

Dexter Morgan

Dexter Morgan is a fictional character and the antihero of a series of novels by Jeff Lindsay, including *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* (2004), *Dearly Devoted Dexter* (2005), *Dexter in the Dark* (2007), *Dexter by Design* (2009), *Dexter Is Delicious* (2010), *Double Dexter* (2011), *Dexter's Final Cut* (2013), and *Dexter Is Dead* (2015). In 2006, the first novel was adapted into the Showtime TV series *Dexter* and its companion web series *Dexter: Early Cuts*. The eighth and final novel in the series written by Lindsay was titled *Dexter Is Dead*, and released in July 2015, signifying the ending of the character

In the TV series, Dexter is a forensic blood spatter analyst who works for the fictitious Miami-Metro Police Department. In his spare time, he is a vigilante serial killer who targets other murderers who have evaded the justice system. He follows a code of ethics taught to him in childhood by his adoptive father, Harry, which he refers to as "The Code" or "The Code of Harry" and hinges on two principles: Dexter can only kill people after finding conclusive evidence that they are guilty of murder, and he must not get caught.

Season one is largely based on the first novel, *Darkly Dreaming Dexter* (2004), but the following seasons veered away from the rest of the book series. In the television program, Dexter was played by Michael C. Hall, who won a Golden Globe Award for Best Actor in a Television Series or Drama in 2009. He was also portrayed as a youth by Devon Graye, Dominic Janes, and Maxwell Huckabee

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Dexter Morgan	
<i>Dexter</i> character	
 <div>Michael C. Hall as Dexter Morgan</div>	
First appearance	Novels: <i>Darkly Dreaming Dexter</i> Television: "Dexter" (episode 1.01)
Last appearance	Novels: <i>Dexter Is Dead</i> Television: "Remember the Monsters?" (episode 8.12)
Created by	Jeff Lindsay
Portrayed by	Michael C. Hall <p>Devon Graye (teenager)</p> Dominic Janes (child)
	Maxwell Huckabee (toddler)
Information	
Aliases	Patrick Bateman <p>Kyle Butler (season 4)</p> Arthur Curry Dave Cutler Dan (season 6) Sean Ellis

Season eight

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Reception

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Connections to actual crimes

Mark Twitchell

Andrew Conley

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Characterization

Psychological profile

Since childhood, Dexter Morgan has felt homicidal urges directed by an inner voice he calls "the Dark Passenger"; when that voice cannot be ignored, he "lets the Dark Passenger do the driving". He abides by a moral code taught to him by his adoptive father, Harry, in which he only allows himself to kill people who are themselves murderers.

Dexter considers himself emotionally divorced from the rest of humanity; in his narration, he refers to "humans" as if he is not one himself. He makes frequent references to an internal feeling of emptiness and says he kills to feel alive. He claims to have no feelings or conscience, and that all of his emotional responses are part of a well-rehearsed act to conceal his true nature. He has no interest in romance or sex; he considers his relationship with his girlfriend (and eventual wife) Rita Bennett to be part of his "disguise".

Dexter likes children, finding them much more interesting than adults; accordingly, he treats victims who prey on children with particular wrath. His connection to Rita's children, Astor, and Cody, sometimes supersedes his relationship with Rita herself. For example, in the novels, Dexter continues his relationship with Rita because he realizes that Rita's children are exhibiting the same sociopathic tendencies he did at their age, and he tries to control their violent urges by providing them with "guidance" similar to that which Harry provided him. In the show, Dexter deviates from his code of only killing murderers to dispose of a pedophile who is stalking Astor.

Animals do not like Dexter, which can cause noise problems when he stalks a victim who has pets. The novels reveal that he once owned a dog that barked and growled at him until he was forced to get rid of it and a turtle that hid from him in its shell until it died of starvation.

Dexter occasionally behaves in a way that suggests that he does feel some rudimentary human connection. He acknowledges loyalty to family, particularly to his late adoptive father, saying: "If I were capable of love, how I would have loved Harry." Since Harry's death, Dexter's only family is his sister Debra, Harry and Doris' biological daughter. Dexter admits that he cannot hurt Debra or allow anyone else to harm her because he is "fond of her". In the first episode of

	Steve Gaskell Darrel Tucker (season 5)
Occupation	Blood spatter analyst Vigilante serial killer Lumberjack
Family	Joseph Driscoll (biological father, deceased) Debra Morgan (adoptive sister, deceased) Doris Morgan (adoptive mother, deceased) Harry Morgan (adoptive father, deceased) Brian Moser (biological brother, deceased) Laura Moser (biological mother, deceased)
Spouse(s)	Rita Bennett Morgan (deceased)
Significant other(s)	Lila West (season 2; deceased) Lumen Pierce (season 5) Hannah McKay (seasons 7-8)
Children	Astor Bennett (stepdaughter) Cody Bennett (stepson) Novels: Lily Anne Morgan (daughter, with Rita) Television: Harrison Morgan (son, with Rita)
Nationality	American

season one, he says: "I don't have feelings about anything, but if I could have feelings at all, I'd have them for Deb".

In the first season, Dexter's relationship with Rita sets in motion his slow but steady introduction to human feelings, progressing further each season. During the episode "Shrink Wrap", when his current target is a psychologist, Dexter infiltrates the doctor's office by posing as a patient, and the doctor astutely speculates that part of Dexter's problem in admitting to his feelings is his need for control. In the second season finale, "The British Invasion", Dexter finally admits that he needs the people in his life.^[1] In season three, when he is threatened by a target, Dexter fights to live because he wants to see his unborn child. In season four, before killing a police officer who has murdered her own husband and daughter, Dexter is overwhelmed with the realization that he does not want to lose his new family. He is also horrified when he finds out that one of his potential victims is an abusive husband and father; Dexter vehemently insists he is nothing like that and would never hurt his family. In season five, after Rita is murdered, Dexter realizes that he genuinely loved her and is devastated by losing her^[2]

Modus operandi

In both the books and the show, Dexter selects his victims according to his adoptive father's code and kills them only after he has discovered enough evidence to prove their guilt. For each victim, he ritually prepares a kill site that has some symbolic relevance to the killer (e.g., killing a boxer in a boxing ring or a gambler in a casino's storage shed). He completely drapes the site in clear plastic tarpaulin to catch all spilled blood, and often adorns it with evidence or photos of his victim's crimes.

The actual capture of his victims differs between the books and the show. On the show, it usually entails approaching the victims from behind and injecting an anesthetic (specified to be an animal tranquilizer called etorphine hydrochloride, or M99), which renders his victims temporarily unconscious.^[3] The injection is a tradition established with his first victim, the hospital nurse.^[4] He uses the alias Patrick Bateman (the serial killer protagonist of Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho*) to procure these tranquilizers.^[3] Other times, Dexter incapacitates his target by using either his hands or a garrote to cut off blood flow to the brain. In the books (and twice in the television program), he hides in the back seat of his victim's vehicle, then wraps a noose of fishing line around his victim's throat when he sits down. Dexter then uses the threat of asphyxiation to force his victim to drive them to his prepared kill site.

Once they have arrived, he either strangles them into unconsciousness or uses the noose to drag them to the kill site proper. In such cases, he anesthetizes them once he has informed them of his judgment. When victims awaken, they are naked and secured to a table with plastic wrap, and for stronger victims, duct tape. If he has not already done so, he confronts them with narrative evidence of their crimes. In the novels, the method usually involves an extended "exploration" with various sharp knives; on the show, Dexter's favored method usually involves an immediately fatal wound to the chest, neck, or gut with a variety of weapons. He occasionally varies his methods to fit particular victims; he kills his brother (and fellow serial killer) Brian by cutting his throat with a dinner knife (with the manner of the death and Dexter's own hesitation at inflicting the wound causing pathologists to conclude that Brian killed himself);^[5] he stabs gang lord Little Chino in the chest with a machete.^[6] He kills Santos Jimenez—the man who murdered his mother—in the same manner in which his mother was killed, by dismembering him with a chainsaw. On other occasions, he uses hammers, drills, and other power tools.

Just before the murder, Dexter collects trophies from his victims so he can relive the experience. Dexter's trophy signature is to slice the victim's right cheek with a surgical scalpel to collect a small blood sample, which he preserves on a microscope slide. In the TV show, Dexter keeps blood slides from all his victims neatly organized in a wooden filing box, which he hides inside his air conditioner. In the novels, he keeps them in a rosewood box on his bookcase.

Ultimately, he dismembers the bodies into several pieces, stows them and the plastic sheeting in black, heavy duty, biodegradable garbage bags, then adds rocks from the dock where he keeps his boat as anchor weight, and seals the bags with duct tape. He then takes the wrapped bags out on his boat and disposes of them by dumping them overboard into the ocean at a defined location; in the TV series, his dumping ground is a small oceanic trench just offshore. In one episode, the dump site and remains are inadvertently discovered by scuba divers, so he changes tactics, cutting the bodies into smaller pieces and dumping them further offshore, where

they will be dispersed by the Gulf Stream. The books give less detail about disposal, with Dexter usually improvising depending on the victim. He has dumped some victims into the ocean due to the victim's owning a boat and doing the same with their own victims, but uses anchors to weight the bags. He disposes of another body in a vat of hydrochloric acid

General biography

Dexter was born on February 15, 1971 (though according to Dr. Evelyn Vogel's journal in S8 E4, Dexter's date of birth was notated as "2/1/71").^[7] At the story's outset, Dexter knows very little about his life prior to being adopted by Harry Morgan (a Miami detective) and his wife Doris. Harry only tells Dexter that his parents were killed in a car accident, and Harry brought him home from the crime scene. When Dexter is seven, Harry discovers that the boy has been killing neighborhood pets and realizes that Dexter is a sociopath with a deep need to kill. Consequently, Harry decides to channel the boy's homicidal urges in a "positive" direction by teaching him to be a careful, meticulous killer of people who "deserve it"—murderers who have escaped justice. Doris died when Dexter was 16, and Harry died when Dexter was 20.^[8] In the second season, Dexter's nemesis, Sergeant James Doakes discovers that Dexter forsook a career in medicine to pursue blood spatter analysis, despite being top of his class at medical school. He also notes that Dexter studied advanced jujutsu in college.^[9]

Both the television show and the first novel gradually reveal Dexter's complete back story. Dexter was born out of wedlock in 1971 to a young woman named Laura (Laura Moser on the show). In the novels, Laura was involved in the drug trade.^[5] On the show, Laura was a police informant for Harry Morgan and his secret mistress. Dexter's father (named Joseph Driscoll on the show) was in the US Army and served in the Vietnam War, but later became a drug-addicted criminal. Dexter also had an older brother, named Brian.^{[5][10]} On October 1, 1973, Dexter and Brian witnessed their mother's brutal murder at the hands of three drug dealers. For two days, the brothers were left in a crate, surrounded by dismembered body parts and sitting in a pool of blood.^{a[1]} Harry adopted the three-year-old Dexter, while Brian was left to the child welfare system.^{b[1]}

Dexter only remembers his mother's murder later in life, when he is called to an extremely bloody crime scene left by his brother—who has also grown up to be a serial killer. In the novel, Brian escapes Miami, but returns in *Dexter Is Delicious*. On the show, however, Dexter catches and (reluctantly) kills Brian, aware that Brian would never stop trying to kill Debra or other innocent people.^[5]

Character development in the book series

Darkly Dreaming Dexter

Doris Morgan, Dexter's adoptive mother, dies of cancer when he is 16. When Dexter reaches puberty, he realizes that he is uninterested in sex and needs instruction by his father on how to behave with women. Around this time, Harry discovers that Dexter has been killing neighborhood pets and realizes that the boy has an innate need to kill. Harry decides to channel Dexter's urges in a "positive" direction by teaching him to kill people who "deserve it", and to get rid of any evidence so he does not get caught.

When Dexter is 18, Harry is diagnosed with cancer and hospitalized. There, Harry gives Dexter his "permission" to kill his first human victim, a nurse who is murdering her patients with overdoses of morphine.

Throughout the novel, Dexter is involved in the investigation of the "Tamiami Butcher", a serial killer who dismembers his victims and puts the body parts in refrigerated trucks. The killer begins leaving taunting clues for Dexter to draw him in personally. The killer kidnaps Deborah and meets with Dexter in a storage container, and reveals their true connection: he is Brian, Dexter's biological brother. Brian tells Dexter that as children, they witnessed their mother's brutal murder at the hands of drug dealers, and were locked in a crate for two days, surrounded by dead bodies. Dexter persuades Brian to spare Deborah, and instead the two of them kill Lieutenant Migdia LaGuerta (this does not occur in the TV series, in which LaGuerta — whose first name is changed to "Maria" — is a recurring character until her death at the end of the seventh season).

At the end of the novel, Deborah learns of Dexter's secret life after he saves her from Brian. She appears to accept it, but in subsequent books feels torn between her duties as a police officer and her loyalty to Dexter, whom she loves as her real brother

Dearlly Devoted Dexter

Dexter's nemesis, Sergeant Doakes, suspects Dexter of being involved in LaGuerta's murder and starts following him around. Doakes and Dexter are soon forced to work together to stop "DrDanco", a psychopathic surgeon who removes his victims' limbs and sensory organs, leaving them in a state of living death.

Doakes' pursuit forces Dexter to spend more time with Rita and her children. While attempting to bond with Astor and Cody, he realizes that they both have "Dark Passengers" of their own, and he resolves to provide them with the same "guidance" that Harry had given him. After finding FBI agent Kyle Chutsky's ring in Dexter's pocket, Rita believes Dexter is about to propose to her, and happily accepts before Dexter can explain.

