on me now of
all places? A woman is dead!

MASUKA

No, it's about the victim. I think I
just cracked the case.

DEBRA

You cracked the case?

DEXTER (V.O.)

Great, I now live in a world where I
get bested by a fanboy and Masuka.

MASUKA

I have this *friend* who reads Dark Defender comics. And in a recent story ark he goes up against the Tooth Fairy Killer, who extracts the teeth from women's mouths. Tooth Fairy threatens to keep murdering women until the Dark Defender finally reveals his identity to the world.

DEBRA

So you think somebody is recreating murders from a comic book so a fictional character will come forward?

MASUKA

From what my *friend* tells me, they still haven't revealed who the Dark Defender is in the comics. It's been driving a lot of people nuts.

DEBRA

Crazy enough to kill.

MASUKA

I once knew a Harry Potter nut who offed himself after Dumbledore died. Plus the Dark Defender creator, Zack Hayes, he's in Miami for a book signing. Don't you think this all lines up a little too perfectly?

DEBRA

Well we have no other leads. Lets find out where this Zack guy is staying.

MASUKA

The Deauville Beach Resort, floor 12, room 20. He gets a nice ocean view.

Debra raises her eyebrow at Masuka.

MASUKA (CONT'D)

Um, my friend told me that...

DEBRA
Quinn, Batista!

Debra turns to Quinn and Batista, who have been inspecting the crime scene.

DEBRA (CONT'D)
According to Masuka, this murder is identical to one in a comic he read.

QUINN
(laughing)
Wait, Masuka reads comic books?

DEBRA
I know, it's hilarious. Anyways, he also says that the writer of the comic is staying here in Miami. It all seems pretty suspicious. I want you guys to go down to his hotel room and check him out.

BATISTA
Okay.

DEBRA
And why don't you bring Masuka with you seeing how he's the comic expert.

PAN to Dexter, who has been listening in on this conversation, as he takes pictures of Charlene's corpse.

DEXTER (V.O.)
If Masuka is smart enough to even marginally put this together then the rest of the police won't be far behind. I've got to finish up here as soon as possible and confront Zack before he gives anything away.

CUT TO:

INT. ELEVATOR - THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT - LATER THAT DAY

Batista, Quinn, and Masuka ride up the elevator in awkward silence.

MASUKA

So this is pretty awesome. I've never been to interrogate someone before.

BATISTA

Yeah, it's kind of like I'm the Green Hornet and you're Kato.

Batista and Quinn laugh amongst themselves.

MASUKA

Shut the fuck up, Batista. I don't read comics. I just have a friend whose into them.

QUINN

Right, a friend. I'm sure the two of you dress up like Batman and Superman all the time and play Avengers.

MASUKA

Batman and Superman are part of the Justice League. Marvel Comics does the Avengers!

Batista and Quinn continue to laugh while Masuka grows more frustrated. The elevator comes to a stop and opens at floor 12.

CUT TO:

INT. FLOOR 12 - THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT - CONTINUOUS

Batista, Quinn, and Masuka exit the elevator and make their way down the hallway.

MASUKA (CONT'D)

You know, the guy isn't even really a friend. He's just some fourteen-year-old geek who I occasionally have to put up with because I'm porking his mom. That's it. It's not my fault if some comic book lingo gets burned in my mind while I'm sticking it inside a hot single milf.

BATISTA

Sure, Vince, whatever you say.

The three arrive in front of room 20. Batista knocks on the door. There is no response.

BATISTA

Mr. Hayes, this is Miami Metro. Open up.

There is still no response. Batista knocks on the door again.

BATISTA (CONT'D)

Open up, this is the police!

Batista and Quinn give each other a look. They draw their guns. After silently counting to three, Batista kicks the door open and they charge in. Masuka just waits outside, unsure what to do.

MASUKA

I'll just wait here then.

CUT TO:

INT. ZACK HAYES' HOTEL ROOM - THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT -
CONTINUOUS

Batista investigates the room as Quinn covers him. The room appears to be vacant. The two enter the bedroom and find that the bed is covered with blood. Batista vigilantly approaches the bloody, rolled-up blanket. He unrolls it to discover a severed hand inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ALLEY IN DOWNTOWN MIAMI - SAME TIME

Debra's cell phone rings and she immediately answers.

DEBRA

Hello...Batista, what do you have...
What? Holy fuck...Okay, stay there.
I'll be there with a team in a few
minutes.

Debra slams her phone shut and advances towards Dexter, who is still analyzing the corpse.

DEBRA
Dex, you almost done?

DEXTER
Yeah, just about.

DEBRA
Good. Pack it up. We've got another
One on our hands.

DEXTER
Where?

DEBRA
Zack Hayes' hotel room. Batista
found a severed hand in his bed.

DEXTER
What?

DEBRA
All in a day's work, huh?

CUT TO:

INT. ZACK HAYES' HOTEL ROOM - THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT -
AFTERNOON

The room is now filled with POLICE OFFICERS. Dexter's attention is drawn to a section of the carpet in the left corner of the room. Debra approaches him from behind.

DEBRA
What do you got, Dex?

DEXTER
Look. There's a small bloodstain on
this carpet. But it's across the room
from where Batista found the hand.
There was a struggle here. They
worked there way over to the bed and
one killed the other.

MASUKA
A lover's quarrel if I ever saw one.

Debra turns around to Masuka and rolls her eyes. Masuka proceeds to the closet and opens it.

MASUKA
Holy fucking shit!

Debra and Dexter turn to Masuka.

DEBRA
Shit, what is it now?

Debra rushes over to Masuka. Inside the closet is a heap of Dark Defender merchandise.

MASUKA
Limited edition Dark Defender merchandise.

DEBRA
You've got to be fucking kidding me.

Masuka gets down on his knees and rummages through the merchandise like a kid on Christmas.

MASUKA
Dark Defender posters signed by Zack Hayes, original drawings, the Dark Defender bobble-head!

Masuka turns around to the frustrated Debra.

MASUKA
You know, if that's Zack Hayes' hand and he's dead this stuff is going to be worth a lot of...

DEBRA
(cutting Masuka off)
Forget it, Masuka. It's evidence.

MASUKA
But...

DEBRA
Get back to work, fanboy.

Debra angrily turns away from Masuka, back to Dexter.

MASUKA
(under his breath)
Life fucking sucks.

Masuka shuts the closet.

JONATHAN (O.S.)
Let me through, God damn-it!

Pan to the front door where Jonathan Kearny, Zack's manager, fights to get past TWO COPS. Jonathan carries a box of donuts as he simultaneously tries to get through.

COP #1
This area is off limits, sir.

JONATHAN
You don't understand. I'm Zack Hayes' agent. What's going on?

The two cops turn to Debra, who has been observing the confrontation.

DEBRA
Let him through.

The two cops stand aside and Jonathan enters.

DEBRA
You said you were Zack's agent?

JONATHAN
Yeah, Jonathan Kearny. What happened here?

DEBRA
We found a severed hand in the bed.

JONATHAN
(shocked)
What? Oh my gentle Jesus! Is it...
does the hand belong to...

DEBRA
Right now we're not sure. We're going
to run a DNA test.

JONATHAN

Christ! What about the rest of the body?

DEBRA

There's still no sign of it.

JONATHAN

But I just saw Zack last night.

DEBRA

You did?

JONATHAN

Yeah. I'm staying in the room down the hall. Today we were supposed to go to a round table interview. I woke up early to get donuts.

DEBRA

Maybe you can help us. I'd like for you to come with us to Miami Metro and answer some questions.

JONATHAN

Why, do you think I did this?

DEBRA

It's just a few questions. Maybe you can give us an idea of who would want Zack dead.

JONATHAN

(hesitant)

Oh alright. If it will help you catch whoever did this.

DEBRA

Great. We'll leave in a few. Just wait here.

Jonathan nods then notices Dexter in the back of the room.

JONATHAN

(pointing at Dexter)

Hey, I know you!

Dexter turns to Jonathan.

DEXTER

Who, me?

JONATHAN

You're the guy who won the Dark Defender comic the other day.

DEBRA

(confused)

What?

DEXTER

I think you have me confused with someone else.

JONATHAN

No, no, look.

