

Ghost Whisperer

"A Ghost of a Crime"

Written by

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GHOST WHISPERER
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TEASER

INT. SAME AS IT NEVER WAS - FRONT ROOM - DAY 1

A CEDAR BED CHEST

With a rag, MELINDA dusts the smooth surface; its resin bears the painted imprint of an ANKH. She uses her other hand to speak into a cell phone.

MELINDA
(on phone)
Okay, dinner at Schiavone's, seven?
Wear something nice.

DELIA looks up at Melinda from behind the cash register.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Looking forward to it.

She hangs up. Delia makes a teasing face.

DELIA
So, hot date?

MELINDA
No-o. Just a quiet night out.

DELIA
Uh, huh. At first.

MELINDA
Get your mind out of the gutter.

As Melinda blushes, Delia looks across the shop.

DELIA
How's that coming?

Over by the far wall, NED coughs amid a flurry of dust. He holds up a wet rag, smeared with soot matching that already on his face.

NED
How long do I have to do this?

DELIA
Until I can see my reflection.

NED

Aw, come on.

DELIA

You want me to pay for that new stereo system? Keep dusting.

MELINDA

Hey Ned, keep up the good work and I'll bring you a cold drink.

DELIA

Don't bribe him.

Melinda trades half-smiles with Delia, as Ned sighs.

The front door CHIMES.

ANITA TORRES, 32, Latina, in good shape, enters. She carries a German CUCKOO CLOCK. Melinda approaches, warmly.

ANITA

Excuse me, is one of you Ms. Gordon?

MELINDA

That would be me.

Anita balances the clock against her chest with one hand, shakes Melinda's hand with the other.

ANITA

I live in Eastfield. A friend recommended your shop to me. I don't suppose you do restoration?

Melinda and Delia take a closer look at the cute wooden bird. It's a bright yellow canary, juttied outward in a stationary position. The varnish peels from the clock's edges.

DELIA

For this little sweet pea, I take it?

ANITA

I've been meaning to get it refinished for years.

MELINDA

And your songbird recently stopped crooning?

ANITA

Suddenly her chirp became a squawk, and now she won't go back inside.

MELINDA

Well, unfortunately I don't do repairs --

Anita's face falls.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

But I know someone who does. I'll get you his number.

ANITA

Great!

Melinda fishes around behind the cash register. Delia continues to admire Anita's cuckoo clock.

DELIA

Adorable. Family heirloom?

ANITA

It was my mother's.
(quickly)
Do you know a lot about clocks?

DELIA

Only what I remember from my honeymoon in Switzerland.

Melinda looks up; she sees a DERANGED-LOOKING MAN standing a few feet behind Anita, unnoticed by either Anita or Delia -- obviously a ghost.

ANITA

I've always wanted to visit Europe.
Do you go often?

The scowling man, Caucasian, late-forties, dark facial hair, wears an orange prison jumpsuit. He suddenly SHIFTS his body closer to Anita.

DELIA

(chuckles)
Oh, I haven't been back there in ages.

ANITA

I wish I could travel more. But with the mess they've gotten our economy into --

The ghost notices Melinda's stare, shoots her a hostile gaze.

DELIA

I hear you. I'm in realty -- my office is next door.

ANITA

And I'm only putting down the money
to get this baby fixed because...
my mother loved it. And I don't
have much else to remember her by.

Delia nods, sympathetically.

ANITA (CONT'D)

(to Melinda)

So, did you find that phone number?

A distracted Melinda returns her attention to the customer.
Ned looks up from his chores, notices Melinda's constraint.

MELINDA

Oh, yeah... sorry. I seem to have
misplaced it --

Melinda watches the ghost, whose eyes are still trained on
Anita and the clock.

Ned slowly approaches them, raises his eyebrows at Melinda's
frustration.

ANITA

Well, why don't I leave you my
card?

Anita pulls a BUSINESS CARD out of her purse, hands the card
to Melinda across the counter. Delia can't stop doting over
the cuckoo clock.

DELIA

For what it's worth, your mother
had impeccable taste.

The ghost's booming voice REVERBERATES...

GHOST

Don't say that!

His angered energy KNOCKS Anita's cuckoo clock off the table.
Anita shrieks.

Ned dives, catches the clock with his arms just in time,
before it can crash to the floor.

NED

Got it!

Delia exhales. Melinda cringes. Anita clutches Ned's hands,
gratefully.

ANITA

Oh, my hero! Thank you!

NED

No prob.

Delia beams at her son.

DELIA

You, sir, have just added one-hundred bucks to your stereo fund.

Ned smiles. Melinda glares at the ghost, whose unrepentant face doesn't break.

ANITA

I'll consider that a sign. I'd better get going.

Anita regroups, fully takes the clock back from Ned.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Ms. Gordon, I'll be hearing from you soon?

MELINDA

You definitely will.

The ghost VANISHES. Melinda's eyes trail Anita as she heads out the door.

ANITA

Thank you again for your help. All of you.

Anita exits the shop. Melinda emerges from behind the cash register, hurries to the front window.

DELIA

Melinda?

THROUGH THE WINDOW

Anita walks down the sidewalk, to where she's parked her beige sedan outside of Melinda's store.

The ghost REAPPEARS next to Anita, who loads her cuckoo clock into the backseat. Melinda continues to stare.

Delia and Ned join Melinda at the window. They watch Anita.

DELIA'S AND NED'S P.O.V.

Anita starts up her engine, pulls her car out of the spot. She drives away through Grandview's village square.

RESUME

Melinda doesn't break her frown.

NED

It was a ghost, wasn't it?

Melinda's silence confirms it.

DELIA

So the clock... that was a ghost?

MELINDA

And not a very nice one.

The ghost REAPPEARS across the street. He stands on the sidewalk, stares back at Melinda with stony eyes.

A BLOODY KNIFE in one of his hands. More blood covers his fingers and arms. He turns the knife on himself, thrusts it into his gut.

Melinda gasps.

DELIA

Melinda... is he still there?

The ghost VANISHES again.

Melinda moves away from the window, her own hands shaking. She responds, quietly.

MELINDA

And out for blood.

Delia and Ned look at Melinda, concerned. OFF the Ghost Whisperer, still recovering from shock --

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. MELINDA AND JIM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT 1

JIM pours Melinda a mug of steaming chocolate from kettle.
Melinda types on her laptop.

JIM
Some hot cocoa to soothe your soul.

MELINDA
It's not my soul I'm worried about.

She blows on the cocoa. Young AIDEN appears next to Jim,
holds out a mug.

