



ARTS & CULTURE

US Filmmaker Tells Story of Thai Cave Rescue

July 22, 2022

Four years ago, a group of 12 boys and their soccer **coach** were rescued from a **cave** in Thailand. Now, their story has been told by award-winning American filmmaker Ron Howard in his new film *Thirteen Lives*.

The children and their coach were exploring the Tham Luang cave in northern Thailand's Chiang Rai in June 2018. Heavy rains flooded the cave and trapped them underground.

They survived nine days in a partly flooded area of the cave before being discovered by two British divers. But it took members of Thailand's navy and international volunteers another eight days to bring them to safety.

Thirteen Lives recreates what happened inside the cave and above it on the ground during those 17 days. Volunteers, engineers and soldiers removed millions of liters of water from the cave. They also drilled through rocks looking for openings to reach the boys.

Howard spoke to Reuters at the film's first showing in London earlier this week. He said, "It's not just about the heroic divers...it really is an entire community and a country and a lot of countries **ultimately participating** and making something **amazing** come true."

The film stars American Viggo Mortensen and Ireland's Colin Farrell as British divers Rick Stanton and John Volanthen. Australian actor Joel Edgerton plays the part of Harry Harris. Harris was brought on to help when possible ways to save the boys were running out.

The Thai performers in the movie included professional and nonprofessional actors. Many of the young boys playing the members of the soccer team had no acting experience.

Stanton, Volanthen and members of the international rescue dive team attended the London showing. They praised Howard's representation of the events.

"I think it's good for people to know what happened. It's not a documentary, but it's pretty much true to life," Stanton said.

Thirteen Lives will be released in a small number of U.S. and British theaters on July 29. It will be released worldwide on the Amazon Prime Video service on August 5.

I'm Jonathan Evans.

Hanna Rantala reported this story for the Reuters news service. Jonathan Evans adapted this story for Learning English.

Words in This Story

coach - *n.* a person who instructs or trains a performer or team

cave - *n.* a large hollow place formed by natural processes in the side of a hill or cliff or underground

ultimately - *adv.* in the end

participating - *v.* taking part in something

amazing - *adj.* causing astonishment, great wonder, or surprise