Jonathan sets the box of donuts on a nearby coffee table and pulls his phone out of his pocket.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

An employee forwarded me this.

Jonathan opens his phone and shows them a picture of Dexter and Zack together at the comic book store. Debra raises her eyebrow and turns to Dexter.

DEBRA

Seriously?

DEXTER

(trying to laugh it off)

Well...you caught me. I picked up a Dark Defender comic one day and couldn't put it down.

JONATHAN

I knew it. What did you say your name was? Kyle Fisher?

DEXTER

Dexter Morgan.

JONATHAN

Just goes to show I'm bad with names. Jonathan takes a look at his phone.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

Oh this reminds me, got to cancel that interview. Mind if I step out?

DEBRA

Go ahead.

JONATHAN

Right. Just tell me when we're leaving.

Jonathan exits. Debra turns to an embarrassed Dexter.

DEBRA

Masuka I can buy. But you, a Dark Defender fan?

DEXTER

It's about Miami serial killers. When you're in my line of work you can't help but be intrigued.

DEBRA

Any other deep dark secrets I should know about?

DEXTER

No. That's about it.

CUT TO:

INT. MIAMI METRO — INTERROGATION ROOM — DUSK

Jonathan sits on one end of a table. Debra sits on the other end with Batista standing behind her.

DEBRA

So you talked with Zack around ten last night then went to bed.

JONATHAN

Yeah. Then I woke up today at like eight. Got some donuts and came back.

BATISTA

You didn't hear a struggle last night?

JONATHAN

No, I told you already.

Batista

And Zack had no plans to meet with someone else that night?

JONATHAN

(frustrated and intimidated)

Not that I know of. Look, there's more to this than what you're telling me. If you would just fill me in maybe I can give you people the information you need...please.

Debra gives Batista a look. Batista then pulls out a file and slaps it on the table. He opens the file to reveal pictures of Charlene Miller's dead body.

JONATHAN

Shit!

DEBRA

The woman in this photo is Charlene Miller. She was found dead this morning with all of her teeth extracted. Ring any bells?

JONATHAN

Ring any bells? What do you...hold on...this fits the M.O. of the Tooth Fairy Killer.

BATISTA

We found a note saying that these murders will continue until the Dark Defender comes forward.

JONATHAN

So someone's recreating events from the Dark Defender comics? Why would they do that?

DEBRA

We were hoping you could tell us.

JONATHAN

Well, Zack's done over fifty issues and still hasn't revealed the Dark Defender's identity. A lot of fans have been getting impatient. There's this one who's been writing some really crazy shit on the Dark Defender message board. His profile name is The Investigator.

DEBRA

What does he say?

JONATHAN

Stuff like, "People will die if the Dark Defender doesn't unmask himself." We tried tracking the user down but he had this really advanced security network. Made him virtually untraceable.

BATISTA

And you guys never thought to call the cops?

JONATHAN

Well we deleted his profile and haven't heard from him in eons. We figured his threats were empty, but now...

DEBRA

Can we still see what he posted?

JONATHAN

Yeah. Even though we deleted his profile we still got all the comments he ever made backed up.

Debra turns to Batista.

DEBRA

We need to trace this Investigator guy. I don't care how long it takes. We're going to find out who it is.

CUT TO:

INT. MIAMI METRO — LAB — SAME TIME

Dexter analyzes the blood samples he found at the hotel room.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Both the severed hand and the blood at the hotel room are a match for Zack Hayes. The blood on the carpet though, it belongs to someone else. Was I was wrong about Zack being the Investigator? Or maybe someone else wanted Zack gone and did me a favor...nah, I'm not that lucky. No matter what happened to Zack, the Investigator is still out there pulling my string.

Debra enters.

DEBRA

Dex, any luck?

DEXTER

It's Zack Hayes' hand alright.

DEBRA

Figures. I think we have our first suspect though.

DEXTER

Who?

DEBRA

Some Internet nerd named the Investigator. He's been threatening to murder people if the Dark Defender doesn't come out. We figured he offed Charlene Miller then took Hayes hostage.

DEXTER

And do you know who the Investigator is?

DEBRA

Not yet. But we have the tech guys working on it. With any luck they'll break through this guy's firewall soon.

DEXTER

Huh, that's good to hear.

DEBRA

You've put in a hard days work, bro. You can go home now.

DEXTER

Okay. Thanks

DEBRA

Maybe you and Harrison can cuddle up with a good comic book.

Debra smiles then exits.

DEXTER (V.O.)

If they find the Investigator before I do, he'll definitely expose me. This will probably blow up in my face, but I need to go back to the warehouse tonight.

Dexter looks up from his works to see his face in a mirror.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Of course I'd better dress for the part.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE, FL - 8:00 P.M.

Dexter enters the warehouse, reluctantly wearing the Dark Defender costume and equipped with a needle. He sneaks about the warehouse, looking for the Investigator.

DEXTER (V.O.)

It's one thing to wear this to a comic convention. How someone could actually go out into public and fight crime in this is ludicrous.

As Dexter walks around, the leather on the costume makes a distracting squeaky sound.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It feels like I'm being cooked alive and the leather squeaks every time I move. I'll take a black shirt and a pair of jeans over the cloak and cape any day.

Dexter turns around a corner and spots a body on the floor wearing the Investigator costume. Dexter rushes to the body, causing his leathery costume to squeak. He kneels down and checks the person's pulse.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Dead.

Dexter removes the Investigator's mask to see it is Zack Hayes. Dexter further inspects the body to notice that Zack is missing his right hand.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Looks like the hand fits the corpse.

Suddenly, an ANONYMOUS PERSON stabs Dexter in the back with a needle. After struggling for a second, Dexter collapses to the ground, unconscious.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE, FL — LATER THAT NIGHT

Dexter slowly begins to regain consciousness and discovers that he is tied to a chair with rope. He attempts to break free, but no such luck.

INVESTIGATOR (O.S.)

Wakey, wakey, Dark Defender.

Dexter looks up. Sitting across a table from him is The Investigator standing on the catwalk.

INVESTIGATOR

So, judging from your needle and knives I take it you didn't come here to make a confession.

DEXTER

(weary)

You...what are you...

INVESTIGATOR

Oh come on, Dark Defender. Say something like, "You'll never get away with this" or "Justice will prevail."

DEXTER

I'm not a damn comic book character!

INVESTIGATOR

Just answer me this me this. Is the Dark Defender a hero or a villain?

DEXTER

He's morally ambiguous.

INVESTIGATOR

Oh that's such an easy answer. He can't stay in the grey territory forever. At some point he's going to have to choose between black and white. Fortunately, you won't have to make that decision.

The Investigator pulls out a match and a lighter. He lights that match and hovers it over the floor.

INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)

If you won't expose your identity voluntarily, I'll do it for you. This place is draped in gasoline. The police will find your body in the dark defender costume tomorrow.

DEXTER

Think for a second. Finding my burnt body in this getup won't prove anything.

INVESTIGATOR

Oh that's just for a dramatic effect. The police will find all the evidence that connects you to the Dark Defender in that fireproof safe.

The Investigator points Dexter's attention to a small safe sitting to his left.

DEXTER

What's in it?

INVESTIGATOR (CONT'D)

If you had gotten here just a little earlier last time we met, you might have found the video camera I hid in here. Our little chat can't be refuted.

DEXTER

You're a madman.

INVESTIGATOR

There you go. That's the exact kind of cliché backtalk I was looking for.

The Investigator tosses the match to the ground. Flames quickly consume the warehouse. The Investigator flees while Dexter struggles to breakthrough the ropes. With no such luck, Dexter hops backwards towards a nearby flame. He is careful to only have the fire touch the rope. After a moment, the rope is burnt off and Dexter hops out of the chair. He notices the safe sitting to his side. He lifts it up to find it is not too heavy. Dexter scans the area to find that the fire is blocking the only exit. For a second Dexter is unsure what to do. Then he takes notice in his cape. Without giving it a second thought, Dexter covers his face and body with the cape and charges through the fire.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE ABANDONED WAREHOUSE, FL — SECONDS LATER

Dexter rushes out of the front door as the warehouse burns down. He quickly drops the safe and removes his cape, which is now on fire. Dexter pats himself down to make sure he is not on fire. The Dark Defender costume has undergone some significant wear.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I think I've been severely underestimating the value of capes.

