

BANGKOK, U.S.A.

FADE IN:

EXT. BANGKOK CITY, USA - NIGHT

It's happening...

"One Night in Bangkok" by Murray Head reverbs off a boombox.

Hustle is in the air, on the streets -- baptized in leather, made holy by spandex -- it's that kind of bad attitude ruled by TRIBAL GANGS, OUTLAW DANCERS, and ANIMAL PRINT.

Two ripped, oily KICKBOXERS fight. A roundhouse-kick-to-the-face corkscrews the other to the asphalt. ZOOMING IN on the champ, he squeezes out his best Bruce Lee face.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT - MOVING

The night is a carnival of neon through a windshield of bug slaw.

Obscured by shadows, a CABBIE tunes her radio. After a few seconds of static, some eerie tones usher in the Emergency Alert System:

RADIO

This is a message by the national alert system. This is not a test. The United States government has confirmed the presence of a "Squiggle" in the following U.S. cities: Bangkok. Do not attempt to communicate with, engage, or have sexual contact of any kind...

INT. BIG ITALIAN PIZZERIA - NIGHT

Devouring a Brooklyn Slice is SAL (30s), and he's got a mean case of the Tony Danzas -- the macho, sexy appetite of a man who asks this pizza, "Who's the Boss?"

SAL

Oh, baby, that crust.

MARCO (30s), the waiter, carries a basket of breadsticks out of the kitchen.

SAL

Hey, Marco. Pisan. You gotta try this pizza.

MARCO

Pizza?

SAL

Yeah, pizza.

MARCO
I would, but I gotta table of ten
waitin' on fresh sticks.

SAL
Eat the pizza.

MARCO
The pizza looks good, Sal, real
good. But like I said --

SAL
Eat the fuckin' pizza.

Marco takes a baby bite. Then a bigger baby bite. As he chews
the pizza, his eyes pop over its stretched mozzarella.

MARCO
(genuine)
That's good pizza.

SAL
See, what'd I tell ya?

Sal squishes Marco's jaw, followed by a quick slap-slap.

SAL
Okay, okay. Go take care of your
breadsticks, tough guy.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

Sal unties his tomato-stained apron, wads it up, and pitches
it. He digs out a pack of Marlboro's, and lights up.

A junkie, CANDY MAN (40s), an Al Pacino look-a-like on crack,
hobbles from the darkness in a trench coat.

Sal spins and flicks his cig.

CANDY MAN
Sal, my man! Wanna buy a fish?!

He opens his coat to reveal a series of small freezer bags
pinned inside, each one houses an ELECTRIFIED GOLDFISH.

Sal looks around, then covers up the trench coat for him.

SAL
Hey, hey, put that junk away. You
tryin' to get us locked up?

CANDY MAN
Paddywagons don't cruise this side
of Bangkok. Besides, I'm Candy Man.
I sell the sweets.

Sal looks around again, but this time licks his lips.

SAL
Okay, okay. How much?

Candy Man hands him a bag.

CANDY MAN
First taste on me. If you want more
like this... you gotta come back
with that peppermint twist.

Sal plucks the goldfish from the bag and swallows it whole. Not an easy task, it tastes like shit. His throat glows as it slides down.

SAL
Gimme another hit.

CANDY MAN
That's the spirit. But hey, you
might wanna slow down and let that
simmer, ya know?

SAL
Hundred bucks.

Candy Man hands over another bag.

CANDY MAN
Don't whistle too loud, my man. You
might find yourself in a stall at
the Denver airport re-skinning
tambourines for the Hare Krishna.

As Sal gives Candy Man the cash, a TAXI screeches to a halt near the alley entrance.

The rear door flies open and a big, distended jaw, mutant freak of a GOON barrels out into the alley --

GOON
Hey..! You piece of shit!

CANDY MAN
Oh fuck!

Candy Man bumps Sal and hauls ass down the alley. The bag drops and erupts on the pavement.

