

CASTLE
"Paranoia"

Written by
Justin M. Lesniewski

CAST

RICHARD CASTLE
KATE BECKETT
JAVIER ESPOSITO
LANIE PARISH
KEVIN RYAN
ALEXIS CASTLE
VICTORIA GATES
TORY ELLIS

LARGE CHARLES
BARRY WELLER
BRETT HOST
EMILY APPLEWHITE
WYATT REED
WILLIAM JOHNSON
MATTHEW GOLDBERG

Non-Speaking

ANGELA BENKO
FANS

Locations

INTERIORS

CASTLE'S LOFT

KITCHEN

OFFICE

LIVING ROOM

UPSCALE HOTEL

HALLWAY

ROOM 815

LOBBY

LOBBY, CORNER

LOBBY, SECLUDED SPOT

BAR

PRECINCT

INTERROGATION ROOM

BREAK ROOM

INTERVIEW LOUNGE

MORGUE

TECH

BULLPEN

GATES' OFFICE

OBSERVATION ROOM

HIPSTER BAR

BOOTH

BRETT HOST'S OFFICE

ACT ONE

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, HALLWAY - MORNING

CLOSE on the door for room 815. A sliver of light comes through the frame. We realize that door is cracked open. The shot slowly pushes into the room...

INT. ROOM 815 - MORNING

Everything is in disarray, as if discombobulated from the previous night's sexual exploits...or fight. The chair is on its side. The bedsheets are on the floor. The minifridge is wide open. Cold air is loudly pumping out of the air conditioning unit. On the desk, a small overnight bag is unzipped, its contents strewn about. Glass fragments litter the floor by the closet, its mirror door shattered as if hit with brute force.

On the cusp of the bathroom, a YOUNG WOMAN's body has been propped up in a sitting position against the wall. She is blonde, petite in the natural way that lacks muscle definition, and cute but not beautiful. A gaudy, tribal-egsue talisman hangs around her neck.

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE'S LOFT, KITCHEN - MORNING

CASTLE is standing behind the island preparing some sort of breakfast. ALEXIS is sitting across from him, staring at her smart phone.

BECKETT walks in from the bedroom wearing nothing but a button down shirt and underwear. She sees Alexis, remembers that she has moved back in, and immediately attempts to turn around. Castle, of course, is not going to let that happen.

CASTLE
(faux-sweet)
Good morning, honey.

Beckett freezes in her tracks. Alexis doesn't look up from her phone.

BECKETT
Sorry, I forgot, I was just--

CASTLE
Nonsense. We're family. Have a seat.

Castle pulls out a chair next to Alexis. Beckett reluctantly sits.

BECKETT
 (annoyed)
 Not yet we're not.
 (to Alexis)
 Morning, Alexis.

Alexis still doesn't look up from her phone. Something has her entranced.

ALEXIS
 Hi, Kate.

Beckett relaxes.

BECKETT
 (to Castle)
 What has her so distracted?

CASTLE
 Oh, you know, social media something-or-other. Ironic, isn't it? I still remember building my entire following with face-to-face interactions.

Beckett resists the urge to roll her eyes at Castle mentioning that he has a following.

BECKETT
 (teasing)
 Did you do it uphill in the snow both ways too?

CASTLE
 As a matter of fact, I did.
 (beat)
 At least I have a Twitter account...

ALEXIS
 Could you guys cool it with the flirty banter? I am here, you know.

CASTLE
 Could've fooled me.

BECKETT
 Let her be, Castle. She's not doing anything any other college student isn't.

CASTLE
 (to Alexis)
 What are you doing exactly?

Alexis shows her phone to her father. It's displaying a Facebook event invite list.

ALEXIS
 I want to go to this party this weekend, but I have to make sure it's safe, so if someone marked that they're attending, I'm looking at their profile. And if I have to, I'm Googling them.

CASTLE
 (amused)
 You're vetting the guests to someone else's party?

Beckett is suppressing a smile.

BECKETT
 I think she's read a few too many of your books.

CASTLE
 You mean all of them?
 (to Alexis)
 You've read all of my books, right?

Before Alexis can answer, Beckett's phone rings from the bedroom. Alexis looks relieved as she turns her attention back to her screening process.

BECKETT
 You know what that means.

CASTLE
 You forgot to return a video to Blockbuster in the 90s and they've finally tracked you down?

Beckett shoots Castle a glare as she gets up to go grab her phone.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, HALLWAY - MORNING

The door to room 815 is open, police tape stretched across the opening.

Detectives KEVIN RYAN and JAVIER ESPOSITO are facing the door, nonchalantly blocking it from the view of a group of FANS who are trying to snap pictures of it with their smart phones. Beckett and Castle walk down the hall holding cups of coffee.

CASTLE

What bothers me is that Alexis has never been like this. She's always trusted people and thought the best of them.

BECKETT

Everybody has to grow up sometime, Castle.

CASTLE

But does growing up mean becoming suspicious of everyone?

BECKETT

I wouldn't worry about it. After all she's been through, a little paranoia is probably healthy.

Beckett and Castle approach Ryan and Esposito.

CASTLE

A little? She's cyber-stalking people in hopes of learning things about them without ever meeting them.

Esposito turns to them.

ESPOSITO

Sounds like these people.

He points over his shoulder.

BECKETT

Who are they?

RYAN

Fans.

Beckett looks at Castle who is slightly offended she would think his fans would act in such a manner.

CASTLE

Don't look at me.

RYAN

Not his. They're fans of Marooned.

BECKETT

That reality show that's been on forever?

ESPOSITO

Yeah, our vic is 23 year old Angela Benko. She was recently on it for the second time, and the cast is being put up here by the network for their finale. These are their "superfans."

Castle eyes light up.

BECKETT

Please tell me you're not a superfan.

Esposito shifts uncomfortably at her statement.

CASTLE

Me? No. But the show is a masterpiece of storytelling. That's why it's been on for over a decade.

Beckett rolls her eyes and ducks under the police tape. Castle and Esposito share a moment of understanding before they follow. Ryan stays behind for crowd control.

INT. ROOM 815 - MORNING

Beckett surveys the scene, taking in the state of disarray the room is in.

BECKETT

Was there a fight?

CASTLE

Either that or someone had a really good night.

Beckett and Esposito ignore his comment.

ESPOSITO

It seems like it. If the room was torn apart in a robbery, nothing was taken. Though it's hard to tell considering the vic only brought one small bag.

BECKETT

So it's possible this was a targeted attack with the intent of stealing something specific.

LANIE (O.S.)

Maybe.

The group turns to see LANIE PARISH crouching over the body, examining it.

LANIE (CONT'D)

I'd lean more toward a crime of passion.

She points to the talisman around her neck.

LANIE (CONT'D)

From the bruising we can see that she was strangled with this necklace.

CASTLE

(correcting)

Secret Security Talisman

Lanie shoots Castle an annoyed look. She doesn't particularly care what it's called. She rises.

LANIE

It's also important to note that the body was posed in reverence. It's possible the killer knew her or at least wanted to look like he knew her.

Esposito steps forward.

ESPOSITO

And the broken mirror across from the body indicates that she tried to fight back.

BECKETT

So we do have a fight of some kind, we just don't know why.

CASTLE

And with reality TV stars, fights are a dime a dozen.

BECKETT

What's the deal with this Secret Security Talisman? I'm guessing it's part of the show.

She has trouble saying name of the item, partly because of how absurd she thinks it is.

CASTLE

Yes. Players find it and use it to protect themselves from being voted off.

(beat, looks at the body)
It looks like it didn't work too well for her.

ESPOSITO

Twice. She was wearing it when she was voted off of the show too.

