CASTLE

“Little Girl Lost”
Ep. 109

Written by
Elizabeth Davis

Directed by
John Terlesky

Studio Draft January 29, 2009
Network Draft February 2, 2009
Full White Draft February 4, 2009
Blue Pages February 6, 2009

©2009, ABC Studios. All rights reserved. This material is the exclusive property of ABC Studios and is intended solely for the use of its personnel. Distribution to unauthorized persons or reproduction, in whole or in part, without the written consent of ABC Studios is strictly prohibited.
“Little Girl Lost”

CAST

White Production Draft
February 4, 2009

RICHARD CASTLE
KATE BECKETT
MARTHA RODGERS
JAVIER ESPOSITO
KEVIN RYAN
ALEXIS CASTLE
CAPTAIN ROY MONTGOMERY

SPECIAL AGENT WILL SORENSON
THERESA CANDELA
ALFRED CANDELA
LUCIA GOMEZ
DOUG ELLERS
JUAN RESTREPO
FBI TECH CRAWFORD
NINA MENDOLA
ANGELA CANDELA
TODD
ASIAN MALE
“Little Girl Lost”

NON-SPEAKING

White Production Draft
February 4, 2009

SCENE 4
UNIFORM COP

SCENES 5 & 6
TECHS
UNIFORM COPS

SCENE 36
BANK GUARD
COPS
FBI AGENTS

SCENE 41
GREEN BACKPACK GIRL
OTHER GREEN BACKPACK WEARERS

SCENES 45 & 46
FEDS

SCENE 47
KIDS PLAYING
“Little Girl Lost”

Locations

Blue Production Draft
February 6, 2009

INTERIORS

120 WEST 53RD LOBBY (NOW 1201 1ST AVENUE)
1201 1ST AVENUE LOBBY (PREVIOUSLY 120 WEST 53RD)
BECKETT’S UNMARKED VEHICLE
CANDELA APARTMENT
  ANGELA’S BEDROOM
  KITCHEN
  LIVING ROOM
CANDELA APARTMENT BUILDING
  HALLWAY
CASTLE’S LOFT
  CASTLE’S OFFICE
  KITCHEN
  LIVING ROOM
PARKING GARAGE
  10TH FLOOR
  GROUND FLOOR
  NEAR WALL
  RAMP (PREVIOUSLY IN STAIRWELL)
STAIRWELL (NOW PLAYS ON RAMP)
  WALL
PRECINCT
  BREAKROOM (PREVIOUSLY IN PARKING GARAGE)
  BULLPEN
  ELEVATOR
  INTERROGATION ROOM
  OBSERVATION ROOM

EXTERIORS

1201 1ST AVENUE
CANDELA APARTMENT BUILDING
CITY
MANHATTAN STREET
MEATPACKING DISTRICT
  STREET
NINA’S APARTMENT BUILDING
  COURTYARD PLAYGROUND
OVER BLACK:

VOICES from a children’s cartoon.

SMASH CUT TO:

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

The morning sun streams through a WINDOW, leading us to a JUICE BOX and some CEREAL strewn across the floor in front of a FLAT-SCREEN TV (playing the cartoon we’ve been hearing).

CAMERA PUSHERS PAST the flat-screen to another room in the apartment as...

WE HEAR aggressive, pulsing HEAVY GRUNGE METAL music as it starts to drown out the cartoon. Its THRASHING BEAT taking us closer to some menace...

And a CU of a white surface:

Suddenly, a VIOLENT SPLASH OF RED hits against this surface. RED SPLATTER running down in DROPLETS. What horrific crime is taking place?

CAMERA MOVES DOWN to a STUFFED BEAR leaning against a nearby wall, as a RED DROPLET strikes the STUFFED BEAR’S FACE.

CUT TO:

EXT. MEATPACKING DISTRICT, STREET - DAY

Iron industrial buildings with a smattering of low-rise brick and nouveau boutiques.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME TIME

BECKETT finds CASTLE waiting with two cups of designer coffee. He hands her one, along with a bag.

CASTLE

Grande skim latte, two pumps sugar-free vanilla, and a bear claw.

She takes the coffee and bag, surprised he knows her drink.

BECKETT

How did you...

CASTLE

I’m a novelist. It’s my job to notice things.
BECKETT
It’s Sunday morning. Shouldn’t you be slinking home from a scandalous liaison?

CASTLE
Would you be jealous if I were?

BECKETT
In your dreams.

CASTLE
Actually, in my dreams you’re not jealous at all. You usually just jump right in and take off your—

Beckett shoves her bear claw into his mouth.

CASTLE (CONT’D)
(as he chews)
Anyway, Montgomery called. He said to come down right away. Must be gruesome, right?

BECKETT
Try not to seem so giddy every time we’re at a crime scene, okay?

CASTLE
Just because someone’s dead, doesn’t mean you have to be grumpy.

BECKETT
You want grumpy? How about the cover art for your new novel?

CASTLE
Nikki Heat cover art? That’s only available to...

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

Beckett and Castle continue walking and talking.

CASTLE
(realizing)
Oh my God. You subscribe to my website? Are you CastleFreak1212? Ooh, or maybe CastleLover45?

BECKETT
You do realize that most normal people would be creeped out by crazy anonymous fans?
CASTLE
Like you?

BECKETT
It was strictly professional curiosity.

CASTLE
So, what’d you think of your alter ego, Nikki? Pretty sweet, right?

BECKETT
“Sweet”? She’s naked!

CASTLE
She’s not naked. She’s holding a gun... strategically.

BECKETT
I comfort myself knowing that if they’re publishing cover art, the book – and our little partnership – is almost done.

They reach an apartment door. Beckett nods to a UNIFORM and they enter...

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

A room bustling with UNIFORMS and TECHS taking crime scene photos. We get a sense of urgency. Beckett quickly clocks the spilled juice and cereal on the floor. CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY approaches Beckett and Castle.

BECKETT
Sir? What’s going on?

CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
2-year-old girl, Angela Candela, reported missing by her parents around eight this morning.

BECKETT
Where’d they find the body?

CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
They haven’t yet. She was abducted.

CASTLE
Kidnapped? From her home?

BECKETT
I don’t understand. If it’s not a murder, why am I here?
CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
The Feds requested you for the task force.

CASTLE
Feds?

BECKETT
FBI has jurisdiction in child abduction cases.
(to Montgomery)
But I’m Homicide now, why’d they request me?

CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
Maybe because you’re the best.

CASTLE
Okay, then why call me?

CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
Because I love pissing off the FBI. And because you think outside the box; something the Feebs don’t do.

Beckett’s mind is working a mile a minute.

BECKETT
Sir, who’s the Special Agent in charge?

CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
Now, Beckett...

BECKETT
Who?

CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
(with meaning)
Sorenson.

CASTLE
Who’s Sorenson?

BECKETT
I thought he was-

CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
In Boston? Not anymore.

CASTLE
Who’s Sorenson?
CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
It’s not gonna be a problem, is it, Detective? I mean, we’re all professionals here, right?

CASTLE
Actually, I’m not.

Montgomery eyes Beckett, as does Castle.

BECKETT
No, sir. No problem.

He nods.

CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
For what it’s worth, the missing girl doesn’t care about your history, nor do her terrified parents. All they want is to get their baby back alive.

BECKETT
Where is he?

CAPTAIN MONTGOMERY
With the parents. Over there.

Beckett turns to see the parents, ALFRED and THERESA CANDELA (30s, Hispanic), standing with FBI AGENT WILL SORENSON (30s, attractive, charismatic, and smart as hell). He looks up and sees Beckett. They lock eyes. Castle sees it and immediately can tell (as we can) that there’s a history.

