

SAM HOUSTON

BY

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FADE IN:

EXT. GHOST CHRISTI - DAY

Remains of a run-down mining village. Sparsely populated.

EXT. KITTY'S CATHOUSE - DAY

Decrepit hotel. Sign: "Cheapest Whorehouse in South Texas."

JUAN VILLA, a grizzly-faced man of fifty, drags --

-- KITTY, 40s, a pretty Southern Belle through the streets.

JUAN

Kitty, I'll teach you not to stick  
your nose where it doesn't belong.

KITTY

Somebody get the sheriff.

A handful of TOWNSPEOPLE - turn a blind eye.

PREACHER (O.S.)

Juan, just wait one minute.

Juan rolls his eyes.

PREACHER, 50s, all skin and bones marches over, adjusts his  
collar. A bible in hand.

JUAN

Preacher man, save the goddamn gospel  
for Sunday.

PREACHER

Just so ya' know...

JUAN

This is coming from a man who spends  
more time in that whorehouse than at  
church. You should be ashamed of  
yourself.

Preacher flips through the good book. Juan shoves a BOWIE  
KNIFE under his chin.

JUAN

As you walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death.

He stares at Kitty - sympathetic.

PREACHER

Well, the Lord works in mysterious ways... maybe he has somethin' up his sleeves.

Preacher squints, looks across the way, wild-eyed --

-- A gloved hand pulls a duster back. It buttons a strap, reveals... a pair of nickel-plated Colt peacemakers.

SAMANTHA (O.S.)

Let go of the girl.

Juan spins, blinded by the sun glinting off her shiny guns. He lets go.

JUAN

I reckon them guns are gonna be mine in a second or two, cause', I'm fixin' to take 'em off a y'ur corpse!

SAMANTHA HOUSTON, 20s - face of an angel, tough, in calfskin leather riding breeches, stands there.

SAMANTHA

Ease those guns out and drop them on the ground.

He laughs, thumbs the hammer off his gun. Juan flexes his fingers.

JUAN

I don't back down from anybody, especially no skirt. Draw!

Both peacemakers clear leather - five inch barrels barking.

Juan drops dead. Hands on the butt of his revolver. Still holstered.

Samantha flicks open the loading gate, ejects shells, then reloads. She does the same with her other peacemaker.

PICKET, 50s, a sad, scruffy Sheriff walks up. Mayor WINSTON, 60s, mutton-chop sideburns, tags along.

PICKET

Lady, you just killed -- Juan "quick draw" Villa.

Surprised, Samantha's gaze shifts to his corpse.

SAMANTHA

And I thought he was suppose to be real fast.

She holsters - scans the street.

PICKET

You always look around like that?

SAMANTHA

Habit. Bad people seem to always have bad friends with misplaced loyalties.

WINSTON

Funny you should mention that. He has a twin brother... Jose.

SAMANTHA

Then -- he better be quick. Or he'll be dead.

PICKET

What's your business in Ghost Christi, Texas?

SAMANTHA

Little Johnny Ringo.

PICKET

A ranger -- Sam Houston is coming.

Samantha faces them - tin star ablaze by the sun.

SAMANTHA

Samantha Houston. My friends call me Sam.

HOMER, 60s, pulls up, wooden coffins in the back of his buggy. He eyes Juan, wolfs down some whiskey, then turns to Samantha.

HOMER

(hiccups)

Thanks for the business. It's been kind of slow around here.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Behind bars - JOHNNY RINGO, 18, a Billy the Kid clone, paces. Samantha brushes Picket aside.

PICKET

Johnny, meet Sam Houston.

JOHNNY

Wow! One fine lookin' woman at that. Let me outta here so I can greet her...

SHIMMERS of light in Johnny's eyes. He's astonished.

SAMANTHA

I'm taking you back to Abilene to hang from a rope. We ride at dawn.

JOHNNY

A Texas Ranger...?

SAMANTHA

Welcome to the new west.

As Samantha walks off...

JOHNNY

I don't think so. My boy's comin' to spring me loose.

SAMANTHA

They'll hang too. That is -- if I don't shoot 'em first.

Plastered on the wall, WANTED POSTERS. Picket and Winston look on, as Samantha studies them.

SAMANTHA

You don't update these?

PICKET

We're just a small town. Sometimes it takes months.

SAMANTHA

I captured, Rowdy "rustler" Hancock in San Antone.

She takes one down, swaps it for another. Both take a hard look at the poster. This isn't lost on Samantha either.

SAMANTHA

You haven't seen him around these parts... have you?

WINSTON

Hey, Picket -- isn't that the feller, that gunslinger over at the crazy horse?

Her eyes widen. Picket's still glued to the picture.

PICKET

It looks like him, but...

The door shuts behind Samantha.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A main stretch of town. Samantha moves at a fast clip, distracted.

DOLLY (V.O.)

When are you gonna stop playing second fiddle to the ghost of Sam Houston?

FLASHBACK - EXT. HOUSTON'S RANCH - DAY

DOLLY, 50s, haggard, hangs up clothes. She hones in on Samantha's tin star.

DOLLY

Don't no badge belong on any woman.

SAMANTHA

Ma, I thought you'd be happy for me.

DOLLY

Why? So you can look for a man who's probably already dead.

SAMANTHA

He killed my daddy.

DOLLY

Ain't nothin' gonna bring him back.

SAMANTHA

Why are you acting like this?

DOLLY

And what are you going to do when you find him... huh? I'll tell you, go and get yourself killed. That's what.

Stare down. Their hearts breaking.

DOLLY

Aw... it's no use. You're just as stubborn as him.

They embrace. Tight. Loving.

DOLLY

I know he didn't raise you -- but remember... he's still your father.

EXT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

Samantha comes out of her reverie. Overwhelmed. Nearly bumps into -- Kitty smiles in appreciation.

KITTY

I could use a woman like you. The pay is real good.

SAMANTHA

Thanks, but no thanks.

KITTY

Well, lady... I'm plumb disappointed, enough to make a rattlesnake cry.

INT. CRAZY HORSE SALOON - DAY

At the bar - HONCHO, 50s, wipes down the counter. He shoots a look across --

-- BLACKSMITH, a tall and lanky gunslinger in black, lifts his head. Hard-lived 40s. Several facial scars.

BLACKSMITH

One for the road.

Honcho pours whiskey. Blacksmith looks down, flicks open a heavy POCKETWATCH on a gold chain: photo of a LITTLE GIRL.

He throws it back. Tosses coins. They rattle around...

...a hand sweeps them up, slides a poster towards him. Samantha SLAMS a rusted tin star with traces of blood on top.

Blacksmith stares. His mind drifts... drifts...

FLASHBACK - EXT. BANK OF ABILENE - DAY

GUNFIRE erupts from inside. Blacksmith, 20s, makes a hasty departure. Bags of cash.

SAM (O.S.)

Blacksmith.

He whirls -- Marshal SAM HOUSTON, 30s, familiar pair of Colt peacemakers trained on him.

BLACKSMITH

Sam... you planning on using those?

SAM

I'd rather not. I'm hoping you'll come quietly.

BLACKSMITH

Now why would you think something like that?

SAM  
 (eyes pleading)  
 I have Samantha with me.

Blacksmith stares, a slight hint of apprehension --  
 -- Samantha, 6, terrified, sits in a horse and buggy.

SAM  
 I'll see that you get a fair...

THREE SHOTS ring out. Samantha screams.

BACK TO SCENE

He snaps out of it. They exchange looks - sadness.

BLACKSMITH  
 I reckon this day was comin'.

SAMANTHA  
 Well, you reckoned right.

Honcho knocks over tables and chairs to get the heck out.

SAMANTHA  
 You're coming back to stand trial  
 for the murder of Sam Houston.

Blacksmith draws his TWIN IVORY PISTOLS -- stares down the  
 barrel of her peacemakers.

Even he's impressed.

BLACKSMITH  
 You're a chip off the old block.

SAMANTHA  
 We may share the same blood, but  
 that's as far as it goes. Why...?

His eyes waver, filled with remorse.

BLACKSMITH  
 I don't believe in livin' in the  
 past. There's no future in it.

Blacksmith nods his head towards the poster.

BLACKSMITH  
 Like it says, dead or alive.

SAMANTHA  
 Don't make me kill you.

BLACKSMITH  
 Sam... you planning on using those?

Outside a commotion. GUNSHOTS.

JOSE (O.S.)  
 (slurred speech)  
 Come out here you whore.

Samantha spins - FREEZES. The proverbial deer look. Turns back.

JOSE stumbles inside, shit-faced, guns ablaze. Bullets rip through walls, splinter wood, and ricochet.

Blacksmith shoves her out of harm's way, FIRES, blows Jose to hell! Jose sprawls back, hits the deck. Sawdust floats.

On the floor -- Samantha eyes her guns beside Jose's body. A shadow falls over her as droplets of blood sprinkle down.

Blacksmith -- eyes far off, gun hangs limply in his hand, collapse beside her.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Early morning. Blacksmith exits, his arm in a bloody sling. Samantha escorts Johnny. Picket follows. They reign their horses.

PICKET  
 You gonna be okay, Sam?

Her eyes meet Blacksmith's. Bittersweet. She sets her sights on Picket - tips her hat.

BLACKSMITH  
 How did you know I wouldn't kill you?

SAMANTHA  
 Mama said if raindrops from heaven dampened your bitterness, and washed away the blood on your hands, there was a decent man.

BLACKSMITH  
 It's a long ride to Abilene.

SAMANTHA  
 Gives us time to catch up.

They ride into a glorious sunrise, then...

FADE OUT: