EXT. HOUSE – NIGHT

Late night. Quiet downtown street. Twelve vague STRIKES echo from the nearby city hall clock while a bus parked on the roadside reads: Brynner Ghost Tours.

Closed businesses surround the area, and all the neighboring houses blatantly display for rent or for sale signs.

Several people stop outside the porch of an abandoned home and look on toward their tour guide, DEXTER BATEMAN (early 30s, eager), with simultaneous intrigue and fear.

Countless cobwebs cover the building’s imposing exterior and overtake much of the shattered windows.

The group of seven people consists of MICHAEL and PHYLLIS, a young couple, JEFF and JONATHAN, two teenage friends, VICTOR, 44, and the married ARTHUR and KATHY.

Everyone wears a name tag which thus contributes to the mom-and-pop-like atmosphere of the tour.

Dexter points his flashlight toward the shambling, decaying house.

    DEXTER
    Well, this is it.

He looks back at his audience.

    DEXTER (CONT’D)
    Jack Bates’s house.

The crowd all inspect the porch and front yard in captivated wonderment.

    DEXTER (CONT’D)
    On this very night ten years ago, he murdered his last victim before leaving Brynner for good.

    JEFF
    (to himself)
    Fuck.

    DEXTER
    So...

He smiles.

    DEXTER (CONT’D)
    Who's ready to go in?
Jeff eyes Jonathan with youthful exuberance.

JEFF
Fuck yeah, dude!

The rest of the audience nod their heads as Dexter opens the door and leads the way.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dexter’s footsteps ECHO on the battered wooden floor. Several portable lamps are set-up inside and illuminate much of the surroundings.

Lying in the center of the room’s a mannequin wearing a dress, its chest viciously sliced open with fake organs hanging out.

The crowd gasps in shock after Dexter waves his light toward it.

DEXTER
Jack Bates’s first murder.

He stops next to the fake corpse and gazes down at it, his eyes almost entranced by the graphic scene.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Carved out the organs of Irena Crane.

He turns to face his audience.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Just met her at a party before bringing her back here to kill her in this very room.

Phyllis shakes her head.

PHYLLIS
Oh, that’s horrible!

Jonathan smiles.

JONATHAN
It true he ate the organs?

Dexter smiles and shakes his head.

DEXTER
No, afraid not.
He glances back at the mannequin again.

JONATHAN
Ya sure? Thought someone told me he did.

Dexter looks at him, his eyes almost piercing into Jonathan’s soul.

DEXTER
No, Jack Bates wasn't a cannibal. Little too mainstream for him.

Some in the crowd nervously laugh.

DEXTER
So happy about his first kill, he got her name tattooed on his left arm.

JONATHAN
What, really? Irena Crane?

PHYLLIS
God, what a sick, evil man! Hope he’s in Hell where he belongs!

Dexter looks at her, a mischievous expression crossing his face.

DEXTER
I don’t know. Thought it was rather a romantic gesture myself.

Jonathan laughs and Phyllis stares at Dexter in disapproval.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Let's make our way to the kitchen, shall we?

He leads the group out.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT
Dexter stops by some decaying counters and a rusted sink.

DEXTER
The site of his next murder.

The rest of his audience walk in. Dexter shines the light on an old, wooden table.
Lying on it’s a mannequin adorned in shirt and jeans, knives plunged into its face, hands, and legs while fake blood covers the floor beneath it.

JONATHAN
Oh shit!

VICTOR
Damn.

After hearing their horrified reactions, Dexter smiles.

DEXTER
Steve McMurphy was his name. Just moved here when Jack started stalking him.

He goes toward the table.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Later, he brought him to this kitchen, laid him out on the table like this, and then shoved all those knives deep through his hands and legs.

Stopping in front of the scene, he stares at the mannequin in weird enchantment.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Listened to him scream for hours before he finally shoved a blade in his face at three A.M.

Phyllis remains visibly uneasy.

PHYLIS
God, that’s terrible!

Michael holds her close to comfort her. Jonathan glances at the mannequin before looking back at Dexter.

JONATHAN
Can we touch it?

A serious, stern expression plagues the usually-jovial Dexter.

DEXTER
No! I mean—I mean I don’t want anyone to damage the victims ya know.
Jonathan nods his head and looks at Jeff, each of them baffled by Dexter’s strong reaction.

        DEXTER (CONT’D)
        Anyway, the bathroom’s next, everyone.

INT. HALLWAY – NIGHT
The crowd trail Dexter out.

        KATHY
        (quietly to Arthur)
        Seems to know a lot.

