33 INT. CASTLE'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM - DAY 33

TIGHT ON: VINCENT "THE SCAR" CARDANO, 50, formidable, prominent scar on his forehead, laughing hysterically. Castle and Beckett are also laughing.

START

CASTLE
Vinnie, stop, you're killing me!

An Italian feast is on the table -- linguine, meatballs, sauce, chicken parm, salad, a couple open bottles of wine. Cardano is finishing a funny story:

CARDANO
...And that's when my cousin Sal says, if I didn't like the guy's writing so much, I'd plug him full of holes and bury him in the new Paramus mall's foundation!

They all crack up, laughing.

CASTLE
Guess I'm lucky Sal has great taste in books.

CARDANO
(deadpan)
You actually are.

Castle isn't sure whether to laugh or not. Then:

CARDANO (CONT'D)
I'm glad we were finally able to get together, Rickie. Salud.

CASTLE
Hear, hear!

They toast with their wine glasses.

CARDANO
(then to Beckett)
And, sweetie, this meat sauce is to die for.

Castle is also enjoying the meat sauce.

CASTLE
(genuinely impressed)
Wow, it is. I didn't know you could cook.

(CONTINUED)

CASTLE

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33 CONTINUED: 33

BECKETT
You should pay more attention.

CARDANO
See, that's the difference between Castle and me. You've had my complete attention since I got here, sweetheart.

CASTLE
Hey, watch it, Vinnie. I don't want to have to do to you what someone did to your neighbor.

Castle generously tops off Cardano's wine glass.

CARDANO
You heard about that?

CASTLE
Who hasn't? Not every day someone's killed around here.

CARDANO
I have to admit, I'm not gonna shed any tears for the guy.

BECKETT
Oh, so you knew him?

CARDANO
Yeah. He was a real bastard. Builds a helicopter pad in his yard, not fifty feet from my house.

BECKETT
What a jerk.

CARDANO
Every Tuesday around midnight, buzzes right past my bedroom.

CASTLE
The balls on this guy.

CARDANO
Yeah, so I complain, but the town council ends up approving it anyway. I happen to know for a fact he greased palms. Wanted to kill him.

33 CONTINUED: (2) 33

CASTLE
I bet. So where were you when you found out about him?

CARDANO
What does it matter?

CASTLE
It's just, guy you thought about killing suddenly ends up killed. How often does that happen?

CARDANO
I dunno. What are you saying, Castle?
(stands)
You think I killed the guy?

CASTLE
Hey, Vinnie, c'mon, siddown, we're just talking. Have some more wine.

CARDANO
I think we're done here.

Cardano starts to leave, turns back.

CARDANO (CONT'D)
And, frankly, Castle, I'm offended you think I did such a bush league hit. If I'd'a whacked him, no one ever woulda found the body.
(threatening)
Don't make me wanna prove it.

And Cardano storms out...

STOP

34 INT. PRECINCT, BULLPEN - NIGHT 34

Ryan, brandishing papers, strides over to Esposito.

RYAN
So I took a closer look at Randall Franklin's real estate holdings. Guy was buying up distressed properties in dying neighborhoods to turn into condos.

Ryan lays out four sheets of paper on Esposito's desk.

ESPOSITO
Sounds like smart investments.

(CONTINUED)

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