

= Dexter (episode) =

" Dexter " , or " Pilot " , is the pilot episode of the first season television drama series Dexter , which premiered on October 1 , 2006 on Showtime in the United States . The episode was written by developer James Manos , Jr. and directed by Michael Cuesta . It was based on the opening of the novel *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* by Jeff Lindsay . The pilot introduces the series ' protagonist , Dexter Morgan (Michael C. Hall) , a Miami Metro Police Department blood spatter analyst with a double life as a serial killer . While solving murders in the Homicide division , Dexter also spends his time hunting and killing murderers and criminals who have escaped the justice system . The pilot introduces the " Ice Truck Killer " , a serial killer who targets prostitutes and leaves their bodies dismembered and bloodless , and the rivalry that develops between the killer and Dexter .

Jeff Lindsay was initially against casting Michael C. Hall to play Dexter , but changed his mind after seeing him speak only one line of the script . The crew began filming the pilot in Miami , but were unable to finish due to the overlap of production with the hurricane season . In spite of a subsidy from the state of Florida , the crew moved to Los Angeles , where the remainder of filming took place ; footage shot in both Miami and Los Angeles were used in the episode . " Dexter " was watched by over one million viewers , giving Showtime its highest ratings in almost two years . Critical reception of the pilot was mostly positive , though critics of *Variety* , *LA Weekly* , and *The Wall Street Journal* found that it was " unpleasant " to watch .

In 2007 , CBS announced that it would broadcast the show over the public airwaves , which sparked controversy with the Parents Television Council (PTC) . The PTC did not want the show to be broadcast because it " compelled viewers to empathize with a serial killer " ; in response , CBS replaced expletives , cut out bloody scenes and gave the show a TV @-@ 14 rating . The eventual premiere of the show on CBS was on February 17 , 2008 , and was watched by 8 @.@ 1 million viewers .

= = Plot = =

The pilot commences with Dexter driving through Miami , summarizing , in a monologue , that something is to occur on that night . After a choir performance at a bandstand , Dexter kidnaps Mike Donovan (Jim Abele) , a pastor who rapes and murders young boys , takes him to a remote cabin in the Everglades , and forces him to look at the bodies of his victims . Before sedating him , Dexter explains that he could never kill a child , because he abides by a moral code . Later , Donovan awakes to find himself strapped to a table . Dexter makes an incision in Donovan 's cheek with a scalpel and collects his blood in a slide , and then proceeds to kill him . Dexter , returning from dumping Donovan 's remains , narrates that he is not sure why he feels the need to kill , and speaks of his adoptive parents , Harry and Doris Morgan , both of whom are dead . At his apartment , Dexter stores Donovan 's blood in a case containing the blood of his other victims . Dexter explains that he kills according to a code taught to him by his foster father who , as a Miami police officer , instructed Dexter on how to avoid being caught , and to kill only those who " deserve it " . Flashbacks throughout the episode reveal that Harry first decided to impart these " lessons " upon Dexter after discovering that the boy had been killing neighborhood pets .

Dexter receives a voice message from his foster sister Debra Morgan (Jennifer Carpenter) , a police officer in the vice department and , Dexter believes , the only person who loves him . Debra says she is at a crime scene and wants him to be there , because she needs his help . Dexter arrives and Debra , undercover as a prostitute , informs him that another hooker has been killed , the third in five months . Dexter inspects the victim and is shocked to learn that the chopped up corpse is bloodless . Dexter leaves , awed by the killer 's technique , and says that due to the lack of blood he can 't help out . At the police station , Dexter discusses another murder case being handled by James Doakes (Erik King) , who hates Dexter and suspects he is hiding something . Dexter suggests that it was a crime of passion , rather than the bad drug deal Doakes believes it to be . Dexter surveils Jamie Jaworski , a murderer who escaped justice due to a faulty warrant , and breaks into his home to find proof of his crime . Once he confirms that Jaworski is guilty , Dexter

meets with his girlfriend Rita Bennett (Julie Benz) , a domestic violence victim . Because of her violent past with her husband , Rita has no interest in sex , and Dexter secretly feels comfortable with the lack of intimacy . Rita has two young children , Astor and Cody , whom Dexter genuinely feels for . While on a date with Rita , Dexter finds another crime scene in which the victim has been cut into pieces with no traces of blood ; this time , however , the head is missing . Dexter theorizes that the killer murders his victims in extreme cold , explaining the absence of blood . Dexter further suggests that a stolen refrigerated truck is being used for the murders . Dexter allows Debra to pitch the theory , but their superior officer , Lt. María LaGuerta (Lauren Vélez) , who dislikes Debra , dismisses it .

