

MYSTERY WOMAN

'WILD WEST MYSTERY'

SYNOPSIS

Mystery Woman bookstore owner Samantha Kinsey (Kellie Martin) is chairperson of Walden's "West Wild Days," and this year promises to offer a lot of excitement. Onetime television star Clint Taylor (Bruce Boxleitner) is bringing his Wild West show to town. Taylor has gathered together some of the former cast and crew of "Red River Days" for his arena show and, as he tells Samantha, he has found a group of investors interested in making a feature film based on the series.

Clint and his right hand man, stuntman Dogie Jones (Joe Stevens), have set up an "accident" to attract press attention, but when Clint's horse Blanco rears during the performance, the actor falls to the ground with a bone crushing thump and is knocked unconscious. Bookstore manager and former spy Philby (Clarence Williams III) discovers that someone had cut the cinch on Clint's saddle. Samantha's friend, Assistant District Attorney Cassie Hillman (Nina Siemaszko), asks Chief Connors (Casey Sander) to investigate. Samantha is concerned for Clint but road manager Jeb Fletcher (Jason Brooks) and stuntman Zeke Foster (Charles Dierkop) assure her that Clint will be back on his feet and ready for the next show. Outside Clint's trailer Samantha hears Clint furiously accusing Dogie of accidentally cutting the cinch when he went to loosen it. Dogie insists that someone had knocked him out while he was working on it. Clint isn't buying his excuse. Dogie has something else he is burning to tell Clint, but Clint hasn't got time to hear him out.

Samantha and Cassie are furious when Clint falls to the ground again at the next show. They rush into the arena so Samantha can give him a piece of her mind. But when the show's villain, veteran character actor Strother Elam (Wings Hauser), turns over the crumpled body they see it is Dogie dressed in Clint's clothes and stone-cold dead. Connors puts out an APB on Clint Taylor. Also missing in action is ageless beauty Annie Boone (Barbara Niven), Taylor's former TV co-star and girlfriend, who wasn't riding shotgun on the stagecoach like she usually does during the performance. Samantha finds Taylor hiding out in his hotel room playing computer poker. He tells her that he had sent Dogie in his place because he was still sore from his previous fall. He grows pale when Samantha tells him Dogie has been killed, but he seems more concerned that it could have been him.

Connors starts his questioning with Jeb, a convicted felon who had done eight years for killing a man in a bar fight. Backstage gossip had it that Jeb and Clint recently had argued over money and that Jeb resented Dogie's higher salary. Annie tells Connors she had sat out the show because she hadn't been feeling well.

(more)

HALLMARK CHANNEL/MYSTERY WOMAN, "Wild West Mystery" Synopsis – Page 2

Samantha, Cassie and Philby head for the cantina where the show's cast and crew have gathered. The impromptu wake turns sour when Clint appears, trailed for the first time in years by the press corps. He is reveling in the attention, giving interviews, when Connors arrests him. The police have found an incriminating note in Clint's handwriting on his stationery in the dead man's shirt pocket. But Samantha thinks Clint was the intended victim so she jumps at the chance when Cassie tells her that Clint wants to talk to her. He tells her the supposed note was actually lines of dialogue from an old script he had given Dogie to use in the arena. But he either can't or won't produce the script. Samantha walks away disgusted by Clint's egotism. But when Cassie shows her a copy of the note, she notices that the incriminating words are enclosed in quotation marks. Who would put quotation marks around a death threat? She is further surprised when she finds out that the supposedly financially well off Taylor is being represented by the public defender.

Samantha convinces Annie to spill her feelings about Clint. It seems he had ruined her career as well as broken her heart, but now he was making up for it by asking her to be his leading lady in the movie they were going to make. Annie suspects Strother may be responsible for Dogie's death. A bitter, mean man, he disliked Dogie and there was bad blood with Clint as well. And what was with those mysterious big boxes he had delivered to him in every town they played?

Philby's longtime friend Otis Rider (Barry Livingston), who runs the town's box and ship company, confirms that Strother had received a big box from a saddle maker. Samantha is surprised that the supposedly broke character actor was ordering expensive saddles. Philby tells her his computer "investigation" has turned up a sizable bank account in Strother's name. Samantha and Philby head back to the cantina to see if they can fish out more information from the drunken Strother, who tells them his ex-wife had left him for Clint. Strother claims there were no hard feelings. His wife had instigated the affair and, in the end, had cleaned both of them out. Jeb takes Samantha aside to tell her he had heard that the two men had fought often over the woman in the old days. But Jeb says everyone from the show thinks Clint killed Dogie because the stuntman had something on him. Jeb says he is the only one willing to talk openly about it because he is the only one who isn't involved in the movie deal.