AIDEN
I'll have some.

Jim pours his son a cup. They take seats next to Melinda.

JIM
Any luck?

MELINDA
None.

MELINDA'S LAPTOP

The "PENTHIUS" search engine displays a number of results on
"ANITA TORRES."

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Anita seems to keep to herself.
Most of what I can find has to do
with her work as an accountant.

She hands Anita's business card to Jim, sips her cocoa.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Nothing I can't already read about
on her business website.

Jim looks down at their son -- mouth buried in his mug.

JIM
Aidan, buddy, why don't you go
watch some TV before bed.

AIDEN
I know, I know... grown-up stuff.

MELINDA
I'll be in to read to you in an
hour, okay? Promise.

Melinda tussles Aiden's hair, as he scampers into the living room. She turns back to Jim.

JIM

Think the ghost is related to her?

MELINDA

It's possible.

JIM

So maybe when he died, Anita kept her name out of the news? Especially if he has a different last name.

MELINDA

The ghost targeted her clock. It belonged to Anita's mother, so there must be some connection.

JIM

An ex-lover, or maybe a stepfather?

MELINDA

He didn't seem too chatty at the store, and I can't exactly tell Anita she's being chased by a psychotic spirit.

JIM

At least not until you get to know her better.

Melinda ponders that thought.

INT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - EASTFIELD - DAY 2

Melinda enters. A RECEPTIONIST sits at a front desk.

RECEPTIONIST

Can I help you?

MELINDA

I'm looking for Anita Torres.

RECEPTIONIST

Do you have an appointment?

MELINDA

Um, no... I --

Anita strolls out from behind a cubicle, catches sight of Melinda in the waiting area. She brightens.

ANITA

Oh, hi! Ms. Gordon --

MELINDA

Please, call me Melinda.

ANITA

Melinda, then. What brings you here?

MELINDA

I found Pete's number.

She pulls out a business card, hands it to Anita.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Just wanted to make sure you got it in person.

ANITA

Thank you, Melinda. Hopefully he can resuscitate my little birdie.

Melinda chuckles. Anita returns the facial pleasantries.

ANITA (CONT'D)

You didn't need to come all the way out here.

MELINDA

Oh, it's not that far. And I wanted a break from the store...

Anita gestures for Melinda to follow her. They move behind the cubicles into:

A MODEST OFFICE AREA

Anita's desk, computer, and fax/copier are set up in the small, simple space.

MELINDA

You've got a nice place here. Low-key, but nice.

ANITA

I never saw any need to rent out a huge office. Can I get you some coffee? Or tea, maybe?

MELINDA

Tea would be great.

Anita reaches for a kettle plugged into the wall. Melinda takes that opportunity to examine Anita's desk.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

I think you'll be satisfied.

She glances over at Anita, nervously, but sees that Anita is preoccupied with pouring the tea.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Pete does great work.

Melinda picks up a FRAMED PHOTO from Anita's desk -- a shot of ANITA AND A YOUNG BOY, tan skin, approximately nine years old. The boy has dark, almost black, locks of curly hair.

ANITA

How did you meet him?

MELINDA

Oh, I think it was at a roadshow.

Melinda holds up the photo. Anita turns, hands Melinda a cup.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Your son?

ANITA

His name's Charlie.

MELINDA

That's the name of Delia's late husband.

(beat)

I've got one of my own. Aiden.
He's six.

She takes in the image of the young boy.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Charlie's adorable. Does he get any of his looks from his father?

ANITA

I'm not married.

MELINDA

Oh. I'm sorry.

ANITA

Don't be. We're better off.

Melinda points to another photo: a BRUNETTE WOMAN, late-fifties, Caucasian, dressed in a formal suit.

MELINDA

Is she your mother?

ANITA

Yes.

(quickly)

You know, I just realized that I have a client expecting me to call him back within the hour.

MELINDA

Oh, of course. I didn't mean --

The ghost REAPPEARS. His intense eyes lock onto Anita.

GHOST

Redemption.

MELINDA

-- um, I wasn't trying to --

GHOST

There will be redemption!

Melinda cringes, as wind emanating from the ghost's emotions WHIPS AT her face. Anita looks at Melinda in confusion.

ANITA

Are you all right?

MELINDA

I'm just going to go. Thank you for the tea.

Melinda sets down the teacup, high-tails it out of there.

The ghost takes one more long stare at Anita, DISAPPEARS.

EXT. ACCOUNTING OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Melinda leans against the building, dials her cell phone.

MELINDA

(on phone)

Eli, it's Melinda. Can you run a search on an Anita Torres?

(beat)

She's a CPA in Eastfield.

Melinda places her hand on her stomach.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Yeah, definitely a haunting.

Melinda looks up, sees the ghost standing across the street. He watches her make the call.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

(on phone)

And see if you can find out
anything about her family.
Especially her mother.

She looks up again. He continues to stare, DISAPPEARS.

INT. ROCKLAND UNIVERSITY - ELI'S OFFICE - DAY 2

ELI sits with Melinda at his desk, in front of his PC.

ELI

Anita Torres, daughter of State
Senator Charlene Hunt.

MELINDA

The mother kept her maiden name.

ELI

Very common among those crazy
liberal types. Which Senator Hunt
apparently was.

He CLICKS onto Charlene's Hunt's archived STATE POLITICAL
PROFILE, complete with a political HEADSHOT.

ELI (CONT'D)

Sponsored bills for same-sex
marriage, stem cell research,
single-payer health care. Rush
Limbaugh's nightmare.

MELINDA

How did she die?

ELI

Home invasion, according to the
online reports.

MELINDA

I think I remember hearing about
that on the news. What was it --
about five years ago?

ELI

Eight, actually. Fall of '06. I'm
surprised it didn't make more
headlines.

MELINDA

Yeah, I'd always wondered what --

The ghost APPEARS next to Eli. The computer begins to SHORT
OUT, and the screen GOES BLACK.

ELI
What the -- ?

GHOST
Redemption.

Eli reacts to the voice. Melinda glares at the ghost. Eli moves only his eyes, his head practically frozen.

ELI
Is that him?

MELINDA
In the flesh. Or not, as the case may be.

She raises her voice to the ghost.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Who are you? What do you want?

The ghost just glares back at her.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
I can't help unless you talk to me.

ELI
I'd talk to her if I were you, bub.

MELINDA
What do you think you're going to get from Anita?

GHOST
Redemption.

ELI
(to Melinda)
Is that the only word he knows?

Melinda shushes Eli, swipes his shoulder.