Dexter turns to the safe, which has been forced open by being thrown to the ground. He approaches the safe to see what is inside. Upon inspecting the safe though, Dexter does not find a video, but a letter.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There's no video. Just a letter.
No time to read it. I got to get
out of here before the cops
show up.

Dexter snatches the letter and runs off.

CUT TO:

INT. DEXTER'S CAR

As Dexter drives his car, he removes the Dark Defender mask. Sweat runs down his face.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Even though this costume is a pain in
the ass, some of these accessories
did admittedly come in handy.

Dexter looks over to the letter, which is sitting in the passenger's seat. He picks it up and begins to read.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(reading letter)

Dark Defender, if you're reading this
then you've survived the fire.
Congratulations. Unfortunately, you
might noticed that there was no
video. Sorry to disappoint, but
come on. You didn't think I would
leave evidence against you in a fire?
You should know though that I do
have your confession on tape and
plan on exposing it to the world. If
you want it back, you'll have to
play one last game. And this time,
the masks are coming off.

Frustrated and confused, Dexter crumbles up the letter.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Great. Another day and I'm still no
closer to getting this guy. And the
worst part is that there's nothing
I can do until he contacts me.
Whether you're a hero or villain,
being powerless is the worst
feeling imaginable.

CUT TO:

INT. MIAMI MENTRO — THE NEXT MORNING

Dexter enters the Miami Metro office, having trouble hiding
the fact that he would rather be else whether. Before he
has anytime to regroup, Masuka immediately approaches him.

MASUKA
Dexter, my man.

DEXTER
(dazed)
Hello, Masuka.

MASUKA
So Debra told us all about you.

DEXTER
All about me?

MASUKA
Don't deny it. You're a Dark Defender
fan too. I should have known when I
bumped into you at the comic store.

DEXTER
Damn-it, Deb...

MASUKA
Well hey, there's a convention next
month. We can to carpool together.

DEXTER
Yeah, sounds like a plan...

Dexter notices a Dark Defender pen in Masuka's shirt
pocket.

DEXTER (CONT'D)

Masuka, have you always had that pen?

MASUKA

Yeah, what's it to you?

DEXTER

Nothing. Never mind.

Debra advances towards Dexter and Masuka.

DEBRA

Good, our two resident Dark Defender fans are here. We need your help.

MASUKA

What? Did you guys find out who The Investigator is?

DEBRA

No, we haven't been able to trace him yet. But we found something even more bizarre.

Debra leads Dexter and Masuka to a computer where Quinn is sitting. On the computer screen is a photo of the warehouse burning.

QUINN

Last night a warehouse downtown burned to the ground. One body was found. We just got the results back from the morgue. It was Zack Hayes.

MASUKA

Damn-it! Now we'll never know if the Dark Defender hooks up with Olivia Olympia.

QUINN

Yeah. That's the real tragedy here. This morning a picture of the warehouse burning was emailed to us.

DEXTER

Who sent it?

DEBRA

It was sent anonymously and we can't trace the email address. Seems to fit the M.O. of the mysterious Investigator, huh?

QUINN

That's not even the half of it. Check this out.

Quinn enhances the picture and zooms in. An image of a man in a Dark Defender costume can be seen running out of the building.

MASUKA

Is that what I think it is?

DEBRA

It's a guy in a Dark Defender costume.

QUINN

That message we found said that more people would die if the Dark Defender didn't reveal his identity.

MASUKA

You're saying that there really is a Dark Defender out there?

DEBRA

We have no idea what to make of this. But seeing how you guys read the comics, maybe you can make some sort of connection.

MASUKA

Fire...wait! In issue 31 the Dark Defender is lured to a warehouse where this anonymous man claims to have learned his identity. When the Dark Defender refuses to expose his identity to the world though, the anonymous man burns the warehouse down. Needless to say, the Dark Defender makes it out.

DEBRA

Well it's for certain now. Whoever this Investigator is, he's recreating moments from the comic books.

