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KILLER TONGUE

(SPANISH-BRITISH)

An Andres Vicente Gomez production for Sogetel, Lola Films (Spain)/The Spice Factory, Noel Gay Motion Picture Co. (U.K.). (International sales: Sogepaq Intl., Madrid.) Produced by Christopher Figg, Andres Vicente Gomez. Executive producers, Volkert Struyken, Jason Pi-ette, Michael Cowan.

Directed, written by Alberto Sciamma. Camera (color, widescreen), Denis Crossan; editor, Jeremy Gibbs; production design, Jose Luis Del Barco; set design, Fernando Saez; costume design, John Krausa; sound (Dolby), Alistair Crocker; special effects, Image Animation; physical effects, Side Effects. Reviewed at Cannes Film Festival (market), May 14, 1996. Running time: 98 MIN.

Candy Melinda Clarke
Johnny Jason Durr
Chief Screw Robert Englund
Rita Mapi Galan
With: Doug Bradley, Mabel Karr, Jonathan Rhys Myers, Miss Kimberley, Danny Edwards, David Dayle.

“Deep Throat” meets “Alien” in “Killer Tongue,” a loco English-language sci-fi comedy from leading Spanish producer Andres Vicente Gomez. Story of a woman who develops a snake-like talking tongue that penetrates, annihilates and snacks on humans is a little on the uncontrolled side to tap into theatrical cult markets, but its gross-out gore and wild undergraduate humor should make it a viable video item. A videogame tie-in reportedly is in development.

Candy (Melinda Clarke) and Johnny (Jason Durr) pull off a heist and swindle their accomplices out of their share of the cash. Johnny takes the rap, and while he does time, Candy hides out in a convent-cum-gas station in the desert, keeping the loot safely stashed. Media exposure of the convent alerts the wronged accomplices to Candy's whereabouts, and they come after her.

With her four pastel-colored poodles in tow, Candy heads back to her old hangout to prepare for Johnny's imminent release. A meteorite

lands nearby, a particle from which turns up in Candy's soup. She takes a sip and undergoes an instant alien makeover that equips her with a voracious, oversize tongue. The poodles lap up the remains of the soup and are transformed into a quartet of drag queens, greeting their new-look mistress with the line, “We're your bitches.”

Giving a whole new meaning to taking a licking, the tongue massacres Candy's former partners in crime, then demands more food, which the poodles willingly procure. Back on the chain gang, Johnny is at the mercy of the sadistic prison warden (Robert Englund), who is set on blocking his release. Candy's attempts to slice off the offending flesh having proved futile, she gets a message to Johnny to come help free her from the tyrannical appendage that's taken over her body.

Johnny escapes from prison, but his rescue mission is delayed by a brush with the meteorite. Also headed for a date with Candy is the vengeful prison chief on Johnny's tail, and Rita (Mapi Galan), a mute nun looking for a divine message in the meteorite. Instead, her encounter with the intergalactic rock gives her the power of speech and a sexy drum majorette outfit.

First-time writer-director Alberto Sciamma — whose background is in musicvideos — choreographs the demented material at a frantic speed, which helps minimize the gradual disintegration of the action into undisciplined excess. But story coherence is not a major factor here, and the operation provides plenty of dumb comedy to keep young viewers glued.

Production values are eye-catching. Spanish locations stand in for the New Mexico desert, with distinctive sets created for the grungy prison, the convent and Candy's luridly kitsch, multicolored shack. Effects also are pro, especially the repulsive, pink, membranous reptile of the title. Cast, including “Nightmare on Elm Street” regular Englund, is suitably over the top.
—David Rooney



NONSENSE: The demented action in sci-fi comedy “Killer Tongue” is set partly at a desert convent that doubles as a gas station.