MELINDA
She's trying to raise her son -- to make a life for herself.

The ghost doesn't flinch.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
You have to cross over.

GHOST
Not until she gives me redemption.

MELINDA

What did she do to you?

The ghost releases another GUST OF WIND, which blows several papers off Eli's desk.

ELI

Hey! I haven't graded those yet!

The ghost DISAPPEARS. Melinda gives Eli a helpless look.

INT. SAME AS IT NEVER WAS - FRONT ROOM - NIGHT 2

Melinda finishes organizing cash in the register. Delia brings a box of knickknacks from the back room.

DELIA

So what do you think he means by redemption?

MELINDA

Maybe he has some sort of grudge against Anita? A family feud that never got resolved?

DELIA

He wants her to apologize for something she did?

MELINDA

Or something Anita's mother did -- when she was alive.

DELIA

I can't believe I don't remember hearing about her murder. Senator Charlene Hunt.

MELINDA

Well, she never represented our district. Obviously, Anita moved upstate to escape those memories.

Melinda flips the "CLOSED" sign so it reads "OPEN," then sees ANITA'S FACE staring back at her through the glass pane door.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Anita?

Melinda opens the door. Anita enters, carries a bundle.

ANITA

Hope I'm not intruding.

MELINDA

No, not at all.
(turns)
You remember Delia?

Delia and Anita exchange waves. Anita extends the package to Melinda: a small GIFT BASKET with tea and cookies.

ANITA

My receptionist told me you'd left a message last night, after I'd gone home. Apologizing.

Melinda smiles, accepts the tea basket.

ANITA (CONT'D)

And I felt bad you never got to finish your tea.

MELINDA

Wow, thanks. You didn't need to --

ANITA

I wanted you to know how much I've appreciated all your help.

Delia wanders over to get a closer look, salacious.

DELIA

Is that biscotti I see?

Melinda playfully swats Delia's hand away from the parcel.

MELINDA

Anita, this is so --

ANITA

And I'm the one who should apologize. I know I was kind of cold to you yesterday.

MELINDA

It's okay.

ANITA

It's just... still painful.

MELINDA

I understand. Were you close?

Anita takes a long pause.

ANITA

No.

Melinda nods, sympathetically.

ANITA (CONT'D)
That cuckoo clock is one of the few
things --

She swallows.

ANITA (CONT'D)
Now I'll still be able to keep a
piece of her with me.

An awkward silence.

MELINDA
Well, I have some new inventory to
sort through. If you ever want to
talk, feel free to come by.

ANITA
Thank you.

DELIA
I'll walk you out.

Delia amicably begins to escort Anita toward the exit.

MELINDA
Thanks so much for the basket.

Anita nods, smiles shyly.

As Delia and Anita head toward the village square, Melinda's
cell phone RINGS. She checks the Caller ID, then answers it.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Eli.

INT. ELI'S OFFICE

Eli leans back in his desk chair.

ELI
I.T. sent someone over. Finally
got my computer running again.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

MELINDA
And?

ELI
It took some digging, but I found
the man convicted of killing
Senator Hunt.

ELI (CONT'D)

They kept it pretty low-profile,
considering who she was.

MELINDA

What's his name?

ELI

Trent Walters.

(beat)

One of those right-wing fanatics.
Apparently resented the senator's
efforts to legalize late-term
abortions, took it to the extreme.

He clicks his mouse.

ELI (CONT'D)

Melinda, he was sentenced to death
row. I'm sending you his picture.

Melinda waits a second for the download to appear on her
phone screen. The INCOMING FILE APPEARS, she clicks on it,
and...

A DIGITAL IMAGE -- a mug shot of the deranged-looking ghost.
Trent!

MELINDA

It's him!

Melinda looks up, gasps.

Trent stands in the shop, a few feet away from her. Glaring
a deadly glare.

ELI

He was executed by lethal
injection... two weeks ago.

Melinda lowers the phone, locks her scared gaze onto Trent.
Eli's VOICE can still be faintly heard on the other end.

ELI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Melinda? Melinda? Melinda, are
you there?

Melinda and Trent stare each other down -- he's stoic, she's
shell-shocked.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. ANITA'S HOUSE - SIDEWALK - DAY 2

Late-afternoon. Melinda and Jim sit in Melinda's car, stare at the front of Anita's house.

JIM
So this ghost --

MELINDA
Trent Walters.

JIM
Why didn't he tell you what he thinks Anita did to him?

MELINDA
It hasn't been that long.
Sometimes spirits need time to figure out what's keeping them earthbound.

JIM
He's a murderer, Melinda.

MELINDA
I'll be fine.

Jim looks down at Melinda's abdomen.

JIM
Both of you?

MELINDA
We'll be fine.

Jim looks doubtful.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
I won't let him hurt us.

Melinda opens the passenger side door. Jim grabs her arm.

JIM
What are you going to tell her?

MELINDA
The truth.
(beat)
If it was me, wouldn't you want me to know I was being haunted?

JIM
I'm here if you need me.

Jim releases her. Melinda walks up the driveway to Anita's front door.

PORCH

Melinda rings the doorbell. The door opens.

A YOUNG BOY, 9, a curly mop of dark hair -- the same kid from the photo on Anita's desk -- swings open the door. Charlie.

MELINDA

Hi there.

CHARLIE

Hi, who are you?

MELINDA

My name's Melinda. I'm a friend of your mom. Is she home?

CHARLIE

Yes.

(turns)

Mom!

INT. ANITA'S HOUSE - FOYER

Melinda steps inside, sees Anita running down the hall. Anita wears large rubber gloves on her hands.

ANITA

Melinda.

(to her son)

Charlie, what's our rule about answering the door?

CHARLIE

(sheepish)

Ask who it is first.

ANITA

And wait for me.

Anita takes off her gloves, places her hands on Charlie's shoulders. They both look at Melinda.

ANITA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I was just in the middle of cleaning.

MELINDA

That's okay. I wanted to check to see if you'd gotten ahold of Pete.

ANITA

I did. He's repairing my sweetie-
pie even as we speak.

She studies Melinda's stressed face, frowns slightly.

ANITA (CONT'D)

You could have just called.

The phone suddenly begins to RING from Anita's kitchen.

MELINDA

Speaking of which.

ANITA

I'll get that.

Anita heads for the kitchen. Melinda smiles at Charlie.

CHARLIE

How do you know my mom?

MELINDA

She came into my store. To get
your grandmother's clock fixed.

CHARLIE

Oh.

(beat)

I never met my grandma.

MELINDA

I'm sorry to hear that.

