

= The Dark Defender =

" The Dark Defender " is the fifth episode of the second season and seventeenth overall episode of the American television drama series Dexter , which first aired on 28 October 2007 on Showtime in the United States . The episode was written by Timothy Schlattmann and was directed by Keith Gordon .

In the episode , Dexter Morgan (Michael C. Hall) investigates a crime scene in a comic book store where he sees a poster of The Dark Defender , a character inspired by Dexter 's own crimes under the guise of the " Bay Harbor Butcher " , who is currently under investigation in his own police department . After he dreams that The Dark Defender saved his mother 's life when he was young , Dexter 's Narcotics Anonymous sponsor Lila Tournay (Jaime Murray) encourages him to seek closure by confronting one of his mother 's killers , Santos Jimenez (Tony Amendola) . Meanwhile , Dexter 's sister Debra (Jennifer Carpenter) suspects that her new boyfriend Gabriel (Dave Baez) is using her to write a book about her engagement to the first season 's " Ice Truck Killer " .

Schlattmann was inspired to set the homicide case in a comic book store when he realized that an Aquaman snow globe on his desk " could easily be a murder weapon " . When he visited comic book artist Tone Rodriguez to draw and render the poster of The Dark Defender , comic book writer Dan Wickline was also at Rodriguez 's studio , and so Schlattmann arranged for the two to have cameo appearances in the episode . The episode was filmed in Los Angeles , California though set in Miami , Florida . " The Dark Defender " was praised by critics and Schlattmann was nominated for Writers Guild of America Award for his script . The episode was also submitted as Dexter 's sample episode to determine the nominees for Outstanding Drama Series at the 60th Primetime Emmy Awards ; though nominated , the series didn 't win .

= = Plot = =

While drinking coffee with his sister Debra , Dexter is called to a murder scene at a comic book store . Talking to a witness about the victim , a shopkeeper who had been bludgeoned to the head with a snow globe , he sees a poster of The Dark Defender , a vigilante killer based on the Bay Harbor Butcher . Later , at a Narcotics Anonymous meeting , Dexter falls asleep and dreams about the death of his mother , Laura Moser (Katherine Kirkpatrick) . In the dream , he enters the cargo container where she was killed , dressed in The Dark Defender 's cloak , and beats his mother 's murderers to the ground , saving her . When he tells his sponsor Lila about his dream , she tells him that he must confront them to seek closure . He and Lila travel to Naples , Florida where one of the three men , Santos Jimenez , is alive and running a tavern . Having been warned by his girlfriend Rita Bennett 's mother Gail (JoBeth Williams) to leave Rita (Julie Benz) and her children alone , Dexter tells Rita that he is going away while Gail is visiting . Leaving Lila in their motel room , he goes to Jimenez 's bar and waits until all of the patrons have left . Dexter tries to explain to Jimenez how he feels , but Jimenez takes out a baseball bat and threatens to beat him . In response , Dexter disarms and brutally beats him , revealing his past to Jimenez as one of the boys he left in his mother 's blood . Jimenez tells Dexter that his mother was killed because she was not only a narcotics informant to Harry Morgan (James Remar) ? Dexter 's adoptive father and a police officer ? but also his lover . Dexter punches Jimenez and is close to killing him when Lila phones and he tells her that he is about to " use " . Thinking that he is about to use drugs , she urges him not to go any further , because " using " will only leave him empty and alone inside . He returns to the motel , leaving Jimenez unconscious in the bar , and falls asleep in Lila 's lap , distraught and completely drained .

When the morning comes , Lila tells Dexter of why she went into rehab . She had been dating a man who introduced her to methamphetamine , a drug that she became very addicted to . But when her boyfriend broke up with her , Lila set his former house on fire after getting high . But later on , she would find out that her boyfriend was squatting inside the house , and had been burned alive . Dexter asks her if she thinks that he was bad and deserved to die , something that Lila silently agrees to . Comforting her now , Dexter tells her " It 's okay then . "

Debra is insecure in her relationship with Gabriel because her ex @-@ fiancé Brian Moser , the " Ice Truck Killer " , kidnapped and tried to kill her . When she looks through Gabriel 's e @-@ mail , she sees that he has sent a book titled The Ice Princess to a number of publishers . She assumes that the book is about her and angrily breaks up with him . Discussing the break @-@ up with FBI Special Agent Frank Lundy (Keith Carradine) , he gives her the background check that he had run on Gabriel , revealing that Gabriel is a children 's writer , and Debra realizes that The Ice Princess is a children 's book .

When Dexter visits Rita the next morning , Gail ? who suspects that he is hiding something ? announces that she will be staying in Miami and will live with Rita . Dexter realizes that he must protect his secrets , so he begins by cleaning his boat that night with a black light to detect any blood . He is unaware that the marina is being videotaped by the Miami @-@ Metro Police , who believe that the Bay Harbor Butcher may be keeping his boat at that marina .

= = Production = =

Schlattmann thought to write the comic book store homicide storyline when he picked up the Aquaman snow globe in his office and thought , " ' Wow , this thing could easily be a murder weapon , " because of its weight and its edge . The writers wanted to use the actual Aquaman globe but DC Comics would not allow the character and the snow globe to be used in the episode , so the Dexter art department custom @-@ made a snow globe . The superhero 's name ultimately became " Mariner " as other names including " Sea King " and " King of the Seas " could not be used for legal reasons . Trademark and copyright clearances was again an issue when finding a name for the superhero based on the Bay Harbor Butcher . " The Eradicator " and " Judge Justice " were considered , but the final choice was " The Dark Defender " . Cerone said that the name was " a little on the generic side , but it was one we could clear . " He said that The Dark Defender was in part an homage to Batman : The Dark Knight Returns and to Dexter 's Dark Passenger , featured in Jeff Lindsay 's series of Dexter novels on which the television series is based . On the poster , The Dark Defender , though hooded , was drawn with a smile to resemble Michael C. Hall . The poster was rendered by comic artist Tone Rodriguez , with whom Schlattmann had previously worked on a screenplay in development at 20th Century Fox . When Schlattmann visited Rodriguez 's studio in Los Angeles to discuss the art , comic book writer Dan Wickline was also there . Schlattmann thought that " by including the two of them , we could make things a bit more special and add some credibility to the show " . Wickline played the dead comic book shopkeeper , while Rodriguez played the prime suspect for the murder . The Dark Defender character also lent its name to a series of highly stylized Dexter webisodes , recapping Dexter 's victims of the second season .

The scenes at the marina where Dexter keeps his boat , Coral Cove , were filmed at the Leeward Bay Marina in Los Angeles ' Wilmington neighborhood , in spite of the show 's Miami setting . The episode opens in a coffee bar at Coral Cove Marina , which was filmed at Leeward Bay 's floating diner , the Chowder Barge . One of the empty barns at Long Beach , California 's Shoreline Village was set up as the comic book store . Doakes and LaGuerta discuss the homicide case while standing on the Shoreline Village boardwalk , and the Village car park was used to film Doakes and LaGuerta 's stake out .

= = Reception = =

Eric Goldman of IGN called " The Dark Defender " " a very satisfying episode of the show " and thought that " so far [the cast and crew are] doing a very good job " of replicating the tension seen in the first season . He was impressed by Dexter 's discoveries about his birth mother and adoptive father , but called Debra 's romance with Gabriel a " less successful " storyline . Writing for the Los Angeles Times , Tom O 'Neil called the episode a " standout " because of the parts of Dexter 's past that it explored . He stated that , for regular viewers , " this episode is a real knockout " , but for unfamiliar viewers , " this whole Dark Defender bit might look pretty corny " . TV Squad 's Keith McDuffee believed the revelation of Laura 's affair with Harry to be " certainly the most shocking

moment of the episode " , and thought that " One of the brilliant moments of the season so far was Dexter going after one of his mom 's killers . " Paula Paige of TV Guide called Dexter 's monologue about his hollowness " very moving " . She thought that his confrontation with his mother 's killer " may have been one of the best shot [scenes] in the whole series " . Blogcritics ' Ray Ellis praised the " razor @-@ sharp sense of humor " seen in the episode and thought that " In a season of mostly dreary , bland series , Dexter remains the most daring show on television . " Dexter and Jimenez 's confrontation was named Hall 's best scene by Variety critic Stuart Levine .

In a short recap of seasons 1 and 2 in Film Quarterly , J. M. Tyree called " The Dark Defender " season 2 's " most intriguing episode " , and compared Dexter to Batman :

When the identities of the Butcher 's victims are revealed to be murderers , the public applauds him , elevating Dexter to the status of a folktale avenger or comic @-@ book anti @-@ hero . And indeed Rita excoriates him for disappearing at night " like Clark fucking Kent , " but the FBI describes the Butcher as more like one 's own " personal Batman . " Batman is an apt comparison , although Dexter prefers to violate Batman 's aversion to killing . Both live outside the law , " part human , part mutant , " as Dexter puts it . Both cling to an ethos riddled with perplexities and contradictions . Visiting a comic @-@ book shop , Dexter find himself transformed on a handmade superhero poster from Butcher into The Dark Defender , a protector of the city and the executioner of its predators . Vigilantes simultaneously share territory with cops and outlaws , they break the law in the hopes of helping society Dexter describes being " half sick with the thrill , the complete wrongness , " when the " dark passenger " inside him takes command .

Schlattmann was nominated for a Writers Guild of America Award for his work on this episode in the Episodic Drama category . " The Dark Defender " was submitted to the Primetime Emmy Awards judging panel to determine nominees for the Outstanding Drama Series award ; Dexter was one of the top ten candidates and became one of the 6 series nominated for the award . The episode was also unsuccessfully submitted for Emmys for Outstanding Writing (Timothy Schlattmann) and Outstanding Directing (Keith Gordon) in a Drama Series .