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Abducted: The Carlina White Story

By Elizabeth Hunter

My name is Joy White.

I'm here to see Ann Pettway.

Does she know you're coming?

No.

Park over there, I'll
put you through security.

I was on my way to school
and my water broke.

We almost didn't make it.

What's your name, honey?

Joy. Joy White.

- And, Joy, how old are you?

- She's 16.

And this is your
first pregnancy?

Yes!

- Name?

- Ann Pettway.

You want to tell me
what happened, Ann?

I started having pains,
so I came here.

- Is this your first pregnancy?

- No!

Is there anybody
you want us to call?

- No. No! No!

- A family member?

Scalpel.

Push!

- Push, now... come on!

- You're almost there!

Scissors...

Forceps...

and suction, please.

Big push!

- I told you it was a girl.

- But I was sure!

Your mom owes me
a chocolate cake now.

- I always wanted a baby girl.

- Yeah?

Don't nobody love a guy
like his baby girl.

Isn't she beautiful?
She looks just like you.
She's got your eyes.
What are we gonna call her?
I am not naming
her after your mom.
I guess Carl Jr
out of the question.
Who says?
Carlina Renae White.
Daddy's little girl.
We love you.
No! I did everything right.
Everything right!
I didn't drink... I didn't smoke!
- Why did this happen again?
- The blood work shows
some abnormalities
with your hormone levels.
What?! I don't even
know what you sayin'!
It is unlikely that you could
sustain a full-term pregnancy.
Mm. Mm-mm. Mm-mm. I
don't even believe you.
- Stop lying! Stop lying!
- Nurse!
Stop lying...
what you do with my baby?!
Nurse!
You need to calm down.
What'd you do with my baby...
I'll find her myself!
I'll find her myself!
Get some Ativan!
- I want to know where it is!
- Hold her down!
What did you do with my baby?!
This is my grandbaby,
Carlina Renae White.
Oh, precious.
Why she's named after her father
instead of me, I don't know,
but the Lord works

in mysterious ways.
Can we bow our heads?
Heavenly Father,
we'd like to thank you
for bringing this healthy
little girl into our family.
May she always know
how it feels to be loved.

- Amen.

- Amen.

- Amen.

- Amen!

What's that Carlina...

I think she said, "Let's eat!"

Let's eat.

She's gorgeous.

Welcome home, sweetie pie.

How is she?

She hasn't eaten
in days... she just lays there.

We need the bed.

Should we try the psych ward?

Nah, there's no
beds there, either.

Miss Pettway...

Your vitals look good.

We can have you
out of here this afternoon.

How's that sound?

Have you thought
of other alternatives?

You can foster a child,
you can adopt a baby...

My wife and I adopted
just last year.

Nobody's gonna give
me no baby.

All night

All day

Angels watching
over me, my Lord #

All night

All day

Angels watching over me #

Are you ready?
To try on shoes?
No, you know... for the baby.
Because you look like
you're about ready to drop.
You're carrying it high...
like it's a girl.
Is this your first?
I had one last year.
You won't sleep,
but you'll love it.
You'll see.
Now how do those feel?
Ma'am?
I think they're kinda tight...
can I get a size up?
I'll go check.
Good morning, Doctor.
Her history?
The patient's had
three miscarriages,
and according to
her blood work,
it appears her body is
too weak to have a child.
But, like I told her,
there's a cure for everything
if you're willing to take
matters in your own hands.
Yes, Doctor?
I knew you'd have a solution.
I just took it
again... it's 104!
I'm leaving right now.
No, Carl... tell your
boss you're leaving now.
Meet me at the hospital?
Okay, bye.
All night, all day #
Angels watching over me,
my Lord #
All night, all day #
Angels watching over me,
my Lord #

Uh, the children's ward...
where is it?
- # All night, all day #
- Thanks.
Angels watching over me # #
I never should have
took her to the park.
- It was too soon.
- It's not your fault.
No, no... maybe I'm not ready
to take care of a child.
I'm just...
I'm just too tired.
You are a great mother.
It's gonna be fine, right?
Our baby is gonna be fine.
Oh, girl, yeah!
I see this all the time.
Babies bounce back
faster than us.
See?
What's your baby's name?
Carlina.
- Your name Carl, right?
- Yeah.
That's cute... I like that.
Okay, we're giving
her antibiotics now,
and the fever should
break by morning.
Did you want to stay
the night with her?
I may have to get back
to work.
- I'll make a call.
- Okay.
Okay.
You're gonna be okay.
...on hold, line two... on hold,
line two.
Hey.
- Hey.
- Hey.
- What's your name?

- It's Joy.
I just want to tell
you I overheard you earlier,
- and you're a good mother, Joy.
- You think so?
- Yeah, girl, I can see it.
- Thank you, Miss...
- You know what else I can see?
- What's that?
- You tired!
- I am.
- The baby keeps me up.
- Oh, she keep you up, right?
The baby keeps me up.
Why don't you go home
and rest for a few hours?
I should stay here.
Girl, don't be
silly... for what?
All you're gonna be doin' is
sittin' round here waitin'.
We got your number... if anything
happen, we'll call you.
I don't want
to leave her here alone.
Joy, the baby don't
cry for you.
You cry for the baby.
I tell you what...
I tell you what.
I'll watch her myself.
Okay.
Maybe a quick shower, just...
I'll just go home
and pick up a few things.
- I got you, I got it...
- I tell you, I got it.
I gotta get back to work.
Can you run me home
on your way back?
Let's go.
I'll be back soon.
Please look out for my baby.
I got you... I got you.

- Go on... go.
- Okay.
...to radiology, please.
...to radiology.
Watchin' over me #
All day #
All night #
Angels watchin' over me #
Oh!
Oh no!
All day, all night #
Ange...
I haven't seen you
around before.
- I just started.
- That explains it.
The only way to survive
the late shift
is by making sure you get
plenty of sleep on your day off.
I'll keep that in mind,
thank you.
Have a nice night.
Just keep the meter
running... I'll be right back.
It's okay!
It's okay!
It's okay.
I got you...
I got you now.
I got you.
Hello?
Yes, this is
Carlina White's mother.
No, I left her at the hospital.
Wh-What's wrong?
Missing?!
What do you mean she's missing?
What the hell happened?!
Detective Dalton, N.Y.P.D.

Between 2:

Medical personnel, or someone
posing as medical personnel,

removed your daughter
from the ward.
Will she hurt my baby?
I can't answer
that, Miss White.
Security cameras... there's
gotta be something on those.
Unfortunately,
cameras aren't working today.
Fingerprints!
We can only match them
if the perpetrator
has committed a crime
in New York.
We believe the kidnapper
worked at the hospital
or pretended to work
at the hospital,
- so we're scouring files.
- How long is that gonna take?
- I can't answer that,
- Miss White.
Well, maybe you
can answer this.
How are you gonna
find my baby?
Why don't you tell
us what you know.
Did you speak
to anyone privately?
- No.
- Yes, that nurse, remember?
- Yeah, she told me,
"The baby don't cry for you.
"You cry for the baby. "
That lady was trying
to get me to leave!
- Did you get her name?
- She wasn't wearing a tag.
- Can you describe her?
- She was black...
- Around my complexion...
- O-older...
...heavy-set...

Like she just had a baby...
Or just lost one.
We have reason to believe
that this woman is involved
in the kidnapping
of Carlina White.
The city of New York
has posted a 10,000 reward
for any tip leading
to the baby's return.
This is the first time
in the history of this city
that a child's been
taken from the hospital.
Sir, another comment?
I want my baby back.
She didn't have
to do that to me.
I was carrying her
for nine months.
She didn't have to take her
from me.
I think the lady's just scared
because she thinks we're
gonna press charges,
but I just want to tell her,
"I won't press charges
against you.
Just bring our daughter back. "
- Ohh, hiiii!
- Hey!
I need a picture!
Eh... stop... awww!
- Hey!
- Hi!
- Okay, be careful now.
- Okay.
- Be careful.
- Okay.
She been a little sick.
I got you.
- Hi!
- That's my girl!
- Hey, baby!

- What's your name, baby?
Say, "My name's Nejdra Nance. "
- "My name Nejdra Nance. "
- Where's your daddy, Nejdra?
"My daddy's
out working today. "
Dealing drugs ain't working.
You look like a Netty
I'm-a call you Netty
You hear that, Netty?
I'm your Auntie Cassandra.
I'm gonna get the bottle.
Excuse me, miss, my daughter's
been kidnapped.
If you could give me
a call if you see her...
Excuse me, sir,
my daughter's been...
Excuse me, sir...
Hey.
I spoke to my boss.
I'm gonna get that raise
so we can start looking
for our own place.
Don't bother.
- They're never gonna find her.
- Yes, they will.
Carl, just stop.
Why are you
so mad at me?
Joy, no one could have known
this would happen.
It was late, a shift change,
the cameras not working...
it was like a perfect storm!
I keep thinking
about that night...
that... nurse,
all those things she said to me.
She... I called a lawyer today.
Somebody's gotta pay for this.
Somebody's gotta pay.
When's her birthday?
July 31.

