

CHANGLING

Another female patient, CAROL DEXTER, thirties, watches

Christine then slides closer. A BEAT, then:

CAROL DEXTER

You should eat. Eating is normal.
You got to do everything you can to
look normal. That's the only chance
you've got. Besides, you'll need
the strength.

CHANGELING A True Story

60.

Christine is startled by the level-headedness of the advice from someone she assumed was probably nuts. Reluctantly, she begins eating the cold-looking oatmeal.

CAROL DEXTER

My name's Carol Dexter. What's
yours?

CHRISTINE

Christine. Christine Collins.

Christine reacts to the taste of the food, which is awful.

CAROL DEXTER

Finish it all. I know it's hard,
but you have to try. Lunch isn't
as bad. Close, but not as --

CHRISTINE

I won't be here that long. As soon
as I can talk to a doctor, they'll
realize there's been a terrible
mistake and --

CAROL DEXTER

Yeah, that always works.

(beat, quieter)

I heard them talking. You're here
on a code twelve, police action.
The doctors, the staff, they figure
that if the police sent you here,
there must be a good reason for it.

CHRISTINE

Then I'll just have to prove that
I'm not insane.

CAROL DEXTER

Yeah? How? The more you try to
act sane, the crazier you start to
look. If you smile too much, you're
delusional or stifling hysteria.
If you don't smile, you're depressed.
If you're neutral you're emotionally

withdrawn and potentially catatonic.

CHRISTINE

You seem to have given this a great deal of thought.

CAROL DEXTER

I have. Don't you get it? You're code twelve. So am I. We're here for the same reason.

(beat)

We pissed off the cops.

CHANGELING A True Story

61.

Christine sits back heavily, starting to understand the world more than she ever wanted to.

CAROL DEXTER

What, you thought you were the only one?

(points os)

The lady over there was married to a cop who kept beating her up. When she tried to tell somebody, they sent her here. And that one? The police beat the crap out of her brother, broke both his arms. When she complained to the papers, they picked her up and...

CHRISTINE

What about you?

CAROL DEXTER

I...work nights.

(Chris doesn't get it)

I mean, I work nights. Downtown. In some of the clubs. You know.

It gets through. Hooker. Christine nods.

CAROL DEXTER

This one client started hitting me, and he wouldn't stop. So I filed a complaint. Turns out he was a cop. Next thing I know, I'm here.

CHRISTINE

But how can they --

CAROL DEXTER

You're kidding right? Hey, everybody knows women are fragile, right? They're all emotions, no logic, nothin' goin' on upstairs. And sometimes, like when they say something that's a little, y'know,

inconvenient...they just go fucking nuts, pardon my French. If we're insane, nobody has to listen to us. I mean, who are you going to believe, some crazy woman trying to destroy the integrity of the force, or a police officer? Then once they get us in here, we either learn to behave, and shut up, or --
(beat)
Or you don't go home...or you go home like that.

CHANGELING A True Story

62.

She nods to an older woman whose upper temples are marred by surgical scars. Lobotomized. Christine turns away.

CAROL DEXTER
Better finish up your oatmeal.
Want to look sane for the doctors.
Then I want to hear what they nailed
you for.

Numb with horror, Christine forces down the oatmeal.