BECKETT

So it's not valuable or our killer would've taken it.

CASTLE

Oh no, it's valuable. It would sell on Ebay for thousands. It could've also been left to prove a point.

Beckett is not a fan of the idea.

BECKETT

Like what? That no one is safe?

CASTLE

(taken aback)
Well, yeah.

Before Castle can respond, Ryan bursts into the room.

RYAN

I've got something for you.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY - MORNING

A large group of people are gathered in the lobby. Some are talking to each other. Some are signing autographs. Most are sitting in the corner looking longingly at the others who are actually interacting with people.

Ryan leads Castle and Beckett over to the group in the corner.

BECKETT
Who are these people?

RYAN
Superfans.

BECKETT
There are more of them? What are they doing?

RYAN
Waiting to meet the cast of the show.

Beckett is in disbelief.

CASTLE
Never underestimate the power of good art.

BECKETT
Really, Castle, art?

CASTLE
Or a reasonable approximation of it.

Ryan points across the lobby at an obese red-headed man in his late 20s who is sitting in the corner watching everything passively, LARGE CHARLES. There is a look of childlike amazement plastered on his face.

RYAN
That's Large Charles. From what I'm told, he's the most involved fan there is. He knows everything about everyone.

BECKETT
Then let's see what he knows about Angela.

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY, CORNER - MORNING

Beckett and Castle approach Large Charles who is sitting cross-legged on the floor with his shoes off and has his computer in his lap. He doesn't look up. Castle looks at Beckett as if to say "I've got this."

CASTLE

Hi--

LARGE CHARLES

Are you a cop?

Charles looks at Beckett and ignores Castle. Castle is still open-mouthed for a second before regaining his composure.

BECKETT

I'm Detective Beckett, NYPD.
(flashes her badge)
This is Mr. Castle.

LARGE CHARLES

I know who he is. His novels are predictable.

Castle is irked at being dismissed like this.

CASTLE

And Marooned isn't? Every season is-

Beckett interrupts by putting her hand in the air. Castle reluctantly bites his tongue.

BECKETT

What can you tell us about Angela Benko?

LARGE CHARLES

Great girl, total sweetheart, fan favorite, wouldn't hurt a fly. Everyone wanted her to win, she just always seemed to get distracted.

BECKETT

Distracted by what?

LARGE CHARLES

Guys. Anyway, you're probably looking for Barry.

BECKETT

Who's Barry?

Large Charles points over to where the autographs are being signed. In the middle of the group is BARRY WELLER, show paraphernalia spread out on top of the piano in front of him. He's emaciated and jumpy in the manner of a drug addict trying desperately to hold on to the high of his latest fix.

His blemished face brings about the slightest disgust in anyone who looks at him.

CASTLE

Why would we be looking for him?

LARGE CHARLES

Angela's dead, right? Well, this morning Barry was bragging he was in her room and started showing off the team bandana she wore on the show this season. There's no way the network would let a player just give that away.

Beckett turns to Castle.

BECKETT

It looks like we found out what our killer was looking for.

CASTLE

But why would he leave the Talisman?

Large Charles is listening to their conversation and interjects.

LARGE CHARLES

You'd have to ask him that. Barry is a weird guy. He pretty much cyberstalks the players and other fans.

BECKETT

Thanks, Charles.

LARGE CHARLES

By the way, if I had something stolen last night, can I report it to you?

BECKETT

What was it?

LARGE CHARLES

My binders full of autographs. I was getting Emily Applewhite to sign a picture and when I turned around it was gone. I had almost the entire cast's signatures. Now I only have this.

He holds up an autographed cast picture of EMILY APPLEWHITE, a voluptuous Southern brunette in her early 20s. Her eyes are empty, but her smile is sweet. Castle blinks twice in rapid succession.

BECKETT

We'll let you know if we hear or see anything.

(beat)

Let's go, Castle.

Beckett turns toward Barry.

CASTLE

Allow me. I've dealt with one or two crazy fans in my day.

BECKETT

Only two?

Castle doesn't hear her swipe at him. He's already on his way across the lobby.

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY - MORNING

Beckett rushes to catch up with Castle.

CASTLE

(almost yelling)

Barry, I heard you have a bandana from this season.

Barry's eyes light up. His hand darts into his backpack. A second later he pulls a white bandana out of his bag and waves it in the air.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

It looks like he's surrendering.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Castle is sitting across from Barry who's sunken into his chair. He fidgets, unable to be still. Beckett is standing and holding up a clear plastic bag containing the white bandana.

BECKETT

Where'd you get this?

BARRY

I told you. I found it.

BECKETT

You found it? Where?

BARRY

In the hallway outside of Angela's room.

BECKETT

The room that you were bragging to everybody that you were in. So we're supposed to believe that you just happened to find the bandana in the hallway and not in the room?

Beckett puts her hands on the table and leans forward.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Why did she let you in?

BARRY

She didn't.

BECKETT

So you're admitting to breaking in?

Barry starts shaking like he is about to cry. The fact that there's no way he's capable of murder dawns on Beckett as he breaks.

BARRY

(yelling)

The door was open!

CASTLE

The door was open?

Beckett sits down, no longer needing to intimidate Barry. He's choking back tears, yet his words come out clearly, almost as if memorized.

BARRY

I was walking down the hall because the cast was staying there. I saw the bandana and went over to pick it up. When I did, I noticed the door was open, so I went in. The second I saw her body I ran out of there. I swear.

CASTLE

Why didn't you call the police?

BARRY

I've got restraining orders against me from most of the cast, fans, and production team. I didn't want to get kicked out of the hotel.

BECKETT

So if you didn't do it, who did?

BARRY

How would I know?

CASTLE

I heard that you know everything that has to do with Marooned. Are you telling us something happened in that hotel that you didn't know about?

Castle's appeal to Barry's identity has him shaken.

BARRY

No!

(beat)

I mean, yes, I didn't know Angela was murdered. But everyone knows her popularity with the fans was an issue behind the scenes, especially with Brett because of how much he hates the female players.

BECKETT

Brett?

Beckett legitimately has no idea who the Brett that Barry is referring to is. Castle is flabbergasted that she doesn't.

CASTLE

Brett Host, the face of Marooned.

BECKETT

Please don't tell me he changed his last name because he hosts the show.

Castle and Barry respond at the same time.

CASTLE AND BARRY

He did.

Beckett resists rolling her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, BREAK ROOM - DAY

Castle is stirring two coffees while Beckett leans against a table.

BECKETT

I just don't know what reason a producer who made his living off of a show would have for killing one of his cast members.

CASTLE

LOST, The Walking Dead, Game of Thrones, Sons of Anarchy--

BECKETT

In real life, Castle.

CASTLE

Oh, right.

Castle hands Beckett a coffee then seems to zone out for a second before something catches his eye.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

Guess who just showed up.

Through the break room window, Castle and Beckett watch BRETT HOST, quietly and unassumingly confident, 40s, dressed in cargo pants and a blue button up short sleeve safari shirt, walk through the precinct toward the interview lounge.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

(a bit reverent)

Brett Host.

BECKETT

You'd think he'd leave his gimmick at home.

Castle grins at Beckett with an excitement that says, "This is delicious."

CASTLE

Let the games begin.

SMASH CUT TO:

CASTLE TITLE CARD

END ACT ONE

ACT TWOINT. PRECINCT, INTERVIEW LOUNGE - DAY

Castle and Beckett are relaxed, leaning back in their seats as they sit across from Brett Host. Brett's body is forward, his hands resting on his knees, as if he is the one giving the interview. He is clearly in full-on host mode.

BRETT

Fan critiques of the show have always extended to me. I'm not surprised by what Barry said. Do you really think it affects me?

BECKETT

Mr. Host

Beckett almost stumbles on the last name because of her distaste for it.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

with all due respect, it's not about it affecting you. It's about whether it's true or not.

BRETT

I assure you, it's not. As I'm sure Castle can tell you, if you make something that becomes popular, criticism and complaints will be made about it.

CASTLE

(teasing)

It's true. You should hear what people say about Nikki Heat.

Beckett glares at Castle.

BECKETT

I see you're already calling Richard by his last name. I wasn't aware you'd met before.

CASTLE

We haven't.

BRETT

It's one of my vocal tics that fans claim I use to show favoritism toward male players.

(beat)

Look, I'm not going to pretend I don't think a certain type of male is more prepared to win, but that doesn't mean he'll win or that I won't be happy if a female wins.

BECKETT

I thought Ms. Benko didn't win.

BRETT

She didn't. But she was one of our most popular cast members in recent history, which can only be good for the show. Angela may have had issues behind the scenes, but none of those were with production. We loved her, so much so that we brought her back. Her winning would have been a feather in our cap.

BECKETT

Can you tell us anymore about her behind the scene issues?

BRETT

I know that I'm a pot stirrer when the cameras are rolling, but that's all for the sake of the show. I try not to fuel the fire when I'm not on the island. It tends to be bad production policy.

Brett stands up to go. He's said his peace. Castle stands with him.

CASTLE

I understand completely. Let the characters speak for themselves in the story. I'm the same way.

Brett shakes Castle and Beckett's hands.

BRETT

They're not characters, Castle, they're people.

Beckett smirks at Castle, momentarily vindicated. Brett moves to the door.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Thank you for meeting with me.

As he gets to the doorway, he seems to suddenly remember something and turns back.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Angela was a young, pretty 20-something woman. That's a highly competitive casting spot. Her being brought back probably caused a lot of jealousy among former cast members. I'd start looking there.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY - DAY

Ryan and Esposito enter through the front door to see a larger mess of people in the lobby than in the morning--most are conversing, some are drinking, some are still staring longingly. There are a few semicircles formed around one or two people.

RYAN

This is going to be like finding a needle in a haystack of insanity.

The group of superfans is still sitting off in the corner. Large Charles and Barry are among them. Esposito spots them.

ESPOSITO

Nah man, follow me.

The two head over to the corner.

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY, CORNER - DAY

Barry sees them and runs away.

RYAN

That's not suspicious.

Esposito doesn't grant Barry's exit any relevance, as if somehow he expected it.

ESPOSITO

The guy's just paranoid.

Large Charles notices them and waves.

LARGE CHARLES
 Javi, what's up, man?

Esposito shakes his hand.

ESPOSITO
 Just doing an investigation. Was there anyone who was upset that Angela was cast again? Maybe a woman who felt like Angela took her spot or something?

Large Charles doesn't miss a beat.

LARGE CHARLES
 Yeah, Emily was pissed. Still is. It's all she's talking about.

Large Charles nods to one of the semicircles across the lobby where Emily is holding court. She seems to be particularly energized, and the fans are eating it up.

ESPOSITO
 Alright, thanks, Charles.

Large Charles goes back to his computer as Esposito and Ryan head over to Emily's group.

RYAN
 How come he called you Javi? Only your friends do that.

ESPOSITO
 I saw him when we were here this morning. He probably just feels comfortable.

They look back to see Large Charles with his shoes still off, wiggling his toes.

ESPOSITO (CONT'D)
 (joking)
 Why, you jealous?

On Ryan's confusion...

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, MORGUE - DAY

Castle, Beckett, and Lanie are all standing around Angela's dead body. Their focus is on her neck as Lanie points at it with a pen.

LANIE

If you look at the way the pattern crosses, it doesn't match the weave on this.

Lanie holds up a plastic bag containing the Secret Security Talisman that was found around Angela's neck.

BECKETT

So where did that come from?

LANIE

No idea. All I know is someone put it on her when she was already dead.

CASTLE

(a realization)

Is it real?

Beckett and Lanie don't blink at the Castle outburst. They just wait for the follow up.

CASTLE (CONT'D)

(explaining)

Sometimes players make pretty convincing replicas using materials they find on the island, so imagine what someone could make with all the time and resources in the world.

LANIE

Are you asking if a fan made it? I'm not so sure. The craftsmanship is pretty intricate. I'd be surprised if it wasn't used on the show at some point.

BECKETT

Is it possible she was strangled by something other than one of these talismans?

LANIE

I doubt it, the weave is different, but not by much.

Beckett thinks for a second then takes the bag from Lanie.

BECKETT

(mainly to Castle)

This one might not even be hers. Could it be from an earlier season?

(MORE)

BECKETT (CONT'D)
Or another one from the same
season?

Castle is impressed by this deduction.

CASTLE
Yes. To both.

Beckett holds the bag up, inspecting it. She smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY - DAY

Esposito and Ryan part the semi-circle surrounding Emily to see her standing with WYATT REED, early 40s short and stocky, wearing a tight shirt and fedora. He's the kind of guy who slightly moves his shoulders forward and backward as he walks in an attempt to appear intimidating. Esposito leans toward Ryan.

ESPOSITO
(whispering)
That's Wyatt Reed with Emily, one
of the most notorious villains in
the history of the show.

RYAN
How do you know that?

Esposito straightens his posture.

ESPOSITO
Research.

RYAN
(confused)
When?

Wyatt greets the detectives before they can reach Emily.

WYATT
Is there something I can do for
you, officers?

RYAN
We'd like to talk to Emily.

WYATT
About what? Angela? She doesn't
know anything about that.

Esposito takes a step forward and becomes a bit more aggressive, perhaps unnecessarily so.

ESPOSITO
How about you let her tell us that herself?

Ryan eyes the two warily, worried that, for some strange reason, Esposito might fight Wyatt. Thankfully, Emily interjects herself into the conversation.

EMILY
It's ok, Wyatt. I have nothing to hide.

Emily takes Esposito and Ryan away from Wyatt and the crowd to a more secluded spot in the lobby.

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY, SECLUDED SPOT - DAY

EMILY
What can I help you with?

RYAN
I'm sure you heard about what happened to Angela.

EMILY
(sincere)
Yes, it's awful.

RYAN
Rumor has it, you're pretty upset that she got the callback for this season and not you.

EMILY
I am. As everyone saw from her making the exact same mistake again, she didn't deserve it.

Esposito nods in understanding.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Why would I kill her over that though? I know the show can get pretty dirty, but I have an image to maintain.

ESPOSITO
Yeah? And how does hanging out with Wyatt Reed help that image?

Emily glances back over her shoulder at Wyatt who is surrounded by all the fans that were around her.

EMILY

The fans love him. The producers do too. I can't help it if he has a crush on me.

ESPOSITO

You know he's married, right?

EMILY

That's none of my business.

Ryan clears his throat and takes a step forward. He shows Emily a picture of the Talisman they found around Angela's neck. Emily winces upon seeing the picture.

RYAN

So you've never seen this before?

EMILY

Of course I've seen it. It was on the season. If you want to know who's actually still mad about it, go look at who's sitting by himself at the end of the bar.

(beat)

Is it alright if I go back to them now?

She smiles tentatively as she nods at the group of fans Ryan and Esposito pulled her away from.

RYAN

Thank you for your time, Ms. Applewhite.

She smiles, turns, and goes back to the adoring crowd. Esposito looks at Ryan with disappointment.

ESPOSITO

What kind of question was that, "have you seen this before?"

Ryan is about to respond when something dawns on him.

RYAN

Are you a superfan?

Esposito doesn't answer. He just shakes his head, adjusts his jacket, and walks away.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, TECH

Beckett and Castle are standing next to TORY ELLIS who is controlling the giant computer screen they're staring at. Currently the display is of a picture Tory took of the Talisman.

TORY

Unfortunately, Reverse Image Search works best when you're trying to find an exact copy of the picture you submit.

CASTLE

I thought that people only used that to find out if they're being catfished?

Tory suppresses her amusement for Beckett's sake.

BECKETT

Do you watch everything?

Castle ignores the comment as Tory continues her report.

TORY

The tool can definitely be used to see if the picture someone sent you of him or herself is actually of someone else, but its general purpose is to locate images similar to the one you input, such as ours of the Talisman.

Tory clicks her mouse and the display changes to a search result containing pictures of different versions of the Talisman. Some look exactly the same. Some look similar, but slightly different.

TORY (CONT'D)

Each of these are displayed somewhere on the net. Most are just from news articles. Two, however, are on social networking profiles.

Castle looks at Beckett as they both make the connection to what Alexis was doing earlier.

CASTLE

Do you use this to vet your dates?

The quip is ignored.

BECKETT

Do those profiles have any connection to Angela?

TORY

One is this guy.

Barry's profile pops onto the screen.

CASTLE

Definitely not him.

BECKETT

What's the other profile?

Tory clicks to reveal the page of WILLIAM JOHNSON, an awkward and geeky black male in his late 40s dressed in what could be generously called an attempt at being stylish. In his profile picture, he is holding the Talisman toward another man, MATTHEW GOLDBERG, mid-20s, tall, athletic, good looking in a less brutish and more sophisticated way, shoulder length brown hair in a pony tail, and stares intensely as if he's going to strangle him with it.

CASTLE

Hook. Line. Sinker.

On a CLOSE-UP of the picture of William with the talisman...

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, BAR

At the far end of the bar, WILLIAM JOHNSON is sitting by himself sipping a white wine. His body is turned away from everyone else, projecting standoffish vibes. Beckett and Castle approach from one direction when they notice Esposito and Ryan approaching from the opposite.

ESPOSITO

(disappointed)

Man, you guys beat us to it? How?

Beckett shows them William's profile picture on her phone.

BECKETT

Social media.

Castle sizes up Esposito's out-of-character reaction.

CASTLE

Why's he so disappointed?

RYAN
He's a superfan.

ESPOSITO
I'm not a superfan. I just thought
it would be nice to get to this one
first.

RYAN
Why this one?

ESPOSITO
This guy's a character, man.

Beckett is not amused with the exchange. Castle is
enthralled.

BECKETT
(firmly)
Castle. Suspect in a murder
investigation.

CASTLE
Oh, right.

They leave Esposito and Ryan behind, with Esposito still
trying to explain himself. As they approach, William
demonstrates no awareness of their presence.

BECKETT
(with command)
Mr. Johnson.

William turns slowly, holding his wine daintily as if at a
tasting session.

WILLIAM
Is this about Angela?

Castle is shocked at William's perceived prescience. Beckett
is not, as there could only be one logical reason for the
police to be talking to William today.

BECKETT
Yes.

WILLIAM
The Professional always knows.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. UPSCALE HOTEL, BAR - AFTERNOON

Castle and Beckett are sitting across from William at a small table in a secluded area of the bar. They're doing their best to pull information out of William, but he is more performing for them than talking to them as he elaborates unnecessarily and gesticulates emphatically.

WILLIAM

You'll excuse me if I'm not exactly trusting of law enforcement authority. My run-ins with them in the past haven't exactly been positive.

BECKETT

We understand.

She's trying to defuse the situation. Castle tries to go the understanding route.

CASTLE

Hey, William, I'm not a cop.

WILLIAM

Then why are you with a cop? How many non-cops do you know that hang around with cops when they're on duty?

Castle is momentarily thrown by William's accusatory delivery of the questions.

CASTLE

Because it's fun?

Beckett has to intercede here, both to salvage the interview and to bail out Castle.

BECKETT

Mr. Johnson. Your concerns are understandable. But we're only looking for the truth and our investigation led us to you.

(beat)

Now could you please explain this photograph to us?

Beckett places her phone in the middle of the table. It's displaying William's profile picture. William doesn't look at it but grunts in annoyance anyway.

WILLIAM

Of course the investigation led to me. Why wouldn't The Professional have something to do with what happened to Angela? The Professional has a hand in everything.

He finally looks at the picture, not betraying any sort of reaction when he does.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

That's a behind-the-scenes still of me and Matthew. It was released after my exit episode aired.

BECKETT

When was it taken?

WILLIAM

The week the episode aired we did a shoot because we both live in the area. I wasn't exactly excited about seeing Matthew again, but I'm obligated to assist in the promotion of the season.

Castle leans in, intrigued.

CASTLE

And why weren't you excited? I would think the camera would love The Professional.

Beckett is simultaneously amused and worried about the comment. On one hand, it's vintage Castle. On the other, it might cause William to stop talking.

WILLIAM

It does, but The Professional doesn't always love it back.

(beat)

What exactly does that picture have to do with Angela?

CASTLE

The Talisman you're pretending to attack Matthew with was found around Angela's neck, after she'd been strangled to death.

Acknowledgment of how serious the situation is flickers across William's face before he reins himself back in.

WILLIAM

Yes, Angela was voted out with a Talisman in her pocket. That has nothing to do with Matthew or me though. Matthew voted me out because he had two secret Talismans and an immunity one. The picture with Matthew was taken because its funny to think I'm still angry about what happened.

William is starting to build up a fire at this point.

CASTLE

But you are still angry.

WILLIAM

(yells)

You're damn right I'm angry!

(calms self)

I was screwed and everyone knows it. No voting block has ever used three Talismans in one vote. The whole show's a setup and no one wants to admit it. That's why they marginalized me as an angry black man in the edit. They don't want me running my mouth and blowing their cover. How original, right? I bet nobody thinks I can swim either.

William shoots out of his seat in frustration. Beckett stands to match his attempt at physical dominance.

BECKETT

Was Angela connected to this "conspiracy" in anyway?

WILLIAM

Probably. We're all supposed to be complicit. Honestly, you're better off asking Brett about this. He runs it all. The rest of us are need-to-know.

BECKETT

So you had nothing against Angela?

WILLIAM

Besides her self-sabotaging behavior being a detriment to my game? None.

BECKETT

Thank you for your time, Mr. Johnson.

William turns to go.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

One last question. Where were you between 2:02 and 2:12 this morning?

WILLIAM

In my room asleep. It takes a lot of energy to deal with these people.

He ducks his head down and tries to exit the bar before any fans catch up with him. Castle stands.

CASTLE

I'm guessing no one's going to be able to corroborate that alibi.

BECKETT

And if they could, I'm not really sure they'd want to.

On the two walking out...

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, BULLPEN - AFTERNOON

Beckett is standing in front of the murder board with her arms crossed and her back to the rest of the precinct. Castle sits on the edge of the desk. The board has pictures of Angela, Barry, William, Brett, the Talisman found on Angela, and William and Matthew with the Talisman.

BECKETT

So the key seems to be who has Angela's original Talisman.

CASTLE

Or, conspiracy.

BECKETT

Castle, Marooned has been running for over a decade, if it was all fake, don't you think it would've been exposed by now?

CASTLE

True, but after the original season a cast member did claim--

Ryan and Esposito walk into the frame, giving Beckett an excuse to non-verbally cut off Castle's rationalizing by turning her attention away from him.

RYAN

I just got off the phone with Brett's office. He wouldn't speak to me.

(MORE)

RYAN (CONT'D)

His secretary also said they won't release any footage to disprove or corroborate William's claims without a warrant.

Castle is extremely pleased with himself.

CASTLE

(hammy)
Oh really?

ESPOSITO

The show's not fixed, bro.

Beckett focuses on the board again.

CASTLE

Then why would they stonewall a murder investigation?

ESPOSITO

It's not good business. The drama comes from the fact that only the people with the cameras know what really happened.

Castle is pleasantly surprised at hearing Esposito say so much about a reality television show.

CASTLE

How do you know so much about Marooned again?

RYAN

He's a superfan.

The accusation annoys Esposito. To him, it's a personal affront. Castle is positively giddy.

CASTLE

(teasing)
You're a superfan?

ESPOSITO

(firm)
I'm *not* a superfan. I don't buy the bandanas. I don't stalk the players. I just watch it. That's it.

Beckett doesn't care about any of this extracurricular activity. She swivels around, intentionally interrupting the digression.

BECKETT

What if the question isn't who has
the Talisman but who had a
Talisman?

Her analysis pleases Castle even more than Esposito's
discomfort.

CASTLE

I love when you parse tenses.

Beckett ignores the comment.

BECKETT

William told us that Matthew used
this Talisman on the show.

Beckett points at the Talisman in the picture of William and
Matthew

BECKETT (CONT'D)

What's to say he didn't use it
again?

The room is silent for a moment as the question sinks in.
Esposito interjects.

ESPOSITO

There are rumors that Matthew and
Angela were dating.

Beckett and Ryan look at Esposito, wondering why he didn't
share this important information before. Castle pulls out his
smart phone and starts typing.

ESPOSITO (CONT'D)

What? I just found out.

RYAN

I told you. Superfan.

A ding for a text message goes off on Castle's phone. His
mood becomes dour as he looks at it.

CASTLE

And look at what Barry just sent me
when I asked about Matthew and
Angela.

Castle flips the phone around to show everyone a picture of
the hotel lobby. On the right is Matthew, his fist balled,
his arm pulled back, his face full of fury. Angela is
standing on the left hand side, her attention away from
Matthew. Castle hangs a lantern on it for the audience.

CASTLE (CONT'D)
I bet nobody saw that punch coming.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOURINT. CASTLE'S LOFT, OFFICE - NIGHT

Castle is sitting in his bathrobe at his desk, completely transfixed by whatever is on his computer screen. He doesn't even notice Beckett standing in the doorway wearing the same button down shirt from earlier. She gets annoyed when he doesn't look up.

BECKETT

Are you coming to bed?

Castle ignores her question, instead focusing on telling her what he is doing.

CASTLE

Have you looked at the way the
Marooned cast members and superfans
interact on Twitter? It's a
treasure trove of intrigue.

Beckett stands next to him and looks at the computer.

BECKETT

Maybe so, but in the real world, we
have hard evidence.

Castle's eyes light up. He swivels his chair away from the
computer so he's looking at her.

CASTLE

Like what, a photograph and gossip?
Isn't that the definition of social
media?

BECKETT

Now you sound like Alexis.

ALEXIS (O.S.)

I knew he'd see it my way
eventually.

Castle and Beckett look up to see Alexis in the doorway
holding her phone. Beckett quickly sits in Castle's lap to
conceal her legs.

CASTLE

You're both scaring me.

ALEXIS

Yeah? Watch this.

She types on her phone. A second later, Castle's computer
dings.

CASTLE

So you mentioned me on Twitter
saying that I'm more active on here
now? Was the winky face really
necessary?

Beckett smiles. Castle's computer dings five more times in
rapid succession. His eyes widen. He hurriedly slams his
laptop closed.

BECKETT

What happened?

CASTLE

Five people I'd never heard of mentioned me because she did.

BECKETT

They're probably just fans.

CASTLE

True, but at least when they're all yelling at me at a book signing, I can see their faces.

Alexis seizes the opportunity she created to drive home her point about checking out who people are on social media.

ALEXIS

Except now you know that you probably don't ever want them at a book signing.

Alexis and Beckett let the comment sink in. Terror washes across Castle's face.

BECKETT

Are you ready for bed now?

CASTLE

Yes, yes I am.

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, TECH - DAY

Castle and Beckett are listening to another presentation from Tory, this time about the picture of Matthew and Angela.

TORY

By pulling the meta-data, we can see that this picture was taken much earlier in the evening, 8:15.

BECKETT

Which gives Matthew plenty of time between then and the murder to steam over what happened and confront her again.

(beat)

What about hotel security camera footage? Were you able to get any of that?

Tory closes the picture window and opens another.

TORY

Yes, we have three separate videos from around the time of the murder.

She clicks on one to make it start playing. Matthew strolls in through the front door of the hotel.

TORY (CONT'D)

This one shows him entering the hotel at 12:23 AM.

She clicks on another to make it start playing. Matthew is sitting at the bar drinking alone, except for a few fans trying to talk to him every so often.

TORY (CONT'D)

This one shows him alone.

CASTLE

And pretty upset judging by how he treats his fan.

TORY

And this.

Tory fast forwards the video. At 1:55 am Matthew stands and walks away from the bar. Tory closes that video and opens one more.

TORY (CONT'D)

Last one.

In it, Matthew stumbles out the front door. Tory pauses the video showing the time stamp to be 2:18 AM.

BECKETT

So the time between him getting up in the bar video and leaving in the lobby video is exactly the window of our murder.

TORY

Yes.

Beckett and Castle look at each other as almost if to ask "Too easy?" Ryan pops his head in and sees their expressions.

RYAN

Something I should know about?

BECKETT

Don't worry about it. What's up?

RYAN
Guess who's here.

The four look to see Esposito, who is trying his damndest to remain stoic, escorting Wyatt to the interview lounge.

BECKETT
First Brett, now him. Why do these people just keep showing up? Guilty consciences?

CASTLE
Do I have to say it again?

BECKETT AND RYAN
No.

Castle turns to Tory for affirmation.

CASTLE
Conspiracy?

On Tory shaking her head no...

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, INTERVIEW LOUNGE

Wyatt refuses to sit. Instead he stands and paces around as he speaks. He's pretty upset or wants Beckett and Castle to believe he is.

BECKETT
What can we do for you, Mr. Reed?

WYATT
I want to report a robbery.

Beckett isn't pleased with his comment, but lets it play out in hopes that it leads somewhere relevant.

BECKETT
What was stolen?

WYATT
Three of my hats and \$200.

BECKETT
Can you give us a description of the hats?

Wyatt points to the fedora on his head.

WYATT
They look like this one.

CASTLE
(amused)
You have four of the same hat?

WYATT
I *had* four. Now I only have one.

BECKETT
Math lesson aside, where were these items taken from?

WYATT
My room. Last night.

Beckett takes a deep breath.

BECKETT
Mr. Reed, you realize we're in the middle of a murder investigation, correct?

WYATT
(snapping)
Yes.

BECKETT
Do you think your robbery and Angela's death are related?

WYATT
I have no idea. I'm not a cop

Castle can tell that Beckett is becoming annoyed, so he takes over the conversation.

CASTLE
Wyatt, if I can call you Wyatt, why are you here?

WYATT
I'm here cause someone stole my stuff.

Castle leans in, as if trying to share a secret.

CASTLE
No, why are you *really* here?

Wyatt is growing even more angry than he was when he arrived

WYATT

(to Beckett)

Who is this guy? He can't really be a cop.

(to Castle)

I heard from a girl on Twitter that you guys were looking for any information you could get.

Wyatt takes out his phone and shows them a tweet from Alexis that says "If you know anything about what happened the night Angela was killed, please let the police know. #Marooned." Castle leans back in his seat.

CASTLE

Alexis.

Knowing Castle has been thrown off his game, Beckett takes back control of the conversation.

BECKETT

What floor are you staying on, Mr. Reed?

WYATT

The fourth.

BECKETT

That's right down the hall from Angela's.

WYATT

The producers put most of their guests on the same floor.

BECKETT

Did you see or hear anything around 2 AM?

WYATT

I was in the bar until like 3:30.

(beat)

Lots of people saw me.

(beat)

So are you guys going to help me or what?

Beckett stands up and offers a handshake. Castle follows her lead.

BECKETT

We'll keep you updated on anything we find.

Wyatt accepts Beckett's handshake and ignores Castle's then exits.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Did that seem a little strange to you, reporting a robbery in the middle of a murder investigation?

CASTLE

Classic misdirection. We must be getting close or else production wouldn't have sent him here.

BECKETT

Really Castle, he's an agent for the production who was sent here to distract us? You're really reaching on this one.

Beckett starts walking away.

CASTLE

You realize that these people are all experts at deception right?

BECKETT

(sarcastic)

I just hope Ryan and Esposito can see past Matthew's manipulation.

CUT TO:

INT. HIPSTER BAR - DAY

Ryan and Esposito step into the poorly lit, run down establishment. There are few customers present at this time of day. Matthew is behind the bar organizing glasses.

ESPOSITO

Ah, the life of a reality TV personality, star by night, bartender by day.

RYAN

Why do you know so much about this stuff?

ESPOSITO

(slightly defensive)

Don't worry about it.

The pair approach the bar. Matthew looks up.

RYAN

Matthew Goldberg? I'm Detective Ryan. This is Detective Esposito. We'd like to ask you a few questions.

Ryan shows his badge. Esposito nods.

MATTHEW

Is this about Angela? I figured you'd guys would want to talk sooner or later. Let's sit over there.

CUT TO:

INT. HIPSTER BAR, BOOTH - DAY

Ryan and Esposito are sitting opposite Matthew in a dimly lit booth. Ryan slides a copy of the picture of Matthew about to punch Angela across the table.

RYAN

Can you explain this?

Matthew sighs. His face flickers with sadness.

MATTHEW

I know it doesn't look good. She found out I cheated on her so we got into a big argument. I got frustrated and, yeah, I hit her. It wasn't very smart. I let my anger take over. She said wasn't going to press charges, so I figured it wasn't a big deal.

ESPOSITO

It's assault. That's a big deal, especially when she turns up dead the next morning.

MATTHEW

I know. I understand. But what reason would I have for killing her?

RYAN

You just said you let your anger take over. Who's to say you didn't do it again?

MATTHEW

Me. I was over it.

ESPOSITO

Unfortunately that won't hold up in court, especially when we have video footage of you entering the hotel, leaving the bar, and leaving the hotel that all fit perfectly with the time frame of the murder.

MATTHEW

Are you talking about when I went to the bathroom to throw up right before I went home for the night?

Esposito is taken aback by this statement. He presses Matthew.

ESPOSITO

You weren't staying in the hotel with everyone else?

MATTHEW

I live right down the street. Why would I do that?

ESPOSITO

Do you remember what time it was when you left?

MATTHEW

No. I don't remember much of anything. I went back there wanting to apologize to Angela, but she wasn't responding to my texts, so I got drunk, threw up, passed out, woke up, and came into work.

At this point, it seems like Esposito is trying to help Matthew out with his line of questioning.

ESPOSITO

Is there anyone, *anyone*, who can back up any part of your story?

Matthew thinks for a long second. If he really can remember, he's at least making a show of his claim that he can't.

MATTHEW

Wyatt was in the bathroom with me, simultaneously making sure I didn't die and mocking me for being a wuss.

Satisfied, Esposito checks out of the conversation. Ryan, however, is not as easily impressed.

RYAN

One last thing to explain.

Ryan slides a copy of the picture of William and Matthew across the table. Matthew suddenly becomes a lot more serious upon seeing it.

MATTHEW

What does that have to do with anything?

RYAN

You see the Talisman that William is holding? It was used to strangle Angela.

Matthew is worried now. He feels backed into a corner.

MATTHEW

That picture was just us goofing around.

ESPOSITO

Cut the crap. The Talisman was also used by you on the show.

MATTHEW

So?

ESPOSITO

So your Talisman is the murder weapon and we're supposed to believe you didn't use it to get rid of somebody else?

MATTHEW

I don't know. I haven't seen it since yesterday afternoon when I was showing it to some of the fans. I didn't even know I didn't have it anymore.

(beat)

I shouldn't have even had it to begin with. They usually auction the props off for charity. Brett just gave it to me as a gift because he wanted to thank me for being such a big part of the show.

Matthew seems like he's on the verge of tears. Ryan and Esposito let this latest revelation sink in.

RYAN

Alright, we're going to check on your alibi. Don't go anywhere. You'll be hearing from us again soon.

Ryan and Esposito stand up and move toward the exit.

ESPOSITO

Brett gave him the Talisman that ended up as the murder weapon?

RYAN

Don't tell me you agree with Castle.

ESPOSITO

Nah, it's not a conspiracy, but it is suspicious.

INT. PRECINCT, BULLPEN - DAY

The three detectives and Castle stand in front of the murder board looking equally frustrated.

BECKETT

So Matthew's alibi checks out. Wyatt says he was with him in the bathroom.

RYAN

Does that really clear him in light of all the other evidence?

CASTLE

Maybe it's not a good alibi for your average person, but a reality television star? That's what they do, cause drama and get drunk.

There's a pregnant pause as everyone processes what Castle said. CAPTAIN VICTORIA GATES enters and takes over the scene.

GATES

Detective Esposito, Mr. Castle, I'd like to see you in my office. Now.

Silently, solemnly, as they know that tone of her voice, Castle and Esposito follow Gate's into her office. Beckett and Ryan are left behind awkwardly.

BECKETT

Don't you dare say "conspiracy."

Ryan shrugs and walks away.

INT. PRECINCT, GATES' OFFICE - DAY

Castle and Esposito sit uncomfortably waiting for Gates to unleash her wrath on them.

GATES

Someone better start explaining
right now.

Castle and Esposito stare back blankly. They don't know exactly what Gates is talking about.

GATES (CONT'D)

I just got off the phone with Brett
Host. He told me that he needed to
speak to us, but he would only talk
to the two of you. Strangely, I
understand why he wants you, Mr.
Castle. Detective Esposito, on the
other hand, I'm at a loss for.

ESPOSITO

Well, sir, you see...

Esposito shifts nervously in his seat.

ESPOSITO (CONT'D)

The thing is...

GATES

Out with it, Detective.

Castle is beyond thrilled with this turn of events. He rarely sees Esposito squirm.

CASTLE

Yes, Detective, out with it.

ESPOSITO

About a decade ago when I was a
cadet, I auditioned to be on
Marooned. I made it all the way to
the final interview stage. I was
one of the last people cut.

CASTLE

So you aren't a superfan.

Esposito toughens up again.

ESPOSITO

Told you.

GATES

And Brett Host still remembers you after all these years?

ESPOSITO

Looks like it.

GATES

Listen you two, I don't care about revealing any show secrets to the world. I just want to know who killed Angela Benko and why. Go meet with Mr. Host and get to the bottom of this.

ESPOSITO AND CASTLE

Yes, sir.

Esposito and Castle stand and turn to the door.

GATES

And Detective Esposito.

ESPOSITO

Yes, sir?

GATES

They would've been lucky to have you. Now let's nail whoever took your spot and Angela's life.

Esposito smiles.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. BRETT HOST'S OFFICE - DAY

Dressed similarly to his appearance earlier, Brett still attempts to assert his dominance over the conversation with body language. Castle and Esposito do not sit. Esposito stands with his arms crossed defensively while Castle explores the numerous knickknacks and souvenirs that line the wall of the office.

BRETT

Esposito, it's been far too long.
How are you?

ESPOSITO

I'm alright. Better than you must
be doing.

BRETT

That is true.

Castle reaches for an urn that rests by itself on a shelf.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Please don't touch that, Castle.
It's the voting urn from our first
season.

Castle spins around.

CASTLE

Oh, sorry.

Brett sits on the edge of his desk.

BRETT

Should we discuss business now?

Castle and Esposito still refuse to sit.

CASTLE

You invited us here, so you go
first.

BRETT

Fair enough. And thank you for
accepting my invitation. From my
perspective, as I'm sure you can
understand, we have a bit of a
problem. You're circling around
some of our biggest names on the
eve of our season finale.

ESPOSITO

We do understand. But from our
perspective, there was a murder and
it needs to be investigated.

CASTLE

You have to admit, it's mighty
convenient that you handed Matthew
the eventual murder weapon at a
publicity photo shoot.

Brett is genuinely confused by Castle's comment.

BRETT

What photo shoot?

Esposito shows him a copy of William pretending to strangle
Matthew with the Talisman.

ESPOSITO

The one that William Johnson is
using this picture from on social
media.

Brett grabs the photo and examines it closely.

BRETT

There's no way this is an official promotional photo. I wasn't told about any shoot like this and I wouldn't have been happy with these pictures. Look at how poorly lit they are.

CASTLE

So then who took the pictures?

BRETT

I have no idea. Whoever it was didn't know much about proper lighting though.

Brett hands the photo back to Esposito.

ESPOSITO

Do you know anything about what happened between Angela and Matthew the night that she died?

BRETT

I know about the assault, and that's what I was hoping to speak to you two about. We try to keep these kinds of things internal. They don't help our story very much. I think you can understand that, Castle.

CASTLE

I do.

BRETT

And Esposito, I hope you still have enough respect for the show to not want to publicly expose its raw underbelly for no good reason.

ESPOSITO

Is this your way of telling us it's rigged and asking us to keep it quiet?

BRETT

No. I didn't mean to give you that impression. I just don't want our good named to be ruined.

(beat)

(MORE)

BRETT (CONT'D)

Look, I gave Matthew that Talisman because I felt bad that he didn't win despite everything he's done for us. I figured he'd just sell it online for thousands. It was the least he deserved.

Castle steps forward.

CASTLE

Maybe, but Angela got a lot more than she deserved with it.

BRETT

That's true. I am sorry about what happened. Everyone in our community is.

Esposito extends his hand.

ESPOSITO

We know. Thank you for your time. We'll keep you updated.

Brett shakes his hand.

BRETT

Thank you. And if you ever want another shot, there's always a spot for you in final interviews.

ESPOSITO

After what I've seen recently, I think I'll pass.

On Brett's worried reaction...

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, BULLPEN

Beckett is briefing Castle, Esposito, and Ryan after the Brett and Wyatt interviews.

BECKETT

After speaking with Wyatt, we asked the hotel if they could provide us with a list of all the rooms Marooned cast members are staying in. What do you notice here?

Beckett points to a list and floor map that are posted on the murder board.

CASTLE

William has the room right next door to Angela's.

BECKETT

Exactly.

CASTLE

Which makes it unlikely he slept through whatever happened in her room.

BECKETT

Combine that with what he told us about his photo and that's two lies.

Ryan is skeptical about the implications they're making.

RYAN

Is that really enough to charge him with murder?

BECKETT

No, but it's enough to make him think we will. Especially when we show him these.

Beckett pulls out an evidence bag with Wyatt's three missing fedoras in them.

RYAN

Where'd you get those?

BECKETT

Barry dropped them off. He says he bought them from William.

Castle is shocked and proud all at the same time.

CASTLE

Why Detective Beckett, how clever of you.

BECKETT

Hey, if these people want to play, let's play. Ryan, Javi, bring him in. But try and keep his theatrics to a minimum.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY

Esposito and Ryan enter to see a small smattering of cast members and fans. William is off to the side sitting by himself like a small neglected puppy.

ESPOSITO
(to Ryan)
Hang back for a minute.

Ryan nods. Esposito approaches William and sits down next to him casually.

ESPOSITO (CONT'D)
How's The Professional doing today?

William looks over at Esposito, who subtly flashes his badge. His eyes light up. He's about to speak but Esposito cuts him off by leaning in.

ESPOSITO (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Let's not make a scene, for all our sakes.

William's energy diffuses.

WILLIAM
(dejected)
Am I under arrest?

Esposito stonewalls the question by not answering it. William takes a deep breath and stands.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
After you, sir.

Esposito stands and exits the hotel. He nods to Ryan on his way by, who follows William out the door.

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

INT. PRECINCT, INTERROGATION ROOM

Beckett is leaning over the table, glowering out William who is sunk back into his chair. Castle eagerly observes. For him, this interaction is like watching television in real life.

BECKETT

You lied to us, Mr. Johnson.

She tosses the picture of him and Matthew down in front of William.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

You told us that picture was an official Marooned publicity shot. Did you really think we wouldn't figure out that it isn't?

William doesn't respond, he seems confused, a stark contrast from his normally defiant gimmick.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

Mr. Johnson? Are you alright?

Beckett is a bit concerned she may have pressed him too hard. Castle touches her on her wrist and she backs away.

CASTLE

William, you understand how serious this is, right?

WILLIAM

(quietly)
I don't know what happened.

CASTLE

What do you mean?

WILLIAM

I ordered room service. The next thing I remember after eating it is waking up in the morning and some of my stuff was gone.

CASTLE

Like what?

WILLIAM

Just some souvenirs from the show like my bandana and clothes.

Something dawns on Beckett.

BECKETT

And that's why you told us you were asleep.

WILLIAM

Yes, look, I'm not an idiot. I know someone probably drugged me to rob me, but I couldn't report it. I have a persona to maintain. Marooned is a show. The profile picture with Matthew is part of that show. I pretend I'm upset about what happened. It keeps the fans interested.

Beckett pulls out the evidence bag with the three fedoras.

BECKETT

(understanding)

And you didn't sell these to Barry?

WILLIAM

Whose are those, Wyatt's? Where would I have even gotten them?

Beckett leans forward again. This time she is less threatening and more understanding.

BECKETT

Mr. Johnson, this is very important. Who took that picture of you and Matthew?

Suddenly William understands what Beckett already did. He was setup.

WILLIAM

Wyatt.

What actually happened dawns on Castle.

CASTLE

(excited)

Conspiracy?

Beckett nods.

BECKETT

Are you willing to play your part one more time?

On a fire lighting in William's eyes...

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY

Everyone who has played a part in the episode so far minus Brett is present--Large Charles, Barry, William, Wyatt, Matthew, and Emily. William is loudly holding court for a bunch of fans in the middle of the room. Beckett, Castle, Esposito, and Ryan walk in through the front door like some sort of mod squad. No one notices them.

BECKETT

Alright, you guys know the plan.

Esposito and Ryan nod and head over to the corner where Large Charles and Barry are. Beckett and Castle approach William's grandstanding.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

(raised voice)

Mr. Johnson, NYPD, we'd like to speak with you about the murder of Angela Benko.

She holds her badge high in the air, so more people than William can see. The room's attention is now on them.

WILLIAM

(loudly)

The Professional had nothing to do with it. But I bet you cops don't care. You probably just have it in for another black man.

Castle does his best to conceal a smile, as to not give away the ruse. William is playing his part perfectly.

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY, CORNER - DAY

Esposito and Ryan walk up to Large Charles who is sitting on his computer. Barry is sitting next to them.

ESPOSITO

What's up, Charles?

Charles is more concerned about the ruckus on the other side of the room. Barry is more concerned with Esposito and Ryan.

LARGE CHARLES

What's going on over there?

ESPOSITO

Don't worry about that. We were hoping to get some more information on your stolen binder.

Charles snaps back to attention.

LARGE CHARLES
Oh, sure, man.

ESPOSITO
Has any of it turned up anywhere
here, or maybe eBay?

As Esposito questions Charles, Ryan eyes Barry without tipping him off that he is doing so.

LARGE CHARLES
Nope.

ESPOSITO
Have you heard about anything else
being stolen or anything missing
turning up?

Before Charles can answer, Barry tries to slink away. Ryan takes a step to the right to stop him.

RYAN
Going somewhere, Barry?

Intimidated, Barry sits back down.

BARRY
(flumoxed)
It was all Wyatt's idea! I was
never in Angela's room! Wyatt gave
me her bandana and Charles' binder
if I promised I would say I was!

CUT TO:

INT. UPSCALE HOTEL, LOBBY - DAY

The circus led by William has been whipped into a frenzy. It's especially caught the attention of Wyatt, Matthew, and Emily who are watching with bated breath.

WILLIAM
(yelling)
Always have to go after the black
man. What about Matthew?

Matthew is dealing with this just fine. Wyatt and Emily, on the other hand, are not. Wyatt's anger is rising while Emily picks up her bag, which looks stuffed, uncomfortably.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Oh you won't touch the Golden Boy,
right? You know why? Because he's
white!

Wyatt's about to pop with anger. Emily clutches her bag closer. Castle notices her and tips off Beckett non-verbally.

BECKETT

Mr. Johnson, I assure you, this has
nothing to do with race.

Esposito and Ryan walk over. Ryan nods at Beckett, confirming that they got Barry's confession. That is all Beckett needed.

BECKETT (CONT'D)

The evidence is just pointing to
you. Unless you're saying...

She emphasizes the last phrase, as it's a cue. William delivers his key line.

WILLIAM

This is a set up.

Wyatt absolutely loses it.

WYATT

(screaming)

Shut your mouth! No one respects
you! You're a joke!

Wyatt takes a step forward. Esposito steps in front of him.

ESPOSITO

Let's cool down for a second, bro.

Wyatt backs away. Matthew attempts to cool him down as Emily looks around nervously.

BECKETT

(loudly, to the crowd)

Nothing to see here, folks. Let's
move on to where we were going.

CASTLE

Nothing to see? This is better than
Marooned's been in years.

As Castle's smile beams, Emily tries to sneak by him with the dispersing crowd, still holding her bag as if her life depended on it. Castle steps in front of her, impeding her exit and noticing the twine necklace that's a part of the other Talisman hanging out of her bag.

CASTLE (CONT'D)
Hi. What's that?

He points to the twine. Emily panics.

EMILY
I didn't want to! I was only doing
what Wyatt said!

CUT TO:

INT. PRECINCT, INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Emily's makeup is a mess and her eyes are puffy. Castle regards her sympathetically. Beckett is much colder.

EMILY
(mumbling)
It was an accident.

BECKETT
Ms. Applewhite, you strangled her
with the Talisman you were stealing
from her and then replaced it with
one you already had.

EMILY
(protests)
No!
(beat)
I mean, I didn't put the other
Talisman on her. Wyatt did. He'd
already stolen it from Matthew.

BECKETT
How do you know?

Emily looks down at the table sheepishly.

EMILY
I, uh, distracted Matthew so Wyatt
could take it. It was like how we
took Charles' binder, just
more...you know...

Castle has an epiphany.

CASTLE
So you're who Matthew cheated on
Angela win.

BECKETT

And that's how you tried to distract Angela, by pretending to apologize for what happened.

Emily nods slowly. She is on the verge of tears again.

EMILY

Mhmm, except she saw Wyatt sneaking into the room and flipped. I panicked and jumped on her. We were rolling around when Wyatt threw me her Talisman and told me to strangle her. I don't know why I did. It all happened so fast. Wyatt told me he would take care of everything after.

BECKETT

And he always took care of everything, including the fencing?

EMILY

(genuinely confused)
The what?

CASTLE

The selling of the stuff you stole. Then he gave you part of the money he made.

EMILY

(crestfallen)
Oh...yeah.

Beckett starts to gather the paperwork spread out before her. It's clear that Emily feels very bad about what she did.

EMILY (CONT'D)

(child-like)
Detective Beckett, what's going to happen to me? Am I going to jail?

BECKETT

Yes, probably for a very long time.

Emily bursts into tears as Beckett and Castle exit the room.

INT. PRECINCT, OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

The door to the interrogation room shuts. Esposito and Ryan are standing on either side of a particularly angry Wyatt. They were watching Emily's entire interview.

BECKETT
 (to Wyatt)
 Anything you want to add?

Wyatt shakes his head.

WYATT
 I'm good.

ESPOSITO
 Not good enough.

Ryan grabs Wyatt's arm to try and lead him out of the room, but Wyatt yanks it away, so Esposito pushes him in the back to make him move. After they leave, Castle lets out a deep breath.

CASTLE
 I think my heart just broke.

BECKETT
 They can't all be cold-blooded
 killers, Castle.

CASTLE
 I know, but she's so young, so
 beautiful, so...

Castle is at a loss for a third descriptor. He finally figures it out.

CASTLE (CONT'D)
 ...eager to get ahead.

BECKETT
 That's what happens when you aren't
 careful about who you associate
 with. You make a name for yourself
 for all the wrong reasons.

Castle realizes what Beckett is driving at. On him...

CUT TO:

INT. CASTLE'S LOFT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Castle opens the loft door to see Alexis lounging on the couch reading. He is a bit taken aback, as he didn't expect to see her.

CASTLE
 I thought you had that party
 tonight.

ALEXIS
I decided not to go.

Castle is pleasantly surprised.

CASTLE
Why's that?

ALEXIS
It didn't seem like my kind of thing.

CASTLE
Did your research tell you that?

ALEXIS
Yes, I didn't know most of the people and their profiles bothered me.

There is a pregnant pause as Alexis waits for her father to reply. He only goes to hang his coat up.

ALEXIS (CONT'D)
Now, I know what you're going to say.

CASTLE
(faux-innocently)
What? I wasn't going to say anything.

Alexis is confused at Castle's change of mind.

ALEXIS
You weren't? You're not going to tell me how I should have given those people a chance? To not judge a person by his profile?

Castle is impressed by the turn of phrase.

CASTLE
Ooo, I like that. But no, I'm not going to tell you what should and shouldn't make you comfortable. I'm just glad you're concerned about who you're associating with. A little bit of paranoia can sometimes be a good thing.

Castle walks over to her.

ALEXIS

Dad, of course I'm going to be careful. If your novels have taught me anything, it's that anybody could be a killer.

Castle is beyond satisfied that Alexis has admitted to reading his novels. He leans forward and kisses her on the forehead.

CASTLE

Goodnight, sweetheart.

ALEXIS

Goodnight, dad.

Castle walks to his bedroom.

END OF SHOW