CHARLIE

She died when I was a baby. My
grandpa died before that.

MELINDA

Charlie, do you know what happened
to them?

CHARLIE

No. Mom never talks about it.

MELINDA

What about your dad?

CHARLIE

(sadly)

I don't have a dad.

Anita returns from the kitchen, feigns a cheery smile.

ANITA
Telemarketers.

MELINDA
Anita --

ANITA
You know, I was about to start
dinner. Maybe you could come back
another time?

Trent APPEARS, stands in Anita's blind spot. He looks stoic.
Melinda gasps.

ANITA (CONT'D)
Melinda, are you okay?

TRENT
Her family. Killers.

Melinda can't speak.

ANITA
Melinda?

TRENT
No conscience. How could I ignore
that?

Melinda backs away.

MELINDA
I -- I need to go now.

ANITA
I think that would be a good idea.

She pulls Charlie close to her.

EXT. ANITA'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY

Trent REAPPEARS, blocks Melinda's path.

MELINDA
Why are you bothering them?

TRENT
I had no other choice.

MELINDA
You "had" to kill her mother?

TRENT
I had nothing left.

Anita peeks out from behind her window curtains.

ANITA'S P.O.V.

Melinda appears to be talking to thin air, in the middle of the driveway.

MELINDA

What do you mean you had nothing left?

RESUME MELINDA AND TRENT

TRENT

Ask her. She knows.

MELINDA

Don't you think it still hurts her to talk about what you did?

TRENT

It always hurts.

Trent DISAPPEARS, leaves Melinda standing alone in the driveway. She shares concerned stares with Jim -- still in the car -- from a distance.

INT. SAME AS IT NEVER WAS - BASEMENT - NIGHT 2 (DUSK)

Melinda and Delia sort through inventory.

MELINDA

I think she heard me talking to him about the grandparents. And Charlie's dad.

DELIA

Don't take it personally. As a mother, she's going to be protective.

(beat)

When Ned lost his father, he wouldn't talk about it for weeks.

MELINDA

I guess that makes sense.

DELIA

It was hard enough for me to get through it. But to see your child suffering like that...

MELINDA

Well, I'm still no closer to finding out what Trent wants.

Delia shakes her head, ventures a guess.

DELIA
Revenge? If he murdered in cold
blood... and he was executed two
weeks ago, right?

Melinda nods. Her cell phone RINGS; she answers it.

MELINDA
(on phone)
Eli, what's up?

INT. ELI'S OFFICE

Eli speaks on his end of the phone.

ELI
Hope I'm not interrupting your
dinner.

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

MELINDA
No, I'm at the shop. Delia's
helping me finish this inventory
before the weekend begins.

ELI
Well, I've been running Anita's
name through every database I can
access. Finally hit paydirt.

MELINDA
What did you find?

ELI
For the last five years she's made
small contributions to EmanciPAC.
Not huge clumps of dough, but
nothing too shabby either.

MELINDA
I don't understand. What's
EmanciPAC?

ELI
A right-wing organization. Mostly
business owners and religious
lobbyists.

MELINDA
What are their top issues?

ELI

Cleaning up pop culture, lowering taxes, and -- drumroll, please -- overturning *Roe v. Wade*.

MELINDA

So --

ELI

Anita's a conservative. Probably pro-life.

MELINDA

And I'm sure that put her at odds with her mother.

ELI

Anita donated to EmanciPAC in her firm's name -- obviously so it wouldn't show up as an individual contribution.

MELINDA

Mmm. That's ethical.

ELI

I'm going to see what else I can dig up. Any luck with her?

MELINDA

Not much. Keep me posted.

END PHONE CONVERSATION

Melinda hangs up, turns to Delia.

DELIA

So what did he find out?

MELINDA

Anita keeps her political involvement as quiet as possible -- but her beliefs were diametrically opposed to her mother's.

DELIA

Must have made for some tense family holidays.

MELINDA

Senator Hunt was trying to expand abortion laws, so Anita might have seen that as enough reason to stop talking to her.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

(beat)

Or to keep her away from Charlie.

DELIA

But I thought Walters admitted that he killed Anita's mother because of her views.

MELINDA

He did -- which makes it all the more confusing what he could possibly have against Anita.

DELIA

Unless...

Melinda raises her eyebrows at Delia, motions for her to continue.

DELIA (CONT'D)

Do you think... Anita may have been involved?

MELINDA

In her own mother's death?

DELIA

Or trying to cover it up. We don't know their family's history.

MELINDA

So you think Anita might have been an accomplice --

DELIA

-- and Walters resents her for getting away with it?

Melinda sighs, not a trace of clarity on her face.

INT. MELINDA AND JIM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 2

Around midnight. Melinda and Jim lie in bed, asleep.

MELINDA'S P.O.V. (NIGHTMARE)

Anita and Charlie both scream through darkness.

A FLASH

Trent's face, also shadowed by the dark.

TRENT

Redemption!

ANOTHER FLASH

Trent's hand stabs a female chest. Blood SPURTS from the fabric.

A female SCREAM.

RESUME BEDROOM SCENE

Melinda shoots straight up in bed, screams.

MELINDA
Redemption!

Jim also wakes up, protectively grabs his wife.

JIM
Melinda, what happened?

MELINDA
Nothing good.

Jim holds her close.

EXT. ANITA'S HOUSE - PORCH - DAY 3

Melinda approaches the steps. She sees Trent APPEAR; he RAPS against the wall of Anita's house next to the doorbell.

TRENT
I will not be ignored!

Melinda scurries up to him. Trent continues his POUNDING.

MELINDA
Trent, stop it! Leave them alone!

TRENT
Anita!

MELINDA
I know what you did.

Trent stops pounding, turns to her.

TRENT
You, of all people, should understand.

His eyes wander down to Melinda's stomach.

MELINDA
What I understand is that you have to move past this.

The front door begins to open.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
You have to leave them alone,
Trent. Holding on like this won't
help anyone.

Trent VANISHES.

Melinda turns, notices the main door OPEN behind the screen.

Anita, just out of bed, stares back at Melinda through the
screen -- Anita looks absolutely horrified.

Panic flashes across Melinda's face. Oops.

ANITA
What are you doing?

Melinda sees Anita's expression change from horrified to
appalled.

Uh, oh.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. ANITA'S PORCH - DAY 3

Anita stares at Melinda from behind the locked screen door.

ANITA

Why are you harassing me and my son?

MELINDA

I'm not. I just... wanted to make sure you were okay.

ANITA

Why wouldn't we be?