QUINN

But why kill Hayes? He's the one person who knew who the Dark Defender was. Now nobody will ever know who the Dark Defender is.

MASUKA

Maybe the Investigator doesn't want to expose the Dark Defender in the comics. He wants to expose whoever's in that Dark Defender costume.

Everyone takes a moment to seriously consider what Masuka just said.

DEXTER

Masuka, The Bay Harbor Butcher was one thing. A guy in tights serving justice in this city is another.

DEBRA

Look, the motivation isn't important right now. We need to figure out where this guy is going to strike next.

MASUKA

In the comic, the guy threatens to blow up this hotel is the Dark Defender doesn't come forward.

DEBRA

What hotel?

MASUKA

I forget...it's like...oh mother of fuck! It's the Deauville Beach Resort, where we found Zack's hand.

Debra turns to Quinn.

DEBRA

Shit! I want a complete evacuation of that resort. Get the bomb squad down there and have them comb the whole area now!

Quinn gets out of his chair and follows Debra.

MASUKA

We'd better hope that there's really a Dark Defender out there. If this is anything like the comic, he's the only one who can stop this.

DEXTER

I'm afraid your right.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT – AFTERNOON

A number of cop cars and OFFICERS occupy the area. Debra talks on a walkie talkie in frustration.

DEBRA

(into walkie talkie)
Any updates.

OFFICER ON OTHER LINE (V.O.)

We've searched the pool and spa areas. No traces of a bomb yet.

DEBRA

Well keep looking.

BATISTA

We don't know for sure that this is the hotel he's going to hit.

DEBRA

It's got to be. We did a background check on the warehouse. It matched the same address as the one in the comic. This one must too.

BATISTA

You really think he'll make a move? How is he expected to escape.

Masuka approaches.

MASUKA

That's the thing. In the comic, the villain doesn't escape. He blows up with the bomb. It's a kamikaze mission.

DEBRA

Masuka, where's Dexter? I thought you guys came here in the same car?

MASUKA

He got a text. Harrison has a fever. Dex went to pick him up from daycare. I'm not sure if I trust Dex driving his kid home though. The man drives a car like a psychopath.

CUT TO:

INT. FLOOR 12 - THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT - SAME TIME

The elevator door opens. Dexter exits and sprints through the hall.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Had to really burn rubber to beat the cops here. I may not be able to search the entire hotel. But if the Investigator is as cliché as I think he is, he'll try to bring me back to the scene of the crime.

Dexter arrives at Zack's room. The door is already open and yellow police tape blocks the entrance. Dexter lifts the police tape over his head and enters.

CUT TO:

INT. ZACK'S HOTEL ROOM - THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT - CONTINUOUS

The sound of rummaging can be heard off screen. Dexter turns a corner to find Jonathan removing Dark Defender merchandise from the closet. After a moment, Jonathan looks up to find Dexter standing there.

JONATHAN

Dexter! What are you doing here?

DEXTER

I'm a cop. I can go anywhere I want. Why weren't you evacuated with everyone else?

JONATHAN

I heard there was bomb somewhere on resort. I couldn't let this limited edition Dark Defender merchandise get blown up.

DEXTER

It's just a bunch of toys.

JONATHAN

They're collectables. And now that Zack is dead they'll be worth a lot more.

DEXTER

How did you know that we found Zack's body?

Jonathan does not respond at first. He then gets up and sends Dexter a menacing glare.

DEXTER

You...

JONATHAN

That's right. You didn't really think Zack was smart enough to orchestrate this scheme alone, did you? Zack was a hack of a comic book artist. For years he struggled with the Dark Defender concept. However, he could never get it right. When I started following you though, I gave Zack all the inspiration he needed to make the comic. Zack and I were more than willing to overlook your doings as long as the comic succeeded.

DEXTER

So you're comic became a hit. Why not just keep following me in secret?

JONATHAN

Sure, we were in the money. But it was never enough. It occurred to us that the comic would sell even better if the real Dark Defender came forward. So we cooked up the Investigator scheme to force you into the public's eye. When you refused, I knew that drastic measures had to be taken.

DEXTER

So you killed the woman in the alley.