SMASH CUT TO:

CASTLE TITLE CARD

6

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sorenson crosses to Castle and Beckett.

SORENSON
Hello, Kate.

She gives a polite smile and nod, still a little off guard.

BECKETT
Hello, Will. How long you been back?

SORENSON
A couple months.

Beckett nods. “Couple months.” He should’ve called.
BECKETT
Something wrong with Boston?

SORENSON
If you’re not a Celtics or Sox fan, all that’s left is Faneuil Hall, and fresh lobster gets old fast. You look good.

BECKETT

SORENSON
Right. The famous novelist.

CASTLE
That’s me. Writer of wrongs.

SORENSON
Cute. So Captain Montgomery filled me in on your little arrangement. And I have no problem with it, as long as it doesn’t interfere with the investigation.

CASTLE
Don’t worry about me. I’m quiet as a mouse.

Sorenson hands Beckett a PHOTO of an adorable 2-YEAR-OLD GIRL clutching a stuffed bunny.

SORENSON
Angela Candela. Two years old. Abducted this morning between 7:30 and 8 a.m.
(re: the Candelas)
Parents were home at the time.

CASTLE
How could she have been taken with her parents home?

SORENSON
Dad got up with the kid about seven, let Mom sleep in.
(pointing to spot)
He planted Angela in front of the tube with a juice box and some cereal...
(points to adjacent room)
...and headed into his art studio.
Beckett takes a look into the art studio.

SORENSON (CONT’D)
He’s a painter.

CASTLE
And he just left his kid?

BECKETT
Did he hear anything at least?

SORENSON
He was listening to his iPod.

CASTLE
(glances over at Alfred)
Nothing like quality time with Daddy.

BECKETT
So, how’d they make entry?

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, KITCHEN – DAY

Beckett, Sorenson, and Castle are standing by an opened window with Theresa and Alfred Candela.

ALFRED
When I couldn’t find her, I looked everywhere, and then I saw the window.

SORENSON
Lock was jimmed from the outside.

ALFRED
I ran outside. I looked for her.

BECKETT
Mr. Candela. You have a ground-floor apartment... Windows facing an alley. Most people have security bars.

THERESA
We were going to. We just...

ALFRED
...never got around to it.

Beckett inspects the floor below the window.

SORENSON
(re: dirt)
We think that’s dirt from outside.
ALFRED
How could this happen in our own home?

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Beckett, Castle, and Sorenson, working it out.

BECKETT
So he climbs in through the window, then probably walked her out the back door.

CASTLE
Just like that?

SORENSON
We have her photo on the wires and are issuing an AMBER Alert to Port Authority and the Tri-State Area.

BECKETT
I’ll have my guys run down registered sex offenders and residential burglaries. What about the parents? Any enemies?

SORENSON
None they could think of. Not that either of them can think straight right now.

Castle looks over at the Candelas, shell-shocked, on the couch. Castle shakes his head.

CASTLE
This thing goes south, they’ll never think straight again.

Sorenson sees a look on Beckett’s face and steps closer. A little too close to be professional.

SORENSON
This one’ll end better. I promise.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, ELEVATOR - DAY

Castle and Beckett. The silence is deafening. Then:

BECKETT
Six months.
Beat.

CASTLE
“Six months,” what?

BECKETT
We dated for six months.

CASTLE
I didn’t ask.

BECKETT
Yeah, I know. You were not asking very loudly.

CASTLE
I’m like a Jedi that way.

Doors open, delivering us into...

INT. PRECINCT, BULLPEN – CONTINUOUS

Beckett and Castle exit and walk to the bullpen.

CASTLE
How’d you meet?

BECKETT
Kidnapping. 6-year-old boy.

CASTLE
How’d it end?

BECKETT
We got the guy.

But the way she says it, there’s clearly more to the story. We find ESPOSITO and RYAN at their desks. Ryan is wearing a particularly loud tie.

BECKETT (CONT’D)
So what do we have on the parents?

RYAN
Theresa and Alfred Candela. Married ten years. One child: Angela-

CASTLE
(noticing, re: tie)
Dude. Wow. Did you come straight from Chernobyl?
RYAN
Okay. Get it all out. It’s a gift from my girlfriend.

ESPOSITO
“Girlfriend”? You’ve seen her, what, four times?

BECKETT
Already giving gifts, huh?

RYAN
Today’s our two-week anniversary.

ESPOSITO
Two weeks! Is that paper... or silk?

CASTLE
I believe it’s whipped.

Castle fist-bumps Esposito.

RYAN
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
(continues)

BECKETT
Adopted?

RYAN
Two years ago... Mom, Theresa, is a fund manager at Keller Stanton. Dad’s a small-time artist. Shows at the Greyson Gallery in Chelsea once in a while. Neighbors say he stays home with the kid.

Beckett hands Esposito a piece of paper.

BECKETT
This is a list of employees who had access to the apartment: baby-sitters, cleaning lady, super. Let’s cross-reference them with all registered sex offenders. And see if anyone in the area had a taste for little girls.

ESPOSITO
You thinking some creepy-crawly might have scouted from the inside?
BECKETT
Father said what he did this morning was part of a routine. Which means someone either got very lucky, or they already knew it.

Beckett’s cell phone rings.

BECKETT (CONT’D)
Beckett. 
(listens)
Thanks. We’ll be right there.
(hangs up)
It may not be a creepy crawler after all.

They look at her. “Why not?”

BECKETT (CONT’D)
Candelas just got a ransom call.

END ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – DAY

An FBI TECH, late-20s, female, has phone surveillance equipment laid out on the coffee table. Beckett and Sorenson huddle with Alfred and Theresa around the table, as the recording of the ransom call is played. Castle watches from outside the circle.

THERESA (ON RECORDING)
(nervous)
Hello?

SCRAMBLED VOICE (ON RECORDING)
We have your daughter.

THERESA (ON RECORDING)
Please. She’s just a child. Please don’t hurt her.

SCRAMBLED VOICE (ON RECORDING)
Whether we hurt her is up to you. Whether she lives is up to you. You want your daughter, we want 750,000 dollars. You have twenty-four hours.

THERESA (ON RECORDING)
I want to speak to her. I want to know she’s safe.

There’s a CLICK, then a DIAL TONE. The FBI Tech hits “stop.”

SORENSON
They used an Internet Voice over IP service.

BECKETT
Meaning it’s untraceable.

SORENSON
Can you raise the 750?

THERESA
It’s everything we have.

ALFRED
If it means getting Angela back, we’ll pay.

SORENSON
Then you should start getting your financial records together.
THERESA  
(overwhelmed, to Alfred)  
Where do we even begin?  

BECKETT  
Is there someone who can help you?  
An accountant, or maybe someone at your firm?  

ALFRED  
Nina could help.  

BECKETT  
Nina?  

THERESA  
She’s my sister. She’s a CPA.  

SORENSON  
Make the call.  

ALFRED  
Even if we give them money, how can we be sure we’ll get her back?  

SORENSON  
You have to trust me. And you have to have hope. You have to imagine your little girl walking in that front door, safe and sound. Okay?  

The Candelas nod, assuaged. Castle’s impressed with Sorenson.  

CUT TO:  

12  
INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, KITCHEN - DAY  
Sorenson studies a transcript of the ransom call. Castle is nearby.  

CASTLE  
You do this a lot? Kidnappings? I mean, you seem to know what to say.  

SORENSON  
It’s not about what you say. It’s about controlling the situation. Controlling the emotions.  

CASTLE  
Controlling emotions?
SORENSON
So the situation doesn’t spin out of control.

But that’s not what Castle meant.

CASTLE
No, I mean, you requested your ex-girlfriend for the task force. That doesn’t seem to indicate control over your emotions.

Sorenson stops and looks up at Castle. He doesn’t like to be analyzed.

SORENSON
I requested Beckett because she’s the best in the city.

CASTLE
Not because you wanted to see her again?

Sorenson sizes Castle up. Smiles, but doesn’t mean it.

SORENSON
How about you, Castle? You’ve written, what, twenty best-sellers? Why the sudden need to shadow a real detective?

CASTLE
Because the ones on TV seemed oddly fixated on their sunglasses.

SORENSON
So with all the fat, balding detectives in the NYPD, you just happen to end up shadowing her.

CASTLE
Maybe it’s fate.

Beckett enters the room. The boys drop it.

BECKETT
Candelas have pulled their financials and the sister’s on her way over. Anything with the transcript?

SORENSON
It’s clear the ransom demand has significance.

(MORE)
The kidnappers make an issue about knowing what the Candelas have.

CASTLE
They said it was everything they had.

SORENSON
Whoever made the demand knows them well enough to know exactly what they’re worth.

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sorenson, followed by Beckett and Castle, approaches Theresa, who’s settled in at the dining table. Financial statements are laid out.

BECKETT
How does it look?

With Theresa is her younger sister, NINA MENDOLA, 30.

THERESA
Detective. Agent Sorenson. This is my sister, Nina.

Nina nods. There’s a gravity to her.

NINA
It’s doable. We’ll market the stocks tomorrow morning, and we’ll have to wipe out the retirement account and both pensions. You’ll have to pay penalties.

THERESA
I don’t care. Whatever it takes.

CASTLE
Where’s your husband?

THERESA
In his studio. He paints when he’s stressed.

CASTLE
He sell a lot?

THERESA
Some.

NINA
(under her breath)
That’s generous.

(MORE)
NINA (CONT'D)
(off Theresa’s look)
Sorry.

THERESA
(to Castle)
Why do you ask?

CASTLE
Most artists I know don’t have pension accounts.

NINA
Theresa set up the account for him. So he’d have something for him and Angela. Y’know... in case.

Castle’s about to ask another question, when Sorenson jumps in.

SORENSON
Mrs. Candela, we think the specificity of the amount of the ransom demand suggests the kidnappers have knowledge of your finances.

Off her confusion...

CASTLE
What he means is, the kidnappers knew you could come up with the cash.

Sorenson shoots a look at Beckett: “Why’s your monkey talking?”

BECKETT
Is there anyone who might have a grudge against you? Or anyone close to you who may need money right now?

Searching her mind.

THERESA
No one who’d do something like this.

ALFRED (O.S.)
What about Doug Ellers?

They turn. Alfred’s in the hallway, holding his brush.

BECKETT
Who’s Doug Ellers?

THERESA
Someone I worked with. But... (thinking it through) No, I can’t imagine-
ALFRED
(cutting her off)
What about those messages he left you at work? Remember the complaints you filed with HR?

THERESA
(snapping at him)
I know what happened, Alfred!

The stress is clearly getting to Theresa. Alfred backs off.

SORENSON
Mrs. Candela, I know how hard this is. It’s understandable to get frustrated. But, please, we need to know everything.

THERESA
Of course. Ellers ran an asset management group. They weren’t performing, so we let him go.

CASTLE
You mean you fired him.

SORENSON
Did he ever threaten you?

THERESA
He blamed me for his divorce. He said his wife left him because he got fired, and...

Theresa stops, suddenly concerned.

BECKETT
And what?

THERESA
She took both his kids.

Looks between Sorenson and Beckett.

END ACT TWO
ACT THREE

14  EXT. CITY - DAY

We’re flying over the city, fast and anxious, slamming us into...

15  INT. PRECINCT, BULLPEN - DAY

Castle, Beckett, and Sorenson stride through the bullpen toward interrogation.

BECKETT
Ellers inside?

Esposito and Ryan follow.

ESPOSITO
Just brought him in.

BECKETT
Where’d you find him?

RYAN
In line at OTB. Missed his trifecta.

ESPOSITO
ESU just hit his apartment. No trace of the kid.

SORENSON
That’s not good.
(to Beckett)
Pressure interview. I’ll take the lead.

Sorenson is about to open the door when he realizes that Castle thinks he’s joining. He turns to Beckett.

SORENSON (CONT’D)
No.

BECKETT
He’ll be fine.

SORENSON
Kate, I don’t care how big a fan of his you are. He doesn’t come in the room.

CASTLE
Fine. But just for the record... how big a fan is she?
RYAN
C’mon, Castle. You can watch from the bleachers with us. See how the Feebees do it.

As Castle, Esposito, and Ryan head toward observation, Beckett and Sorenson head into...

16 INT. PRECINCT, INTERROGATION ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Beckett and Sorenson enter to find DOUG ELLERS, mid-40s.

SORENSON
Mr. Ellers.
(badging him)
Special Agent Sorenson, FBI.

BECKETT
Detective Beckett. NYPD.

ELLERS
What’s this about?

SORENSON
When was your last contact with Theresa Candela?

ELLERS
Theresa Candela? What’s going on?

BECKETT
Just answer the question.

He hesitates.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED: *

16A INT. PRECINCT, OBSERVATION ROOM – SAME TIME

Castle, Esposito, and Ryan watch the interrogation.

SORENSON
Mr. Ellers, we’re not playing games. Now answer the question.

ELLERS
What’d she say about me?

SORENSON
Let’s talk about what you said to her.

Sorenson pulls out an MP3 player. Hits “play.”
ELLERS (ON RECORDING)
I gave you six years of my life. Six years! My profits built your whole damn division. And now you want to bend me over? You want to cut me out? Well, karma's a bitch, Theresa.  
(MORE)
You burn down my house. I'm gonna burn down yours.

Sorenson clicks off the recording.

SORENSON
You left that three months ago, just after your wife left.

ELLERS
Yeah? So? Every word of it is true.

BECKETT
It’s harassment.

ELLERS
What? She gonna press charges now?

SORENSON

ELLERS
What the hell are you talking about?

BECKETT
Someone kidnapped Angela Candela this morning.

ELLERS
What? Kidnapped?

SORENSON
Hurting someone else’s child isn’t the way to get back your own.

ELLERS
No, no, no. That’s not me. Theresa’s not my favorite person, but I’d never hurt a child.

BECKETT
Your ex-wife wasn’t so sure. According to your divorce papers, there were allegations of violence.

ELLERS
My ex was looking for a payday. That’s all.

SORENSON
You’re not looking for a payday, are you, Mr. Ellers?
ELLERS
Look, you have the wrong guy.
(beat)
But here’s the irony. Thanks to Theresa, I need a lawyer. Again. Only, guess what? I can’t afford one, so this time, it’s on you.

Off Beckett and Sorenson...

INT. PRECINCT, BULLPEN – DAY

Sorenson and Beckett find Castle, Esposito, and Ryan gathered at Ryan’s and Esposito’s desks.

SORENSON
(to Esposito and Ryan)
Run him down. Where he was all morning and who can vouch.

CASTLE
Pretty clear it wasn’t him.

SORENSON
You a mind reader, too?

CASTLE
C’mon. If he were the guy, he would’ve downplayed his feelings for Theresa, not worn them on his sleeve.

SORENSON
A couple dozen best-sellers doesn’t make you a criminologist.

CASTLE
And I don’t need a weatherman to tell me the sky is blue.

BECKETT
Oh, for godsake, why don’t you both just drop your pants and get it over with.

A beat. “Did she really just say that?” Then:

CASTLE
I’m game.

BECKETT
Fact is, you’re both right. Most likely he’s not the guy, but when a child’s life’s at stake, we need to be sure.