MELINDA

Where's Charlie?

ANITA

He's taking a shower. I'm bringing him to karate practice in a couple of hours.

(beat)

Not that it's any of your business.

MELINDA

Anita --

ANITA

Now if you'll please leave.

She begins to close the door.

MELINDA

(hastily)

I know that Trent Walters killed your mother.

Anita freezes, shoots daggers at Melinda through the screen.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

And you're feeling guilty because you and your mother never got along, right?

ANITA

Why are you doing this to me?
Digging into my family's past!
Can't you just let it stay buried?

MELINDA

No, I can't.

She takes a deep breath.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
I see ghosts. Spirits of the
deceased.

ANITA
I beg your pardon?

MELINDA
They communicate with me. I help
them settle unfinished business so
they can move on.

ANITA
You're crazy.

MELINDA
And the spirit of Trent Walters has
been appearing to me.

Anita looks disgusted; her tone is snide.

ANITA
To brag about what he did?

MELINDA
He's trying to get a message to
you, but I haven't --

ANITA
Even if I believed you -- which I
don't -- I wouldn't want to hear
anything that monster has to say.
(beat)
Or anything you have to say, for
that matter.

MELINDA
Please, you need to --

ANITA
Don't come back here. Ever again!

She slams the door in Melinda's face.

INT. MELINDA AND JIM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 3

Melinda spoons yogurt into her mouth from a small bowl. Jim
sits at the table in front of Melinda's laptop.

MELINDA
Any luck on your end? Because I'm
coming up empty.

JIM

Fortunately, the city hasn't disabled my old password yet.

MELINDA

So did Trent have any criminal history before he killed the senator?

JIM

Only one minor arrest for protesting on private property, when he was younger. But I found out something else. He'd been married.

MELINDA

"Had been?"

JIM

My password also got me into the state's hospital records.

He clicks on the screen.

JIM (CONT'D)

His wife, Janice, had an abortion before her death.

MELINDA

How did she die?

JIM

A rare blood disease. Passed away in Two-Thousand-and-Four.

MELINDA

Was the baby Trent's?

JIM

Unless she had an affair.

MELINDA

So if Trent's wife did something he was morally opposed to, and then he lost her just a few years later...

JIM

Losing both of them could have been enough to send him over the edge.

MELINDA

I can't imagine.

Jim looks at her, tries to process her words.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Losing both, I mean.

Melinda peers into the living room -- where Aidan sits on the couch, sketching a picture with colored markers.

INT. ELI'S OFFICE - DAY 3

Eli reaches into a bakery box, retrieves a donut hole. Melinda sits next to him.

ELI
Nothing like fresh baked goodness
to get you through a weekend grind.

He makes a face, pops the pastry into his mouth. Talking with his mouth full:

ELI (CONT'D)
Got to love these Saturday morning
classes.

MELINDA
Eli, can we -- ?

ELI
Hole?

He holds up the box, offers Melinda a donut.

MELINDA
Can we please get back to Janice?

ELI
Sure thing. She attended Rockland
from '82 to '86. Majored in
business management.

MELINDA
Student involvement? Any clubs?

ELI
Not really. 3.6 GPA, but pretty
much kept her head down. They
announced their engagement in the
'89 alumni newsletter.

Trent APPEARS on Melinda's other side. He speaks with melancholy.

TRENT
It was a beautiful ceremony.

Melinda turns her head toward him. Eli listens, attentively.

ELI

Uh, oh. He's back?

MELINDA

Afraid so.

TRENT

I gave her everything she wanted for her dream wedding. A rose canopy. Mediterranean buffet. Doves released over the gazebo.

MELINDA

But she wasn't willing to give you the one thing you wanted the most.

TRENT

A child.

INT. TRENT AND JANICE'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK (2001)

JANICE, mid-thirties, Caucasian, brunette, three months pregnant, sits on the sofa in tears. Trent, then 34, tries to comfort her. A CHRISTMAS TREE sits near them, brightly decorated.

TRENT (V.O.)

Everything was taking its toll on her. The morning sickness, the headaches, the endless fatigue.

Trent pleads with Janice, who shakes her head wildly.

TRENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I tried to convince her. I thought once she held our child in her arms, she'd have a change of heart.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Trent and Janice argue, heatedly.

TRENT (V.O.)

But she felt we'd made a mistake. She was suddenly up for a promotion, and didn't want to take maternity leave. She said her career was more important.

END FLASHBACK

Melinda and Eli show slight traces of facial sympathy as Trent solemnly recounts the events.

MELINDA
You felt betrayed.

TRENT
She didn't care what I wanted.
Half of our baby's life came from
me.

ELI
Did she at least listen to what you
had to say?

TRENT
Yes. But it didn't matter.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - FLASHBACK (2002)

Janice walks out of the doctor's office. Trent sits there,
glares at her.

TRENT (V.O.)
After she killed our child, things
were never the same between us.
Then it happened.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - WEEKS LATER

A DOCTOR delivers the devastating news to Janice, who bursts
into tears. Trent tries to comfort her, but she's
inconsolable.

TRENT (V.O.)
They diagnosed Janice with TPP.
Her health deteriorated.

INT. BEDROOM - TWO YEARS LATER

Janice lies in bed, sickly and bald. She wails in pain.
Trent kneels by her bedside, holds her hand.

TRENT (V.O.)
The chemo didn't take.
(beat)
Near the end, she couldn't feed
herself, or even use the bathroom
alone.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - ONE MONTH LATER

Trent lays a bouquet of roses by his late wife's grave.

END FLASHBACKS

Melinda sees the grief now on Trent's face, holds back tears.

MELINDA

I'm sorry that happened to her.
(beat)
But you can't blame Anita. It
wasn't her mother's fault.

TRENT

That feminist pig pushed it through
the legislature...

MELINDA

You thought it was unconscionable.
(beat)
But that didn't give you the right
to take her life.

TRENT

Why not? People like her don't
give a damn that my unborn baby's
life was sacrificed!

He lowers his head, stoic.

TRENT (CONT'D)

But now, it's time to make things
right.

As Trent DISAPPEARS, Melinda calls after him.

MELINDA

Trent, wait!

Melinda groans -- Trent has completely faded from sight.

ELI

Is he gone?

MELINDA

I think he's going after Anita. I
could feel his emotions. His anger
and pain.

ELI

What should we do?

MELINDA

The vision I saw... we have to warn
her.

EXT. ANITA'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY 3

Melinda and Eli drive up to the house, exit Melinda's car.

Charlie climbs a tree in the front yard; the boy stops, waves
at them from the branches.

