F5720 FIRST MORNING (USA, 2003)
(Other titles: Buoi sang dau nam)

Credits: director/writer, Victor Vu.
Cast: Kathleen Luong, Catherine Ai, Long Nguyen, Johnny Nguyen, Dang Hung Son.

Summary: Melodrama about the secrets of a family of Vietnam War survivors set chiefly in contemporary California. Tuan (Johnny Nguyen) has returned home from college for the Lunar New Year to find his mother (Ai) bedridden after a stroke, dad (Son) bitterly uncommunicative, and younger sister Linh (Luong) missing. Initial flashbacks show beautiful, withdrawn Linh rejecting her “perfect daughter” role to party too hard and get pregnant before running away. The film then shows the separate paths family members had taken as mid-’70s refugees from the fall of Saigon. First, dad emigrated with son Tuan, intending to send for the others but got involved with a Texas woman instead. The entire family came together again in a most improbable reunion-by-accident. Finally, mom’s dying monologue for Tuan reveals childhood-trauma (rape by Thai pirates during their sea journey from Vietnam) as the source of Linh’s problems.


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