Samantha and Philby break into Dogie's hotel room where they find a box on the floor of the closet. Before Philby can stop her, Samantha opens it to be confronted eyeball to eyeball with a rattlesnake. Just then Zeke comes into the room. He grabs the rattler and dashes it against the wall. When Chief Connors arrives on the scene, he reminds Samantha that breaking and entering is a crime. Philby claims the door was open. Zeke also claims to have entered through the open and unlocked door, but Samantha knows he is lying. She had closed and locked it behind her. Connors shows Zeke a gun found in the box with the rattlesnake and Zeke says it looks a lot like a gun that Clint had in his collection. Clint tries to keep his cool when Samantha tells him about the gun but when she leaves, he is clearly worried.

(more)

**HALLMARK CHANNEL/MYSTERY WOMAN, "Wild West Mystery" Synopsis –
Page 3**

Annie pays a visit to the bookstore. She is afraid that if Clint does not get out of jail soon the movie deal will fall through. Annie tells Samantha that Jeb was supposed to be one of the producers, as was Zeke. Jeb and Clint had a big confrontation a couple of days before they came into town when Clint suddenly reneged on his promise, claiming his backers didn't want to do business with an ex-con. Back at the cantina, Philby gets into a brawl with Strothers who takes exception to their incessant questions. After dealing with Strother, Philby takes Samantha to see Otis at We Ship It where they meet Cassie. Otis claims to have heard ticking inside a box addressed to Strother and under homeland security guidelines, took it upon himself to open the package. He shows them a saddle and spurs with Taylor's signature along with certificates of authenticity. Samantha recognizes that the signatures are identical and likely forgeries. Strother apparently has a thriving business in fake Clint Taylor memorabilia. Samantha asks Cassie to hold off bringing him in for fraud so she can dig a little deeper into his possible involvement with the murder.

Philby turns up a full financial report on Taylor but as Samantha starts to read it her cell phone rings. Cassie tells her that Annie has paid Clint's bail. Samantha finds him at the fairground looking for his gun. Samantha tells him she knows he is dead broke. He blames high living and a gambling addiction. It seems the beat up trailer is his only home. Nobody but Dogie knew the truth, Even the movie is a lie, but one he hopes to somehow make come true. Samantha is not surprised to find out that Clint's fingerprints are on the gun they found in Dogie's room, but disappointed to hear that Strother has been arrested. Clint meets Annie at the hotel and tells her the truth about his financial situation, the real reason why he had fired her from the series and the movie. She goes ballistic on him in the lobby, then gives him a passionate kiss before heading off to her room. Meanwhile Philby shows Samantha the financial information he has dug up on Dogie—almost no money in his checking account, but there is a safe deposit box in his name. At the jail, Strother tells her that Dogie was Clint's go-between with his bookies. He had even gotten roughed up more than a few times. He took it all in stride, In fact the only time that Strother ever saw Dogie angry was an argument with Zeke that had something to do with Clint and a key. Strother is a chastened man, grateful that Clint is not only not going to press charges but will sign the memorabilia.

Strother tells Samantha that Dogie had a fancy cell phone and was going to call Zeke next time he went on for Clint. She goes back to Clint's trailer where Dogie had changed into Clint's costume, and finds the cell phone. Samantha, Cassie and Philby join the cowpokes at the fairground for a traditional western farewell for Dogie. During Clint's eulogy, Samantha hits redial and Zeke answers. When he realizes he has been caught by Samantha's trick, he takes off on a horse. Samantha mounts Clint's horse Blanco and sets off after him. The rest of the cowboys mount up and follow. Samantha is in hot pursuit when Zeke emerges from cover with his gun drawn. He tells her "Red River Days" had been his idea. Clint was supposed to make amends for cutting him out of the series profits by making him a producer on his movie. Then Dogie told him there wasn't going to be a movie. He had been holding the key for the safe deposit box where Dogie had kept the money he had been skimming from Clint's gambling winnings for years. Dogie was going to give it back but Zeke felt it rightfully was his.

(more)

**HALLMARK CHANNEL/MYSTERY WOMAN, "Wild West Mystery" Synopsis –
Page 4**

With the sound of police sirens closing in, Samantha commands Blanco to rear, spooking Zeke's horse. Zeke falls off, dropping his gun. Samantha jumps off Blanco and grabs Zeke's gun. Back at the fairground Connors is set to arrest Clint. The ballistic test has shown that Clint's gun was the murder weapon. Just then Samantha and the cowboys ride up with Zeke.

Annie stops by the bookstore to say good-bye and compliment Samantha on her horsemanship. Clint bursts in looking for Annie. He is headed for Vegas and a nightclub singing gig. Of course, he will have to learn how to sing. He wants Annie to marry him. She turns him down. Samantha and Philby watch from the window as Annie heads down the street with a warm smile on her face and Clint follows after her desperately pleading.

-- HALLMARK CHANNEL--