

BINGO QUEENS

Written by Nick Finegan

In association with BFI NETWORK

1: EXT. STATION PLATFORM. DAY.

A blood red sunset hangs low in the early summer sky, casting long shadows across the grey concrete.

A young man in a pink "Bobby's Bingo" work uniform stands with the tip of his scuffed up loafers teetering over the lip of the platform. This is ERIC.

Tannoy: *"Please stand back from the platform edge. The next train is not due to stop at this station."*

Eric stares intently at the cast iron tracks...

Further down the platform a young woman wearing lime green sunglasses and hot pink buffalo trainers stands with a jewel encrusted iPhone to her ear. This is LUNA.

The dial tone thrums. Then:

AUTOMATED VOICE

Welcome to Canadian Airways. Press one for existing bookings. Two for enquiries. Three for cancellations. Four for - (she presses three)... Please have your booking reference to hand. We are connecting you.

We hear the tinny echo of automated hold music.

Behind her, two guys (JAMES and CHARLIE) have arrived: navy suits, gelled hair, beer cans and chips. They spot Luna.

James mutters something to Charlie. They eyeball her legs, her ass. They both piss themselves laughing.

Luna wheels round.

LUNA

D'you think I can't hear you?

They stop laughing. James's face drops as he clocks Luna's deeper voice. He's realised she's trans... Something dangerous is gathering in the air now.

He picks up a chip.

Holding Luna's gaze, he slowly and deliberately dips it in ketchup. Then: lobs it straight at her.

It hits her jacket. She flinches. Ketchup oozes down the faux fur lapel. Connor bursts out laughing.

Luna looks at the chip. She bends down, picks it up... and lobs it straight back. It hits his pristine white shirt. He locks eyes with her. Who will move first?

Up in the distance we hear a freight train rushing down the tracks. Horns scream through the air.

We're back on Eric: He is still perilously close to the edge. He closes his eyes.

The sound of the oncoming train grows louder, louder...

CUT TO BLACK.

2: EXT. STATION PLATFORM. DAY. MOMENTS LATER

Suddenly the frame shatters into a frenzied blur of colour:

JAMES

What the fuck are you?!

Luna topples hard into Eric. She grabs onto him to steady herself, pulling him away from the platform edge. They both hit the floor.

LUNA

(to Eric) Fuck, sorry!!!!

The men are pissing themselves. Charlie's face light's up.

CHARLIE

Oi I recognise you! You're that guy
from -

Suddenly: Eric is on his feet. Knuckles meet jaw as he lands a fist on Charlie. James' wallet drops to the floor as he stumbles backwards to catch his mate.

Before the men have noticed the wallet, Luna grabs it.

Charlie's face is wrenched in pain as it dawns on him he's been punched.

Eric and Luna both start running. Charlie pats down his pockets: the wallet is gone. His face drops.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Fuck...

JAMES

What?

CHARLIE
They've got my fucking wallet.

JAMES
Little cunts!

3: EXT. TOOTING BROADWAY. DAY.

Luna and Eric dash down a main street. James and Charlie are gaining ground - shirts streaked with sweat and blood and ketchup as he pelts a path straight towards them.

They round the corner of a beaten up old BINGO HALL corner and meet an empty alley. Eric sprints to a side door, scans a key card and pulls Luna inside, slamming it behind them.

4A: INT. BINGO HALL. STAFF CORRIDOR.

A long brightly lit hallway. Their chests heave. They are dripping in sweat.

LUNA
Fuck...

ERIC
Shh.

Eric strides down the corridor. Opens the "STAFF ROOM" door.

ERIC (CONT'D)
Down here.

4B: INT. BINGO HALL. STAFF ROOM. (AFTERMATH)

Bright white ceiling lights cast a harsh glare across the grey room. Luna stands on the threshold. Dazed.

LUNA
Wait d'you work here?

No answer. He opens up a first aid kit, grabs a handful of antiseptic wipes and heads over to Luna. She flinches away.

LUNA (CONT'D)
Uh-uh! Nah babes. Hate those!