Arthur nervously smiles.

        ARTHUR
        Yeah no kidding.

Trying to scare her, he looks at her with a sinister expression.

        ARTHUR
        (morbid tone)
        Maybe he’s Jack Bates.

Kathy angrily glares at him while Dexter stops outside a battered door.

        KATHY
        Arthur, don't say that!

        DEXTER
        Alright this is it.

INT. BATHROOM – NIGHT
The door loudly CREAKS, and Dexter walks in.

He stops in front of a bathtub filled to the brim with red water. Inside floats the torso of a male mannequin with its head still attached and a knife plunged deep through its chest.

The mannequin’s severed arms and legs populate some of the shelves, each of the limbs covered in an abundance of fake blood.

The scared crowd reacts; Arthur and Kathy turning away from the sight in disgust, and Phyllis holding Michael closer.
DEXTER
As you can see, Jack got a lot more violent and audacious with this one.

Holding his hand out toward the torso, he turns and smiles at his audience.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Hacked him up in the bathtub like this.

He points at the severed limbs.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Before putting his body parts up for display.

Fascinated, Dexter eyes the crowd.

DEXTER
(dry sense of humor)
Did a very efficient job I might add.

A few people uneasily laugh.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Victim’s name was David Sebastian. Him and Jack were drinking at a bar before coming over here. Evidently, Jack had promised him they were gonna call up some girls however, once that didn’t materialize, he cut David's night short.

Jeff smiles and shakes his head at the awful pun.

MICHAEL
That’s crazy, man.

Dexter smiles and nods his head toward the fake torso.

DEXTER
Yeah tell that to David here.

He leans in closer to the mannequin and puts his hand on its head.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
(sinister tone)
Screamed for his mother while getting hacked up.
Victor looks at him in confusion.

VICTOR
Hey man, how ya know all that?

DEXTER
It's true.

Dexter smiles.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
I do my research.

He points at the legs.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Started with the legs.

Dexter motions toward the arms.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Then worked his way up to the arms.

The crowd’s made uneasy by his comments and look on at the mannequin in fear while the still-skeptical Victor shakes his head.

VICTOR
How could ya know all this shit, man? Never read any of that in the papers.

Dexter stands up and smiles at him like a good sport responding to a rude challenge.

DEXTER
Guess you could say I'm an expert.

He goes toward the door when Jeff notices a vague IRENA tattoo on his left arm. Jeff looks at Jonathan as they follow everyone out.

JEFF
(quietly)
Hey dude, look at his arm!

Jonathan’s eyes go wide after he sees it too.

JONATHAN
(voice a little louder)
Shit, it’s that chick’s name!

JEFF
Fuck.
INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dexter walks toward another rotted door.

JEFF
What should we do?

DEXTER
Going to Jack’s parents' bedroom next.

JONATHAN
Fuck man, I don't know!

The door loudly CREAKS and swings open. Some spiders and cobwebs fall from it in splotches while Phyllis overhears Jonathan and Jeff’s conversation.

PHYLLIS
What y'all talking about?

JONATHAN
He’s got the same tattoo Jack Bates had!

INT. PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dexter stops in front of an old bed, its surface covered by sliced-up sheets and pillows. A deteriorating, dusty dresser complete with a mirror full of intact jagged glass stands alone in the corner.

Pinned to the wall’s a male mannequin wearing a shirt and jeans, knives plunged into its head and shoulders.

Fake blood DRIPS to the floor in loud spurts and constantly makes a tapping sound upon impact.

The group follow Dexter who approaches the staged crime scene in his usual excited state.

DEXTER
Miles Udo.

After stopping in front of the fake victim, he turns to face them. Jonathan nods his head toward his arm.
JONATHAN
(quietly)
Look at it!

Phyllis intently stares at Dexter, trying to see the tattoo.

DEXTER
Him and Jack were at a party when he passed out.

He fixates his gaze on the mannequin.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Jack then brought him here and made him his final victim.

Phyllis becomes terrified once she notices the name: Irena Crane.

PHYLLIS
Shit, I see it!

She looks back at Jonathan.

PHYLLIS
(louder)
You're right!

Dexter turns and stares right at her almost like he’s on to her suspicions. Phyllis goes quiet and looks at him in an attempt to hide her fears.

DEXTER
Found him pinned to the wall just like this.

Piercing through the silent atmosphere, the mannequin’s head rises up and screams. Its eyes glow with dark redness and complete the horror-movie-like-scare.

Kathy and Phyllis scream in fright, and the startling sight terrifies the rest of the crowd.

JONATHAN
Aw fuck!

Dexter smiles and holds up his hands.

DEXTER
Relax, everyone.

He leans down in front of the mechanical corpse whose SCREAMS still echo through the room.
DEXTER (CONT’D)

Even I gotta resort to cheap tricks sometimes.

People in the group uneasily laugh as Dexter turns it off. The laughter ends quick though once they all see his mysterious tattoo. Phyllis looks at Michael.

PHYLlis
(trying to be quiet)
There it is! Gotta be him!

Kathy glares at her.

KATHy
Shut up! You’re gonna get us killed!

Dexter turns and stares at them, his gaze making everyone go quiet even though he’s grinning.

DEXTER
One more room then we’re done.

He steps toward the hall. Phyllis uneasily watches him, a slight tremble now overtaking her.

PHYLlis
Thought this was the last one.

Dexter smiles at her, his eyes reading her fears like a malevolent psychic.

DEXTER
It was.

He turns and enters the hall, and the crowd follows him out. Phyllis glances at Michael before looking back at Dexter.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dexter approaches the last door on the left, a spot littered by rotted, fallen planks that were once used to board up the doorway.

PHYLlis
Then where are you taking us?

He stops and intently stares at her again.

DEXTER
Jack’s room.
PHYLLIS
Wait, what?

DEXTER
Jack Bates’s room. No one was ever found inside.

Phyllis turns to face Michael who holds her close.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Must’ve been saving it for when he came home.

Struggling with the door, he finally budges it open and makes his way in. Victor looks over at Phyllis.

VICTOR
(quietly)
Ya sure it’s him?

PHYLLIS
Has to be! He’s got the tattoo, knows all about the murders--

JONATHAN
(interrupting)
Yeah he’s been acting weird all night!

The terrified Phyllis glances at Jonathan.

PHYLLIS
You don't think he brought us here to--

He shakes his head vigorously.

JONATHAN
No, no way! Not with this many people, right?

He looks at everyone else.

JONATHAN (CONT’D)
Right?

VICTOR
I don't know man, he might. Seems fucking crazy!

DEXTER (O.S.)
Come on in, everybody!
Several members of the audience walk inside. Victor glances toward the room before looking at the others.

VICTOR
Shit I don’t think we should.
Don't know what he's got in store for us--

Jonathan goes in.

JONATHAN
Hey we'll be fine as long as we stick together alright.

Phyllis quietly nods her head as her and Michael follow him. Victor skeptically stares at the door and turns away.

Standing by an old counter’s a large rat who glares at him with red eyes and sharp teeth like it’s the Count Orloc of rodents.

Convinced to not want to be left alone with the vicious-looking creature, Victor enters the room.

INT. JACK BATES'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Right in front of the old bed stands the quiet Dexter. His flashlight lies on the torn mattress and its beam shines directly on him while he remains turned away from everyone.

An old, decrepit dresser looms by the bed; a variety of sharp knives laid out on it.

Strange, faded portraits hang from the walls, all of them displaying Jack Bates from childhood to mid-30s.

A lone corner window reveals the suffocating darkness awaiting outside.

The nervous Jonathan stops and trembles in fear since he’s the closest one to Dexter.

JONATHAN
So uh-uh what happened in here?

Dexter remains silent.

JONATHAN (CONT’D)
Anyone die?

Dexter stays quiet and seems to be ignoring the crowd. Michael glances at Phyllis and Jonathan before looking at Dexter.
MICHAEL
Hey getting pretty late, man.
Think it’s time to go.

One of the portraits, a photo of Jack Bates as a kid, loudly falls to the ground with a THUD and startles everyone.

MICHAEL
Shit!

He looks back at Dexter.

MICHAEL
(slightly angry tone)
Hey man, let’s go! Tour’s over!

Arthur motions toward the hallway.

ARTHUR
Shit, just leave him!

MICHAEL
We can't! He’s got the damn keys!

Michael angrily approaches Dexter.

MICHAEL
Hey what's your problem, man? Come on!

He grabs him, his expression quickly changing to shocked horror once Dexter turns around with a sharp knife. Dexter smiles a knowing grin.

The crowd screams, and, before Michael can react, Dexter brutally stabs him several times, splotches of blood splattering over both of them after each hit.

JONATHAN
Oh fuck!

Some audience members run away, their collective terror accelerated by the sight of Michael falling to the ground amidst a pool of blood.

Dexter stands up over him and glares at the crowd. He violently raises his now-blood-stained knife toward them.

PHYLLIS
Michael!

By now, Kathy and Arthur have nearly pushed their ways out. Dexter lets out a subtle, less crazy smile.
DEXTER

Hey wait!

With everyone almost out the door, he quickly presses in on the retractable fake blade.

DEXTER (CONT’D)

Everyone, relax! You’re all okay!

He puts the knife back in his pocket as the scared patrons stop and stare at him in confusion.

DEXTER (CONT’D)

You’ve just survived the Brynner Ghost Tour!

The audience stands still and continue to stare at him, almost like they’re not ready to trust him just yet. Phyllis turns and smiles at them.

PHYLLIS

Hey y’all, he’s not kidding!

Michael makes a loud noise and jumps up, his final scare for the already-terrified group.

JEFF

Shit!

Jonathan laughs.

JONATHAN

What the fuck? Y’all serious?

Michael smiles at them, and the group now realize he and Phyllis were planted amongst them.

MICHAEL

Ya scared?

Arthur and Kathy smile at each other in relief before she looks at him.

KATHY

Uh, Hell yeah!

Michael approaches them.

MICHAEL

Hope y’all enjoyed it.

Arthur laughs and shakes his hand.
ARTHUR
Definitely!

Dexter lifts up his sleeve and rubs off the fake Irena Crane tattoo. Jeff and Jonathan grin.

Victor picks up the fallen portrait and looks at it like he’s haunted by the image.

JEFF
Dude, you scared the shit out of us!

Dexter smiles.

DEXTER
Hey that’s what this is all about! Getting scared and having fun.

JONATHAN
Great job, man!

DEXTER
Appreciate it, guys.

Phyllis grabs the flashlight and points it toward the door.

PHYLLIS
Alright everyone, follow me!

She leaves and everyone except Dexter and Victor follow her out.

Dexter, tired from the work, lets out a sigh of relief and looks over at Victor who continues to stare at the portrait.

DEXTER
Enjoy it?

Startled, Victor looks over at him and smiles as Dexter approaches.

VICTOR
Yeah. Gotta say that was pretty good.

DEXTER
Been doing this awhile. Guess I should be pretty scary by now.

Left all alone, the two continue their conversation.
VICTOR
You knew so much about the victims and all.

He looks back at the image of ten-year-old Jack Bates. Even then, his eyes looked menacing and malevolent like they were capable of only evil.

DEXTER
Yeah.

Victor looks at Dexter.

VICTOR
Really had us thinking you were him.

DEXTER
Well, like I said, do my research.

Victor gazes around the room and puts his hand in his pocket. Dexter smiles.

DEXTER (CONT’D)
Hopefully I’m a decent actor too.

VICTOR
Yeah.

The image grasps Dexter’s attention. He looks down at the portrait and notices something familiar about those eyes.

VICTOR
Only forgot about one thing.

He looks back at Dexter. Menacing coldness now overcomes Victor’s seemingly-normal manner.

Dexter glances at him and, in horror, realizes where he’d seen those eyes before. Victor.

DEXTER
Shit!

VICTOR
The last victim.

Sharp madness overtakes Victor as he wickedly smiles and takes out a knife. Dexter tries to push him away only to be grabbed by the savage killer.

DEXTER
No! Get the fuck away from me!
In one quick plunge, Victor shoves the blade deep into Dexter's chest.

DEXTER
Aw fuck!

Blood spurts from the wound in quick gushes before Victor pushes him onto the bed.

Dexter now sees the Irena Crane tattoo on Victor’s left arm, an image that had been subtly hidden by a draped shirt sleeve.

Dexter grabs his chest while blood pours from his mouth.

DEXTER
No, please! Please don’t!

Victor’s wild grin remains permanently etched on his face. He whistles as his menacing FOOTSTEPS echo through the still room.

VICTOR
Have to say y’all were awesome.

He makes his way over to the dresser, and, with intense enthusiasm, eyes the many knives at his disposal. After weighing his options, he grabs the largest, sharpest one.

DEXTER
(screaming)
Help! Please! Somebody help me!

VICTOR
Hate to ruin such a fun tour ya know.

Victor gazes at the weapon, relishing its touch.

VICTOR (CONT’D)
Got the room set up so perfectly too.

He turns and takes a few steps toward the entrapped Dexter.

VICTOR
Just how I like it.

DEXTER
No please! I won’t tell anyone!

VICTOR
Thanks for the knives...
Spotting Dexter’s name tag, he laughs and methodically raises his sharp weapon up above Dexter's face.

VICTOR (CONT’D)

Dex.