Dexter captures Jaworski , who admits his guilt and explains that he has no remorse for his act . After killing Jaworski , Dexter drives to see Rita , but is sidetracked when he sees a refrigerated truck . Dexter follows the truck , and the driver throws a severed head at Dexter 's car . When the police squad arrives , LaGuerta confirms that Doakes ' case was indeed a crime of passion . Dexter arrives at Rita 's apartment , where she expresses interest in taking their relationship to a more intimate level , under the impression that this is what Dexter wants . Dexter feels uncomfortable and is saved when Rita 's son , Cody , gets sick next door and needs his mother to pick him up . When Dexter arrives home , he finds a doll 's head on his refrigerator door . Inside the freezer , he finds the other parts of the doll , severed just like the bloodless bodies of the dead women . Dexter views the doll as an invitation to play , which he accepts gladly .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Showtime began developing the series at the start of 2005 , planning for it to be based on the novel by Jeff Lindsay . By February , Emmy @-@ winning writer James Manos , Jr . (a writer for The Sopranos) was on board to write the pilot script with John Goldwyn , with Sara Colleton as executive producer . By June 13 , 2005 , Showtime had given the show a green @-@ light to be aired for the next year . The premise of the episode follows the same storyline as Jeff Lindsay 's novel *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* , the first in the series of novels on which the television show is based , albeit with many additional elements and altered characters . Dexter was released on Showtime as part of a batch of new programs for the network , along with *Brotherhood* , *This American Life* and a reality TV series called *Sexual Healing* .

= = = Casting = = =

Michael C. Hall received the script for Dexter in July 2005 , after just having finished the fifth and final season of HBO 's *Six Feet Under* . Hall was one of the few cast members not to audition for their roles ; Robert Greenblatt and Michael Cuesta approached him with the script . Hall said that he didn 't think " the role was created with me in mind but I think that once the pilot script emerged at Showtime , both Robert Greenblatt and Michael Cuesta independently thought of me for the role and then approached me about it . "

Hall was in New York and thinking of going back to theatre work , and had no intention of returning to television so quickly . However , he changed his mind after reading the script , because he was " intrigued by the macabre mix of dark humor , chilling violence , and a unique central character . " He also said that he " realized it was a big commitment and certainly appreciated that coming off of *Six Feet Under* " but said that he " couldn 't pass it up " . Lindsay was initially against casting Hall , based on seeing him on *Six Feet Under* , but after he saw Hall speak one line of the script , Lindsay changed his mind , describing Hall as " absolutely perfect " to portray Dexter . To prepare for the part , Hall read various books on the psychology of serial killers , read transcripts of interviews with serial killers , and spent time with the head blood @-@ spatter analyst at the Miami precinct . He also watched people in New York restaurants to get a feel for what it would be like to stalk them .

Julie Benz was given a copy of the script in 2005 , and was asked to audition for the part of Rita Bennett . She was surprised she was asked to audition , because the script was " one of the best pilot scripts [she] ever read . " She also read for the part of Debra , and joked that she would have auditioned for Dexter 's role had she been able to . Benz had been a " disgustingly huge " fan of Michael C. Hall from his role in Six Feet Under and she said in an interview with Vanity Fair that " I was such a fan of his from Six Feet Under , to the point where my cell @-@ phone ring was the show 's theme song . I had to change it once I got cast ! " . The script was also presented to James Remar , who auditioned for the part of Harry Morgan , because it was a character he " really related to " and had waited for most of his life to play .