JONATHAN

You truly are a modern Sherlock. But Zack, the pansy, didn't have the spine to allow an "innocent" to die. Said he wanted nothing more to do with the game. There was a struggle and I killed him. Kind of works out for the best though. No artist is really appreciated until they're dead. Now that Zack is gone, I can add an extra couple grand to the price of all the original comics and this merchandise. There's just one more thing I need.

Jonathan moves towards a box on the bed and pulls out a videotape.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

You're confession!

Dexter takes a step towards Jonathan. The instant he moves though, Jonathan pulls down the zipper of his sweater. A bomb is strapped to his chest.

JONATHAN (CONT'D)

One more move and I detonate this!
Now I'm going to walk out of here
and deliver this tape to your pretty
sister down there.

DEXTER

If you've had the video this whole time, why the bomb, why all the murders? You could have just given it to the police and I would have been exposed.

JONATHAN

Because I want a proper unmasking of The Dark Defender. I want you in front of a news camera and all of your so-called friends making a confession. The tape will get the job done. But I'm giving you one last chance to come clean yourself right now!

Dexter takes a second to think things over.

DEXTER

I...

JONATHAN

Would detonating the bomb help you think? It's got a solid thirty second timer.

DEXTER

Thirty seconds?

JONATHAN

Yep.

Without thinking, Dexter charges forward and tackles Jonathan to the ground. The bomb is accidentally detonated in the process.

JONATHAN

No! Look what you made me do!

Dexter punches Jonathan in the face. He then grabs the videotape and runs out the door with about twenty seconds still on the clock.

CUT TO:

INT. FLOOR 12 - THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT - CONTINUOUS

Dexter exits the room and slams the door shut. He charges down the hallways as quickly as he can. Dexter arrives in front of the door leading to the stairway and exits.

CUT TO:

INT. ZACK'S HOTEL ROOM - THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT - SAME TIME

Jonathan attempts to get up, but has hurt his back. He tries to remove the vest, but it is stuck. With only a few seconds left on the clock, Jonathan gives up.

JONATHAN

(hysterical)

That man really is the Dark Defender.

Ha, ha, ha...

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT - SAME TIME

POLICE OFFICERS monitor the area. Suddenly, there is an explosion from the 12th room of the resort. Everyone looks up the explosion in shock.

CUT TO:

INT. THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT STAIRWAY - SAME TIME

Dexter stumbles a bit as the explosion occurs off screen. He manages to grab onto the railing though, preventing a fall. After several seconds, the explosion comes to an end. Dexter proceeds to run down the stairs.

CUT TO:

INT. ZACK'S HOTEL ROOM - THE DEAUVILLE BEACH RESORT - DUSK

The room has been completely destroyed, along with everything in it. Batista, Quinn, and various other POLICE OFFICERS scan the room. Masuka comes across a little Dark Defender bobble-head on the ground that's just barely in tact. He picks it up and shoves it in his pocket. Debra enters

DEBRA

We just got the ID of our John Doe wearing the bomb vest.

BATISTA

Who?

DEBRA

Jonathan Kearny.

QUINN

Zack's agent? You think he was the Investigator.

DEBRA

We also compared his DNA to the blood we found. They're a match. It actually makes sense. He had full access to Zack. He would have been able to wash away any clues.

BATISTA

But why would he blow himself up?

DEBRA

That's what I don't get.

MASUKA

You don't think the guy in the Dark Defender outfit, whoever he was, maybe...

Dexter enters.

DEXTER

Hey guys.

DEBRA

Dex.

DEXTER

Sorry I had to bail. Did I miss anything?

DEBRA

You know, sometimes it feels like you're never around when something interesting happen.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEXTER'S BOAT — THE MIDDLE OF THE RIVER — NIGHT

Dexter holds the videotape in his hands. He breaks it in half then stuffs it in a garbage bag. Dexter then picks up the Dark Defender costume and stares at it for a moment.

DEXTER (V.O.)

Like I said, I'm already wearing the only mask I'll ever need.

Dexter stuffs the costume in a garbage bag. He ties it up and throws it overboard.

DEXTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hero, villain, I'm not sure what group I fall into. For now I'm in a league of my own. I'm Dexter Morgan.

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE