

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

A myriad of coloured lights twinkle across the bustling metropolis. Always busy. Never sleeping.

It appears deceptively peaceful. It won't be for long.

EXT. INNER CITY HIGH-RISE - NIGHT

A tall, ugly concrete high-rise that may have once been called luxury, but is now just old, worn and dirty, like its inhabitants.

From a distance we see a WORKMAN, tool box in hand, stride towards the graffiti scrawled front entrance.

INT. LIFT - NIGHT

DEXTER (53), the workman we saw moments ago, stands expressionless in the far corner of the lift.

Unnaturally thin, he wears a blue workman's overall, brown hair covered by a baseball cap, glasses and a tool box. A screwdriver in his breast pocket. An ID card hangs from a strap around his neck.

Tinny Muzak plays. The halogen light exacerbates Dexter's pasty skin and the dark circles under his tired eyes.

A ping as the lift arrives at Dexter's desired floor. He exits into...

FOURTEENTH FLOOR CORRIDOR

Automatic lights flicker on, illuminate the pale green walls in a eerie glow. The colour reflects off Dexter's skin, makes him look like one of the living dead.

Dexter walks to the far end of the corridor, halts in front of apartment two-four-one. He knocks with a latex gloved hand. A long moment...

...then the door opens a crack.

THOMPSON (33) peaks through, flashes a questioning look. Dexter shows him his ID.

THOMPSON

'Bout time.

Thompson opens the door wide, leads the way into...

THOMPSON'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY

Dexter closes the door behind him.

THOMPSON

Bloody thing's been playing up all
afternoon.

Dexter pulls the screwdriver from his top pocket to reveal a
cleverly disguised syringe...

THOMPSON (CONT'D)

Fuckin' freezin' in here.

...and stabs Thompson in the neck, depresses the button.

Thompson half turns, surprised. He tries to grab the now
empty syringe but his legs give way. He's unconscious before
he hits the floor.

THOMPSON'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dexter enters, deposits his tool box on the floor, opens it,
takes out two empty pill bottles and one half full.

He lines up all three on the lip of the bath.

THOMPSON'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dexter slips his hands under Thompson's arms, hoists him
upwards, with a gargantuan effort hefts him onto his
shoulders in a fireman's lift.

A momentary stumble, Dexter steadies himself then carries
Thompson carefully towards the bathroom.

THOMPSON'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Breathing hard, Dexter settles the unconscious Thompson in
the bath. He reaches into his tool box, extracts a bottle of
Jim Beam and a funnel, presses Thompson's fingers to the top,
the body of the bottle and to all the pill bottles.

Dexter discards the Jim Beam bottle top on the bathroom
floor.

He opens Thompson's mouth, uses the funnel to pour the whiskey and a few of the pills from the half full bottle down his throat.

A dying Thompson gags, pure reflex, vomits a little back up.

Dexter sprinkles a few of the pills on the floor, then places the bottle into Thompson's hand and steps back to admire his work.

Satisfied, the funnel goes back in the tool box, the lid closed.

Dexter stands, clutches his right side. A stitch? He drops to his knees, surprised by the pain. He struggles to catch his breath, waits for the pain to subside. Finally he stands.

Ever the professional Dexter takes one last look around and then exits on wobbly legs, holds onto the door frame for support as he goes.

EXT. MADDOX'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

A small inexpensive block built in the shadow of a taller building.

INT. MADDOX'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Not plush, just comfortable, equipped with high end electronics at odds with their modest surroundings. A mattress on the floor for a bed.

A stunning naked woman, Maddox's GIRLFRIEND (21), lies facedown on the blood stained sheets. Old scars and fresh cuts on her arms mark her otherwise perfect body.

On the floor in front of the bed MADDOX (24), lean and muscular, covered in tattoos, aggressively does pushups in his boxers. He wears an ugly scar across his forehead and a large burn on his right shoulder and upper arm.

With every pushup Maddox's wiry frame glistens with sweat. His teeth gritted in supreme effort, he pushes through the pain barrier, pumps away with fanaticism.

EXT. TRAVIS' PLACE - NIGHT

An old industrial building. Peeled paint, rust, graffiti and discarded rubbish. In contrast a brand new, top of the range dark blue SUV is parked up alongside.

INT. TRAVIS' PLACE - NIGHT

The building doubles for a warehouse and living quarters. Even though the outside is run down the interior is brightly lit, in good order and includes a four lane ten-pin bowling alley.

Dexter enters, now his natural blonde flecked with grey, no glasses, his suit a little loose on his lean frame.

He strides towards a large meeting table at the head of lane four, where TRAVIS (36), a calculating deal arranger, and his very muscular Spanish boyfriend and assistant EDUARDO (29), finish up with Maddox who looks lean and fit in his suit.

Business done, Maddox strides towards the exit, locks eyes with Dexter as he closes, smiles cruelly, deliberately shoulder barges him as he passes.

Dexter takes the hit well, continues on his way as if nothing's happened. Two fighting cocks - a display of strength.

Travis closes a folder on an iPad as Dexter approaches, motions for him to sit down.

TRAVIS

A tea, please, Eduardo.

Eduardo clears the existing cups away and trots up the steps to the kitchen area.

DEXTER

What's that cock doing here?

A concerned Travis sits back, regards Dexter as he lights a Marlboro Red.

TRAVIS

You're looking a little... tired.

DEXTER

I'm fine.

Dexter takes a heavy drag on his cigarette. His eyes bore questioningly into Travis.

TRAVIS

I gave him a job.
(off Dexter's disapproving
look)
A menial one.

Dexter quickly glances back at the exit, massages the feeling back into his shoulder.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
When was the last time you took a break?

DEXTER
I told you, I'm fine.

TRAVIS
Actually you look like shit, I was just trying to be polite!

Dexter shrugs, nonplussed. Travis checks Maddox has left.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
I suspect Maddox goes on holiday, no idea where though. Probably shark wrestling or clubbing baby seals.
(beat)
How did it go?

DEXTER
No problems.

Travis nods, the expected answer.

TRAVIS
Seriously... think about it.

Dexter glances at him questioningly.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
A holiday.

DEXTER
Why?

TRAVIS
(incredulous)
To relax... enjoy yourself... rest those aching bones..?

Travis tries to find a hint of interest in Dexter's blank face, but Dexter just stares back, unmoved.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)
All work and... you know how it goes.

DEXTER
You got my money?

Travis shakes his head at Dexter in wonder. Eduardo returns with two teas, a glass of milk and a bulging leather zip pouch. He hands the milk and pouch to Travis, a tea to Dexter and keeps the second for himself.

Travis throws the pouch at Dexter who catches it expertly.

TRAVIS

Take my advice and use some of it
to get away.

Dexter ignores him, counts the cash inside the pouch.

INT. DEXTER'S CAR - LATER

The SUV still parked outside Travis' place. Dexter shifts uncomfortably in the driver's seat, flips the sun visor down and appraises himself in the vanity mirror.

The pasty skin, the bags under his eyes, the grey rapidly taking over the blonde in his hair. He doesn't like what he sees.

Dexter sneers at his own reflection in disgust, slams the sun visor back up.

Dexter starts the engine and drives away.

EXT. CHEMISTS - MORNING

Dexter's SUV parked on the curb.

Dexter, wearing a tracksuit, exits the shop, dips into the bag he carries, opens a bottle of vitamins and a bottle of water, pops a tablet.

Then a packet of pain killers, pops two, wipes away a dribble of water that escapes down his chin.

INT. GYM - DAY

A high end fitness centre. Wall to wall mirrors, the latest fitness equipment, bulging muscles, fat free abs, training gear, sweat and the BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE perfecting their already perfect bodies.

Dexter, in shorts and tee-shirt, red faced, drenched in sweat, short of breath, runs wearily on a treadmill a good distance away from everyone else.

A YOUNG MAN (early twenties) hops on a treadmill three removed from Dexter, sets off at a blistering pace. Dexter glances over, envious of the Young Man's effortless lope.

Dexter subtly adjusts the speed on his own treadmill to match the Young Man's, increases his pace and effort. But he can't keep it up. He stumbles and slips. The emergency cut off saves him from landing flat on his face.

Dexter grabs the stitch in his side, gulps in air against the pain. He's absolutely fucked! It takes him several moments to catch his breath.

Breathing more regular, Dexter lowers the intensity setting, steps back on the treadmill and sets off at a more sedate pace.

EXT. PRIVATE DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

A handsome Edwardian building. A large black door. A large brass plaque fixed to the side of the door informs us DR COUSINS practices privately here.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY

The latest issues of upmarket magazines, luxury chairs and a scattering of well cared for indoor exotic plants. A fly somewhere in the room, its buzz annoyingly high pitched.