Why did it take you three
weeks to bring her around?
They kept us
in the hospital...
- ...for a little while.
- And you didn't call nobody?
I didn't want to bother folks.
I ain't "folks"...
I'm your sister.
Okay. I started
having contractions.
I didn't want to take
no chances,
so I went
straight to the hospital.
I didn't want no problems.
I got there.
They didn't think she
was gonna make it.
But she did.
You're my little
miracle baby, Nejdra.
You're my little miracle baby.
It's been nearly a year
that 19-day-old Carlina White
was snatched
from a Harlem hospital.
Parents have filed
a 100 million lawsuit
against the city
that charges lax security
and shoddy hiring practices.
Carlina's life is priceless.
No settlement in the world
could ever measure up
to having my daughter back.
I can't believe the police
haven't found my daughter yet.
In the beginning,
there were helicopters
and police officers everywhere,
but it all died down
rather fast.
Detective Dalton?

- I need some good news.
- We're working on it.
You said you'd find her.
Look, there was a woman.
Someone saw her at the hospital,
then on the train with a baby.
- We're checking...
- If Carlina was a white girl,
you'd have found her by now.
- You really believe that?
At least she'd still
be in the papers.
- What do you want me to say?
- I want you to keep your word.
Find my daughter.
And that's 43.96.
Cleanup in aisle 2.
- Cleanup in aisle 2.
- Here you go.
Keith, I need
an authorization.
Hold on a second,
Mrs. Alexander.
Is there a problem?
Uh, no... there's just been
an uptick in fraud.
We just need to
verify this quickly.
I got cash.
Sure. Thank you.
Okay.
Hold on a second,
Mrs. Alexander.
- What?
- Your change.
Marcus, can you come
to the deli?
Marcus to the deli.
Auntie Cassandra's
gonna get you some milk.
Ugh, we're out of milk.
That's why I
went to the store.
That's why I went to the store...

get my baby some milk!
Yes! Mwah! You miss me?
Yes, you did!
Oh, baby.
What you gonna do with that?
I am gonna make
Nejdra a new outfit.
- A dress and a hat... you like it?
- That's sweet.
- I like that.
- It's sweet, right?
I like that... I like that one.
Her daddy's taking us
out for her first birthday,
and I want us to look
extra nice.
You need to cut him loose
and get yourself a job.
For your information,
Miss Holier-Than-Thou,
I gots me a job.
Well, let me show you
- what we been doin' all day.
- No!
I'll go with you, mama!
Come here, precious!
Hi, mama!
- You did it!
- That's right!
We'd like to open up
three accounts.
One in my name.
One in mine.
And one is a trust
in the name of Carlina White.
And she is?
Our daughter.
That's good planning...
where's the little one?
- Do you see her?
- Uh, Carlina's not with us,
but we're hoping
she will be soon.
Well, our minimum deposit

is 100 per account.
Is that okay?
That's almost
half a million dollars.
What do you have to do
to make that kind of money?
It was a settlement, okay?
Want to get a coffee
or something?
- I'm gonna be late.
- How about tonight?
- I can't.
- You can't keep avoiding me.
I've got to get to class.
How's the studying going?
Carl, I know you've been trying,
but every time I look
at you, I see Carlina.
I see her face.
I see her eyes.
I don't want to be
angry anymore.
It's my fault, right?
We both left
the hospital that night.
You think you're
the only one that's angry.
There's not a day goes by
I don't think about what
our lives could've been like
if this didn't happen.
I'm sorry.
I just... can't.
I just can't.
Hey, what's up, cutie?
Don't you ever talk to
strangers, you hear me?
What do you do if a stranger
tries to give you candy?
- I scream "No!" and run.
- Good. Good.
- Do I gotta go?
- Yes, you gotta go.
Can't you teach me?

Mama can't teach
you everything, baby.
Don't you want to grow up
and be smart,
- like the Huxtables on TV?
- I don't wanna go to school!
Look here...
don't test me today, okay?
Don't test me today...
do you hear me?
Do you hear me?
Yes.
Don't be upset, okay?
Mama just loves you so much
that she wants
what's best for you.
You mama's miracle
baby, Nejdra.
Can I get a smile?
You can do better than that!
Come on, give me a smile!
Come on.
Mwah... let's go to school,
big girl.
- # The blinds are pulled #
- Hurry up, mama... it's time!
What'd I tell you about
bothering me this early?
With both of us,
this house might bust #
I'm comin'!
And all this family #
I'm comin'.
We're gonna have
a merry Christmas, babe #
- # A very merry Christmas, baby #
- Let's see what you got.
- # A merry Christmas, babe #
- Are all these for me?
Very merry Christmas, baby #
Yeah, you been
a good girl this year,
so here... open this one first.
No, no, no... open this one.

Open this one first.

- Here!

- Look, baby.

The old neighborhood
always looked so good #

And this one's for you.

We say hello to the friends
we can and can't remember #

I know you want to do
hair when you grow up,
so I say you could
practice on her.

- # Then the handbells ring #

- Can I brush it now?

- Can I, please?

- Yeah, yeah.

Go get my brush.

And then the children sing

I don't get no sugar... what?

Huh?

The fireplace
is on the embers #

And Netty, hurry up,
'cause we're already late
to your grandma's house.

You and me
and all this family #

Mm... all these presents?
You didn't have but two pennies
to rub together last month.

Ain't you gonna open it?

Huh... well, whatever
you're doin',

you better watch out
before you end up
in a prison cell
right next to Netty's daddy.

Why don't you see
what you got?

You're acting like
a prison guard yourself.

- I'm just sayin'...

- I'm just sayin',
it's Christmas...

why don't you enjoy yourself?
The old neighborhood #
always looked so good
each December #
Remember that day?
We say hello to the friends
we can and can't remember #
Thank you.
- Mama, where's your brush?
- Um, it's in my top drawer.
And, Netty, get a move on,
all right?
We ain't got all day.
I can't find it.
Well, it's in there,
but you gotta go.
Fine.
Bye, mama.
Bye... Netty.
Excuse me, I'm looking
for a Detective Dalton.
Oh, he retired last week.
Can I help you?
I'm Joy White.
My daughter Carlina White
was kidnapped
I'm here to look at the book.
Yeah, he told me you
were gonna come by.
Uh, let's see here.
Here.
Not a lot of new faces
in the book
since last month, though.
Here, have a seat.
I'll never forget hers.
"The baby don't cry for you.
You cry for the baby. "
When were you gonna tell me?
What?
Ride or die, right?
Besties.
Ann ain't stupid.
And when she find out,

she gonna be real mad.
- What if she kicks me out?
- Come live with me.
Will you tell her for me?
Mmmm... we'll tell her together
when I get back from Atlanta.
You know you're my girl,
right?
Mm-hmm.
Everybody move, man #
Just groove,
players gotta do your dance #
Just breathe, ladies
better choose a man #
Let's go, let's go, let's go #
Just clap # #
I'm-a have to beat these
boys off her with a stick.
Least she got better
taste than you do.
- Oh, no, you ain't gonna start.
- Hey, hey...
- You ain't startin'!
- 'Cause I'm scared of you.
- I'm really scared of you.
- Oh, you should be.
You should be.
Huh! Huh! Huh! Huh!
Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha!
Why don't you go say something
to your guests, please?
And stand still.
- Hi, y'all.
- Hey.
So glad you guys
could all come to my "Sweet 16."
It's really nice to have
all my friends here today.
I don't know what I'd do
without you guys.
All y'all are me.
Know what I'm sayin'?
Dudes can't pick that up #
Slackin' in the game

so I came here to pick that up #
Just clap
Everybody movin', man #
Just groove
players gotta do your dance #
What I tell you...
...about getting all close up
with these boys?
- We weren't doing nothing.
- I know what I'm talking about.
All right, people,
party's over.
You all need to go home.
We are home.
Go inside.
Why?
Because we said so.
Becau...
Last time I checked,
it was legal
to stand on the street.
- Come on, mama, let's go.
- Get your hands off me, girl.
I ain't scared of these cops!
- Is there a problem?
- No!
Yes... you.
- Mama, he's serious.
- So am I!
This is my house.
This is my street!
My street!
What are you on, ma'am?
What am I...
I'm high on life.
All right... I'm high on life.
Go inside... right now.
- Or what?
- You need to stop and be quiet.
Get your hands off me, girl!
Don't you touch.
Or what?
What you gonna do?
Huh?

You gonna beat me in the street?
You gonna beat me in the street
like Rodney King?
- What you gonna do?!
- What's goin' on?
They violatin'
my human rights.
- That's what's goin' on.
- You're coming with me.
- I ain't goin'...
- Officer, wait! Wait!
Please, please, wait...
I'll take her back in the house.
You don't have to beg
for me, girl.
These cops ain't got
nothin' on me!
Get off me... I can walk...
I can walk!
Get off me!
Bless us, Lord,
make us thankful
through Christ our Lord.
And, Lord, as we celebrate
Carlina's 16th birthday,
please keep her safe and happy.
And I humbly ask
you bring her back to me
when you see fit.
Amen.
Are you gonna do this
every year on her birthday?
I will...
until Carlina comes home
or I die.
That's not healthy.
So you a psychologist now?
We're just saying
maybe it's time to let her go.
Lf, God forbid,
something happened
to you or your sister,
would you want me to let it go?
Hi, Carl.