(MORE)
Which means you have to question everything you think you know.
(to Esposito and Ryan)
Keep him iced until we can track every second of his morning.
Sorenson and I’ll head back to the Candelas’ and profile their associates and acquaintances.

CASTLE
What about me?

Beckett pulls him aside.

BECKETT
I need you to go home.

Castle looks at Sorenson and then back at Beckett. He understands.

CASTLE
Okay. But if you need me, call.
(beat)
Even if it’s just to talk.

She nods. It’s her way of saying “thanks.”

EXT. CITY – NIGHT

PUSHING IN on Castle’s loft.

INT. CASTLE’S LOFT, LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Castle drags through the front door and hears MARTHA, passionately confronting a client. He can see a piece of her through the shelves that separate the living room and office.

MARTHA (O.S.)
Todd, honey, I need you to focus on calibrating your creative energy.

Castle rolls his eyes and heads into...

INT. CASTLE’S LOFT, CASTLE’S OFFICE – CONTINUOUS

Castle pops in and is not at all surprised to see Martha sitting at his desk, her feet up like she owns the place. She’s facing one of her sad sack clients: TODD, 35, self-involved. There’s a NAME PLAQUE on the desk that reads: “MARTHA RODGERS, LIFE COACH.”

CASTLE
Howdy, Mother.

Martha, a bit deer-in-headlights, and Todd turn to Castle.
MARTHA
Oh. Hello. You’re here. I’m just finishing up a session in...
("hint-hint")
...my office.

CASTLE
I’m so flattered that you hang my framed book covers in your office.

MARTHA
A coach can never be too proud.

Todd stands and grabs his knapsack. Gets up the nerve.

TODD
Mr. Castle, I just want to thank you for being so honest about your struggle with persistent and chronic writer’s block.

CASTLE
Excuse me?

Martha starts to squirm a bit.

TODD
I chose Ms. Rodgers as my life coach because you’re a client.

MARTHA
Todd’s an aspiring novelist, so I shared your inspiring tale of triumph over adversity.

CASTLE
Really? How... courageous of me. Good luck, Todd.

TODD
Thanks!

(handing Martha a check)
I’d like the year-long package.

MARTHA
Way to be decisive, kiddo. See you next week.

Todd exits.

CASTLE
I guess all those years as an actress really paid off. “Focus on calibrating your creative energy”? 
MARTHA
I’ll have you know, Todd is a very bright spirit in need of direction.

CASTLE
It’s bad enough you’re slandering me, do you have to commandeer my office for your new-age coddle sessions?

He grabs Martha’s name plaque off his desk and walks into...

INT. CASTLE’S LOFT, LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS

Castle heads toward the kitchen, Martha following.

MARTHA
Richard, you can’t expect me to pay Manhattan rates for office space.

Castle sets Martha’s name plaque down on the kitchen table.

CASTLE
How ‘bout this? You can’t beat the location. Its proximity to beverages and sharp utensils.

Castle opens the fridge and grabs a beer.

MARTHA
Sweetheart, as your life coach, I urge you to say nay to your inner naysayer. Good, huh? I call that a Martha-ism.

CASTLE
How is it that you don’t know who my father is or how your ex-husband took all your money, yet you’re giving life-coaching advice?

MARTHA
Mistakes are the building blocks of wisdom. Another Martha-ism. Besides, Freud was an addict. Didn’t stop him from helping people.

CASTLE
(giving up)
And, sadly, confronted by his mother’s twisted-yet-unimpeachable logic, Richard Castle’s head exploded.
MARTHA
So, why home so early? You supposedly have two jobs, yet you’re pulling banker’s hours.

CASTLE
Just needed a breather. We’re working a kidnapping. A little girl.

MARTHA
What a world. No wonder you’re so surly. Those poor parents, having a child ripped away. I can’t imagine how that must feel.

CASTLE
Alexis home yet?

MARTHA
Upstairs.

Castle rises.

CASTLE
I feel a deep-seated need to give her a hug.

MARTHA
Perfectly understandable. We are, after all, all pod-mates.

CASTLE
“Pod-mates”?

MARTHA
Another Martha-ism. I really should write a book.

(explaining)
I call it the pea pod bond. The bond that exists between parent and child. Me and you. You and Alexis. We’re peas in a pod and, like it or not, everyone who’s ever had kids is in the pod forever.

Off of Martha’s pod wisdom, Castle has a realization.

CASTLE
“The pea pod bond.”

He rises and heads for the door.
CASTLE (CONT’D)
I’ll deduct the session fee from your rent.

MARTHA
(calling after him)
You might want to think about the yearlong package. It’s a bargain.

As he gets to the door, he sees ALEXIS coming down the stairs. He runs up and ambushes her with a hug.

ALEXIS
What was that for?

CASTLE
It’s a pod thing. Gram’ll explain.

And then he’s out the door.

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, KITCHEN – NIGHT

It’s quiet. Beckett enters and is surprised to find Sorenson pouring himself a cup of coffee, somber.

BECKETT
Hey.

SORENSON
(re: the coffee)
Hey, yourself. Want some?

BECKETT
Thanks.

He hands her a cup.

BECKETT (CONT’D)
Just heard from my team. Ellers was a dead end. The owner at Paradise Diner on East 62nd vouched that he was having his usual poached eggs this morning.

SORENSON
Would have been too easy, right? Or over-easy.

She smiles.
BECKETT
That’s something Castle would say. When a story seems too easy, he’ll say, “That’s a terrible ending.” Or, “The reader would never buy it.”

SORENSON
You like him.

She nudges him with intimate familiarity.

BECKETT
No. He’s just... I don’t know. Interesting.

SORENSON
So you’re not...?

BECKETT
With him? No...

SORENSON
I meant to call. I must’ve picked up the phone a dozen times.

BECKETT
You meant to do a lot of things. That’s why you left, remember?

SORENSON
Boston was a great opportunity.

BECKETT
I never said it wasn’t. I just said it was a choice. A choice that didn’t include me.

SORENSON
You could’ve come.

BECKETT
And done what? Join the Boston PD, so you could move to Phoenix? And then Cleveland? And then back here? I know how it works, Will.

SORENSON
That didn’t stop me from missing you. Missing us. Sundays in the park. Those ridiculous neon ice skates at Rockefeller Center.

She laughs and smiles.
I’ll have you know those skates were awesome.

It wasn’t the skates.

Sorenson inches closer. Beckett doesn’t pull away.

Will...

Sorenson goes in for a KISS. And it’s hot. When they pull away, Beckett is mortified to see Castle standing in the doorway.

And I thought that cops and Feds hated each other.

Beckett and Sorenson pull away. AWKWARD!

They say justice never sleeps. Now I know why.

We were just-

Being consenting adults. I’m not judging.

I thought I told you to go home.

I went home, but then my mother said something that couldn’t wait.

You live with your mother?

Apparently, we’re peas in a pod. But the important point is that Angela’s adopted.

So?

So, prior to giving up her baby, the birth mother would’ve been given background on the Candelas.
CASTLE (CONT'D)
Specifically, their ability to support the child.

BECKETT
( echoing her earlier point)
Knowledge of their finances.

SORENSON
Really, Kate? We're going to waste time on the insights of Nancy Drew here?

BECKETT
(amazed to be saying it)
Castle's insights have actually been fairly helpful at times.

CASTLE
(to Beckett)
"Fairly helpful"?
(to Sorenson)
And I'll have you know that Nancy Drew solved every case.

BECKETT
Castle.

CASTLE
Okay. I'm quoting now... "When a child's life's at stake, we need to be sure. Which means you have to question everything you think you know."

BECKETT
I told you he was really annoying.

From the other room they hear:

LITTLE GIRL'S VOICE
MAMA!