As a former police officer , actor David Zayas was immediately interested in the role of Sgt. Angel Batista . After appearing in Oz for a season , Erik King , was looking for a " different " acting chance , he " loved " the character of Sgt. Doakes , after reading the script . South Korean actor C.S. Lee , who has a recurring role on the show as forensics specialist Vince Masuka , was asked for the part after Dexter producers recognized him in guest parts on Spin City , Law & Order : Criminal Intent and The Sopranos . Lee accepted the part because of the " fantastic " writing . By September 15 , Jennifer Carpenter had joined the cast to play the part of Debra Morgan . Carpenter had enough time before her audition to read the Dexter books , but admitted that she " didn 't exactly see myself in the books . I knew that it was going to be a TV show and that it had the potential to go for five to seven years , so I tried to make Deb as similar to me as possible and to bring out the parts of myself that were like Deb . I think that may have helped in the audition and it has certainly helped sustain such a long run with one character . " She also stated that she enjoyed cursing on television , but found it hard to stop it creeping into her real life . In June 2006 Geoff Pierson was cast as Cpt . Matthews . The series stars Lauren Vélez (Maria LaGuerta) , David Zayas (Angel Batista) and Erik King (James Doakes) , all previously starred in the American HBO television drama series Oz .

= = = Filming , editing and cinematography = = =

Filming of the episode took place in Miami and Los Angeles . Shooting began on the first episode on 18 September . The network took advantage of the Florida Film Commission incentive program which provided a 15 % rebate of all money spent in Florida on the production (which was up to \$ 2 million) to encourage film and television production in the state . The incentive was first launched in 2003 , and was refunded by the state legislature for 2006 with \$ 10 million , its largest budget to date . President of Entertainment at Showtime , Robert Greenblatt said " I 've always felt that location is a strong starring character and adds to the success of many shows . "

The crew originally wanted to shoot the entire pilot in Miami , but during the first two weeks of filming , three hurricanes went by : Katrina , Rita , and Wilma . Since further filming was to take place during the hurricane season , and it was not possible to get insurance , the crew was forced to move to elsewhere . Though the state of Florida offered a US \$ 450 @, @ 000 subsidy , the Dexter crew relocated to Los Angeles . Executive producer Sara Colleton explained that the filming crew tried to create a different version of Miami in Los Angeles , that differed from the " glossy look " Miami has in CSI : Miami and Miami Vice . " Dexter " was shot in HD ; cinematographer Romeo Tirone said he experienced some difficulties because HD " sees everything . " As opposed to Dexter 's " disturbing " environment , Tirone tried to give Rita 's home a " warmer , safer , happier place " with " a dark side to it , " doing so by letting more light come through the windows . Editor Elena Maganini was contacted by episode director Michael Cuesta after he saw her previous work with director John McNaughton ; Maganini had previously worked on a serial killer movie entitled Henry : Portrait of a Serial Killer . Michael Cuesta said that when he met Elena he " ... thought she had great instincts , was relaxed and didn 't pretend to know exactly who this character was . " He said that " ... that , and all her work with John McNaughton , helped convince me to bring her onto the pilot . She 's done serial killers ; she 's done noirs . She gets that world . "

Veteran television editor Scott K. Wallace was hired later , on Maganini 's suggestion . Wallace and Maganini had already worked with each other on Tarzan . They worked on the flashback sequences

in the episode , which they tried to make " very dreamlike , " identifying as Dexter 's " Dark Passenger , " which urges Dexter to kill as explained in Lindsay 's novels . After the pilot was filmed , the footage filmed in Miami was mixed with the footage of Los Angeles .

= = = Shooting locations = = =

= = = Miami = = =

The first scene , with Dexter cruising through the Miami streets , was filmed on location , along Ocean Drive in South Beach . They used Ocean Drive again for the scene in which Dexter strolls through the streets with an ice cream , before meeting with Rita and once more , in the same street , for the next episode , Crocodile , for the scene whereby Dexter and Debra find the Ice truck killer 's truck . They also used a gazebo in a park in Miami Springs , Florida , located around seven miles northwest of Miami , for the boy choir scene in which shortly after the choir ends , Dexter kidnaps Mike Donovan . They used several water locations in Miami , to illustrate Dexter on his boat , the " Slice of Life " . These locations include Biscayne Bay and Virginia Key island (used for the flashbacks of the 8 @-@ year old Dexter , talking with Harry about his homicidal tendencies , and then later re @-@ used in Crocodile) . The condo used to portray Dexter 's apartment is also in Miami . The Seven Seas Motel is an actual location and they didn 't change the name for the motel . There is genuinely a pool outside and the room 105 was rented for the day for them to shoot in it . They also shot in Doral Park Country Club to portray the valet station where Jaworski works .