Thank you for the flowers.
Thanks for the card.
How are the kids?
My oldest boy just got
his learner's permit...
- ...last month.
- Now that can't be good.
You ain't lying.
Really, Carl, how are you?
Well, you know,
this is always
one of the hardest days
of the year for me.
Me, too.
Hey, sis, so how was
the interview?
Well...
I got the job!
Yeah, Cassie...
look at you!
Yeah, I'm gonna
be moving down there.
Atlanta is real nice.
The streets are full
of hard-working brothers...
- ...with suits... suits!
- Mm-hmm!
I don't care if they all
look like Denzel,
it's too damn hot down there
for me.
So maybe Netty
could come down there.
It's a great place
to start a family.
What you talking about?
I can get a job...
and, uh, a place
for me and the baby.
- You pregnant?
- Wait...
before you get mad, remember
how you were at that age.
No. No.

No grandbaby of mine is
gonna be raised in no Atlanta.
We puttin' a child-pen
right here.

- You're not mad?

- No, girl, I'm happy!

I'm happy...

I'm gonna be a grandmama!

Is it a girl?

Is it a girl... it's a girl?

Oh, my God, I want a girl...

I want a girl!

Well, we gotta get
prenatal vitamins...

- ...and a checkup.

- We might need a bigger place.

How are we gonna pay
for all this?

I can pay!

The state will pay
for some of it.

No grandbaby of mine is
gonna be raised by no welfare.

I can pay.

Credit card.

We'll get her in the system
just in case, okay?

Hey, did you find
my birth certificate?

I need to go
to the appointment soon.

It's here somewhere.

I'll handle it
when I get home from work.

That's what you said
last week.

I'll handle it
when I get home from work.

I promise.

Next.

Here are the forms and...

- ...my birth certificate.

- Okay.

We have no record

of your birth.

What?

No Nejdra Nance

born July 31, 1987?

Bridgeport, Connecticut.

We have no Nejdra Nance

in the system.

I didn't make it up...

can you check again?

- This document is a forgery.

- No, it's not.

Don't make me call the police.

I'd like to thank the DJ

for starting my set off

on a racist note.

Everybody else came up to...

What did you do

with my real birth certificate?

Have you lost your mind...

I was watching that!

The state of Connecticut

has no record of my birth.

- Who told you that?

- I went downtown

with the fake certificate

I found in your closet.

- You went in my room?

- To find my birth certificate.

I done told you about

goin' in my room!

- They almost called...

- I done told you!

They almost called

the cops on me!

What's goin' on?

Why don't I have

a real birth certificate?

Why?!

She left you and she

never came back.

What?

She was a friend

of your father's.

- What are you talkin' about?

- Your mother.
She left you on my doorstep.
You're not my real mother?
She left you
because she knew
I'd raise you right.
And I did.
I did raise you right, didn't I?
- What was her name?
- Didn't I?
What was my mother's name?
You don't... you don't
even need to know all that.
Yes, I do.
All that matters right now
is you and me.
You call me "Little Ann... "
'cause I look just like you.
You pretended to be
my real mother.
What... how could you lie
like that?
To me?
Netty...
Now you can't be mad at me
for that now.
Come here...
come on, don't be like that.
Come here.
Now you can't be mad at me!
I took you out of
a bad situation,
and I did my best for you.
I did my best for you...
that's all you need to know.
Look here.
Netty... I did my best.
What... Netty... Netty!
Netty!
You sure you don't
want me to stay...
- ...till you have the baby?
- We'll be fine.
You could always

come stay with me.
I mean it.
You and that baby
are always welcome.
Tell me the truth.
Did you know?
She told me she gave birth
to you, and I believed her.
Why... Why did you believe her?
I didn't think she would lie
about something like that.
Look, Netty, here's the truth.
I don't care who gave birth
to you.
But I do.
You sure you want to know?
'Cause the truth don't always
turn out the way you want.
Cassie, if I don't know
who I am,
how am I gonna tell my baby
who she is?
All right,
I got the last two.
Here you go.
I'm gonna miss you, girl.
Baby on the doorstep?
You gonna have to tell her
more than that.
Mind your business, Cassie.
You be careful.
Call me!
She was a tiny figure
they knew for a tiny time,
but 17 years
after she was snatched away,
- the ache remains.
- I feel it in my spirit.
Says Joy White,
the mother
of the abducted child,
who works for a financial
brokerage firm.
I use that name

as my e-mail address,
- Someone out there has her...
I could walk past her any day,
and she wouldn't know
her own father.

Back to you, Bill.

"Dear Oprah...

"I'm writing to you because...

"I can't think of anyone else
who can help me.

"I've recently found out
the woman who raised me
"is not my mother.

"I had a healthy baby girl
"and moved to Atlanta
to be near my aunt.

"My baby makes me happy,
"but inside, I feel lost.

"Can you help me find
my parents?

"I need to know the truth
in a life filled with lies.

"Sincerely...

Nejdra Nance. "

Smile!

Perfect.

- Have a great day, beautiful!

- Bye!

Bye!

- My name is...

- Maya Nance.

- I'm 6 years old.

- And I live in...

- Atlanta, Georgia.

- But I was born in...

Bridgeport...

Con-nect-i-cut.

Very good...

that's hard to say.

Your teacher's

gonna be very happy.

- Mama?

- Mm-hmm?

Were you born

in Con-nect-i-cut, too?
I don't know
where I was born, baby,
but I'm gonna find out.
- Look at this.
- You on that web site again?
No, look at this...
she was born July 15, 1987.
That's about right.
I was born July 31, 1987.
You think it's me?
Mm... that baby ain't you.
She got too much hair.
She looks just like Maya did.
Look again, for real.
She does look like you did
at that age.
"Carlina Renae White
was last seen
in the Harlem Hospital
Children's Ward. "
Hm-mmm... Ann's twisted,
but she wouldn't have done
all that.
Call the number.
Center for Missing
and Exploited Children...
This is Keith.
I may have information
on a missing child.
Well, we're not sure
she's missing.
She's missing.
She thinks she was abducted
from a hospital.
Is the child
in immediate danger?
No, but we been trying
to get information
for the last five years
with no luck.
Can you tell me
something about her?
- Like what?

- How old is she?

- 23.

- And her race?

I guess African-American...

could be Dominican.

Probably African-American.

Does she have any

identifying characteristics...

- ...any birthmarks?

- No.

Yes, she has a birthmark

on her right arm.

Right, a birthmark.

Who is "she"...

who's missing?

Me.

I am.

Keith, take a look at this.

Okay, we took the photograph

that Nejdra Nance sent us

of her at 6 months,

and the one Joy White sent us

of Baby Carlina at 9 days old.

We did an aging progression

sequence on both,

and I think we have a match.

Carlina's alive!

Oh, God... praise God!

My baby's alive...

it's Carlina!

My daughter...

she's alive.

What's up?

They think they found her.

My God.

She's living in Atlanta.

How do they know it's her?

We have to take DNA tests.

We shouldn't get our hopes up.

Look at this, Carl.

She has my eyes.

Oh, my God, Joy, I...

It's her.

We found our baby girl!

- "He secretly wept at night.
- "... at night.
"He felt nobody wanted him.
"Why am I d...
"different from my brothers?"
Oh, look at you readin'!
Look at you!
- He's not ugly.
- He ugly for a duckling.
- Grandma?
- Yeah, baby?
Why do you live so far away?
I want you to come live
with us one day.
Oh, that' sweet, baby...
maybe one day.
Mama, Grandma Ann might
come live with us one day.
Maya, will you leave
me and Grandma
alone for a minute?
- All right, bye,Smarty-Pants.
- Bye.
- We gonna read later, okay?
- Okay.
All right... she readin' so good!
I need to know
about my parents.
Netty, I didn't come down here
to argue with you.
Mama, no matter
what you say,
as long as it's the truth,
I won't get mad.
I promise.
You want to know the truth?
- Hmm?
- Yes.
Okay.
Your mama was a crack ho.
You was a crack baby...
she didn't want you,
so I took you in,
and now you sittin' up here

treatin' me like I did
something wrong.
Puttin' me on trial
like I did something wrong...
when I did the right thing.
You know what I shoulda done?
I shoulda left your little
crackhead behind
out on the street,
just like your mama.
- Get out!
- It's in the genes!
- Get out!
- Get out?!

Girl, who you think
you're talkin' to?
I'm talkin' to you...
I want you out of my house.
Take all your stuff and get out.
All I wanted was...
All I wanted was the truth.
That's all.
I don't need this!
Hello.
Is Joy White there?
Thanks.
Baby.
It's you.
Here, let me get a hug.
You must be Maya.
Ohh...
Carlina, this is your Aunt Lisa.
She's been crying all day.
And this is your auntie
and your uncle.
There's your cousin
back there.
This is your half-sister Tina.
And this is your
half-brother Trey.
How y'all doin', everybody?
This is my daughter, Maya.
Praise be to God!
Welcome home, child!

I'm your Grandmother Elizabeth.

Thank you, Grandmother.

Let us pray.

Heavenly Father,

You are a mystery

we cannot comprehend.

None of us know

why we are meant to suffer,

but we do believe

in Your infinite wisdom.

There is always

a reason and a purpose.

We hope that one day

you will reveal it.

And we pray that one day

we will forgive those

that took Carlina away.