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Castle, Beckett, and Sorenson enter to find Alfred and Theresa watching a VIDEO of Angela in the park. Tears stream down the parents' faces as they watch the images of their little girl.

CUT TO:

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Castle, Beckett, Sorenson, Esposito, and Ryan huddle. Esposito reads off his notes. They speak in hushed tones.
ESPOSITO
Birth mother was Lucia Gomez. Got pregnant in high school, had Angela two years ago, and gave her up in a closed adoption.

BECKETT
So she couldn’t contact the Candelas without their permission.

RYAN
But a couple of months ago, she submits this to the adoption agency.

Ryan hands Beckett a form. As she looks it over...

BECKETT
Request to contact adoptive parents.

ESPOSITO
Clerk can’t say if the information got passed along or not.

CASTLE
Right. But all she would have needed was a quick glance at a computer screen to get an address.

Beckett gives Castle a look: he was right.

BECKETT
Pick her up.

* 

END ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

INT. PRECINCT, OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Castle, Esposito, and Ryan watch as Sorenson and Beckett enter the interrogation room and sit opposite LUCIA GOMEZ, 18.

CASTLE
Now I know why you guys hate the Feds so much. They’re like bouncers at a nightclub.

ESPOSITO
Only you can’t bribe them.

RYAN
Yeah, so we just make fun of their blazers.

We push in on the monitors, taking us...

INT. PRECINCT, INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Beckett and Sorenson, with Lucia Gomez.

LUCIA
I was a junior in high school. What was I gonna do with a baby?

SORENSON
Two years is still a long time to think about a decision you made when you were sixteen.

LUCIA
Look, what am I doing here? What’s this about?

BECKETT
It’s about your baby and regretting your decision.

LUCIA
My decision? I don’t regret my decision. I’m in college now. I’ll have kids when I can care for them.

SORENSON
Then why did you try to find her?

LUCIA
What are you talking about?
BECKETT
You filed this petition with the adoption agency a couple months back.

Beckett pushes the form in front of Lucia.

BECKETT (CONT’D)
It’s a form requesting the identity of the adoptive parents.

SORENSON
A signed form.

LUCIA
That’s not my signature.

BECKETT
Lucia-

LUCIA
(pulls out her wallet)
No, really. See for yourself.

She shoves the form and her driver’s license to them. Beckett and Sorenson compare the signatures. They’re different.

LUCIA (CONT’D)
Why? What’s going on? What’s happened to her? Is she okay?

BECKETT
Did anyone in your family object to you giving up the baby?

LUCIA
No one. My mom even helped me.

SORENSON
And the father?

LUCIA
Juan? He was in Iraq when I had her, but we talked. He was cool with it.

BECKETT
You sure about that?

Lucia looks away. No, she’s not sure...

LUCIA
Look, we just had sex. It’s not like I loved the guy. What was I supposed to do, marry him? It’s my body.
SORENSON
This Juan? He still in Iraq?

LUCIA
Naw. He got back a couple months ago.

Off Beckett and Sorenson...

27 INT. PARKING GARAGE, 10TH FLOOR – DAY
Beckett and Sorenson approach JUAN RESTREPO, 21, a car detailer, working on a car.

BECKETT
Juan Restrepo. Detective Kate Beckett. NYP...

But seeing Beckett’s badge, Juan takes off running. Sorenson races after him.

28 INT. PARKING GARAGE, RAMP – CONTINUOUS
Juan books down the ramp, Sorenson behind him, with Beckett trailing.

29 INT. PARKING GARAGE, GROUND FLOOR – MOMENTS LATER
Juan reaches the bottom and runs right into Castle, Ryan, and Esposito.

ESPOSITO
Hey, bro.

RYAN
(pulling out cuffs)
Lemme see your hands.

Juan puts them up and Ryan moves in to cuff him. A beat later, Sorenson comes charging down, out of breath. Castle pats him on the back.

CASTLE
No wind sprints at Quantico?*

CUT TO:

30 INT. PARKING GARAGE, WALL – DAY
Juan Restrepo is now handcuffed. Beckett faces him.

JUAN
I didn’t do nothing wrong.
BECKETT
So why'd you run?

JUAN
In my neighborhood, you see a cop - that’s what you do.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, NEAR WALL - SAME TIME

Esposito and Ryan, wearing latex gloves, inspect the contents of the interior of Juan’s beat-up Corolla. Ryan picks through a pile of fast food wrappers in the filthy backseat.

RYAN
The man details cars, you think he’d show a little pride with his own ride.

Sorenson, also gloved, inspects the trunk. Castle stands nearby, watching Beckett interrogating Juan twenty feet away.

CASTLE
(re: Beckett and Juan)
What? No good cop, bad Fed?

SORENSON
The guy did two tours in the Gulf. I go over there, he’d turn it into a pissing match. But Kate, she’s got a way of sneaking up on people.

CASTLE
Like last night?

Sorenson doesn’t take the bait. He turns back to the trunk.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, WALL - SAME TIME

Beckett and Juan.

BECKETT
When was the last time you saw your daughter, Mr. Restrepo?

JUAN
My daughter?

BECKETT
Lucia told us about how you changed your mind. That you wanted to keep the baby.

Beckett holds up the forged document for Juan.
BECKETT (CONT'D)
This is a form to find your daughter.
Only that’s not Lucia’s signature.

Juan looks away.
BECKETT (CONT'D)
It’s called forgery, Mr. Restrepo. You can do ten years for it, especially when a child’s involved.

JUAN
I had to give her up, all right? I just wanted to see her, is all.

INT. PARKING GARAGE, NEAR WALL - SAME TIME
Sorenson continues looking through the trunk as Castle stands there.

CASTLE
Just saying. Looked like quite a kiss.

SORENSON
What, you jealous, Castle?

CASTLE
Me? No. Although, you have to admit, I was right.

SORENSON
About what?

CASTLE
Your whole, “she’s the best,” “controlling emotions.”

SORENSON
Some things you can’t control. Kate and I always had that pull. When we were together, we couldn’t keep our hands off each other.

CASTLE
Dude. TMI.

SORENSON
You are jealous. That I hooked her.

CASTLE
What’s there to be jealous of? You couldn’t reel her in.

SORENSON
We’ll see about that.

Sorenson turns back to the trunk.
INT. PARKING GARAGE, WALL - SAME TIME

Juan’s head is down. The words are flowing now.

JUAN
I was eighteen when Lucia got pregnant. Six months in, I got deployed. I never even got a chance to see her.

BECKETT
But you signed adoption papers.

JUAN
I was eighteen. But bein’ over there... you see so many kids. I needed to know my daughter was okay. So I filled out the form and signed Lucia’s name.

BECKETT
You got an address.

Juan nods.

JUAN
Dude felt sorry for me. He’d been there, too. Gulf One. He only lost his arm.

BECKETT
And what’d you lose?

JUAN
IED hit my humvee. Shrapnel tore through the floor. (looks up at Beckett) Doc said I ain’t never gonna have kids of my own. So, yeah, I got an address and I went to find my daughter. She looked happy.

BECKETT
So you kidnap her and ask the people who adopted her for money?

JUAN
“Kidnap her”? Wait. She was kidnapped?

BECKETT
From her apartment. You had the address.
JUAN
You think I'd take her? You think I'd screw up her life like that? I just wanted to know she was doing okay.

INT. PRECINCT, BREAKROOM - DAY
Beckett, Sorenson, and Castle stand together, anxious.
Through the door in the bullpen, we see Ryan and Juan seated at Ryan’s desk. Esposito pops in from the bullpen.

ESPOSITO
His story checks out. Limo company had him doing their fleet this morning.

Beckett nods. Esposito heads back to his desk in the bullpen.

SORENSON
I don’t care. He had motive and opportunity.

CASTLE
His motive was the instinct of fatherhood. If he took her, he would’ve been with her. Not at his twelve-buck-an-hour detailing job.

SORENSON
Doesn’t matter. I want ESU on his place.

BECKETT
Will, it’s not him! We’re at square freakin’ one, and we’ve got nothing. Send ESU wherever you want, but I’m not going to lose this one.

She walks away from them into the bullpen, frustrated. Off Castle, seeing the depth of how she feels, as she walks off.

CASTLE
What’d she mean, “lose this one”?

SORENSON
The case we worked.

CASTLE
I thought you caught the guy.

SORENSON
We did. But the kid was already dead.

Sorenson’s phone rings. Beckett looks over. “Bad news?”
SORENSON (CONT’D)
(picking up)
Sorenson.
(beat, looks at Beckett)
On my way.
(MORE)
Another call. About the ransom.

It’s good news. They hurry out, reenergized...

A BANK GUARD unloads thick PACKETS OF $100 BILLS onto the dining table. The FBI Tech downloads to Castle, Beckett, and Sorenson.

FBI TECH
They asked for seventy-five packs of hundreds; randomized serial numbers and they warned about bait money, dye packs, and trackers.

CASTLE
Sounds like they know your playbook.

Beckett notices a GREEN BACKPACK on the table.

FBI TECH
They were detailed, right down to the color, make, and model of the backpack.

BECKETT
Drop instructions?

FBI TECH
We wait for their call.

SORENSON
All right, let’s get the money set and be ready to move.

FBI Tech moves off to load the packets of $100 bills into the backpack. But Theresa and Alfred come over.

THERESA
It’s good they called, right?

BECKETT
Very good.

ALFRED
But why didn’t they tell us where to bring the money?

BECKETT
They’re testing you. It’s not unusual.
Which means, before we make the drop, we’ll need to test them. We’ll need proof that they have Angela and that she’s okay.

Alfred takes Theresa’s hand.

_ALFRED_
(frightened)
What if they don’t give any? What if they refuse?

Theresa pulls her hand away from him.

_THERESA_
(snapping)
How can you think like that?

_ALFRED_
I just mean, if-

_THERESA_
You think she’s dead?

_ALFRED_
No. Of course not.

_THERESA_
I should’ve gotten up. I shouldn’t have let you watch her-

_ALFRED_
Don’t say that-

_THERESA_
Don’t you tell me what to say! Tell me, Alfred, was it worth it?

She points into the art studio off the living room, to the big canvas with the red paint splatter – the one Alfred was working on during the montage. Theresa picks up a vase and hurls it at the painting. It slams against it, knocking it down.

_THERESA (CONT’D)_
Was it worth our little girl?

Beckett crosses to Theresa.

_BECKETT_
Mrs. Candela? Theresa... You can’t give in to your fear. Neither you or your husband is to blame.
The phone rings. AGENTS and COPS spring into action, pulling on headsets and flipping on monitoring equipment. Theresa pushes toward the phone.

SORENSON (to Theresa, reassuring) *
Remember, no proof, no money. We need to be firm on that.

Theresa wipes away her tears and nods.

SORENSON (CONT’D) (to Theresa) *
Okay, here we go.

Theresa answers the phone.

THERESA
Hello?

SCRAMBLED VOICE (SPEAKER) *
Listen carefully. Any deviation and your daughter dies.

THERESA
I understand.

SCRAMBLED VOICE (SPEAKER) *
A civilian, not a cop, must make the drop or we kill the girl. We see police or FBI and she dies. You have the money?

THERESA
Yes. 750. Just like you asked.

SCRAMBLED VOICE (SPEAKER) *
Put it in the backpack and bring it to the northeast corner of 1st Avenue and 47th. There’s a mailbox there with a cell phone taped underneath. We’ll text further instruction once you’re there. When we have the money, then we’ll call with the girl’s location.

BECKETT (whispering to Theresa)
Ask for proof that Angela’s okay.

THERESA
You’re not getting any money until we know my baby’s okay.
A tense silence. Theresa looks over at Sorenson. Beckett and Castle look concerned. Then:

LITTLE GIRL’S VOICE (SPEAKER)
Mama.

THERESA
Hi, sweetheart!

LITTLE GIRL’S VOICE (SPEAKER)
(a little more scared)
Mama!

SCRAMbled VOICE (SPEAKER)
You have one hour.

The call ends. It's emotional. FBI Tech shakes her head.

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Castle, Beckett, and Sorenson. There's a sense of urgency. Sorenson studies a map on the kitchen counter.

BECKETT
(checking her watch)
We’re north of twenty-four hours and she’s still alive.

SORENSON
Doesn’t guarantee a safe return.

CASTLE
Even if you give ‘em the money?

SORENSON
Once they get paid, there’s no incentive to keep her alive. Which means, I’ll make the drop.
(opens map)
Figure we’ll place our people at a one-block radius from the mailbox-

ALFRED (O.S.)
No. They said no cops.

The three turn to see Alfred there, having overheard.

SORENSON
It’s okay. I’ve done this before. They won’t know I’m an FBI agent.

ALFRED
And if they do?
BECKETT
Mr. Candela, we need this to go as smoothly as possible.

ALFRED
She’s my daughter and we’re going to follow their instructions to the letter. They said no cops.
(off them)
Look, I’m her father and I can do this. Do I make myself clear?

Alfred turns and leaves.

SORENSON
No way we can send the father. Too many things could go wrong. He’s too emotional.

BECKETT
What other choice do we have?

CASTLE
(beat, then)
Me.

BECKETT
What?

CASTLE
I’m not a cop. And I’m certainly not emotional.

SORENSON
No. Absolutely not.

CASTLE
The NYPD has a signed waiver from me. Plus, I don’t like saying this, but you’re running out of time.

BECKETT
Castle’s right.

SORENSON
You can’t be serious.

BECKETT
He’s followed me on cases. He’s good under pressure. I hate to say it, but he’s our best shot.

END ACT FOUR
Angela’s “big girl” twin bed, with several stuffed animals and a safety rail, is against a wall. Another framed PHOTO of Angela in her bed, holding a stuffed bunny, is on a dresser. FBI Tech works on wiring Castle, as Beckett steps in.

BECKETT
Okay, this is where I’d ask if you’ve really thought this through, but then I remembered you never think things through.

FBI Tech threads a wire under Castle’s shirt. He cackles.

CASTLE
Ooh, cold hands. Cold hands.

FBI Tech smiles, shakes her head, keeps working.

BECKETT
These people are dangerous. You need to stay focused and alert.

CASTLE
“Focused and alert,” got it. Wait. What?
(off her look)
Just kidding.

FBI Tech finishes inserting a tiny microphone into his ear.

FBI TECH
You’re good to go.

FBI Tech exits. Castle looks at Beckett, sees her concern.

CASTLE
It’s gonna be okay.

BECKETT
(beat, then quietly)
Look, about last night, in the kitchen...

CASTLE
You don’t have to explain.

BECKETT
(a little thrown)
I don’t?
CASTLE
Not unless you want to.

Beckett looks at Castle, searches for some insight; quickly realizes none’s coming. So, she covers.

BECKETT
I just thought for the character, you know, for Nikki Heat...

CASTLE
I think I understand Nikki better than you think I do.

Beckett shifts gears. She fixes his shirt.

BECKETT
Be careful, okay?

CASTLE
Do I detect actual concern for my well-being?

BECKETT
Screw this up and I’ll kill you.

CASTLE
That’s more like it.

CUT TO:

39  EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

A MAILBOX. Castle carries the green backpack toward it.

CASTLE
(enjoying the lingo)
Okay, I have eyes on the target.
Over. Are you reading me?

