

= The Well @-@ Worn Lock =

" ' The Well @-@ Worn Lock " is the eighth episode of the first season of the American crime @-@ thriller television series Millennium . It premiered on the Fox network on December 20 , 1996 . The episode was written by series creator Chris Carter , and directed by Ralph Hemecker . " The Well @-@ Worn Lock " featured guest appearances by Paul Dooley and Lenore Zann .

Clinical social worker Catherine Black ( Megan Gallagher ) aids a family as they come to terms with the incestuous abuse they have suffered for decades . However , the father who is responsible still commands respect and political connections in the area , making the case a difficult one .

" The Well @-@ Worn Lock " is the third of seven Millennium episodes written by Carter . Hemecker would return to direct an episode in each of the show 's seasons . The episode opens with a quote from Robert Louis Stevenson , and features several actors who would reappear in unrelated roles in both Millennium and its sister series The X @-@ Files .

= = Plot = =

In Madison Park , Seattle , a family are gathered around the television . The mother leaves to go to bed , and the atmosphere in the room grows tense . The older of two sisters , Connie Bangs ( Michelle Joyner ) takes her sister Sara ? who is clearly much younger than she is ? to her bedroom and locks her in , warning her not to let her father inside . Connie runs out of the house , fighting off her father , and is later found wandering the streets confused . She is taken to clinical social worker Catherine Black ( Megan Gallagher ) , and admits that her father has been sexually abusing her for years .

However , given the length of time the abuse has been going on , Connie is afraid no one will believe her . The assistant district attorney assigned to the case , Rhonda Preshutski ( Christine Dunford ) agrees , believing the case to be weak . Child Protective Services cannot remove Sara from the household until Connie undergoes a psychiatric evaluation , although Black and police lieutenant Bob Bletcher ( Bill Smitrovich ) investigate the Bangs home to check up on the girl . The father , Joe Bangs ( Paul Dooley ) , chases them off as his wife watches detachedly . Bangs wields a degree of political clout in the community , and pressures the district attorney 's office to drop the case . Preshutski is furious with Black over the matter , until it is discovered from Connie 's medical exams that Sara is not her sister , but her daughter .

Black is later woken in her office by her husband Frank ( Lance Henriksen ) . She had fallen asleep there while trying to find a legal precedent to remove Sara from the Bangs home . Catherine visits Connie , who is staying with another sister , Ruthie ( Lenore Zann ) . Ruthie also reveals that their father had abused her , until she was sectioned following mental breakdown . Black is worried that Connie might be persuaded by her mother to drop the case .

Joe Bangs finds himself unable to have the case dropped , but Bletcher still feels that Black 's pursuit of it may end up costing her her job . However , Black knows she is doing the right thing and is determined to continue . Her fears for Sara are confirmed when it is discovered she and the elder Bangs have gone missing . Frank , an offender profiler , deduces that Bangs ' controlling personality would cause him to take his daughter somewhere he knows , and realizes that they will be in the family 's holiday cabin in the woods . A police manhunt begins , and Bangs is arrested without Sara coming to harm .

The case against Bangs is presented before a grand jury , and Black is afraid that Connie will be too afraid to testify . However , she manages to reveal the truth of her abuse to the court . Later , she is seen with the lock from her bedroom door ? which had previously been used by her father to lock them both inside ? which she throws into a river .

= = Production = =

" The Well @-@ Worn Lock " was the first of three Millennium episodes directed by Ralph Hemecker . Hemecker would later helm the second season 's " The Curse of Frank Black " , and the

third season episode " Exegesis " . The episode was written by series creator Chris Carter . Beyond creating the concept for Millennium , Carter would write a total of six other episodes for the series in addition to " The Well @-@ Worn Lock " ? three in the first season , and a further three in the third season .

Several of the actors in this episode have made other appearances in Millennium or series related to it . Michelle Joyner , who played abuse victim Connie Bangs , would later appear on Millennium 's sister show The X @-@ Files , starring in the seventh season episode " Chimera " . Guest star J. Douglas Stewart , who portrays Larry Bangs , later appeared in the second season episode " Monster " in an unrelated role . Fellow guest Sheila Moore , who played Clea Bangs , had previously made two appearances on The X @-@ Files , in the episodes " Deep Throat " and " Excelsis Dei " .

The episode opens with a quotation by Robert Louis Stevenson ? " The cruelest lies are often told in silence " . The line is taken from *Virginibus Puerisque , and Other Papers* , an 1881 collection of essays .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" The Well @-@ Worn Lock " was first broadcast on the Fox Network on December 20 , 1996 , and earned a Nielsen rating of 6 @. @ 8 , meaning that roughly 6 @. @ 8 percent of all television @-@ equipped households were tuned into the episode .

The episode received mixed reviews from critics . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book *Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen* , rated the episode two stars out of five , noting that it " turns the complex into something easy and obvious " . Shearman and Pearson felt that the character of Sara Bangs was " treated as an object by the episode " , and that Carter 's script " takes a very real issue and trivialises it " by presenting such an " open and shut case " . However , they noted that the episode was " very well acted " , and was " clearly well intentioned " . The A.V. Club 's Todd VanDerWerff rated the episode a B + , noting that it " tries some interesting things with the Millennium template " . VanDerWerff felt that several of the episode 's scenes " are as horrifying as anything I 've seen on TV " , adding that " they accomplish much of this through the mere power of suggestion " . However , he also noted that the character of Joe Bangs was too simplistic , claiming that he is " so damned blatant about what he does that it eventually stops being horrifying and becomes preposterous " . Bill Gibron , writing for *DVD Talk* , rated the episode 2 @. @ 5 out of 5 , finding that its focus on legal issues and counselling " fragments the tone and atmosphere " built by previous episodes . However , Gibron felt that " Carter 's script handles the horrifying subject very well " .