ERIC
You're bleeding.

The wipe dangles limply in the air. Luna relaxes just enough to let him dab the graze on the side of her head. She winces as the sting of alcohol meets bloodied, broken skin.

LUNA
Shit you grazed yourself pretty bad
too doll...

She pulls one of the wipes from his clenched fist and gently pats at his jaw... For a moment they just stand there, quietly and methodically cleaning each other's wounds.

Luna is gazing at Eric with a curious look across her face.

LUNA (CONT'D)
Have we met before?

ERIC
What?

LUNA
You look familiar.

ERIC
What you gonna do with the wallet?

She flashes him a devilish smile.

LUNA
Didn't think that far ahead.

She pulls out the wallet and starts rifling through. *Jackpot.*

She pulls out some cash, fans herself with it, then hands him two £20 notes. He smiles awkwardly. Doesn't take them.

LUNA (CONT'D)
Suit yourself.

She deposits the cash in her handbag. He heads for the door.

ERIC
Stay here.

LUNA
Wait where you going?

ERIC
Ice. They'll have some on the bar.
Help that bruise go down.

LUNA
(calling after him) Can you get me
a vodka n lime too babe?!

5A: INT. BINGO HALL BAR.

A bar-lady in pink uniform is playing Candy Crush. She doesn't look up as Eric bustles in. He searches in a freezer. No ice...

5B: INT. STAFF ROOM. BINGO HALL.

Eric walks back into the staff room clutching a bag of frozen frankfurters. A beat. Luna's gone...

BINGO CALLER
(O/S) Okay ladies and gents...

6: INT. BINGO HALL MAIN FLOOR.

The whole place has the look of a plastic, pink-lit cathedral. Albeit one dedicated to Lady Luck rather than Mother Mary...

BINGO CALLER
Okay ladies and gents. Please take a seat? Your afternoon paper Bingo session is about to begin...

Luna is happily ensconced on a little table in the middle of the room with TINA, a fab, glammed up woman in a blue *JUICY COUTURE* tracksuit, blonde bob and gold hoops. She chews on a hunk of bubblegum as she goes over the rules with Luna:

TINA
No, no, no - you need a vertical line running down one of them columns there. You see?

LUNA
And that's when I shout Bingo?

TINA
"Bingo". "House". "Oi!". To be honest whatever you wanna say is fine by us luv.

Tina waves at the Bingo Caller and points to Tina.

TINA (CONT'D)
(mouthing) Newbie!

The Bingo Caller gives them a thumbs up - flashes Luna a disarmingly charming smile.

LUNA
Wait, so what's a full house?

BINGO CALLER
Fourth round? Eyes down.

TINA
Op! Eyes down! Eyes down...

The next round plays out. The room is tense and the numbers come thick and fast.

Tina reaches over to cross off the numbers that Luna invariably keeps missing. Then... Suddenly:

PUNTER
YeeeaAS!!!!

One woman jumps up, ecstatic. A sea of disgruntled muttering.

TINA
Ugh. Jammy bitch...

Eric paces down the aisle towards Luna. He has a bag of frozen frankfurters in his hand.

ERIC
Thought you'd done a runner.

He holds up the frozen sausages. She stares back blankly.

ERIC (CONT'D)
For the bruise?

LUNA
I'm vegan.

She takes them reluctantly. Eric surveys the table, then crouches down beside her with a condescending grin.

ERIC
You know it's like 400 to 1 odds?

Tina winks at Luna, and grabs her cigarettes.

TINA
Don't listen to him love. Gotta be in it to win it!

She bounds off to the lobby. Eric slides into her seat.

ERIC
Seriously though, there's better things to waste your money on.

LUNA

I'm not wasting *my* money -

She reveals a pink driving license from the stolen wallet and sparkles with a wicked grin, flashing JAMES's photo at Eric.

LUNA (CONT'D)

It's the least the fucker deserves.

He can't help but let an amused smile melt across his face.

BINGO CALLER

Okay, ladies n gentlepeeps? That's your evening interval we'll be back in just a tick!

7: INT. BINGO HALL. MAIN ROOM.

We follow Tina back from the bar with a tray of colourful cocktails - adorned with mini umbrellas and glacé cherries.

BINGO CALLER

Don't forget. 30 minutes left to sign up for the monthly talent show. 30 minutes!

TINA

Oh go on Eric! (to Luna) I'm always tryna get him to do one of his songs for us.

LUNA

You a musician?

ERIC

Oh. No. It's just a hobby.

Luna and Tina "cheers". Tina snaps a quick selfie of the three of them. Eric tries to avoid being included.

TINA

Get in Eric.

She pulls him into the frame. He's brittle. Smiles awkwardly.

TINA (CONT'D)

Gawjus. (to Luna) Pop your instagram in, pet. I'll tag you!

She hands the phone to Luna, who idly chucks a cherry in her mouth as she inputs her IG handle. She hands the phone back.

Tina is scrolling Luna's page now. It's full of pictures and videos of her in ballet clothes. Dancing on pointe.

TINA (CONT'D)
Look at you. (to Eric) Got ourselves a ballet dancer.

LUNA
Ex-ballet dancer.

TINA
What you retired already?

Luna nods as she nonchalantly takes a sip of her pina colada.

ERIC
How come?

LUNA
Love the dancing part. Just not the toxic bullshit that goes with it...

She smiles wide, but there is something hard in her eyes now.

BINGO CALLER
Alright alright chaps and *chapettes*. Your final round of the evening now...

TINA
Oh! Eyes down you lot! Eyes down...

The next round plays out in montage. The BINGO CALLER announces several numbers. We rove around the room as various old ladies and weather worn gentlemen try their luck once again. Tina, Eric, Luna all daub their score cards.

BINGO CALLER
Two and Seven? Twenty seven.

A bolt of excitement. Tina and Luna light up.

TINA
I'm sweating!

Luna looks confused.

TINA (CONT'D)
I'm one away!

LUNA
Me too.

BINGO CALLER
Two fat ladies? 88!

PUNTER
YESSSS!!!!!!

An old man jumps up. As does Tina. She is beside herself.

TINA
Right. Don't let me play another round.

ERIC
You say that every time Tina.

TINA
Oh but then I get that feeling you know. *What if...*

BINGO CALLER
Don't forget. 9pm Ladies and Gents!
Our Bobby's Bingo Got Talent show
is *tonight*. Just a fiver to enter.

Luna sparkles at Tina as she takes a sip of her drink. She glances to Eric... Eric rolls his eyes with a laugh.

ERIC
You're not serious...

LUNA
In it to win and all that.

8: INT. BINGO HALL. MAIN HALL.

Luna steps to the centre of the little platform. She is silhouetted against the spill of a bright white back light. She flexes an ankle. Stretches a wrist. We hear the sound of a Chopin ballad start to play. Then it begins:

She throws her body into the air with a gazelle like grace. She lands - calves pinioned together as her heels reach up and she moves onto her toes. She is as far onto point as her beaten up Reebok Classics will allow. Her body hollows backwards and she lurches up, down, left, right, jumping and skitting about the stage in a delicate tour de force.

Suddenly the track starts skipping - then it cuts dead. Luna stops dancing. She looks to the bingo caller. He is frantically pressing buttons on the stereo - shaking his head.

She takes a breath, then she starts dancing again - in silence. The room lights up in applause.

Eric is on his feet now. He strides over to the little stage and pulls up the lid of a dusty old piano at the back of the platform. He starts playing. Something simple but haunting.

The scene takes on a fantasy turn: The lights spin and circle around Luna. We are orbiting about her in broad smooth sweeping revolutions.

Suddenly we crash back to the present. All the ambient sounds of the room fall away, sucked out like a vacuum.

Luna is standing in the middle of the stage, shaking. She is having a panic attack.

SMASH CUT TO:

9: INT. BINGO HALL. WOMEN'S TOILETS.

Flickering strip lights cast a sickly green glare over white-pink tiles, chipped sinks and a small row of cubicles.