Most of all, we thank you

for returning

our lost daughters to us.

- Amen.

- Amen.

Amen.

We didn't know

what you'd like,

so we made you

macaroni and cheese, and...

curry chicken

and lasagna and ox-tail soup.

And that's just to start.

You got your daddy's eyes.

And I love music.

That's because I used to sing

to you when you were a baby.

I'm a neat freak...

I clean all the time.

I know where she

got that from.

I wish you would have gotten

some of the same from me, too.

Was the woman who snatched you

a neat freak?

Not like me and Joy.

Is it true that the news

said you grew up on welfare?

- Tina!

- And drugs...

They said the woman
who raised you was on drugs.

- That's enough!

- I just want to know...

- ...about her life.

- It's okay.

The house I grew up in
was nothin' like this.
And the woman that took me
is nothin' like Joy.

But you can't believe everything
you hear on the news.

Where'd you learn
how to do hair like this?

When I was 6, this Christmas,

- my mom got me a doll.

- Your mom?

Styling's a good skill
to have.

I know.

I just started working
at this hair salon part-time
I know I'll always be able
to make money as a stylist.
People will spend
their rent money on their hair.

But what are you thinking
about college?

I don't know yet.

Carlina...

we may not have
the past together,
but we will have a future.

Are you mad
at Ann Pettway?

- What do you think?

- Was she mean?

Was she scary...
what was she like?

She had two sides.

One time she got so mad at me

that she hit me in the face
with a shoe.
Then she felt so bad
she figured out a way
to sneak me and all my friends
into the movies.
Wow... a shoe?
What was it like for you,
growing up here?
Wasn't perfect.
Ma was always worried something
would happen to me or Trey.
We didn't have much freedom.
You know,
she cried a lot for you.
I'm sorry.
Yeah, well, she's happy now,
so even if the DNA
doesn't match,
can you still come visit?
Just you being here
gives her hope.
Hey, it's me.
What took you so long to call?
We had a big family dinner.
- Is DNA back?
- They're my parents... I know it.
- Kinda feels like home.
- That's great.
Why don't you sound
happy for me?
Netty, just don't forget
who you are.
Okay?
- Hey!
- You're late.
You were supposed to be here
an hour ago.
Sorry, I got held up at work.
What?
Do I have somethin' on my face
or somethin'?
Nah.
You don't understand what

me and your mother went through.
Just seeing you standing here...
So... if you could do
anything today,
what would you do?
I'd like to do a girl thing,
like get my hair done,
- but...
- But what?
I'll take you.
Might feel strange
having a man come with me.
Well, I ain't a man...
I'm your dad.
- Papers haven't come back yet.
- You giving me attitude?
Sorry.
I've never had a father before.
It's positive.
It's positive?
Thank you, God.
- Mmm!
- Mmm!
- It's a miracle!
- I knew it.
I knew it... from the first time
I saw that picture.
Oh, the phone's been
ringin' off the hook.
The press is comin' by tomorrow
to interview us here.
It's official now, Maya.
You can call me "Grandma. "
Just like Grandma Ann?
Aw, come here!
- Mmm!
- Mmm!
We can come down to Atlanta
next weekend
and help you and Maya
move up here.
Carlina White,
who was kidnapped
from Harlem Hospital

over 22 years ago
solved her own kidnapping.
She will be reunited
with her biological parents...
today in what is sure to
be an emotional reunion.
In local news,
police say a propane explosion
destroyed
a suburban Charlotte house
that killed a toddler
and injured 17 other people.
Investigators
are on the scene now.
In other news, Michelle Obama...
I'm Special Agent Thompson.
- Thank you for coming in.
- Happy to help out.
It's the kind of case that
haunts you even into retirement.
Is there anything that didn't
make it into this file?
We interviewed just about
anyone breathing
at Harlem Hospital that night...
a number of people
I. D another woman
besides Pettway as the perp.
We tracked her
down to Baltimore,
- but couldn't pin it on her.
- Your gut?
It's the woman who raised her.
I'm about to run into another
conference... what's up?
Have you heard from Ann?
- No, why?
- The police
came looking for here...
they say she disappeared.
She's not answering
her phone... I'm worried.
Look the conference
is about to start... I gotta go.

- Fill it up, please.

- Yeah, sure.

Nope.

This one's declined.

Oh.

- Try that one.

- Okay.

Hunh-unh.

Sorry.

Can I pay another way?

Cash.

I got a computer in the...
car.

Lady...

we don't take computers.

Mm-hmm?

Yeah.

All right.

...23 years ago,
White has reunited
with her biological parents.

Pettway is believed to be
in the tri state area.

How do I feel?

I feel complete.

I've always dreamed
about this.

Now after 23 years...

I can sleep.

Do you have anything to
say to Ann Pettway?

I want her to suffer.

I want her to do time
like I suffered
for 23 years.

Carl, you said before you
didn't want to press charges.

Do you still feel that way,
or have your feelings
changed over the years?

Well they have changed
over the years,

but right about now,
whatever the court decides,

that's all right with me.
I don't want to say
too much about it,
because I got
other things in my heart.
Can I get a shot of the
three of you, please?
Sure.
Great.
How about a kiss on the cheek
by both parents?
Nice, thank you.
- All right, thanks.
- Carlina,
do you have anything to say
about Ann Pettway?
Is it true she was
drug-addicted and abusive?
When I look at Joy White,
I see me.
With Ann, my mother,
the other lady...
I don't know what to call her...
I would always be searching
for things we had in common,
but we had nothing in common.
All right, no more questions...
we gotta go.
Thanks... thank you...
excuse me.
Hey.
Can you believe this?
Oh, God is so good.
Hello?
So what do you think, Carlina?
She wants to fly us to Chicago
and everything.
I don't feel like sittin'
on Oprah's couch for an hour
talkin' about Ann.
What's wrong?
Cassandra's flippin' out,
and Ann's missing.
You don't have to worry

about them anymore.
They're not your family, Carlina.
I know it's you...
say something!
- I know this looks bad.
- You stole my life!
Is that her... is that Ann?
Just give her a minute...
it's okay.
Look, just give me a minute,
and I'm-a straighten this out.
I'm-a straighten it out, okay?
Either you did it
or you didn't.
You never take responsibility
for anything!
Netty!
Federal Bureau
of Investigation,
How can I help you?
My name is Ann Pettway.
I'm here to straighten out
this mess.
Where's your boss?
Tell me what happened.
There was this girl,
and she loved dolls...
...all kind of dolls,
but she got tired
of these dolls because...
they couldn't walk.
They couldn't talk.
They couldn't love her back.
So she got pregnant...
three times.
And every time the baby died.
And that wasn't fair, was it?
Was it?
No.
It wasn't fair.
She just wanted somebody
to love her back.
Ann Pettway,
you're under arrest

for the kidnapping
of Carlina Renae White.
Will you tell my daughter now?
Why don't we get
a mani-pedi?
I think it's time to go home.
Ok, let's go home.
No, I mean back home
to Atlanta.
No, don't... you...
Am I being too pushy?
No! No, it's not that.
I appreciate all of this,
really I do.
A reporter told me
about the trust fund,
and I was hoping to take
that money,
close out my life in Atlanta,
and... I don't know...
maybe get a place up here.
That way I'd be closer.
Carlina...
What?
The trust fund dissolved
when you were 21.
What happened to it?
We needed that money.
Were you ever gonna tell me?
I'm sorry, Carlina.
L...
Hey, Carlina,
do you have a quote?
Carlina White! Carlina!
Ann Pettway turned
herself in... any thoughts?
Do you have anything
to say to Ann Pettway?
- No comment.
- How was the reunion?
We want to hear
your side of the story!
Auntie!
Hey, pretty girl!

- Did you miss me?

- Mm-hmm.

Could you come to New York
with us next time?

- W...

- Maya,

go put your stuff in your room...

I'll be there in a minute.

- 'Kay.

- 'kay.

So you heard the news?

I saw it on TV.

Her lawyers want

to meet with you

so they can discuss strategy.

I can't.

You can and you will.

She's family.

Netty, you hear me?

- You can't leave her hangin'.

- Look,

- I'm goin' by Carlina now.

- You're Netty to me.

- But my name is Carlina.

- Your name is Nejdra.

Not according

to my birth certificate.

- Rise and shine!

- Stop bangin'!

Rise and shine!

Pettway.

You gotta make her.

If they convict me,

it's 25 to life.

She don't wanna testify,

and she don't wanna see you.

You gotta make her!

I can't keep cleanin' up after

you where Netty's concerned.

- She's her own person.

- Cassie...

Ann, you took that

child's life from her,

then you kept her in the dark

about her family for years.
You had plenty of opportunity
to make this right,
but you didn't.
What am I supposed to do now?
That woman took
everything from us.
All rise.
How does the defendant plead?
My client pleads
"not guilty," Your Honor.
Not guilty?!
What?
"Dear Nejdra,
"I think of you every day.
"I miss you and Maya so much
it makes me want to cry.
"I hope I see you soon.
Love, your mother. "
Has she returned
any of your calls?
I've left five messages.
Carl, we can't lose her
this time... we can't.
Now that's enough,
all right, excuse me.
What will you do
in the future?
Joy? Joy!
Give us a statement, please.
Hi, Carlina,
it's your mom.
I can't believe I can
actually say that to you now.
Listen, I tried to call you
the other day
and never heard back.
I tried texting you,
never heard back.
Carlina, please call
me and your father.
We need to hear from you.
Now I am happy
my daughter came back to me,

The problem we're having
right now is just...
it's hard for her
to cope with us.
She hasn't been with us
for 23 years.
Is there anything you'd
like to say to Carlina?
I love you.
I want you to come back.
Give us a chance.
Let's make...
make up for lost time.
I was on such a high
when I was first reunited
with my daughter.
You couldn't tell me nothin'
you know?
I was floatin' on air.
That was a great moment.
And then one day
after telling her story
to "The New York Post,"
she changed.
In just that day.
I think it had a lot to do
with the Pettway family.
She asked a lot of questions
about the money...
the trust fund
and the 10,000 reward.
That money's gone.
It really hurts
because it's about money.
She won't return my calls.
I'd like to change
my phone number.
Where's Grandpa Carl?
He's in New York.
Where's Grandma Joy?
She's in New York, too.
Can we visit her soon?
I don't know.
Where's Grandma Ann?

What's with all the questions?
Where's Grandma Ann?
She went away.
Is she mad at me?
No, baby, she's not
mad at you.
Sometimes people do bad things.
When they get caught,
they have to go away.
Did she say she was sorry?
When I do something bad,
I say sorry,
and you give me a hug.
Ms. Johnson,
What is your relationship
to the defendant?
Ann Pettway is my sister.
What you're saying she did
was despicable,
but I love my sister.
She's not perfect.
She's deeply flawed.
But she loves Netty
Ann is a good mother.
Ann Pettway knows
she caused a lot of pain.
She'd had several miscarriages,
and she never believed
she'd be able to be a parent.
So in my opinion,
she did kidnap Carlina White,
and she as much as confessed
to it in my office.
Get up.
Get up now.
What happened to your phone?
I disconnected it.
Needed to just drop out.
Well, you need
to drop back in.
Why... so I can help Ann?
Because you have
a life to live.
Whose life am I livin'?

Joy's?
Ann's? Yours?
If I spend time with Joy,
I'm betrayin' you.
If I spend time with you
and we talk about Ann,
I'm betrayin' Joy.
Look, I know this has
been hard on you.
I know I helped make it
hard on you.
Look, you can call yourself
Carlina or Nejdra.
I don't care.
It doesn't matter to me
what you call yourself.
Point is...
you gotta get up and get on
with your life.
I just keep wonderin'
what my life woulda been...
had I grown up
with my real parents.
Okay.
But where do you go
from here?
Mmm!
Thank you for comin'.
- About the money...
- Carlina...
Nobody told us to set
up that trust fund.
We had it for 21 years,
and if I had to do it
all over again,
I never would have spent it.
It's not about the money.
You could have told me.
But...
I'm just tired of people
keepin' things from me.
I'm sorry.
Why didn't you look harder?
Excuse me?

Anyone who knows me knows how
much I want to find my parents.
I searched and searched for you.
Why didn't you look harder?
Carlina, you have no idea
how hard we looked.
I knocked on more doors...
I passed out more flyers,
than you could have
ever imagined.
We couldn't find you!
But... we never stopped looking.
Sorry.
There's been so much pain.
I just want you to be happy,
Carlina.
But I'm just not ready.
I'm not ready
to leave my whole life
and start over as Carlina White.
You know, for the past 23 years,
I've talked to you in my head...
and in my dreams.
All this time,
you been a part of my life.
And you've only just found out
about me.
We'll take it slow.
My name is Joy White,
and I'm here to see Ann Pettway.
- Does she know you're coming?
- No.
Park over there...
we'll put you through security.
I could just slap that smile
off your face.
Is that why you're here?
I came here
because I have to find a way
to forgive you.
Why did you do it to me?
From over here, it don't look
like nothin' been done to you.
What you so upset for?

You got her now.
I may have Carlina now,
but you stole 23 years
of my life.
I wasn't there when Carlina
took her first step.
I didn't get to see her
go to the prom.
I wasn't there when she had
my grandbaby.
Those are moments
I'll never have.
- I lost three babies.
- I lost a child!
I didn't go around
stealin' nobody's babies!
See, that's what I'm sayin'...
you lost one.
I lost three...
I heard you got two more now.
They told me
I couldn't have none.
- That's no excuse!
- I needed that child, okay?
I saw y'all on TV,
and I thought about
givin' her back.
But then Netty
would look up at me.
People started sayin'
we looked alike.
They even called her
"Little Ann. "
Every day, she became
more and more mine.
She wasn't yours...
she was mine!
I fed her!
I clothed her!
I taught her right from wrong!
That little girl
who you paradin' around
on TV and everything...
I did that!

You should be thankin' me.
- I should be thankin' you?
- Thank me!
It's takin' all I got not to
jump across this table
and kill you.
I know you hate me.
And I know, somebody like you,
you'll never understand this.
Somebody like you, you know...
you got a lot of love
in your life.
Me...
I been lovin' people
and lovin' people
and doin' for people...
It's one thing
to love somebody,
but it's another thing
for somebody to love you back.
Netty loved me back.
I ain't ever felt that before.
You could have taken any
other child in that nursery.
Why'd you take mine?
Was it 'cause I was young?
It didn't have nothin' to do
with you, Ms. White.
It had everything
to do with me!
On August 4, 1987...
I went to Harlem Hospital.
I took a child.
I got back on the train,
I went back home,
And I raised her as my own.
I knew it was wrong.
Ann Pettway.
You've pleaded guilty
to one count of kidnapping.
In light of your confession,
the court hereby sentences you
to 12 years in prison.
That's it?

That's what our suffering's
worth?
I thought it was
a mandatory life sentence.
She plea bargained.
I lost you, I lost my family...
I lost everything.
We gotta appeal this.
We just gotta live with it.
All of it.
I have a few questions
for you, Carlina.
Or would you prefer
I called you Nejdra?
Or Netty?
I'm not Nejdra.
That's the name
that was forced on me.
I'm not Carlina.
That's the name
that was taken from me.
My name is Netty
That's the name that feels
more like me...
...the name that feels
most like home.
Grandma!
It's a story of grief...
Will you please bring my
baby back, please?
...and longing...
Carlina would always be
on my mind every day.
...betrayal...
Where did you get me from?
She destroyed my life
and my family.
...and discovery.
Now to an unbelievable
reunion...
She made this happen herself.
She's the hero in this.
I got my answers now to things
that happened in my life.

But Carlina White's
newfound family
faced some hard realities.
Everything happened too fast,
and we're all strangers
to each other.
It's hard to build a relationship
with someone that you
don't even know.
These stories aren't
always happy-ever-after.
They take time.
Now, for the first
time on television,
Carlina, her birth parents,
and the family that raised
her tell the true story
behind a reunion
that captivated the world.
In January 2011,
an assistant in a hair
salon near Atlanta
discovered she was
really Carlina White,
abducted as an infant
from Harlem Hospital
But though she had
found her true family,
in the months afterward,
she still had not
made her way home.
I still have that family
that don't really know me.
I was brought up differently,
and I'm an adult as well
so it's like,
it's gonna take
a little bit more time.
She have the family
that she was brought up with,
and she don't know me,
she don't know, you know,
her real mom.
This is not easy.

You don't just wipe out 23
years of history and...
and have everything revert
to where it was, uh,
on that day in 1987.
She was a sweet baby
in the time
that I had with her.
Joy White was 16
years old in 1987,
when she found out she
was pregnant
by her then-boyfriend,
We started talking about it.
She said she wanted
to keep the baby,
then that's when we
really had to sit down
and talk to our parents.
I had to explain
to my mother,
you know, what
was going on, and...
she was upset at first,
but she was very supportive
throughout the whole thing.
It was a long pregnancy,
running two weeks
past the due date.
By July 15th,
Joy had had enough.
I got tired of being pregnant,
so, uh,
what I did was I walked
all the way from 125th Street
and Broadway,
and I walked down
to 34th Street,
and then after that,
I went into labor,
and I had her.
She named the baby
Carlina Renae White.
The first name

was for Carl,
the second was
Joy's middle name.
That was a wonderful feeling.
Here was a little girl
I was going to raise,
that I was gonna be able
to take to the park.
Joy brought the baby home
to her mother's apartment
in Harlem.
We all used to just stand
and look at her.
You know how I'm talkin' about...
What a beautiful little girl.
Very pretty, always smiling,
but she had some lungs on her.
She used to cry, cry, cry...
cry a whole lot.
Joy was just learning
to take care of her baby
when Carlina spiked
a high fever, 104 degrees.
On the evening
of August 4th,
Joy and Carl rushed their
to the emergency room
at Harlem Hospital,
where she had been born.
The doctors found that Carlina
had swallowed some fluid
during the delivery,
and now she had
an infection.
I was upset because,
you know,
that was my baby
and she was sick.
And then when they told me
that they have to keep her,
you know, I was really,
you know, upset.
As Joy cried in the hallway
outside the pediatric ward,

a woman dressed in white
comforted her.
She came up to me...
she seen me crying,
and she came up to me and said,
"Don't cry...
here's a piece of tissue.
Don't worry... everything
is gonna be okay. "
And, um, she kinda made
me feel better, you know,
at that time, because
I was, like, so upset
I didn't know what to do.
Joy decided to head
home to clean up
and get a little rest.
I'm 16 years old...
I'm a young girl.
I didn't know any better
at the time.
I think the hospital is safe.
She fell asleep,
but not for long.
Someone knocked on the door,
and there was two detectives
standing at the door.
I said, "Carlina died?"
He said, "No. "
He says, "Somebody took her
from the hospital. "
So I called Joy,
and I said, "Joy!"
And she came running
up here and I said,
"Somebody done took Carlina,"
and she couldn't believe me.
She was hollerin' out,
"Oh no, not my baby!"
I get this phone call.
Get on the phone, Joy
in the background crying,
"Carl, someone
stole our baby!"