CHARLIE

Hi!

They look up at him.

ELI

Hey, Tarzan!

MELINDA

Charlie, is your mom home?

CHARLIE

She's inside, on the phone.

Trent APPEARS, stares up at Charlie in the tree. Melinda flares at the ghost.

MELINDA

Don't even think about it.

ELI

He's back again?

Melinda and Trent lock eyes on each other.

TRENT

I would never --

MELINDA

Somehow, I don't believe you.

CHARLIE

(calls down to them)

Mrs. Gordon, who are you talking to?

Anita runs out of the house.

ANITA

Charlie, inside!

(to Melinda)

You stay away from him!

Melinda catches sight of Trent's gaze -- it's fixated on Anita, who approaches them.

ANITA (CONT'D)

What you're doing is borderline stalking.

MELINDA

Anita, you need to listen to me --

Melinda stops short, sees a knife APPEAR in Trent's clutched hand. Anita shouts up to her son.

ANITA
Charlie, get down from there right
now!

Charlie drops from the lowest branch, lands on his feet.

ANITA (CONT'D)
(to Melinda)
Now do I have to call the police,
or are you -- ?

As she speaks, Trent SHIFTS HIS BODY inches away from Melinda's face. He thrusts the knife in her gut; Melinda gasps, grunts.

ELI
Melinda!

ANITA
What's going on?

ELI
Mel, what's he doing to you?

INT. SENATOR CHARLENE HUNT'S HOME - FLASHBACK (2006)

MELINDA AND TRENT'S SHARED P.O.V.

In a spotless kitchen, SENATOR CHARLENE HUNT fights off Trent -- who wields the same knife.

As the senator kicks and punches, Trent rams the knife into Charlene's gut. She gasps.

END FLASHBACK

Melinda gasps again, begins to tumble to the ground. Eli catches her, lends weight to Melinda's body.

ELI
Do you need me to call Jim?

PREMONITION - MELINDA'S P.O.V.

An EXPLOSION of fire.

Anita's dead body lies on the ground, scratched and bloody.

Next to his mother, Charlie's small body lies in a heap.

END PREMONITION

Melinda returns to the present, exhales. Eli helps to prop up her torso.

ELI

What is it? What did you see?

Melinda gazes up at Anita, who protectively clutches Charlie as they stare at her.

MELINDA

I saw them.
(points)
Dead.

A combination of horror and revulsion spreads across Anita's face.

OFF Melinda, who fights through tears --

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. ANITA'S FRONT YARD - DAY 3

Anita gives Melinda one final appalled stare. She grabs Charlie's hand.

ANITA
Sweetie, come on!

Anita yanks Charlie into the house. Melinda gets to her feet; she and Eli follow them inside.

CHARLIE
Mom, where are we going?

ANITA
Far away from here!

MELINDA
Anita, wait!

INT. ANITA'S HOUSE - FOYER

Anita swivels around, faces Melinda with fury.

ANITA
Leave us alone!

MELINDA
You have to confront him, Anita.
Wherever you go, he'll be there.

Anita backs into the kitchen, Charlie in tow. Melinda and Eli approach her at a safe distance.

ANITA
You expect me to believe I'm being
haunted by the man who killed my
mother?

Melinda looks at Eli for help, but he's speechless. She turns back to Anita.

MELINDA
I don't want anything bad to happen
to you. Or Charlie.

Charlie looks terrified. Anita clutches her son's shoulders.

ANITA
Don't listen to her, sweetie.
(to Melinda)
Don't come near us ever again.

Anita opens the door to the garage, shuffles herself and Charlie through it. She closes and locks it behind her.

ELI
I don't think she's buying it.

MELINDA
I saw what's going to happen.

ELI
A vision? A premonition?

MELINDA
Of Anita and Charlie lying dead on the ground. We can't let them go.

Melinda rushes back through the foyer and front door, Eli on her heels.

EXT. ANITA'S DRIVEWAY

Anita's beige sedan pulls out of the driveway, just as Melinda and Eli emerge. They can see Anita and Charlie through the windshield -- Charlie's in the backseat.

MELINDA
Anita!

She pulls out her keys, looks at Eli

MELINDA (CONT'D)
We have to go after them!

Eli takes Melinda's car keys, puts his hand on her shoulder.

ELI
I'll drive.

They head for Melinda's car.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - MINUTES LATER - TRAVELING

Anita drives, eyes firmly on the road. Charlie panics.

CHARLIE
Mommy, where are we going?

ANITA
We're just taking a little trip, sweetheart.

CHARLIE
Why was Mrs. Gordon talking about ghosts?

ANITA
She's just confused.

CHARLIE
But Mom --

Anita's cell phone RINGS. She reaches over to the dashboard, clicks it off.

ANITA
We're staying with Aunt Susie for awhile, Charlie.

CHARLIE
But Mrs. Gordon said --

ANITA
Charlie! Just let Mommy drive!

INT. MELINDA'S CAR - SAME - TRAVELING

Eli drives. Melinda sits in the passenger seat, frantically redials her phone.

ELI
I don't think she's answering.

MELINDA
We have to catch up to her.

ELI
And do what? Run them off the road?

Trent APPEARS in the back seat.

Melinda sees him in the REARVIEW MIRROR, gasps.

ELI (CONT'D)
Melinda?

MELINDA
Trent.

ELI
You mean a stowaway.

TRENT
Redemption. She must give me redemption.

MELINDA
You keep saying that. But what do you want her to do?

TRENT

I took her mother's life. That makes me no better than the senator.

ELI

You got that right.

MELINDA

Wait.

(to Trent)

You want forgiveness, don't you? From Anita?

TRENT

Janice took our child away from its parents. But I was so... consumed. So --

MELINDA

-- blinded by rage?

TRENT

I couldn't even see I was taking a mother away from her daughter. Becoming that which I loathed.

INT. CHARLENE'S KITCHEN - FLASHBACK (2006)

Trent kneels by Charlene, who takes her final breaths.

TRENT

Killer. What do you have to say for yourself?

Charlene tries to gasp out words.

TRENT (CONT'D)

You had a lot to talk about on the senate floor when you were pushing your bill through.

(beat)

Haven't got much to share now, eh?

Charlene manages to form a half-audible sentence.

CHARLENE

A -- Anita...

Trent reacts.

CHARLENE (CONT'D)

I -- I... l-love you, A-Anita...

She DIES, her eyes still open.

Trent looks at her with a moment of regret. Then, he runs.

END FLASHBACK

Melinda looks at Trent through narrow eyes.