Luna is holed up inside: sat on the toilet, knees up to her chin. Her phone is out and she is gazing at a glowing photograph of a beautiful black trans woman on instagram.

She scrolls the comments: *"RIP" "So talented" "Rest In Power"*

The rolodex of comments and emojis slides onto one message in particular: *"Luna_Eclipse97: Miss you already Sis"*

We hear the door to the Bingo Hall creak as it swings open.

ERIC

Luna?

A beat. She unlocks the cubicle door and it swings open to reveal Eric. He has a fresh vodka and lime for her.

10: INT. BINGO HALL. SLOT MACHINE CORRIDOR. AROUND MIDNIGHT.

Luna and Eric sit together on the floor of the now empty bingo hall. Eric gazes at the picture of Luna's friend.

LUNA

She was the only other trans
ballerina I'd met.

She takes the phone back. Scrolls through a message thread. We see a snippet of conversation played out in blue and white message bubbles:

LUNA: (Don't let them get to you) (You're so talented!!!!)

KANDICE: (Yeah but Ballet's brutal babe. Even when you DO fit their perfect little boxes...)

LUNA: (Well I'm not going if you're not) (Kandice?)

She scrolls a series of messages separated over several days.

(Babe what you thinking?) (Oi. Don't ignore me gurl)
 (Kandice?) (??!) (Bitch please just tell me you're okay?)
 (You're worrying me gurl)

KANDICE: (I'm sorry sis) (I think I'm done xxx)

Luna takes a sip of the drink and closes her eyes. Without thinking she rests her head on Eric's shoulder. It's seismic.

LUNA (CONT'D)

We were both gonna fly out for this
 job in Canada next week.
 Fuck that.

ERIC

Would she have wanted you to quit?

LUNA

If it means I stay alive longer
 than she did then yeah.

We hear the creak of a door. Tina bustles in from the toilet.

TINA

Oh you're still here! (She
 sparkles) Is it a lock-in then?

They both smile, shift in their seats - feigning nonchalance.

TINA (CONT'D)

Hey, everyone's loving that selfie
 of us you know. Check it out -

Tina pulls out her phone. She tries to show them the picture - but as she does the phone starts to ring. It's her DAUGHTER on Facetime.

TINA (CONT'D)

Hello gorgeous! Long time no speak.
 What you been up to, how's the new
 boyfrien-

TINA'S DAUGHTER

Mum. Where d'you meet Disney
 Princess Guy?

TINA

What?

TINA'S DAUGHTER

Disney Princess Guy!

TINA

Sorry babe, don't follow.

TINA'S DAUGHTER

He's, like, youtube famous! You know?! The video with all the princess impressions...

LUNA

(to herself) Oh my fucking God. That's it...

Luna whips out her phone and pulls up a video on youtube.

She shoots Eric a look. He's like a rabbit in the headlights.

LUNA (CONT'D)

I *knew* I recognised you! Tina check this out.

TINA

I'll call you back darling.

Eric is bright red. He stares at Luna blankly. Tina bustles over, watching the video over Luna's shoulder. We hear the tinny sounds of a youtube video clearly made years ago.

TINA (CONT'D)

200 million views? Eric you're famous!

LUNA

Wait, wait, wait, Tina this is the iconic bit when the dad walks in -

Eric is seething now, rooted to the spot, fists clenched.

TINA

Oh my God look at his *face*. Priceless!

Tina and Luna burst into hysterics.

LUNA

Stop it, I can't!

Eric storms across the room, rips the phone out of Luna's hand and chucks it head long at the wall. It crashes to the floor. Phone screen smashed to smithereens. A beat.

Everyone stares at the phone. Stunned silence.

11: EXT. BINGO HALL. ROOF. 3AM.

Outside, the sky is a deep, early morning blue. Eric and Luna lean on a wall watching the sparkling lights of the city... Luna finishes rolling a joint, lights up, passes it to him.

ERIC

I'm so sorry.

LUNA

S'fine babe. It's a phone. It'll mend. (she twinkles) Besides you're paying for the upgrade now so...