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

40  INT. BECKETT’S UNMARKED - SAME TIME

Beckett and Sorenson watch Castle from a distance. They talk to him over the radio.

BECKETT
We don’t have to read you, we can see you. Now shut up and focus.

CASTLE
Roger that. Five by five.
SORENSON
Quite a guy. If he only knew how a big a fan you really are.

BECKETT
He’s not going to know.

SORENSON
You never told him how you stood in a line for an hour just to get your book signed? How his novels got you through your mother’s death?

BECKETT
Is there anything you don’t remember?

SORENSON
Not when it comes to you.

As they share a look, Castle gets to the mailbox, crouches down, and reaches under.

CASTLE
I feel like Michael finding the gun taped behind the toilet.

He rips the phone away from the bottom of the mailbox and pulls the tape off. The phone beeps.

CASTLE (CONT’D)
Hey. Have Esposito and Ryan hang back. They just sent a text. It says, “We’re watching you.”

SORENSON
It could just be a ruse.

CASTLE
Nope. Just got another one. It says, “You’re wearing jeans and a tan coat.”

* It’s correct. Castle is wearing jeans and a tan coat. *

BECKETT
Okay, so they’re watching you. It doesn’t change anything.

Beckett then gets a text on her phone. She pulls it up: “U GUYS MAKING OUT?”

SORENSON
(seeing the text)
Tell him to stop fooling around.
BECKETT
Like that’ll help.

Castle reads the next text...

CASTLE
They want me to cross the street and head west on East 47th.

Castle walks a few steps, stops.

CASTLE (CONT’D)
That’s left, right?

BECKETT
Right.

CASTLE
Right, right? Or right, left?

BECKETT
Castle! Left! Go left!

Castle heads across the street and gets another text.

CASTLE
“1201 1st.” It’s just up ahead.

As Castle heads toward the building, behind him we reveal Esposito and Ryan trailing at a distance. They’re also wired.

ESPOSITO
Got it. We see him.

We’re back with Castle as he enters...

INTERCUT AS NEEDED:

INT. 1201 1ST AVENUE, LOBBY – CONTINUOUS

Castle enters into a CROWD inside the building’s lobby.

CASTLE
(reading text)
They want me to leave the backpack at the shoeshine stand and exit out the side.

Ryan and Esposito enter the lobby. They look through the crowd for Castle, but can’t see him.

RYAN
I don’t see him.
CASTLE
I’m at the shoeshine stand.

SORENSON
They could still be watching him.
Make the drop.

BECKETT
Leave the bag, Castle. Make the drop and walk away!

Castle leaves the backpack and keeps walking.

CASTLE
I just left it. I’m heading out.

BECKETT
Esposito, Ryan, you got him yet?

Esposito and Ryan push through the crowd, starting to separate from each other.

ESPOSITO
I see the shoeshine stand.

RYAN
Wait. I got the backpack.

Ryan spots an ASIAN MALE, 20s, jeans and a brown shirt, with the GREEN BACKPACK, heading toward the exit!

RYAN (CONT’D)
Asian male, jeans, brown shirt.

BECKETT
Stay with him.

ESPOSITO
I got him now, too.

They push past people as Asian Male heads outside.*

EXT. 1201 1ST AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

Esposito closes in and tackles him.

ESPOSITO
Where’s the girl?! Where’s Angela?!

ASIAN MALE
What girl? I don’t know what you’re talking about!
Esposito grabs the backpack and opens it up to find... ONLY NEWSPAPER. And then:
ESPOSITO
Ryan!

He points to a GIRL with the SAME BACKPACK. Ryan chases her down, rips her pack off, and opens it. More newspaper. He sees ANOTHER PERSON with the backpack, and ANOTHER, and ANOTHER.

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Castle, Beckett, and Sorenson are with Alfred and Theresa, the tension between them since the blowup still lingering.

BECKETT
The kidnappers posted the ad on Craigslist. Said it was a performance art piece for YouTube.

SORENSON
They sent out nearly two dozen of the backpacks. The poster used an IP anonymizer, making it impossible to trace.

ALFRED
So we just do nothing? We just have to sit here and wait?

BECKETT
We’re doing everything we can.

THERESA
What? What are you doing?

CASTLE
I was able to slip the phone they gave me into the backpack.

THERESA
I don’t understand.

CASTLE
Before I did that, I sent a text to Detective Beckett.

BECKETT
Phone’s under a bulk account so we can’t trace the owner, but we can trace the phone’s ID.

SORENSON
So far, we’ve pinged the phone to a twenty-block radius on the Lower East Side.
ALFRED
Twenty blocks? But that could be fifty thousand people!

SORENSON
We need another few hours to narrow it down. In the meantime, I moved a team into the area. They’ll work the streets and be ready to move when we have more information.

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, ANGELA’S BEDROOM – DAY

Castle’s finished being de-wired by FBI Tech. Beckett approaches.

BECKETT
You okay?

CASTLE
I keep thinking that if I’d only seen whoever took the bag...

BECKETT
That wasn’t your job.

Castle’s gaze falls on the framed picture of a beautiful, smiling Angela clutching a stuffed bunny.

CASTLE
I can’t even imagine if something like this ever happened to Alexis.

BECKETT
We’ll have her back soon.

They’re interrupted by Sorenson, looking disturbed.

SORENSON
Not as soon as we hoped. They must’ve found it. Taken the batteries out.

BECKETT
What?

SORENSON
We just lost the signal from the phone.

END ACT FIVE
Castle, in his robe, his laptop on his lap, scrolls through PHOTOS he took on his phone of the Candelas’ apartment. A few photos come up at a time. Alexis, in her pj’s, enters, sleepy.

ALEXIS

Hey.

CASTLE

Hey. Why up so early? Stressing about finals?

ALEXIS

American Lit’s today. I was having nightmares about Hester Prynne.

CASTLE

The irony for you is, not getting an “A” is cause for shame.

She gives him a look as she comes around his desk.

ALEXIS

So why are you up?

CASTLE

Looking for a white rabbit.

ALEXIS

Lewis Carroll or The Matrix?

CASTLE

I’m not sure yet.

ALEXIS

What did Beckett tell you about taking phone photos at the crime scene?

CASTLE

I don’t know, I wasn’t listening. See all the stuffed animals on the bed?

ALEXIS

Aw. It looks just like mine used to. Remember when I used to have all those animals?
CASTLE
If by “used to have” you mean
Monkey-Bonkey - who mysteriously
appears between your pillows from
time to time despite having been
washed so many times he looks more
like a freaky squirrel - then, yes,
I remember.

ALEXIS
(best poker face)
I have no idea what you’re talking
about.

CASTLE
Then I guess you won’t mind if I
throw him out next time I see him.

She pokes at him.

ALEXIS
Don’t you dare.

CASTLE
Fine. I won’t. I won’t.

Alexis notices one of the photos on screen: a close-up of a
framed photo of Angela with the bunny.

ALEXIS
You think the bunny has something
to do with the case?

CASTLE
I’ll let you know after I go down
the rabbit hole.

Castle looks at the Angela-bunny photo. Off the photo...

INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, ANGELA’S BEDROOM – DAWN

It’s very early. Some light seeps in around the window
shades, but it’s pretty dark. Beckett is asleep on a rocking
chair. We see some FEDS in the background in the living room.

Beckett stirs to find Castle pulling up the blankets on
Angela’s bed, searching for something.

BECKETT
Castle?

CASTLE
Go back to sleep.
BECKETT
What are you doing?

Beckett flips on the lights, groggy.

CASTLE
When Alexis was little, she had this stuffed monkey she couldn’t sleep without. Monkey-Bonkey. Once she forgot to take him on vacation, so I bought another one, but she knew it wasn’t Monkey-Bonkey.

BECKETT
So?

Castle picks up the framed photograph of Angela clutching her bunny in bed. He holds it up to Beckett.

CASTLE
There are two more pictures of her holding the bunny out there. So where’s the bunny?

Now Beckett is fully awake.

BECKETT
You think whoever took Angela knew her well enough to take the bunny, too.

Castle taps his nose: “Bingo.”

BECKETT (CONT’D)
But we’ve been through the Candelas’ list. A few teenage babysitters, the cleaning lady... We cleared them already.

CASTLE
Only not all babysitters are teenagers. Sometimes they’re people close to us. Sometimes they’re family. When did we lose the phone’s signal?

BECKETT
Right after we told the Candelas we were tracking it. You don’t think...?

On Castle. Clearly, he does think...
INT. CANDELA APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM – DAWN

Beckett and Castle walk out and see Alfred and Theresa at the dining table having coffee. They look up. But Beckett discreetly approaches Sorenson.

BECKETT
Theresa’s sister, Nina? You got an address?

Sorenson pulls it up on his LAPTOP. He turns the laptop slightly for Beckett and Castle to see.

CLOSE ON THE ADDRESS ON THE LAPTOP: 329 Clinton Street.

CASTLE
Lower East Side.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING, COURTYARD PLAYGROUND – MORNING

It’s a private playground, surrounded by buildings, not seen from the street.

A few KIDS play on swing sets. CAMERA FINDS a shy little girl, ANGELA, holding her stuffed bunny. Watching her is a smiling Nina. We RACK FOCUS past Angela to reveal Beckett, Castle, and Sorenson walking across the playground.

Nina looks anxious, but as she rises and turns, she sees Ryan and Esposito closing behind her.

When they reach Angela, Beckett bends down. Sorenson keeps walking to Nina.

SORENSON
Nina Mendola, you’re under arrest for the kidnapping of Angela Candela.

On Beckett and Angela.

BECKETT
Angela. I am so happy to see you.

Beckett scoops her up.

BECKETT (CONT’D)
Let’s go see Mommy and Daddy.

Sorenson glances over at Castle, nods: “Nice job.” Castle nods back. The hatchet is buried. Then both men turn and watch Beckett comforting Angela.
Theresa and Alfred sit at the dining table. Beckett enters carrying Angela, who is clutching her bunny. Sorenson and Castle follow right behind.

ALFRED
Oh my God, Angie!

Beckett sets Angela down as Alfred, overcome, runs to his little girl and scoops her up, giving her hugs and kisses.

ALFRED (CONT’D)
Mi corazon! Are you okay? Oh, God.
You look perfect, just perfect!
(then, to Beckett)
Is she okay?

BECKETT
She’s fine.

ALFRED
Thank you. Oh, God, thank you so much. How did you find her?


ALFRED (CONT’D)
Honey, what are you doing? She’s here! She’s home!
(off her silence)
What is it? What’s wrong?

But Theresa remains statue-like. Alfred looks back to Beckett, Sorenson, and Castle, whose serious expressions reveal that something is amiss.

ALFRED (CONT’D)
What’s going on?

BECKETT
You should ask your wife, Mr. Candela.

Alfred turns back to Theresa, who now has a deer-in-headlights look.

ALFRED
Theresa? Terry?

Theresa’s silence tells him everything.
THERESA
(finally turning to him)
Don’t look at me like that. Don’t
you dare judge me.

SORENSON
(to FBI Tech, indicating
Angela’s room)
Crawford, can you take Angela...?

FBI TECH
(kneeling down)
Come on, sweetheart.

FBI Tech takes Angela to her room.

ALFRED
What did you do?

THERESA
I worked fourteen-hour days. Year
after year, killing myself to give
us a life. And what’d you do? You
painted. All you did was paint!

ALFRED
That’s a lie.

THERESA
Oh, really? What about the job you
were going to get so I could cut my
hours? Was that a lie, too?

ALFRED
I was taking care of Angela.

THERESA
“Taking care”? You left her there!
In front of the TV! Every day!
(to the others)
Do you know how many times I woke
up to her screams while he was in
the next room, blasting music into
his ears? How many times did I come
home to a dirty house, dirty
clothes, and dirty diapers?

BECKETT
That doesn’t give you the right to
kidnap your own child...

THERESA
How is it kidnapping? She’s my
daughter.
BECKETT
Mrs. Candela, you had your sister climb through the kitchen window and take her.

THERESA
She had my permission.

BECKETT
It doesn’t matter. You violated your husband’s custodial rights.

THERESA
“Custodial rights”? He didn’t even notice she was gone! What kind of father leaves his two year old like that?

ALFRED
Why would you do this? Why would you put us through that?

She doesn’t answer, but Castle knows.

CASTLE
Because... she was planning to divorce you.

ALFRED
Then for godsake, why not just divorce me?

THERESA
So I could pay you alimony? So you could take half of everything? So you could get custody of her because I work all day and you can “be there for her”? No. I’ve seen what happens to the guys at work. What happened to Doug Ellers. No way I was gonna let that happen to me.

CASTLE
You were paying the ransom to yourself.

THERESA
Nina and I had it all planned. Once Angela returned, I’d file the divorce papers. There’d be nothing left for him to take.
BECKETT
And if Angela was kidnapped while Alfred was supposed to be watching her...

THERESA
The lawyer said if I could show he was negligent, I’d get custody. I wouldn’t have to move out of the apartment I paid for, so that he could live here with my daughter. Do you know how hard it was to adopt Angela? How much it cost? It was all on me. It’s always been all on me. Ten years together. How many paintings have you sold, Alfred? How many?

ALFRED
What you put me through... How could you hate me so much?

THERESA
You made it easy.

Beckett and Sorenson share a glance. Beckett goes to Theresa.

BECKETT
If you agree to go quietly, we won’t cuff you and you can say good-bye to Angela.

Alfred watches, devastated, as Beckett leads Theresa toward Angela’s room...

INT. PRECINCT, BULLPEN – NIGHT

Beckett sits at her desk, doing paperwork. Sorenson walks up and takes the seat next to her desk.

SORENSON
How do you think she’ll do?

BECKETT
Depends on how many mothers are on the jury.

SORENSON
So now that it’s over... now that I’m back... I was thinking, maybe we could give it another shot?

Beckett looks at him a beat, then shakes her head.
BECKETT
What happens when you leave again?

SORENSON
You come with me.

She shakes her head. A beat. He nods.

SORENSON (CONT’D)
Think about it.

As she watches him walk away, Castle takes a seat.

CASTLE
Nice guy. I can see why it didn’t work out, though.

BECKETT
Really?

CASTLE
Sure. He’s handsome, square-jawed, by-the-book.

BECKETT
And that’s a bad thing?

CASTLE
He’s like the male you. Ying needs Yang, not Ying. Ying-Yang is harmony, but Ying-Ying? That’s just, like... a panda name.

BECKETT
Any other bits of wisdom, Obi-Wan? *

CASTLE
Nope. That’s all for today. What say we grab a drink and celebrate.

BECKETT
Can’t. I have a date.

She rises and grabs her jacket.

CASTLE
A date? You date?

She nods, “Yeah.” He swallows his momentary jealousy.

CASTLE (CONT’D)
Who?
BECKETT
That’s why they call it a “private life.” Because it’s private. Unlike you, I don’t live my life on Page Six.

Beckett grabs her purse.

CASTLE
You’re a very mysterious woman.

BECKETT
Maybe there’s more Nikki Heat in me than you think.

She shoots him a mysterious smile as she heads out of the precinct, his jealousy of this mystery man building...

END OF SHOW