A RECEPTIONIST (31) glances up from her computer, searches for the source of the buzzing, her eyes eventually resting on Dexter, who sits in the furthest chair from her staring blankly ahead.

Even in the bright lights of the waiting room Dexter looks pasty and gaunt, a hint of yellow to his skin, his eyes bloodshot.

The Receptionist switches her gaze to the widescreen plasma TV on the wall showing Sky News.

A news story about a big court case. Archive footage of ten high end CRIMINALS as they stroll into court, smile and wave at the crowds and cameras, more like rock stars than criminals.

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)

The ten men will appear in court on Thursday for the first day of the trial, on charges of child prostitution, trafficking, false imprisonment and money laundering...

At the mention of money, Dexter's bloodshot eyes flick to the TV.

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)

Among the witnesses to be called by the prosecution are low level members of the gang, those involved with the transportation, imprisonment and distribution of the abused children, who agreed to testify against the ringleaders to avoid prosecution.

The Receptionist goes back to her computer. The fly lands on Dexter's shoulder, runs around on his suit jacket. If he notices, he doesn't show it.

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)

Expected to last six weeks the Crown Prosecution Service have already described it as the worst case of organised child abuse they have ever seen...

Dexter's eyes unfocus, once again staring at nothing. The fly's off again, the same incessant high pitched buzzing, maddeningly just out of reach.

INT. TEXTILE FACTORY, 1ST FLOOR OFFICE - DAY

A glass walled office with blinds and an omnipotent view over the warehouse. On the shop floor overworked IMMIGRANTS busy themselves on sewing machines.

MATTHEW STUART (59), pinstripe suit and a casual air of confidence, sits in a sumptuous chair behind the desk as he studies the screen of an iPad.

A GOON watches on from a stiff chair in the corner of the office.

HENRY (62) sits facing the desk, exudes importance, gazes down his nose at his surroundings as he ignores the Goon and waits for Matthew to finish.

Matthew carefully places the iPad down on the desk top, stands, walks around the desk, surveys the shop floor with a critical eye.

Henry waits patiently, the tapping of a solitary finger the only sign he's holding his annoyance in check.

After a long moment of careful thought Matthew turns to Henry.

MATTHEW
Five million in cash!

Henry stares at him, hateful.

HENRY
I've already paid out a lot to get
this information.

MATTHEW
And I give a fuck why?

HENRY
(bitter)
Fine... agreed!

MATTHEW
And your place on Weston Street and
all its assets.

Henry looks like he could spit bullets.

HENRY
We don't have anything on Weston
Street.

MATTHEW
Then perhaps you should find
someone else to clean up your mess
for you?

He smiles knowingly at Henry. Matthew's got him bent over a barrel and he knows it.

Henry flushes red with rage, forcibly bites his tongue from saying anything he'll regret. It's a long moment before he's calm enough to answer.

HENRY
(through gritted teeth)
It's yours!

Matthew grins, triumphant.

HENRY (CONT'D)

I'll have the money dropped over
tomorrow morning.

Matthew extends his hand. Henry hesitates, reluctantly takes it, barely shakes before he snatches his hand away, like he's afraid to catch something nasty. Deal done, he can't get out of there quick enough.

EXT. PRIVATE DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Dexter staggers out of the doctors, stumbles to a halt on the top step, doesn't even react when the door closes with a resounding slam behind him.

Shock pales Dexter's face even more than normal, like the colour has completely drained from him. He almost matches his grey suit.

Dexter's red eyes fixed ahead, a thousand yard stare, focused on nothing. His eyes glisten with moisture.

It's all too much for him as his legs fold under him and he drops to the steps, his face in his hands.

Gradually, inhaling deeply and rubbing his face, the world slowly returns to focus for Dexter, his face shifts to one of sadness and resignation. Still he doesn't move.

Dexter glances around, not quite registering where he is... hopelessly lost.

PEOPLE pass, get on with their daily lives, oblivious to Dexter and his emotional state.

THREE FRIENDS laugh and joke.

LOVERS hold hands, very much into each other.

A DOG OWNER picks up his LABRADOR's mess.

Dexter silently takes this all in, a solitary figure amongst the crowd.

PATIENT (O.S.)

Excuse me.

A PATIENT stands in front of Dexter, unable to get past. Dexter exhales heavily, empties his lungs, shrugs off his anxiety, stands and steps aside.