I said, "What are you talking about?"

I ran to the hospital. They had detectives all over the place. They had helicopters. They had sniffing dogs. They had, uh, I mean, it was everybody out there. Nobody couldn't tell me anything at the time. We had a big conference in... with the hospital and everybody that's worked on that ward that night sit at the table, and nobody knew anything. As they talked about the night, Joy remembered the woman in white who had comforted her. And I was like "Oh my God!" You know, "It was that lady!" She saw me crying. She knew my baby was in that treatment room and she said, "Stop crying. " It turned out many people in the hospital had seen the woman hanging around, especially in the pediatric ward. Parents thought she worked there. Staff members thought she was a parent, or a volunteer. I really thought she was a nurse. So... I mean, she dressed just like a nurse. But she had no name tag. Obviously the woman

is some type of a hanger-on
in the hospital.
That's typical behavior,
according to those who
study infant abductors.
They will go to hospitals
and birthing centers.
They will walk the halls.
They'll look at the nursery.
They will identify
particular children
that might be
of interest to them.
Police in Harlem launched
a frantic search,
combing the hospital
and surrounding buildings.
They released pictures
of baby Carlina,
hoping someone
would recognize her.
Time is the enemy
in the search
for a missing child,
and that's particularly true
with an infant or a newborn.
Because you want to respond,
generate visibility
before the abductor gets
to where the abductor's
trying to get.
When the woman in white
left Harlem Hospital,
there were security cameras
in place,
but they weren't working.
That left very little
information to go on.
No one can actually
document that woman
as the one leaving the hospital.
We have no one seeing a woman
fitting that description
leaving the hospital

with a child in tow.
Joy and Carl,
and other witnesses
from the hospital
helped police develop a sketch
of the woman in white.
Then they identified a mug shot
of a woman who looked
like the sketch.
Detectives questioned her
in the week after the abduction,
but she had an alibi
and there were
no other strong leads.
We've received over 50
calls from the public,
and, uh, we are thoroughly
investigating
all of the information
that we have received.
Sometimes they said,
"Oh, we have a lead,"
and then turn around
and it's no lead.
And you'd be like, "Oh, man,
did they forget about us?"
"Come on, man,
this is our baby. "
You know, sometimes I wonder
if I had a whole lot of money,
would they find my baby
in a couple of days?
My sense is that N.Y.P.D.
Responded quickly,
took it seriously,
attempted to use the media.
I think this was a failure
on many levels,
not the least of which was
that America's hospitals
hadn't really thought about,
or paid attention
to these kinds of problems
in the 1980's.

The lack of attention allowed
several infant abductions
in the late '80's.
Though they were unrelated,
they all followed
a similar pattern.
Typically, the abductor
was someone
almost always a woman
who would walk
into the hospital,
find a smock
hanging up in a closet,
pick the baby up
out of a bassinet
in the mother's room
or in the nursery,
walk off the floor,
out of the hospital,
out of their lives.
In the days and weeks
that followed
Carlina's abduction,
Joy did everything she could
to keep attention on the case.
I did any interview
that I could possibly do,
you know,
to talk about her.
I want my baby back.
She didn't have to do that
to me.
I had her.
I was carrying her
for nine months.
She didn't have to take her
from me.
The loss was devastating.
It was hard for me,
because I couldn't sleep.
Every night I had
to take, like,
sleeping pills every night,
because I could not sleep.

Police run out of leads,
media spotlight dims,
but these parents
don't forget.
This is a picture
of me with, um,
Carlina's stroller.
Empty stroller.
I was always hoping
that, you know,
one day she
could come back,
and could sit back
in that stroller again.
In August 1987,
a young woman named
Ann Pettway
got off the train
in Bridgeport, Connecticut,
with a baby girl.
She was just 60 miles
northeast of New York City,
where Carlina White
had been abducted
from Harlem Hospital.
Bridgeport was home for Ann,
but she hadn't been
around in a few months.
When she left, her family
believed she was pregnant,
and now she was ready
to show off the baby.
It wasn't a issue,
because she was pregnant,
so it wasn't to say,
"Oh, where did you get a baby?"
You know, she was pregnant,
so you come home
with your child.
Infant abductions
are relatively rare.
There were fewer than 300
from 1983 to 2010.
But experts have been able

to develop
a profile of the perpetrators,
and it seems Ann Pettway
fit that profile to a tee.
Overwhelmingly, the abductor
is a woman... maybe a woman
who has miscarried,
who has lost a baby.
These cases are
more often driven
by a psychological need
to keep a particular man
in a life,
keep a relationship alive,
than it is for the baby,
per se.
So it is... it's a very
manipulative tool
uh, that these women use.
The man Ann was trying
to keep in her life at the time
was Derek Nance,
a local drug dealer.
She would later tell the FBI
that she wanted to have
his baby,
but had suffered
several miscarriages.
She named the new baby Nejdra,
but the family always
called her Netty.
The Pettway family was
a large clan,
spread across
Bridgeport's East Side.
There are so many of us.
You can walk down the street
and see 20 family members.
I remember just growin' up
with a lot of cousins,
havin' a lot of family
events together...
cookouts, parties... and
it was just family-orientated.

She didn't really need
friends because we were there.
We were her friends
and her family.
What's better to have
than family?
In the Pettway family,
Netty became known
as an entertainer.
Every September,
they'll have a family reunion
at the park,
and they'll have dance contests,
and she'll get involved in it.
I was just into the
entertainment...
just growin' up,
believing one day
that I would have been a star.
But there was another
side to her, as well.
She always liked
to be to herself sometimes.
To this day she's still
quiet and to herself.
That quiet girl found
her own outlet.
At the age of ten,
she began writing poems.
I just like to write...
it expresses me.
When Netty wasn't
with her cousins,
she was home
with Ann Pettway.
For years it was
just the two of them,
until Ann had a baby boy
when Netty was 11.
Ann is a very outspoken,
loving person.
She made sure Nejdra
had everything she wanted
and everything she needed.

Ann was fairly strict
with her daughter though.
She disciplined her when
she needed disciplining.
It was, "You have to go home,
go to school
go to Brittany's house... "
But she still let us
have our fun as children,
but she did have
that strict side to her.
The young Netty didn't
dare talk back.
You didn't ask questions
why you should do it.
It was just, "You do it
because they told you. "
And that's how I grew up.
I mean, from my uncles,
my aunts... everybody.
According to police reports,
Ann ran into some trouble
over the years.
She was arrested
in 1991, '93, and '97
on charges of drug
possession and larceny.
Netty had no idea at the time.
I really wasn't exposed
to everything that she
was going through...
until I got older.
As a child growin' up,
you're not into adult business,
so those things
we wouldn't know.
Netty did shuttle
back and forth
to Ann's mother's home,
although she was given
a different reason
for the moves.
I stayed with my grandmother
when I attended school,

'cause I was going based
on her address.
I went to school
in a better district,
so I stayed with her.
Other grandkids who needed
somewhere to stay
or have some type
of issues going on,
they'll come and stay
with my mom,
and Netty was one of 'em
that stayed.
And most of the time, the kids
choose to stay with my mom.
Through her childhood,
no one in the immediate family
seems to have questioned
Nejdra's parentage.
There was no suspicion that
Nejdra was not Ann's daughter.
I knew she looked
a little bit different,
but we all look a little bit
different
in the family.
And Netty had no reason
to question it either.
If anything, I probably
thought my dad wasn't my dad.
I just figured, okay,
maybe I look like my dad,
but I don't know who he is.
But, I thought
that she was my mom,
for me growing up.
In fact, of course,
her real mother was 60 miles
away in New York City,
still dreaming
of her missing baby, Carlina.
No other leads.
They just had crazy
people call, saying that,

you know, they
may have seen Carlina,
this or that, whatever,
but it was nothing...
Joy and Carl split up
after Carlina
was kidnapped,
but together, they sued
Harlem Hospital for negligence
in allowing their baby
to be taken.
Anybody could come
to a hospital,
you're supposed to have
security around them.
And you're supposed
to watch them.
That... that's your job.
I think if they had
more security at the time,
this probably would
have never happened.
Eventually, in 1992,
they won a settlement
of 750,000.
They put some of it aside
for Carlina.
We had that hope, our
daughter was coming back.
So that's why me and Joy decided
to start this trust fund.
So, if she was to be found
by 21 years old,
she would have it.
Meanwhile, all Carlina's parents
could do was wait.
This is somethin'
that you can't explain
when you
have a missing child,
but it always stayed with me.
She was always on my mind.
I always wondered
where she was at.

I would get on trains,
and I would look at girls,
and I would just think
that maybe that's her.
As decades passed,
the kidnapping
of Carlina White,
stolen as an infant
from Harlem Hospital,
became a cold case.
After all, how do you find
a missing baby
after so many years?
Later on in the years,
things kind of,
you know, died down.
They just... think
they lost hope.
I didn't, but I...
I think they lost hope.
As often happens with
these cases,
it became the purview
of the National Center for
Missing and Exploited Children.
The experts there know
that infant abductors
usually take good care
of their captives.
We were convinced from day one
that Carlina White was
out there somewhere,
no doubt with a different name,
no doubt with no recollection
or any inkling
that she, in fact,
was a missing child.
The way the center
keeps these cases
in the public eye
is with age progressions,
using the last-known
picture of the child,
and information

about her family,
to guess what she might
look like as she grows up.
It doesn't do much good
to circulate the photograph
of a 19-day-old child
if she's now 5 years old,
or 10 years old,
or 23 years old.
That was based on her sister,
and I used that photograph
to create Carlina's
age progression,
based on Mom's statement
that her half-sister
looked just like Carlina
when they were born.
So... can't
argue with Mom on that.
Carlina's mother Joy made
her own effort
to keep the story
alive and public.
What I remember the
most about Joy White
was the fact that
she never gave up.
And periodically,
Joy would be in the media,
in New York, or elsewhere.
Sometimes I... I go to sleep,
I think about her.
Sometimes I wake up
thinkin' about her.
I did a lot of interviews
over the years
because I wanted to find
my daughter.
I wanted her back, you know,
with me, and um,
I really believed that she
was out there somewhere,
and I wanted to get
that message out

that her mother wanted her
to come back home.
Joy never stopped believing
that Carlina was alive.
I always knew that Carlina
would probably
look for her birth certificate
or something, or...
or try to find out
who her real mom was.
And in 2005,
that's exactly what happened.
The girl called Nejdra,
still living in
Bridgeport Connecticut,
found out she was pregnant.
She had a serious
boyfriend at the time
and was excited
about having a baby.
The only problem was...
she didn't have
health insurance.
She asked for help
from the woman she always
called "Mom"... Ann Pettway.
I questioned
her about, um,
my social security card,
my birth certificate.
She just said she'd
handle it, you know,
get everything
right for me.
I don't have to worry about it.
But, I started
gettin' impatient.
Nejdra snooped
among Ann's papers
until she found one that looked
like a birth certificate.
She brought it in
to apply for insurance.
They told me

to take the paper
and leave out they office
before I get arrested.
And, I just looked
at the lady like,
"I'm just tryin' to get,
you know, prenatal care.
"I need to go to the doctor
'cause I'm pregnant. "
And she was like,
"Well, this is fraud. "
The birth certificate was a fake.
The clerk called the woman
who had made it, Ann Pettway.
Now Ann had to give
Nejdra an explanation.
When she got back home
from work that night,
she came into my room.
I was hangin' up
my clothes in my closet
and she sat on my bed
and said, um, "I'm sorry. "
And tears started fallin'
outta her eyes,
and I was like,
"What are you sorry about?"
And she was like,
"I'm just... I'm sorry.
"Um, I wish I coulda
told you," you know.
She was just like,
"Your mom just left you there.
She just left you there
and she never came back. "
I'm like, "What?"
She just basically told me
that she wasn't my mom...
that someone left me
and she took me in
and basically took care of me.
The news that Nejdra
was not Ann's child
surprised the whole family,

but the close-knit Pettway
clan closed ranks.
No one cared about it,
truthfully.
To me, she-she-she was
always my family,
and she will always be
my family.
Meanwhile,
the Connecticut Department
of Child and Families,
or D.C.F., opened a file
on Nejdra's case,
But there wasn't a lot
of information to go on,
and Ann wasn't much help.
It's like, she don't
remember anything.
She don't talk about it.
I asked her several times.
Ann claimed Nejdra had
been born in New Haven,
but there was
no record of the birth.
D.C.F. Took DNA samples
and confirmed that
Ann wasn't the mother,
but they said they couldn't
help Nejdra find out who was.
I was like, "Can you
take my blood at least
to match it up
with someone that's out there?"
They was like,
"That's TV stuff. "
D.C.F. Found out...
they didn't do nothin'.
What would you do if they say
that's not your mother
but they not finding
your mother?
It was like I'm startin'
from scratch.
I don't know anything... I don't...

I don't have any names,
no area where they from,
no background, no nothin'.
Nejdra, who had always
kept to herself
writing poems rather
than sharing her feelings...
kept this news
to herself as well.
She dealt with it
on her own, basically.
You would've never known
that there was speculation
that she was her mother,
that she wasn't her mother...
you never would've
known any of that.
I'm still healthy,
I'm still alive,
and I just gotta move forward,
And that's how I looked at it.
Besides, she had her own
baby to look after now.
On May 6, 2005, Nejdra
gave birth to a daughter.
She named her Samani.
That was the best thing
that happened to her.
She loves her.
To have a daughter
that's just like you
is the one thing she could've
ever asked for.
And eventually
that daughter
and the revelations
around her birth
would lead Nejdra to uncover
the secrets of her own birth.
I thank God that
she had a daughter
so that she could find me.
In 2005,
the girl called Nejdra

was 17 years old,
living in Bridgeport,
Connecticut,
with her new daughter, Samani.
She'd found out
that the woman she had always
called Mom, Ann Pettway,
in fact was not her mother.
Still, as she graduated
from high school
and moved out on her own,
she kept up a relationship
with Ann
and with the entire
Pettway family.

In 2009, she moved
near Atlanta,
where more members
of the Pettway family lived.
I just wanted a new atmosphere
for me and my daughter.
Nejdra found a job as an
assistant in a hair salon,
and she worked to build a life
for herself and her daughter.
She's a very down-to-earth...
strict mom.

P- e-n-r... So...

- P-e...

- Yeah.

It's cut off
so I read the rest.
She makes sure Samani
does her homework.
She makes sure she's on point
with everything she needs to do.
She's actually
a great mother.
But being a mother
made Nejdra wonder
about her own mother.
Wait, don't tell me... um...
Some days I wake up
and look at my daughter

and wonder,
"Who do I look like?"
Every so often,
she would trawl the Internet
looking for clues.
Mainly around July,
the summertime,
when my birthday come around...
'cause I already knew
that my birthday
wasn't the date
that I was born on.
Still intensely private,
she told no one
what she was doing.
That's something
I guess that she harbored,
which I know ate her up inside.
That was a journey that Nejdra
had to search and endure
on her own.
But in the fall of 2010,
Nejdra asked her aunt
Cassandra for help.
She was like,
"You know,
"I still want to find my mom
"and see who my family is. "
And I said, "If you want me
to help you, I'll help you. "
I think that was a chapter
in her life
that she needed to complete
in order to move forward
with her life.
Neither of them
thought about
what finding out the truth
would mean for Ann Pettway...
...the woman who
raised Nejdra.
The week before Christmas,
they began to search
for answers.

Nejdra had always looked
for stories
of missing children
from Connecticut,
since Ann had told her
she was born in New Haven.
This time, she decided
to cast a wider net.
I was just reading
through articles
about African-Americans,
Hispanics...
anything that was missing
around the New England area,
and I came across
that baby picture.
I thought it looked like
it could be me.
And just how the dates
were adding up...
it was a little
close to my birthday,
so I got kinda stuck
on the whole concept of it...
everything about the whole
article and the picture.
The picture she found
was of Carlina White,
stolen as a baby
from Harlem Hospital
in August 1987.
And I'm like,
"Auntie,
Don't you think
this look like me?"
It look like her,
but the only thing that was
in question for me was the hair.
It seemed like too much hair.
The picture was on
the web site
of the National Center for
Missing and Exploited children,
which had followed

Carlina's case for years.
Nejdra called
the center's hotline
and spoke to Jordan Wood.
She had strong suspicions.
I'm explaining to her
my whole story.
There were problems
with her birth certificate
and her other documents,
so that was her main concern
and her main reason for feeling
that she was possibly abducted
as an infant.
She just said,
"I feel that my parents
"are still out there
looking for me,
"not knowing that I'm going
by another name
and another social
security number. "
Nejdra did not tell Jordan
that she had seen the picture
of Carlina White.
I don't know exactly if that
was me in that picture.
I just called to see
if someone could match it up
and just let me know.
I could definitely hear
a lot of frustration
in her voice.
She had gone to other agencies
before she came to us,
and she hadn't gotten anywhere,
um, so, you know,
out of frustration,
she said, "I... I don't know
who I am. "
Jordan took Nejdra's information
and a complete physical
description
and passed it to the

center's analysts.
We knew, based upon
Netty's age,
that we could rule out
cases prior to 1987.
But then we began to look
at a wide range of cases
subsequent to 1987.
The child could've been taken
when she was
and not have any memory of her...
of her birth parents.
Finally, the analysts came up
with what they believed
was the best match...
Carlina White.
On January 4, 2011,
a caseworker called Joy White,
Carlina's mother.
I was at work
when he called me,
and I was like,
"You found my daughter?"
So I left my desk,
and I went downstairs
and I just started crying,
and I started screaming.
The caseworker sent pictures
of the girl they'd identified
as Carlina
to Joy and Carlina's father, Carl.
And when he emailed
me those pictures,
I sat there and I cried.
She looked just like Joy
used to look like in the day.
Then I called Joy up...
I said, "Joy. "
She said, "Yeah"...
I said, "Joy,
she look like
she could be our daughter. "
And then Joy got another call.
And she said, "Hi, Mom,"

and that touched me.
She had me on
speaker... we talked.
My aunts was
in the background yellin',
saying "come home"...
they knew it was me.
Nobody couldn't
believe it.
We were all in here
going crazy... so happy.
Joy notified
the New York City
police department.
I said, "Hello,
my name is Joy White,
"and I'm the mother
of Carlina White
"that was
missin' in 1987,
and she have been found. "
In January 2011,
more than 23 years after
a baby named Carlina White
was stolen from Harlem Hospital,
she was reunited with her
birth parents, Joy and Carl.
Okay, big smile.
I was nervous...
I was definitely nervous.
You want some bread
for that pasta?
She flew up here
from Atlanta,
her and my granddaughter,
and I made sure that, uh,
all the family was here.
They... all the...
all my family came over,
and we cooked,
and we just enjoyed each other.
Look, we go, um, forehead
and everything over here.
Carlina, she was a sweet,

adorable, beautiful girl,
And right away I seen Carl,
her father's, eyes.
"Oh God," I said, "you
got your father's eyes. "
So I hugged her,
and I'm like, "Oh my God. "
She saw tears
comin' from my eyes.
I said, "I can't
believe this. "
Joy comin' downstairs,
and Joy said, "That's our baby. "
And I say, "Yeah,
that's our baby. "
At the time, the reunion
was everything
they had hoped for.
When she was here,
it was like, uh,
nothin' never happened,
like she was never lost.
I didn't feel anything
else but happiness.
She would say to me, like,
"Why're you staring
at me like that?"
I don't think that she
understood
how much I missed her,
and I couldn't believe
that she was in front of me,
and it was just, oh God...
it was just so unbelievable.
The whole thing
is unbelievable.
But after the reunion...
...problems quickly developed.
The story of the young woman
who discovered her true identity
became big news.
Now to an unbelievable
reunion...
of Georgia

had long suspected she
wasn't related
to the people who raised her.
By the time she was
headed home to Atlanta,
where she lived,
the media had descended.
I think she was
a little overwhelmed,
and I think she was
a little spooked
by the attention.
The media attention
had another consequence.
The Pettway family, who
she'd grown up with as Nejdra,
now heard the whole story.
I found out about it on the news.
My emotions were so mixed up.
I was sad.
I was happy that she got
the answers that she wanted.
I was... it was just a bunch of...
a ball of emotions all in me.
Everybody was really happy
for her,
and they told her,
"You found your family,
but we'll still be
your family also. "
Once I did reach out,
they said that nothing
really changed for them.
They still loved me
the same way.
I'm still their cousin.
But there was
still a big question:
What would happen
to Ann Pettway,
whom authorities believed
was the one
who took baby Carlina
from Harlem Hospital?

When police went looking
for her in North Carolina,
where she'd moved,
she was gone.
Her sister says she wanted
to bring her 13-year-old son
to be with her family
in Bridgeport Connecticut.
They make it out
to be like she was
some crazed animal
or something like that,
and... and it wasn't like that.
She knew she had to go and take
care of her responsibilities,
and that's what she went
to go do.

On January 23, 2011,
Ann turned herself in
to authorities in Bridgeport.
She gave a statement saying
she had caused a lot of pain,
but she pled "not guilty"
to the kidnapping charge
brought against her.

She's upset.

Um, she's concerned
about the impact this has
on all the members
of her family.

For every court hearing,
members of the Pettway family
and Carlina White's family
were on hand.

She act like nothin'
never happened,
like she didn't do
anything, and, um,
she have no remorse whatsoever.

My stomach feels sick
when I see her.

But for Carlina,
who was raised by Ann,
the subject

was more complicated.
I would just like to know
what's the reason behind it.
I want to know her side
of the story,
because I don't know her side.
Watching the woman who
raised her face jail time
was difficult,
especially because she was
the one who set it in motion.
I didn't acknowledge that
she was gonna go to jail,
and get taken away,
you know, from my brother,
and they're separated,
and now he has to come up
without his mom.
I'm-a speak from my heart.
If I was able to give her
another chance, I would.
Her serving time is...
not gonna do much.
The disagreement
over what should happen
to Ann Pettway
caused a serious rift.
I think that they
should lock her up,
and, um, throw
away the key.
I think that she
needs to do life, uh,
for what she did to me.
The anger that they givin' off
is only satisfyin' them.
It's like, you doin' that,
not carin'
about how I'm feelin'.
And other disagreements developed.
At the reunion,
a story came out
that Ann had mistreated Carlina
as she was growing up.

She told me that she
used to beat her with a shoe
and leave a shoe print
on her face.
And, um, when she
told me that, I cried.
For someone else to take
my daughter
and to treat her that way,
you know,
that was very hurtful.
The story caused a crisis
in the Pettway family.
Me and Nejdra sat and cried,
and it hurt us so bad,
because it wasn't that bad.
She was loved...
she was not mistreated.
There was no abuse.
I don't look at it
as me being abused.
It's just, I guess, the words
that they put out there,
They take, you know,
what you say, mix it up
and make it sound
as how they want it to be.
And then there was
the question of money.
In a family where
no one had much,
it became a contentious issue.
The settlement that Joy and Carl
received from Harlem Hospital
had long since been spent.
Things were, uh, rocky,
with, you know,
far as, uh,
the financial situation.
Um, I have kids.
Carl have kids, and, um,
we used the money to live.
That was a choice
that we had to make at the time.

Carlina insisted it
didn't matter.
I could care less
about that money,
'cause I didn't have it
from the beginning.
I was searchin'
just to find who I was.
The situation, so promising
in January 2011,
fell apart quickly.
She went back home,
so we haven't seen her since.
As winter turned to spring,
there was no second reunion.
In fact, there was very
little communication.
Wow, it's like
I found her and, um,
but she's still lost.
It's eatin' Joy up inside
to know that her
daughter is alive,
and her daughter's
not with her.
Her daughter's turnin' back to
the people that's kidnapped her.
When people all
of a sudden are found,
then there's this great,
uh, brouhaha,
and excitement
and celebration,
there's sort of like
a halo effect that takes place,
and you believe everything's
gonna be great from now on,
but these are very difficult,
complicated issues.
They're not easily resolved.
Dr. Geoffrey Greif
has interviewed
many people who were
abducted as children,

and followed them
as they became adults.
He says the division
between Carlina and her
birth parents is typical.
There were a lot of people
I've interviewed
who did not know that they'd
even been kidnapped.
That would cause you to question
the previous 15 or 20 years
of your life,
because you don't know
what to believe anymore
when something that significant
has been told to you
that's not true.
For the birth parents,
there is a different set
of issues to reconcile.
All of the sudden,
they've received the child
back in their life,
and they are apt to treat
the child
as if the child was still
very young.
They have to step back
a long ways
and try and realize
who this person is now
and try and construct
a meaningful relationship
based on who the person is now,
not who they wish
the person could've been
had they raised her.
Joy White said that was
just what she wanted to do.
I was havin' trouble
when it first happened,
but I had to sit down
and I had to analyze everything
and now I feel really bad.

I feel sorry for her.
I feel bad for her,
because I know that she's going
through something emotion,
because I am too.
I'm her mother, and I'm going
through somethin' right now.
But building a relationship
would mean
accepting that her daughter
was still loyal
to the Pettway family.
I'm-a have a relationship
with that family,
and if y'all want
a relationship with me
y'all have to be
able to accept
that I'm still going to be
affiliated with that family.
I look at it as I should
be free to be able...
to speak to who I want
to speak to,
to consider who I want
to be my aunt,
want to be my uncle,
my cousins and my friends.
Even her name was an issue.
Legally, she was
changing it to Carlina,
but she said she
would always be Netty.
Nejdra and Carlina is like
in between two families,
so one side know Nejdra,
the other side
know Carlina.
So Netty is just me.
Go ahead, girl.
She was receiving help
from psychologists
at the National Center for
Missing and Exploited Children.

Netty is really a good person...
really a caring person
who is in the middle,
uh, of a... of a storm.
I mean, she goes from being
the mom of a 5-year-old
with questions about her history
to being in the center
of a media frenzy,
with everybody wanting
a piece of her
and everybody wanting
to talk to her
and use her
and manipulate her.
And she needs some time,
and some space,
and the ability to sort
through all of this.
We're trying to help her
do that.
I think that, um, one
day, she'll come along,
and she'll understand
what her real mother
is goin' through.
Carlina, listen.
You know your mother
and father love you.
We had a happy beginnin',
and we can still
make this happy.
We all want to see you.
You don't know how much love
you have from all of us.
Through it all,
the young woman who found
out she was Carlina White
said she was glad she did.
I look at every day
as a better day
for me to just wake up
and acknowledge
that I do know who I am.

I know who my parents are.
I'm good at just knowin' that.
And she, too,
hoped that someday,
she would share her life
with that family as well.