CANDY MAN
Sorry, gotta go!

The Goon books it past Sal.

Sal stands motionless, wonders what the hell just happened.

But not for long. He picks up fish and lets it dangle above his open mouth.

BAMBI (30s), bucks open the driver door. She's got a cocky, pinup-girl way of doing it, perched provocatively on edge of her seat. She's the full, cartoon version of Jayne Mansfield.

BAMBI
Quit eating shit off the road and
get in if you need a ride!

He struts over like a Barbarino shot in the ass.

Left behind, the illuminated skeleton of the goldfish flops
in its own drug laden Quinine.

SAL
Oh baby. I've had atomic candy
before but... what's your name
Amoré?

BAMBI
Name's Bambi. Hop in.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT - MOVING

Baked in the sweet sounds of jazz, Sal sweats like a bitch in
heat as he lolls out on the smooth number.

BAMBI
Where you headed?

Sal observes Bangkok from the backseat. An ANIMATED NUCLEAR
MUSHROOM-CLOUD rises over the city and sets fire to the sky.

Eyeballing him via rearview, Bambi rolls cherry lipstick on
her toony smile.

SAL
La la land... apparently. I got a
kiss waitin' for ya if you get us
there before last call.

Bambi smacks her lips.

BAMBI
Cash on the barrel head only.

Sal huffs.

SAL
Bamboo Club then, I need a stiff
one.

BAMBI
Where ya from?

SAL
Italy.

BAMBI
Never heard of it. Can we get to
Italy from here?

The taxi creeps by a QUARTET OF LESBIANS, an enviable chore,
feeling each other out like it's their first and last time.

Sal would salute them but his hands are numb as novocaine.

SAL
In my mind... I'm already there.

They come to a stop.

BAMBI
Okay, we're here.

SAL
Italy?

BAMBI
No, the Bamboo Club.

She turns to face Sal.

BAMBI
That'll be five bucks.

Sal traces a CHROME INSECT as it hovers through the interior of the cab. Like a mechanical bee, its wings are powered by tiny gears, needle-legs protrude from the thorax.

Bambi snaps her fingers in his face, he perks up.

BAMBI
It's weird, I didn't know Squiggles liked alcohol.

The word "Squiggles" gets Sal's attention. His head slumps forward to see his feet melting into the floor.

SAL
About that stiff one, Bambi? Better take a rain check. This fishy has me meltin' like the Mutz.

The mechanical bee lands on the back of Sal's neck and drives a stinger deep inside --

He quickly careens upright as a strange metamorphosis engulfs him completely. He blinks. His hands are MICKEY MOUSE GLOVES.

SAL
Uh, what are ya doin' to me?

Bambi pulls a syringe from Sal's neck.

BAMBI
Just peeling back that skin so we can see what's underneath.

SAL
Mama Mia.

She smothers him with a kiss...

INT. TAXI - DAY

Like a violin, we fiddle past a desert terrain. Sal dozes in the backseat, knocked-out cold, his balloon hands bound tight.

BAMBI
(sad about it)
Rise and shine, Sally boy.

SAL
Where are we headed?

BAMBI
Home.

Sal's eyes burst open, what's left of 'em anyway: Bulging out like mad-crazy, his pupils are animated, no longer under his human control, bouncing unnaturally.

This should disturb us, yet, somehow, we get it...

SAL
I can't go. I can't. Please, I'm
beggin' ya! Gimme some more time!

BAMBI
I'm sorry.

Sal's face buckles and quivers. He wants to cry.

SAL
You can't take me back. What I'm
gonna do for pizza? The sauce? The
cheese?
(sotto)
The pepperoni?

No response...

SAL
What am I gonna do! God, I don't
wanna go!

EXT. THE DESERT - DAY

The taxi drives toward a montane horizon...

Far, far away from Bangkok.

SAL (V.O.)
I'm not ready to go.

A beat...

SAL (V.O.)
Are we there yet?

FADE OUT.