= = = Los Angeles = = =

The house used for Rita 's abode is actually in Long Beach , California , and is in a residential area known as Los Altos . The Los Altos neighborhood has been used extensively in shooting Dexter . The team used 6 different homes in that area alone in the first season : Dexter 's childhood home , Angel 's house , the house of the neighbor with the noisy dog , the Dade City house that Dexter inherits from his biological father , and the house of the old lady across the street . It 's also close to the intersection where the " Ice Truck Killer " stopped his car to check on his captive (Debra) in the car trunk .

= = = Promotion = = =

As promotion for the show , Showtime posted a preview of the pilot on their website . In September 2006 , CBS and YouTube struck a strategic content and advertising partnership , and the YouTube CBS Brand Channel started including daily contributions from the Showtime network , including promotional video clips from its critically acclaimed original series , such as Dexter . On October 28 , after the first few episodes had aired , Showtime made it easier for viewers to catch up with the show by dedicating a whole night to showing the first five episodes .

= = CBS broadcast controversy = =

In December 2007 , CBS announced that it was considering Dexter for broadcast over the public airwaves , making Dexter the first show in 20 years to air on a broadcast network after it had been shown on a premium cable channel . However , the Parents Television Council (PTC) publicly protested the decision , because of the show 's graphic violence . In a 2008 press release , PTC president Tim Winter stated the following :

We are formally asking CBS to cancel its plan to air the first season of Dexter on its television network . This show is not suitable for airing on broadcast television ; it should remain on a premium subscription cable network . The biggest problem with the series is something that no amount of editing can get around : the series compels viewers to empathize with a serial killer , to root for him

to prevail , to hope he doesn't get discovered . Dexter introduces audiences to the depths of depravity and indifference as it chronicles the main character 's troubled quest for vigilante justice by celebrating graphic , premeditated murder .

Although some critics objected to Dexter 's edited broadcast , CBS , in response to the PTC , moved it up to a later timeslot and replaced expletives , using substitutes such as " frickin ' " and " mother lover " . Also , the scene in the car , in which Dexter inappropriately touches Rita thinking of bloodless bodies was removed . In addition , bloody scenes were cut out by the network , as well as giving the show a TV @-@ 14 Rating . While the PTC was still against CBS airing the episode , CBS eventually broadcast the episode on February 17 , 2008 .

= = Reception = =

= = Ratings and viewership = =

The pilot premiered on October 1 , 2006 . It was watched by 603 @,@ 000 viewers , the highest audience numbers for a series premiere since *Fat Actress* aired in March 2005 . Dexter bested the series premieres of *Weeds* , *Brotherhood* , *Sleeper Cell* and *Huff* . An encore from 10 : 00 to 11 : 00 , one hour after the initial broadcast , brought in 443 @,@ 000 viewers , bringing the total number of viewers to over a million , giving Showtime its highest ratings in nearly two years . The edited version of the pilot episode that was broadcast on CBS on February 17 , 2008 , was watched by 8 @.@ 1 million viewers , finishing third in its timeslot and giving CBS its best ratings in the 10 p.m. timeslot since December 2007 . Just under 300 @,@ 000 viewers watched Dexter 's premiere on FX in the United Kingdom , on July 10 , 2007 . On July 7 , 2008 Dexter premiered in Australia on Network Ten , where it was watched by a little less than a million viewers , finishing highest in the 18 @-@ 49 , 16 @-@ 39 and 25 @-@ 54 demographics .

= = Critical reaction = =

Reviews of the pilot were generally positive . David Hinckley of the *New York Daily News* called it " bold , different and exciting , with a central character and performance that take your breath away " . Hinckley praised Hall 's dynamic Emmy @-@ worthy performance , and the " indispensable and haunting " narration . Maureen Ryan of the *Chicago Tribune* claimed " to deny yourself the engrossing Dexter based on its subject matter would be to miss out on one of television 's most fiendishly intelligent new dramas " . Ryan enjoyed the series ' black comedy aspects , which she thought were " infused with the most pitch @-@ dark irony on television " . Matthew Gilbert of *The Boston Globe* was impressed by Hall 's grand performance , especially in his ability to make Dexter likable . Gilbert praised the set designers , comparing the crime scenes to a *Vanity Fair* photo spread .

Critics reacted positively to the character of Dexter . *Entertainment Weekly* 's Josh Wolk called him " the hippest @-@ looking killer since *American Psycho* 's Patrick Bateman " . The *San Francisco Chronicle* 's Tim Goodman said " What makes the series work so well is twofold . Hall is magnificent ; it 's another sterling performance from him . But instead of being pent up yet emotionally explosive , like his David Fisher on " *Six Feet Under* , " he 's cool and calculated and entirely without compassion as Dexter . That makes him alluring , in a strange way. while Ryan found him to be " among the more compelling characters on the small screen " . Gilbert described Dexter as a cross between Hannibal Lecter and Clarice Starling , calling him a vigilante obsessive murderer with a slippery personality , but " also a hero of sorts " . *InsidePulse.com* reviewer Mathan Erhardt said that the episode did not quite meet his expectations and that " to me the major flaw in the show is Dexter ? s noir @-@ esque narration " , although he finished the review by saying " Dexter , despite it ? s [sic] flaws is yet another reason why Sunday night is one of my favorite nights to watch TV . "

IGN gave the pilot episode an " Outstanding " rating of 9 out of 10 , with Dan Iversen starting his review by saying " Every once and a while [sic] a show will come along that will be so creepy and

so intriguing that you feel compelled to watch . Dexter is one of those shows . " and summarized with " The pilot episode did an extremely good job hooking us into the world of Dexter . We are meant to feel confused by his actions , and only time will tell how the show deals with this topic - will Dexter ever go too far , making us turn on our protagonist ? There are so many questions that we have about this show , and that is a good thing . Personally we cannot wait to see how long this game of cat @-@ and @-@ mouse goes on with the unknown serial killer and Dexter . With the solid introduction to the series , characters , and future storylines , we can 't help but recommend Dexter to anybody that is at all curious about the show . " IGN reviewer Matt Fowler later placed Mike Donovan third on a list of " Dexter 's Top 10 Kills " , saying " We all remember our first . First car . First love . First staph infection . And when it comes to Dexter , first kill . No Mike Donovan , the church choir master , wasn 't Dexter first dead body , but he was our televisual introduction into Dexter 's wicked world of revenge and reckoning . " IGN also declared the show as the " Best New Psycho Drama of 2006 " .

TVSquad reviewer Jonathon Toomey gave the first episode 9 out of 10 and said of it that " This show is legit , well @-@ worth watching . The only reason I 'm holding back that last star is because the screener DVD I received only had the pilot episode and I suppose it 's possible that the show could go downhill after that . But I wouldn 't bet on it . " Toomey also later added another review of the premiere , stating that " I 'm worried though . Dexter is good . In fact , it 's really good . That 's why I 'm worried . Why ? Because Showtime has a nasty little habit of canceling great shows . There was The Chris Isaak Show . Then Dead Like Me . The most recent casualty ? Huff . All three of those shows were spectacular . And you know what ? Dexter is better than all of them . So , yeah ... I 'm worried . "

However , not all reviews were as positive . Robert Abele of LA Weekly thought the pilot was average , containing " fashionable gore , occasionally witty dialogue , serviceable suspense and boilerplate police @-@ department politics " . Abele felt that the series was a superhero tale , rather than the dark comedy , police thriller and brooding drama that it was promoted to be . Brian Lowry of Variety did not think that Dexter would impress critics , and noted , " antics of the deranged ... aren 't really all that pleasant to watch " , but praised Hall 's acting saying that he " ... quickly dispatches any thoughts of his " Six Feet " character , which , by itself , represents quite an accomplishment . " Nancy DeWolf Smith of The Wall Street Journal felt that the " grotesqueries of Dexter are not something that can easily be dismissed with the old ' you don 't have to watch ' line . We don 't have to watch . We do have to live among the viewers who will be desensitized , or aroused , by this show " .

= = = Awards = = =

Elena Maganini won a Creative Arts Primetime Emmy Award in 2007 for " Outstanding Single Camera Picture Editing for a Drama Series " . Also , the episode was nominated for two Artios awards , for " Best Dramatic Pilot Casting " and Best Dramatic Episodic Casting . The nominees for the Best Dramatic Pilot Casting were Deborah Aquila , Mary Tricia Wood , Jennifer L. Smith , Julie Tucker (for the New York casting) and Lori Wyman (for the Florida casting) .