MELINDA

But it was too late. You couldn't bring her mother back.

TRENT

It's haunted me ever since that day. My views were moral... but not my actions.

MELINDA

And you need to repent.

ELI

Or he won't be able to move on?

Melinda nods.

TRENT

I just want her to know I wish I could change what I did.

MELINDA

You want redemption.

TRENT

For myself.

Eli makes a face, concentrates on the road.

ELI

Then why didn't he just tell you that from the start?

MELINDA

Being dead isn't an exact science. Spirits need time to process what exactly they're feeling.

TRENT

And when I saw that little boy climbing the tree...

Trent bows his head. Melinda looks at him with a glimmer of sensitivity.

MELINDA

You realized who you'd taken away from him.

TRENT

And from his mother.
(beat)
Help me make amends.

MELINDA

First we have to stop them.
(to Eli)
Be careful how you approach. We
don't want to freak her out.

ELI

Um, she's well past freaked, Mel.

Melinda stares ahead at the tail of Anita's car.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - SAME - TRAVELING

Through the SIDE MIRROR, Anita sees Melinda's vehicle gaining
on hers.

ANITA

(under her breath)
I don't think so, you lunatic.

Anita's foot hits the gas pedal.

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

Anita's car accelerates.

INT. MELINDA'S CAR - SAME - TRAVELING

From the passenger seat, Melinda watches Anita's car zoom
ahead.

ELI

We're losing her!

MELINDA

She's going to hurt herself -- and
Charlie!

ELI

Melinda --

MELINDA

Pull up next to her.

ELI

I don't think --

MELINDA

Just do it, Eli!

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

Eli drives Melinda's car so it travels parallel to Anita's.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - SAME - TRAVELING

Anita sees them trying to flank her. Charlie yelps.

CHARLIE

Mom!

Anita shoots Melinda and Eli a scowl of defiance through the window. In that moment of distraction, she --

EXT. HIGHWAY - SAME

-- accidentally veers off the road.

Anita's car BARRELS through the treeline.

INT. MELINDA'S CAR - SAME

Eli hits the brakes as Melinda reacts, in horror.

MELINDA

Anita!

EXT. FORESTED GORGE - SAME - WIDE SHOT

Anita's car heads straight for the edge of a ravine.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - SAME - TRAVELING

Anita and Charlie holler with fear.

THEIR P.O.V.

Tree branches SMACK the windshield as they careen toward the absence of ground up ahead.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY 3

Melinda flies out of her stopped vehicle. Eli exits from the driver's seat, dashes after her.

ELI
Melinda, wait!

Melinda doesn't stop. They forge ahead into the:

FOREST

Melinda points out the trail that's already been blazed through the foliage by Anita's vehicle.

MELINDA
This way.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - SAME - TRAVELING

Anita turns the steering wheel, frantically; she tries to get some control over her vehicle. Her foot repeatedly slams the brake pedal, to no avail.

THE EDGE OF THE RAVINE comes into view.

Anita and Charlie wail as...

Trent APPEARS next to Anita in the passenger seat.

The brakes LOCK, just as the very front of Anita's car teeters over the ravine's edge.

Anita looks to make sure her son's okay.

ANITA
Charlie, don't move.

CHARLIE
(squeals)
Mommy...

EXT. THE TEETERING CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Melinda and Eli arrive to find the vehicle precariously straddling the cliff.

MELINDA
Charlie! Charlie, I need you to
open the door slowly.

Charlie obeys, although he can barely move atop the seat. Eli moves in front of the open door.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

Okay, Anita, as Charlie crawls out, you have to shift your weight into the backseat.

ELI

Come on, Charlie -- I've got you.

Charlie makes his way out of the backseat, into Eli's arms. Simultaneously, Anita gingerly crawls over the seats.

Trent stays in the front seat, face tense. HIS FOOT still presses against the brake pedal.

Eli sets Charlie down on the ground, turns his attention to Anita. Melinda wraps her arms around the shaken boy.

CHARLIE

Mom!

ELI

Anita, that vehicle is going to give out at any moment. You need to move quickly.

Anita takes a deep breath, leaps from the backseat. Eli catches her.

Anita's vehicle TILTS off the ravine, falls to the jagged depths below.

ANITA

Charlie!

She hugs her son, tearful.

The vehicle continues to plummet, CRASHES. They watch an EXPLOSION arise.

Melinda gazes at Anita and Charlie with relief. She suddenly sees Trevor APPEAR next to them.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Melinda, I can't even begin...

Anita chokes up with grateful eyes.

MELINDA

I'm not the one you should be thanking.

Anita looks confused.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

He's here.

ANITA

You mean -- ?

MELINDA

Trent Walters.

TRENT

I couldn't let them die too.

ELI

He's the one who caused your brakes to lock. Long enough for you to get out.

TRENT

(gestures at Melinda)

And I made sure she saw what would happen, if we didn't intervene.

Anita looks down at Charlie, then back up again. Her eyes are wide -- but with fascination rather than doubt.

MELINDA

He's been trying to make amends, Anita. He realizes what he did was wrong.

Trent circles them, softness in his stare.

TRENT

She was there -- on my last night.

INT. EXECUTION CHAMBER - FLASHBACK (TWO WEEKS EARLIER)

Trent sits, strapped back into a gurney. A PRISON GUARD administers a lethal injection into Trent's bloodstream.

TRENT (V.O.)

Anita watched me in my last moments.

Trevor turns his head, unrepentant. He sees Anita through the OBSERVATION WINDOW of the witness room. Her face is streaked with tears -- a combination of bitterness and grief.

TRENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That's when I realized how much I'd hurt this family.

Trevor's face goes pale, as his body creeps closer to death.

TRENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Because of my anger from having lost mine.

END FLASHBACK

Trevor looks from Anita to Charlie, with sorrow.

TREVOR

He's lost a piece of his
bloodline... because of me.

(to Melinda)

Will you tell them? How ashamed I
am?

MELINDA

Anita, he wishes he could take it
all back.

Anita fights through tears.

ANITA

But he can't.

TRENT

I know.

MELINDA

He knows that, too.

Anita calls out to Trent, blindly. She holds Charlie close.

ANITA

Why? Why did you do it? Charlie
will never know his grandmother!

TRENT

She showed me such disrespect.
Like what I had to say didn't
matter.

EXT. SENATOR'S OFFICE - FLASHBACK (2005)

Trent and OTHER PROTESTORS picket. Charlene pushes through
the crowd, accompanied by AIDES.

TRENT (V.O.)

We organized rallies outside her
office.