At the climax of the book, Danco kidnaps Dexter and Doakes, mutilating the latter by removing his hands, feet, and tongue. Just as Danco is about to turn his attentions to Dexter, however, Deborah bursts in and kills him, saving Dexter's life.

Dexter in the Dark

In *Dexter in the Dark*, the third novel of the series, third-person narrative reveals through an entity referred to as "IT" that the Dark Passenger is an independent agent inhabiting Dexter, rather than a deviant psychological construction. Later, Dexter realizes the Dark Passenger is related to Moloch, a Middle Eastern deity worshiped in Biblical times. The Dark Passenger is one of Moloch's many offspring; Moloch had many children (formed through human sacrifice), and learned to share its knowledge with them. Eventually, there were too many, and Moloch killed the majority; however, some of them escaped into the world. In the novel, Dexter learns of the Dark Passenger's true nature when it briefly "leaves" him, frightening him into researching possible reasons for its existence.

By now, Dexter has embraced his role as stepfather to both children, but is annoyed when thoughts of them – wondering if Cody had brushed his teeth before bed and if Astor had set out her Easter dress for picture day at her school – distract him from hunting an intended victim. By the end of the book, he has begun training Astor and Cody to be careful, efficient killers, with great success: when the novel's antagonist, a Moloch-worshipping cult leader, kidnaps the three of them, Cody saves Dexter's life by killing one of his henchmen.

The novel ends with the Dark Passenger returning to Dexter on his wedding day

Dexter by Design

Dexter by Design opens in Paris, with Dexter and Rita on their honeymoon. There, while visiting an art gallery, Dexter and Rita see an avant-garde performance piece called "Jennifer's Leg" in which the artist amputates her own limb. When they return to Miami, Dexter crosses paths with a suspicious homicide detective and a serial killer who preys on tourists. In the novel's closing paragraphs, Dexter learns that Rita is pregnant with his child.

Dexter is Delicious

In *Dexter is Delicious*, Dexter grapples with raising his infant daughter, Lily-Anne, and wonders if she can help restore his humanity. Brian reappears in Dexter's life, situating himself with Dexter's family. The main event for the Miami Police Department is related to the appearance of cooked, partially eaten bodies and the disappearance of a teenaged girl, Samantha. Dexter has sex with Samantha while under the influence of ecstasy, and tries to prevent Rita from finding out while helping Deborah solve the murders.

The novel reintroduces Dexter's brother, Brian, who shows up unexpectedly at Dexter's doorstep and inserts himself into his brother's new family. Dexter is reluctant at first to let Brian back into his life, but changes his mind when he sees him bond with Astor and Cody over their shared bloodlust.

Double Dexter

In *Double Dexter*, Dexter is seen by an anonymous Shadow while killing a victim in a secluded house. He continues on with his life until he starts receiving threatening emails from the person who claims to have seen him over a pile of dead body parts. Instead of turning him in, the Shadow, as he is referred to, takes it upon himself to take Dexter down. While Dexter tries to find and dispose of this Shadow, he quickly finds out that this person is much more capable than he initially suspected. Dexter is eventually framed for a murder, at least circumstantially by his still anonymous Shadow

While on suspension from the police force for being a 'person of interest' in a murder investigation, Dexter finally finds out who his Shadow is: Doug Crowley. When he goes to dispatch Crowley, he finds he is once again being tailed by Doakes. Realizing that no way exists to take down Crowley with Doakes on his tail, he enlists the help of his brother, Brian, and finally thinks that his problems have been taken care of.

While Brian is dispatching Doug Crowley, Dexter goes down to Key West with his family. Despite learning from his brother that a Doug Crowley had been taken care of, he finds the body of Detective Hood, the lead detective investigating him for murder, in his hotel suite, with the only explanation being that Brian killed the wrong Doug Crowley

While Dexter is preoccupied with the Key West police, Crowley finally attacks Dexter by abducting his step children, Cody and Astor. Dexter hunts down Crowley to a small island off the coast of Key West. He finally gets the drop on him, and Crowley escapes with Astor on a speedboat. Dexter manages to sneak aboard and overpower Crowley, with some assistance from Astor. They shove Crowley overboard, where he is eaten by a hammerhead shark.

With Crowley dispatched, Dexter can finally focus on clearing his name in the murder investigation. He plants evidence in Hood's apartment, thoroughly discrediting him, while Doakes is now under review for excessive force and intimidating a witness. These developments leave Dexter in the clear

Dexter's Final Cut

In *Dexter's Final Cut*, a famous celebrity becomes obsessed with Dexter Morgan after researching him for his new role. When the Big Ticket Network comes to Miami, Deborah and Dexter are assigned as "technical advisors" to the stars of the show. Deborah is shadowed by female lead Jackie Forrest and Dexter is left with over-the-hill star Robert Chase. Sensing a strangeness in him, Dexter keeps Robert at arm's length. When a series of murders leads Miami Metro's Detective Anderson through a loop, Dexter is assigned to guard Jackie.

Deborah and Dexter quickly realize that the string of bodies all bear a striking resemblance to Jackie. Dexter is assigned to protect her in her hotel room. At first, things seem perfectly routine; Dexter accompanies Jackie to the station each morning and returns with her to the hotel at night, but when the killer's identity is revealed to him, Dexter's "Dark Passenger" leads him out into the streets in pursuit.

While working a crime scene where police have found another body matching the pattern of Jackie's obsessed fan, Dexter notices a man fitting the description in a kayak out in the bay watching the scene. Stealing away to his boat, Dexter slips alongside the man and kills him. After a hard day's work, they return to the hotel only to be disturbed in the night by sirens; Jackie's assistant Kathy has been murdered in the room below. The murder seems to fit the pattern, but Dexter notices several errors. That night, Dexter and Jackie fall into bed together and start a brief but intense affair. Dexter thinks he has fallen in love with Jackie, and considers leaving Rita.

Dexter is called onto the set to appear as a minor character in the series following a conversation with Jackie and Robert. Suddenly, Dexter gets a panicked phone call from Rita: Astor has disappeared. Fearing the worst, Dexter goes in search of Robert, who had shown a suspicious interest in Astor. He questions the show's director, who confirms that Robert is a pedophile. Moments later, he finds Jackie's dead body in her trailer. Dexter then pieces it together: Robert killed Kathy after she caught him in a compromising position with Astor, and then killed Jackie when she found out what he had done. Dexter follows a hunch and heads to Rita and his new house. Robert catches him sneaking in and knocks him unconscious.

Waking some time later, Dexter finds Astor and Robert together in the house. Robert has lured Astor with promises of stardom, and she appears ready to help him to kill Dexter. Thinking quickly, Dexter tells Astor that Robert will be arrested and sent to prison, and is thus useless to her. When Robert tries to take Astor as a hostage, she stabs him to death. Dexter realizes that circumstantial evidence implicates him as the murderer of Robert and Jackie, and that the only person who can exonerate him is Rita. When Dexter searches the house, however, he finds that Rita is dead, murdered by Robert. Dexter sees that his luck has finally run out, and waits for the police to arrive.

Dexter is Dead

In the final book of the series' *Dexter is Dead*; Dexter is in jail after being charged with Robert's crimes - thanks to the corrupt Detective Anderson, who has falsified evidence and reports to make it seem that Dexter is guilty. Only Masuoka tries to clear Dexter's good name, but he gets swatted down by everyone from the beat cops to the state attorney. Deborah, meanwhile, disowns Dexter for cheating on Rita and putting Astor in danger and decides to take custody of his children

Dexter's brother Brian bails him out of prison and gets him the best lawyer in town, but the lawyer happens to be in the pocket of a very powerful Mexican drug cartel led by a man named Raul, who is after Brian. The cartel tries to kill Dexter several times to get to Brian. Eventually, Dexter and Brian find out their lawyer sold them out to the cartel, so they kill him and all the cartel's members, save for one, whom they torture to find out where Raul is holding Cody and Astor

Brian, Deborah, and Dexter team up, storm Raul's yacht, and take the kids back. Deborah and the kids get away, but Brian is killed by a bomb and Raul shoots Dexter in the shoulder. Dexter kills Raul and sets a bomb so no evidence is left, then jumps off the boat into the water and sinks into the ocean. The book leaves it open to interpretation whether he survives.

Dexter in the television show

Season one

By the start of season one, Dexter is a blood spatter analyst for the Miami Metro Police Department; in his "secret life", he is a serial killer who preys on people who are themselves murderers. In his private life, Dexter maintains superficial relationships – with his sister Debra (Jennifer Carpenter), his girlfriend Rita (Julie Benz), and Rita's children, Astor (Christina Robinson) and Cody (Daniel Goldman in season one, Preston Bailey in subsequent seasons) to appear normal. Dexter has internal conversations with his late foster father, Harry Morgan (James Remar), who gives him advice about killing and navigating his personal life.

Rita's previous, abusive marriage leaves her afraid to have sex, which suits the asexual Dexter perfectly. When she overcomes her demons and becomes more amorous, however, Dexter considers ending the relationship, fearing that she will see him as he really is if they become a real couple.^[11] However, during a therapy session with one of his intended victims, psychologist Emmett Meridian (Tony Goldwyn), Dexter is put into a state of deep relaxation, wherein he sees a frightening image of a small boy sitting in a pool of blood. In a heightened emotional state, he runs to Rita's house for comfort, and they have sex.^[11]

Meanwhile, a serial killer of prostitutes appears in Miami, and Dexter notices that the killer is leaving hidden clues at the scene that have personal significance to Dexter. One day, Dexter receives official notification that a man named Joseph Driscoll is his biological father, and that, since Dexter is the only next of kin, he must come settle the estate and claim the body. Debra's new boyfriend, Rudy Cooper (Christian Camargo), insists that they accompany Dexter and Rita to clean out the house. Dexter doubts that Driscoll is his father, but while cleaning, discovers a thank-you card that he sent his blood donor as a child, as Dexter has a rare blood type (AB-).^[12] As Harry had convinced Driscoll to donate the blood anonymously, Dexter had no idea from where it had come.^[12] Dexter suspects his father's death was foul play, but the body is cremated before Dexter can obtain proof.^[12] The show reveals to the viewer that Rudy murdered Driscoll with an injection of insulin designed to mimic a heart attack.^[12]

Dexter's rivalry with Rita's recently paroled ex-husband Paul (Mark Pellegrino) turns violent; Paul tries to fight Dexter, who knocks him unconscious. To cover his tracks, Dexter injects Paul with heroin and leaves him to be found. Paul fails a drug test (thus breaking his probation) and returns to jail.

Dexter is called to analyze a hotel room flooded with the blood of multiple persons. The sight triggers a panic attack and calls up several memories of himself as a child sitting in blood.^[13] His research leads him to discover he witnessed his mother's murder as a child, and he had a brother named Brian. Eventually, the Ice Truck Killer (who turns out to be none other than Rudy) kidnaps Debra after proposing to her, then drugs her and takes her to Dexter's childhood home. When Dexter goes to rescue Debra, he finally recognizes Rudy as his long-lost brother Brian Moser.

Brian proposes that they begin to murder together, and leads Dexter to a bound and drugged Debra, suggests that she be their first kill. After wrestling with internal conflicts from his attachment to his biological brother and need to protect his adoptive sister, Dexter ultimately decides that his loyalty lies with Debra. Later on, Brian begins to hunt down Debra himself, but Dexter apprehends Brian and then ties him down to an operating table in Brian's apartment. Dexter tearfully slits Brian's throat, staging the crime scene to make it look like Brian committed suicide. Eventually, the police find the body and close the case. The season ends with Dexter wondering what it would be like if everyone knew his secrets and imagining being celebrated outside the police station by an adoring crowd.^[5]

Season two

In season two, Dexter is so haunted by killing his own brother that he cannot resume killing. To make matters worse, Debra, traumatized by her ordeal with the Ice Truck Killer, moves in with Dexter, which hinders his secret life. Dexter's nemesis, Sergeant James Doakes (Erik King), harbors lingering suspicions about Dexter's possible connection with the Ice Truck Killer, and he begins to tail Dexter everywhere. To throw him off, Dexter reluctantly refrains from killing for a month. Just as Dexter finds a chance to kill again, over 30 bodies are found in a Miami harbor provoking a massive search for the so-called "Bay Harbor Butcher".

Rita soon figures out that Dexter has been lying to her and concludes that Dexter is a heroin addict, with which he goes along to hide his real secret. Rita forces him to attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings, where he meets Lila Tournay (Jaime Murray), who becomes his sponsor. Lila convinces him to explore his past, and while under extreme duress after confronting and killing his mother's murderer, his relationship with Lila becomes sexual. Dexter confesses to Rita, who dumps him. Lila becomes obsessed with Dexter, believing he is her soulmate. Eventually, however, Dexter's desire to be with Astor and Cody compels him to ask for Rita's forgiveness; she grants it, and they get back together. Dexter learns that Lila is in fact a sociopath who attends NA meetings to vicariously experience emotions she is incapable of feeling, and tells her to leave him alone. Lila retaliates by framing Dexter's colleague and friend Angel Batista (David Zayas) for rape, though he is eventually cleared.

Doakes' suspicions subside some when he realizes that Dexter is attending Narcotics Anonymous, but he begins to suspect this is a cover for an even worse secret. As Doakes gets closer to discovering the truth, Dexter provokes him into a physical altercation at work, resulting in Doakes' suspension. In "The British Invasion", Doakes finally catches Dexter in the act of disposing of a dismembered body in the Florida Everglades. Dexter is forced to take Doakes captive and sets about framing him. Lila discovers the cabin in the Everglades where Dexter is holding Doakes and blows it up (with Doakes inside), to protect Dexter. The police eventually find Doakes' charred body, surrounded by Dexter's murderous paraphernalia, and conclude that Doakes was the Bay Harbor Butcher, much to Dexter's relief!^[1]

Dexter pretends to want to run away with Lila, but she soon discovers that he intends to kill her. Lila kidnaps Astor and Cody, and when Dexter finds them at her house, she sets it on fire and leaves the three of them locked inside. Dexter manages to save the children and escape unhurt. Weeks later, he follows Lila to Paris, where he thanks her for showing him his "true self" before killing her.^[1]

Season three

In season three, Dexter finds his life manageable until he discovers that Rita is pregnant.^[8] Rita and he tacitly consider terminating the pregnancy, until Rita announces she will keep the baby regardless of whether or not Dexter wants to be a father to the child. Dexter, afraid of what kind of father he would be, considers leaving Rita to parent alone, until Debra convinces him that he would be a great father. After a few failed marriage proposals, Dexter proposes again by mimicking a declaration of love from a criminal. Rita finally accepts, with her children's blessing.^[8]

Meanwhile, after killing an unknown man in self-defense while attempting to murder a homicidal drug dealer named Freebo, Dexter forms an unlikely friendship with the man's brother, Miguel Prado (Jimmy Smits), a popular assistant district attorney.^[8] While hunting down Freebo at night, Prado stumbles upon Dexter, bloody from murdering Freebo; Dexter claims he killed Freebo in self-defense. Prado offers Dexter Freebo's bloody shirt as proof that he will not reveal Dexter's secret.^[14] The two men grow closer, and Dexter even makes Prado his best man. Prado gradually discerns that Dexter is a serial killer, and they begin to murder together according to Dexter's "code". When Prado deviates from the code to murder a rival defense attorney, it sets off a game of competing leverage and blackmail between the two men.^[15] Dexter discovers the blood on the shirt is actually bovine, meaning that Prado was just using him as an excuse to kill. Angry and hurt, Dexter decides to kill Prado.^[16]

After being tipped off by Prado, a serial killer called "the Skinner" (Jesse Borrego), who is searching for Freebo, kidnaps Dexter on Dexter's wedding day. Facing certain death, Dexter resolves to keep fighting so he can live to see his son; he frees himself and kills the Skinner by snapping his neck and throwing his body into an arriving police car. Dexter then kills Prado^[17] and marries Rita, with Debra as his "best man".^[18]

During the course of the season, Dexter justifies killing two people who do not fit his code: Nathan Marten (Jason Kaufman), a pedophile who is stalking Astor;^[19] and his old friend Camilla Figg (Margo Martindale), who is dying of cancer and asks him to end her suffering.^[20]

Season four

At outset of season four, Rita has given birth to a baby boy, Harrison. Dexter is happy to have a child of his own, but his responsibilities as a new father leave him too exhausted to kill.^[21] Dexter finds it increasingly difficult to keep concealing his secret life, which leads to conflict with Rita and Astor who has entered adolescence. At Rita's urging, Dexter and she enter couple's therapy.

After his first kill of the new season, Dexter falls asleep while driving and has an accident, and the resultant short-term memory loss causes him to forget where his victim's body is.^[21] He eventually retraces his steps and disposes of the body. After retired Special Agent Frank Lundy (Keith Carradine) is murdered, Dexter begins his pursuit of the so-called "Trinity Killer", who has been committing ritualistic murders across the country for 30 years.^[21] Once Dexter finds the killer, however, he is shocked to discover that "Trinity" is actually Arthur Mitchell (John Lithgow), a family man and pillar of his community

Dexter assumes the alias Kyle Butler and begins to insinuate himself into Mitchell's personal life in an effort to learn how Mitchell balances his family responsibilities with his secret life as a serial killer. To that end, Dexter repeatedly puts off murdering Mitchell, thwarts police efforts to apprehend him, and even saves Mitchell's life when he attempts suicide. Upon getting to know Mitchell, however, Dexter realizes that he misjudged him; after spending Thanksgiving with the Mitchell family, Dexter learns that his would-be mentor is an abusive tyrant whose family is terrified of him. After getting into a violent altercation with Mitchell, Dexter insists that they are nothing alike and thinks he may be able to silence his Dark Passenger permanently.^[22]

When he returns home, Dexter makes arrangements for Rita and him to take a belated honeymoon. He sends Rita ahead and entraps Mitchell as Mitchell tries to skip town. Before Dexter kills him with a hammer, Mitchell tells him that Dexter will not be able to control his violent urges for long, and "it's already over" — the same thing Mitchell tells his victims just before killing them.

After returning home, Dexter calls Rita's phone to find out if her and Harrison made it alright. He immediately hears Rita's phone start to ring, indicating that she is in the house. Harrison then starts crying and Dexter is devastated to find Rita lying dead in the bathtub, with Harrison on the floor in a pool of his mother's blood; she was Trinity's final victim.^[23]

Season five

The season opens with a shocked, guilt-ridden Dexter clutching Harrison as the police respond to his call, in which Dexter says "I killed her". While he means that he killed her by letting Trinity know his identity, the police interpret this as an admission of direct guilt. The FBI, however, soon clear

“ Harry was right. I thought I could change what I am, keep my family safe. But it doesn't matter what I do, what I choose... I'm what's wrong. This is... fate ”

— Dexter Morgan, "The Getaway", Episode 4.12

Dexter, as he was with the police at Arthur Mitchell's house at the time Rita was murdered.

Dexter spends the next day completely numb, unable to even fake any sort of emotion or grief. As Dexter plans to disconnect and restart, he finds himself confronted by Rankin (Brad Carter), a brash, foul-mouthed hillbilly. When Rankin insults Rita, Dexter kills him in a fit of rage. Harry tells Dexter that this act is the first human thing he has seen Dexter do since Rita's death.^[2]

Distraught over Rita's death, Astor and Cody leave to go live with their grandparents. A struggling Dexter attempts to move on by hiring an Irish nanny to look after Harrison while he goes out to find his next kill. He settles on Boyd Fowler (Shawn Hatosy), a convicted rapist whose connection to a string of missing women makes him the perfect target. Dexter kills Fowler, only to find Fowler's latest victim, a young woman named Lumen Pierce (Julia Stiles), who is still alive. After debating whether or not to kill her (and thus eliminate a potential witness), Dexter gives in to his better nature and decides to protect her. Lumen is slow to trust Dexter, but comes to realize he means her no harm. She reveals that Fowler was not the only man who raped her. As Lumen gradually becomes integrated into Dexter's life, she begs him to help her to go after her attackers; Dexter reluctantly agrees. They stalk a children's dentist and the head of security for a high-profile motivational speaker named Ibrdan Chase (Jonny Lee Miller). As the plot thickens, it becomes clear that Chase was also one of Lumen's attackers. Complicating the situation further is Detective Joey Quinn (Desmond Harrington), who believes that Dexter killed Rita and is getting too close to finding out Dexter's secrets.

To keep the police occupied, Dexter puts them on Fowler's trail. Dexter becomes personally acquainted with Chase and stumbles onto a photo that proves that all of Lumen's attackers (who are also guilty of torturing, raping, and murdering 12 other women) have known each other since childhood.

Dexter eventually finds a vial of blood that Chase wears around his neck. After extracting a sample, he discovers that the blood belongs to Emily Birch (Angela Bettis), the rape club's first victim. She provides Lumen and Dexter with the identity of the mysterious fourth attacker in the photo, Alex Tilden (Scott Grimes). Dexter allows Lumen to kill Tilden by stabbing him in the heart. Dexter and Lumen then become lovers, before continuing their hunt for Chase. As Lumen and Dexter plan to capture Chase, Dexter realizes cameras are in his apartment. Dexter, assuming he is being watched by Quinn, waits for him to return to the surveillance van. As Dexter opens the door to capture Quinn, Stan Liddy (Peter Weller), a private investigator Quinn had hired to tail Dexter, stuns Dexter with a taser. After Liddy calls Quinn to bust Dexter, Dexter attacks Liddy and kills him in self-defense, after Liddy tries to stab him.

While Dexter deals with Liddy, Lumen gets a call from Emily. Emily appears frightened of Chase and threatens to call the police, but she is revealed to be setting a trap to allow Chase to capture them. Dexter returns to the apartment to find Lumen gone. He tracks Chase to the camp where the rape club had started. In a fit of emotion, he accidentally wrecks the stolen car he is driving, allowing Chase to take him prisoner. Chase brings Dexter to the building in which he is holding Lumen. As Chase is about to kill them, Dexter frees himself with a knife he had stashed and immobilizes Chase by stabbing him through his foot and into the floor. Dexter cuts Lumen free and knocks Chase out. When Chase wakes up, Dexter allows Lumen to kill him. While they are still in the kill room, preparing to move the body, Debra arrives on the scene, though her view of Dexter and Lumen is obstructed by a sheet of plastic. Dexter and Lumen, trapped, remain silent. Without requesting their identity, Debra warns them that she is about to call in backup and allows them to flee before the police arrive.

The next day, when Dexter returns from work, Lumen tells him that she no longer feels the need to kill, and they cannot be together because Dexter's homicidal urges will never leave him. She then leaves to return to the life she had before her kidnapping. The season ends with Dexter surrounded by friends and family at Harrison's first birthday party

Season six

About a year later, Harrison is old enough to walk, and Dexter has begun searching for a preschool, though his atheism conflicts with the largely religious preschools to which he applies. He finds a greater understanding through Brother Sam (Mos Def, credited as Mos and later as yasiin bey), an ex-con and murderer whom Dexter once considered killing, who has since become a born-again Christian who counsels other ex-cons. Dexter initially sees Brother Sam's religious conversion as a scam, but Brother Sam proves himself a truly changed man, and even helps Dexter through a crisis when Harrison undergoes an appendectomy.

However, things go awry when Brother Sam is shot and mortally wounded in his garage. Dexter realizes that a friend of Sam's, Nick (Germaine De Leon), is responsible, and swears revenge. On his deathbed, Sam forgives Nick and implores Dexter to also forgive him. Dexter considers sparing Nick when he initially appears remorseful, but that proves to be an act; after Sam refuses to press charges on his deathbed, Nick brags about what he did. An enraged Dexter drowns Nick in the surf, reawakening in him the presence of his dead brother, Brian, who begins to guide him in much the same way that Harry's presence ~~one~~ had.

Brian convinces Dexter to go after Arthur Mitchell's son Jonah (Brando Eaton), who appears to have also become a killer. Dexter adheres to his father's code, however, causing a schism between his personalities. Dexter finally catches Jonah with the intent of killing him, but relents when he sees that Jonah feels guilty about failing to protect his sister, who committed suicide by slitting an artery in a bathtub, similar to how her father killed his victims. When Jonah and his mother discovered Jonah's sister, their mother blamed the children for their father's shortcomings. This enraged Jonah, who then killed his mother. Learning this new information, Dexter rejects Brian and reaffirms the "Code of Harry", leaving Jonah alive to forgive himself.

In the meantime, Dexter begins investigating "the Domsday Killer", a serial killer who models his crimes after the Book of Revelation. Dexter soon finds that the murders are being committed by two people: a fanatically religious college professor named James Gellar (Edward James Olmos) and his protégé, Travis Marshall (Colin Hanks). Dexter tracks Marshall down, but balks at killing him, believing that Marshall has a conscience and is simply being led down the wrong path. Dexter then resolves to save Marshall from himself.

After the death of Marshall's sister, Dexter follows him to the old church and discovers Gellar's body in a freezer, concluding that Marshall had been acting alone the whole time, with Gellar as a dissociative identity. After being forced to accept Gellar's death, Marshall begins to target Dexter, managing to capture him and enact the lake of fire. Dexter escapes, however, and is rescued by a fishing boat carrying illegal immigrants bound for Florida. Marshall kidnaps Harrison to sacrifice him as the "Lamb of God" during a solar eclipse, but Dexter rescues Harrison and takes Marshall to the old church. Debra walks into the church—seeking to find Dexter after a recent meeting with a therapist helped her realize that she was in love with her adoptive brother—only to see Dexter kill Marshall.^[24]

Season seven

In the season-seven opener, Dexter tells a bewildered Debra that he killed Marshall on impulse after Marshall ambushed him. Debra believes him at first, and helps him destroy the old church, with Marshall's body inside. A few days later, however, Debra finds Dexter's knives and collection of blood slides, and asks him point blank if he is a serial killer. Not knowing what else to say, Dexter replies that he is. Debra is horrified, but resolves to help Dexter stop killing by moving in with him and keeping a constant eye on him.^[25]

After weeks under Debra's surveillance, a stressed out Dexter kidnaps Louis Greene (Josh Cooke), a former coworker with a grudge against him, with the intent of killing him. Dexter relents at the last minute, however, and calls Debra so she can talk him out of it, reassuring her that some good is in him after all.^[26]

Dexter escapes Debra's watch long enough to dispose of Ray Speltzer (Matt Gerald), a brutal serial killer who had evaded prison on a technicality, and Debra comes to understand why Dexter kills. She makes a deal with him: she will not stop Dexter as long he does not tell her about it or interfere with Miami-Metro investigations.^[27]

Dexter sets his sights on killing Hannah McKay (Yvonne Strahovski), a serial poisoner, who as a teenager, had gone on a cross-country killing spree with her boyfriend. Dexter subdues her and prepares to kill her, but stops when Hannah does not appear to fear him. They are both suddenly overcome with attraction and have sex.^[28] Dexter falls in love with Hannah, who helps him realize that his "Dark Passenger" does not control his life.^[29]

Dexter's romance with Hannah complicates his relationship with Debra, however. Debra is intent on arresting Hannah for the murder of Sal Price, a crime writer for whom Debra had feelings, and Dexter has trouble reconciling his feelings for his girlfriend with his responsibility to his adoptive sister. To make matters worse, Miami-Metro Captain Maria LaGuerta (Lauren Velez) reopens the Bay

Harbor Butcher case, convinced that Doakes was innocent and that Dexter is hiding something. When Dexter tries to kill Hector Estrada (Nestor Serrano), the man who ordered Dexter's mother's murder, LaGuerta arrives at the scene, forcing him to let Estrada go so he can escape. Dexter deduces that LaGuerta had orchestrated Estrada's release from prison to set Dexter up.^[30]

At the beginning of the season, mobster Isaak Sirko (Ray Stevenson) vows to kill Dexter to avenge his lover, Viktor Baskov (Enver Gjokaj), a cop killer and one of Dexter's victims. Fearing for his family's safety, Dexter engineers Sirko's arrest, but Sirko is soon released on bail and resumes his vendetta. Sirko asks for Dexter's protection against his former associates, who fear that he will testify against them; in return, he promises Dexter that he will let him live. Dexter refuses, but ends up inadvertently coming to Sirko's aid when one of his former henchmen attacks them both. Dexter kills the mobster, but is too late to save Sirko, who is mortally wounded during the struggle. As he dies, Sirko tells Dexter that it is not too late for Dexter to find happiness.^[31]

Debra gets into a near-fatal car accident following a confrontation with Hannah, and insists to Dexter that Hannah poisoned her. Dexter refuses to believe it at first, but he is suspicious enough to order a tox screen on Debra's water bottle found on the driver's floorboard of her car after the accident. To Dexter's horror, the results prove that Hannah had spiked Debra's water with an overdose of Xanax. Left with no other choice, Dexter gives Debra proof that Hannah murdered Price and looks on, heartbroken, as Debra arrests her.^[30]

LaGuerta has Dexter arrested for the Bay Harbor Butcher murders, but Dexter is released thanks to evidence with which he had tampered to throw LaGuerta off. Dexter is certain that LaGuerta will not give up, however, and resolves to kill her, though doing so would be a violation of his "code". He kidnaps and kills Estrada to lure LaGuerta in, and then knocks her unconscious, planning to shoot her to make it look like Estrada killed her. At that moment, Debra bursts in, holding Dexter at gunpoint and begging him not to go through with it. LaGuerta regains consciousness and urges Debra to kill Dexter. Seeing no way out, Dexter resigns himself to his fate and tells Debra to "do what you have to do". Much to Dexter's surprise, however, Debra turns the gun on LaGuerta, and shoots her dead. As the countdown to the new year begins, Dexter wonders if this is the "beginning of the end".^[32]

Season eight

The eighth season opens six months later, with Dexter growing increasingly worried about Debra, who has quit the police force and spiraled into depression and self-destructive behavior. Dexter goes to her new job as a private investigator and learns that Debra is pursuing, and sleeping with, drug dealer Andrew Briggs (Rhys Coiro). When Dexter confronts her, Debra tells him that she wishes she had killed him instead of LaGuerta. A few days later, Dexter learns that an assassin, El Sapo (Nick Gomez), is going to kill Briggs and Debra, and Dexter goes to Debra's hotel to save her. A scuffle ensues, in which Dexter kills Briggs. He begs Debra to come with him, but she refuses.^[33] Soon afterward, El Sapo is found dead, and Dexter is called in to investigate. He discovers that some of the blood at the scene belongs to Debra. She admits to killing El Sapo, and Dexter reluctantly covers up the crime.^[34]

Dexter meets Dr. Evelyn Vogel (Charlotte Rampling), a neuropsychiatrist consulting with Miami Metro about a serial killer dubbed "the Brain Surgeon" who removes parts of his victims' brains. She tells Dexter that she knew Harry, with whom she came up with Dexter's "code". Vogel believes the killer is one of her former patients and asks Dexter to kill him before the killer goes after her.^[33]

Quinn calls Dexter to tell him that Debra has shown up at Miami Metro, blind drunk, and confessed to killing LaGuerta. Panicked, Dexter rushes over with Vogel in tow, and knocks Debra unconscious with a low dose of the tranquilizer he uses on his victims. He realizes he cannot help Debra and asks Vogel to treat her.^[35]

Dexter starts looking into another of Vogel's former patients, serial killer A.J. Yates (Aaron McCusker). He saves one of Yates' victims and confronts the killer, who escapes. The following day, Debra asks Dexter to take a drive with her so they can talk. During the drive, she intentionally crashes the car into the bay, intent on killing them both. Debra survives, however, and saves Dexter's life.^[36] When Yates kidnaps Vogel, the two of them put aside their differences to track him down. Dexter kills Yates to keep him from harming Debra, and Debra and he reconcile.^[37]

Dexter sets his sights on a new victim: Zach Hamilton (Sam Underwood), a teenager from a wealthy family who murdered his father's mistress and is now preparing to kill his father. Dexter kidnaps Zach, who admits that he enjoys killing and will do it again. Seeing in Zach a kindred spirit, Dexter promises to teach him how to kill.^[38] When Dexter's neighbor Cassie Jollenston (Bethany Joy

Lenz) is murdered, he at first believes Zach is responsible and decides to kill him. Dexter confronts Zach, who swears that he did not target Cassie, but another murderer, giving Dexter hope that Zach can be trained after all. That hope is dashed, however, when Dexter finds Zach's dead body in his apartment — with a piece of his brain missing.^[39]

Hannah reappears in Dexter's life when she nonlethally poisons Debra and him, to get his attention.^[38] Dexter investigates and finds that she has changed her name and married Miles Castner (Julian Sands), a wealthy businessman. Dexter goes to see Hannah, who says she had wanted him to kill Castner, but changed her mind after realizing she is still in love with Dexter. Dexter goes to Castner's boat to protect Castner, but finds that Hannah has already killed him. The two of them dispose of the body, and Dexter arranges for her to leave the country.^[40] The night before Hannah leaves, however, Dexter and she have sex, and he realizes that he is still in love with her. They renew their relationship and plan to run away together to Argentina.^[41]