ERIC

It's just this job is the only place I don't get recognised.

LUNA

At least you're bringing some joy to the world doll. People went fucking mad for that video.

ERIC

Yeah but now I'm just one big joke. And no one takes my music seriously, they don't even wanna listen.

LUNA

So why don't you just delete it?

ERIC

(beat) 200 million views is a lot of views.

LUNA

Annnnd yet here you are hiding on the roof of a bingo hall with some random girl that nearly got you beat up earlier...

They both start giggling. The weed is kicking in.

LUNA (CONT'D)

I mean I don't think I said yet but I'm so fucking sorry bout that.

ERIC
 (takes another drag) I've actually
 been meaning to say thanks.

She gazes at him. Questioning. He stares at the joint embers.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 I really wasn't on that platform to
 catch a train.

A beat. They share a moment of eye contact. He breaks it. But she's still holding his gaze. The look in her eyes is stern.

LUNA
 Give me your phone.

He does so. She navigates to his youtube profile. Opens up the video. Her fingers hover over the dustbin *DELETE* button. She presses it. *ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO DELETE THIS VIDEO?*

ERIC
 Hey. Luna. No!

He grabs the phone, but Luna won't let go. She is determined. It's getting messy. They tussle for it.

ERIC (CONT'D)
 It's the only thing I've ever done
 that people actually liked.

LUNA
 And you'll throw yourself in front
 of a train so that people like you?

A moment of stasis. They both have a grip on it now.

LUNA (CONT'D)
 If I thought like that I'd never
 step outside the *house* Eric.

She tries a different tactic: yanks the phone away and starts scrolling through the comments...

LUNA (CONT'D)
"Omg lol he's too camp to be alive"

He lurches for the phone but she keeps going.

LUNA (CONT'D)
*"poor thing what a fag lol" "I feel
 so sorry for his dad"*

Suddenly he launches himself at Luna, unleashing a welter of pent up energy and grabbing the phone from her hands. They're both on the floor now. Breathless, red faced...

LUNA (CONT'D)

Play me one of your songs.

He looks unsure. She's lit up. The vodka and weed and lack of sleep mixing up a mischievous fire somewhere inside her.

LUNA (CONT'D)

FUCKING PLAY IIIIIITTT -----

ERIC

Okay, okay, okay!!!

He pulls out his phone. After a moment a rich rhythmic electronic track begins to throb. The bass is hot and clean and the melodies spin and dive in a minor key. The mood shifts. They stand together, heads over the phone.

She steps back. She begins to dance again. This time there is no balletic restraint or formal postures. It's wild and hectic and savage and beautiful... Eric stares on in awe. Seeing his music through her. It's like he's hearing the song for the first time.

12: EXT. BINGO HALL ROOF. MORNING.

They are fast asleep, now, lying together in a sprawl.

An airplane carves a line through the bright blue sky...

They both begin to wake, groggy and disorientated.

Eric takes out his phone, he pulls up the Youtube Video. Luna's watching him now. His finger hovers, then: he presses DELETE.

LUNA

Gurl. Did you delete it?

He nods. Disbelief. It's dawning on him. A new horizon...

LUNA (CONT'D)

It's gone?

ERIC

...Yeah.

LUNA

You're free.

He bursts into jubilant laughter, letting out a sigh of relief as he lets the events of the night move through him.

Luna grabs a little prosecco bottle from their nearby collection of drinks and pops it open. They drink.

ERIC

Right then. What about you?

Luna walks to the edge of the roof, gazing out at the plane:

LUNA

Where do you reckon it's going?

ERIC

Mmmmmmm... Canada?

A pause. She takes a toke of his cigarette. He glances from the plane - to Luna, twinkling with a wry smile.

LUNA

I'm not a dancer any more babe.

ERIC

I'm not sure I believe you.

LUNA

You barely know me honey.

A beat. They both know that's not true. She glances out towards the plane again as it fades to a speck in the peachy pink morning expanse.

ERIC

Gotta be in it to win n all that.

We're on Luna now: A small smile creeps into the corners of her mouth.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END