Trent gets in Charlene's face.

TRENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But the one day when she finally
acknowledged us...

Charlene yells back at him, not at all intimidated.

TRENT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...it was to tell us what heartless
pigs we were. That we were wrong.

END FLASHBACK

Melinda focuses on Anita, who strains her eyes.

MELINDA
Trent had a confrontation with your
mother during a protest. He felt
she'd insulted him, as her
constituent.

ANITA
She always said exactly what was on
her mind.

MELINDA
Trent lost his late wife to a blood
disease. A few years earlier,
she'd had an abortion... against
his wishes.

Anita's face softens, but only a shred.

ANITA
Years before the execution -- he'd
never explained why he did it.

INT. PRISON - VISITORS' AREA - FLASHBACK (2008)

Anita sits on one end of a transparent partition. Trent,
wearing an orange jumpsuit, sits behind the glass.

ANITA (V.O.)
I visited him in prison, but he
wouldn't talk to me.

She yells at him. He averts any eye contact, remains silent
in hateful defiance.

END FLASHBACK

TRENT
I was too angry -- and selfish --
to give you the answer you
deserved.

ANITA
I begged the local media to keep
its coverage as discreet as
possible. To my surprise, they
were pretty cooperative.

MELINDA

Trent wants me to tell you his anger made him lose his judgement. That's why he stayed quiet when the two of you met face-to-face.

TRENT

My convictions were always right. I won't apologize for them.
(beat)
But my actions were so misguided. I ended my life committing a sin just as bad as those I'd fought.

MELINDA

He doesn't regret his political beliefs. But he's ashamed of what they turned him into.

ANITA

He should be.
(to Trent)
I feel the same way you do, about preserving life. My mother and I argued about it all the time.

She closes her eyes, holds back tears. Charlie hugs her around the waist.

ANITA (CONT'D)

But I never took the chance to tell her how much I loved her, in spite of our differences. I never got closure.
(sniffs)
And now I never will.

TRENT

I'll tell her for you. I promise.

MELINDA

He says he'll let his mother know how you feel.

Anita caresses Charlie's shoulders. Charlie sees his mother crying -- tears slip from his eyes, as well.

ANITA

I forgive you. Not because I condone what you did. But because it's time for all of our suffering to end.

TRENT
(whispers)
Thank you.

MELINDA
He accepts that.

In the distance, LIGHT APPEARS. Trent gazes at it.

TRENT
Is that for me?

Melinda nods.

TRENT (CONT'D)
What should I do?

MELINDA
Just move toward it.

Trent walks forward, allows the light to CASCADE over him.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
You get to be with your wife again.

Trent moves further into the light.

TRENT
Janice?

ANITA
What's happening?

MELINDA
He's crossing over.

Trevor glances at Melinda, before letting the brightness FULLY ABSORB him.

TRENT
Tell her never to stop letting
Charlie know how much she loves
him.

MELINDA
I will.

Trent CROSSES OVER. He's gone.

Melinda turns to Anita and Charlie. She glances at Eli.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Trent has moved on.

Anita's face is a mess. Charlie continues to squeeze his mother around her torso.

ANITA
Melinda...

She struggles to find words.

ANITA (CONT'D)
...thank you.

Melinda smiles, meets Eli's heartened gaze.

INT. SAME AS IT NEVER WAS - FRONT ROOM - DAY 4

Delia and Ned each stand on step-ladders; they hang a plastic PINE BOUGH from the top corners of a cabinet display. Melinda stands below them, supervises.

DELIA
How's this?

MELINDA
Um... a little to the left.

Ned pulls one end of the bough toward his shoulder.

MELINDA (CONT'D)
Okay, now... Delia, bring that pine cone slightly above the edge.

Delia lifts it.

DELIA
Now?

MELINDA
Perfect.

Delia and Ned step down to the floor. Ned looks at his mother.

NED
So do I get the stereo yet?

DELIA
One-fifty more to go, kiddo.

Ned trudges behind the cash register. Melinda pats him on the shoulder as he passes by her.

DELIA (CONT'D)
(to Melinda)
What's the word on Mr. Walters?

MELINDA

No word. And that's good.

NED

It means he crossed over.

DELIA

I kind of figured.

MELINDA

I just can't believe I never gave Trent the benefit of the doubt.

DELIA

Well, he did kill a woman in cold blood.

MELINDA

And there was no justification for it. But you have to consider what he was going through... losing his spouse... losing his child.

She trails off, looks down at her own stomach.

DELIA

I'm just glad they're safe now.

The store's front door CHIMES. Anita enters with Charlie; they carry tinfoil-covered plates.

ANITA

Knock, knock.

MELINDA

Anita!

Melinda greets Anita with a hug, leans down to squeeze Charlie's shoulder.

CHARLIE

We made you cookies.

MELINDA

Wow, awesome.

She accepts the platters.

DELIA

That was really sweet of you guys.

CHARLIE

They were Grandma's recipe.

He looks up at his mom, who smiles. Melinda beams.

ANITA

We just wanted to thank you for everything you've done.

MELINDA

I was happy to help.

DELIA

Ned, why don't you take Charlie into the storeroom. Show him the pendants we just got in from Cairo.

Ned gently slaps Charlie on the back, leads him toward the back of the store.

NED

Come on, bud.

CHARLIE

What are pendants?

NED

They're sort of like necklaces... except us guys can wear them too.

The three women are left alone in the front of the shop. Delia lifts the cookies from Melinda's grip.

DELIA

I'll just go pop these in the fridge back there.

She gives Melinda a mischievous smile before disappearing into the back area.

Melinda faces Anita.

MELINDA

How are you doing?

ANITA

It's never going to be completely okay.

(beat)

But now at least I finally feel like I can talk with him about his grandmother.

Melinda nods.

ANITA (CONT'D)

I heard you lost your husband recently. I'm sorry.

Melinda looks over Anita's shoulder -- through the window, she sees Jim approach the store.

MELINDA

It's hard.

(beat)

But I know he'll never leave me.

Anita smiles back, as Melinda continues to glance at Jim.

MELINDA (CONT'D)

How about this? Tell Charlie he can have his pick -- any one of those Egyptian pendants.

Anita gives Melinda a small hug before heading to the back.

The door CHIMES as Jim enters. He reveals a small corsage hidden behind his waist.

JIM

I believe I still owe someone an Italian dinner.

Melinda grins, takes the corsage.

MELINDA

Grazie, bello.

She giggles, fingers the flowers as Jim gives her a loving kiss on the lips.

END OF EPISODE