After investigating, Dexter discovers that Zach's killer is related to Vogel. Vogel tells Dexter that she had a son, Daniel, who as a teenager murdered his younger brother Richard before apparently dying in a fire. Dexter discovers that Daniel set the fire himself to fake his own death, and that he is now living under the identity of Cassie's boyfriend Oliver Saxon (Darri Ingolfsson). Dexter suspects that Saxon is the "Brain Surgeon" and warns Vogel, who tells him to stay out of it; Dexter is unaware that she is sheltering her son.^[41] Dexter makes preparations to move while hunting Saxon, the last "loose end". He goes to Vogel's house to make sure she is safe — only to see Saxon slit her throat.^[42]

Days later, Saxon shows up at Dexter's apartment and offers a truce: he will spare Dexter's family if Dexter will leave him alone. Dexter pretends to accept, but is now more than ever determined to kill Saxon. He finds proof of Saxon's murders, which he turns over to the police so that Saxon will be forced to come after him before he leaves Miami. Dexter then enlists Debra's help in subduing Saxon and prepares to kill him. At the last moment, however, Dexter realizes that his love for Hannah is stronger than his need to kill, and he spares Saxon's life. He calls Debra so she can arrest Saxon, and says his goodbyes to Harry and her. Saxon escapes his bindings, however, and shoots Debra in the gut when she tries to arrest him.^[43]

In the series finale, "Remember the Monsters?", Dexter's flight to Argentina is delayed by a hurricane, and he tells Hannah and Harrison to go on without him, intending to take care of Saxon. When he learns what has happened to Debra, Dexter rushes to her side at the hospital, but she tells him to go on and live a good life. Moments later, she suffers a major stroke that leaves her in a persistent vegetative state. Dexter blames himself and realizes that he will always destroy those he loves; he sees at last that he can never have a happy life. After Saxon is arrested, Dexter kills him in his cell, and convinces Quinn and Batista that he acted in self-defense. Dexter goes to see Debra one last time, turns off her life support, and buries her at sea. He then fakes his own death by wrecking his boat. The series' final scene reveals that he has assumed a new identity as a lumberjack and begun a new life, alone.^[44]

Other formats

In conjunction with the TV show, Showtime produced an animated web series, called *Dexter: Early Cuts*. This series was a prequel and portrayed Dexter's early years as a serial killer.^[45]

Jeff Lindsay has written two comic miniseries for Marvel featuring Dexter Morgan: *Dexter* and *Dexter: Down Under*.^[46]

Reception

Critical reception

The character of Dexter Morgan has been given mostly positive reviews, and Michael C. Hall has won many awards and received critical acclaim for his performance. *The New York Daily News* reported that it was "a central character and performance that takes your breath away". *The Hollywood Reporter* noted that "Hall... is brilliant at conveying the subtle complexity of Dexter". *The Detroit Free Press* gave season two of the series a 70/100 and said: "Hall invests strange, demented Dexter with real heart and humanity". *Variety* said that "Michael C. Hall's portrayal of the title character remains a towering achievement, one that eclipses the show's other shortcomings and rough patches". The *San Francisco Chronicle* said of the actor that "the allure of the series always has been and always will be Hall, who manages to make a killer (who kills only people who deserve it, mostly) likable, believable, engaging and

funny". Joshua Alston with *Newsweek* mentioned the character, along with Tony Soprano and Jack Bauer, as an example of the growing popularity of antiheroes.^[47] Commenting that Hall was "adept at portraying repressives", Ginia Bellafonte of *the New York Times* said this vigilante operates on the "stylized libertarianism that sees institutional failure wherever it looks".^[48] Calling Dexter "the thinking woman's killer", Wendy Dennis of *Maclean's* remarked that the show enjoys a high female audience because they are attracted to damaged men who are still sweet, handsome, and dependable.^[49] He appeared in Comcast's list of TV's Most Intriguing Characters.^[50] *Paste* ranked Dexter Morgan number 6 on their list of the 20 Best Characters of 2011.^[51]



Michael C. Hall at Comic-Con

Michael C. Hall has received many accolades for his portrayal of Dexter Morgan. In 2007, Hall was honored with a Television Critics Association Award for Individual Achievement in Drama. In addition, he was nominated five times for the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series (in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012). He was nominated four times for the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor in a Television Series – Drama (in 2007, 2007, 2009, and 2011) and won in 2010. He was nominated five times for the Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series (in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011, and 2012), and won in 2010. He has been nominated thrice for the Satellite Award for Best Actor – Television Series: Drama (in 2006, 2008, and 2010) and won in 2007. He has been nominated seven times for the Saturn Award for Best Actor on Television (in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013) and won in 2006.

Connections to actual crimes

Mark Twitchell

Connections were established between Dexter Morgan and Mark Twitchell, of Edmonton, Alberta, during his first-degree murder trial. After weeks of testimony and evidence presented in court, Twitchell was found guilty of the planned and deliberate murder of 38-year-old Johnny Altinger on April 12, 2011.^[52] Twitchell, an aspiring filmmaker, had adopted the persona "Dexter Morgan" on Facebook and made a movie that was similar to how Dexter operates in the TV show.^[53] Prosecutors alleged that Twitchell had begun a double life inspired by *Dexter*.^[54] Twitchell wanted to re-enact the life of Dexter Morgan, and after writing a script for a *Dexter* movie, began posing as a woman online interested in having an affair with married men.^[55] Detective Mark Anstey of the Edmonton Police Service was quoted as saying, "We have a lot of information to suggest he definitely idolizes Dexter", and Twitchell had posted a Facebook status stating that he believed he had "way too much in common with Dexter Morgan".^{[56][57]} A nonfiction book on the case, *The Devil's Cinema* detailed how Twitchell had written Facebook status updates under his Dexter Morgan account, including, "Dexter is patiently waiting for his next victi... uh, play date buddy", but his followers did not know how true these posts really were.^[58]

Andrew Conley

Andrew Conley said the show inspired him to strangle his 10-year-old brother.^[59] In an affidavit filed in Ohio County court, police said Andrew stated that he "watches a show called *Dexter* on Showtime, about a serial killer, and he stated, 'I feel just like him.'"^[60] Even further, after killing his brother, he put a plastic bag over his brother's head, mimicking a practice that Dexter ritualistically commits to dispose of his victims.^[61]

Notes

^ **a:** While Harry finds the boys in the shipping container on the television show, the investigating officer who finds Dexter is never specified in the novels.

^ **b:** Brian was ultimately sent to a mental institution for disturbed children. The first novel implies that Harry chose not to adopt

Brian because he was older and more likely to be traumatized; in the TV program, both Brian and Tom Matthews, Harry's best friend and former superior, state this to be true.

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Further reading

- DePaulo, Bella; Leah Wilson (2010), "[The Psychology of Dexter](#)"; *Benbella Books*, ISBN 978-1-935251-97-2
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- [Dexter Morgan at Metacritic](#)
 - [Dexter Morgan at *The New York Times*](#)
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