

# **"TSUNAMI STORIES"**

Screenplay by  
Bill O'Leary

FADE IN:

EXT. OUTER SPACE - DAY/NIGHT

The starry expanses of space surround a blue luminescent pearl - Planet EARTH.

TITLES / VOICEOVER:

**On December 26th 2004, the Earth was struck by an underwater earthquake; it was the second largest earthquake ever recorded, measuring 9.3 on the Richter scale. While, the tsunami, that resulted from this quake, was the deadliest in history...**

**At this time, the United Nations lists a total of 229,866 people lost, including 186,983 dead and 42,883 missing.**

**Many countries, particularly in Southeast Asia, were affected by the devastating waves that fateful day - including Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, the Maldives, Somalia, Myanmar, Malaysia, Seychelles and Thailand.**

**What follows are the Tsunami Stories of Thailand.**

ZOOM into the area of Southeast Asia. Glistening sea dancing on the cusp of a picturesque shoreline.

EXT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - DAY

An alien land - bleached white with bright sunlight - with water serenely lapping the shore.

On the next wave, debris and a dead fish wash up onto the sand.

Further up, planted on this barren beachscape, a single 40-foot shipping container - battered and tarnished by sun and sea - sits on four concrete posts, with a fibro-roof and faded rattan-covered walls.

TITLE: "Bangtao Beach, Phuket Island, Thailand - March 2005"

A few uprooted coconut trees lay strewn nearby. In the distance, there are MEN in yellow construction hats erecting scaffolding around a hotel building.

INT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - DAY

BILL O'LEARY, 40s, stoically stares out of a long glass window, slotted into a cut in the container's wall.

Silent and deep in thought, he is frozen like a statue; a frown bearing down on his face.

A computer is on his desk, with a screensaver scrolling across the black screen - "AMAN RESORTS... AMAN CRUISES".

Bill sits looking out, as he watches a few Thai longtail boats bobbing around in the ocean.

BILL (V.O.)

(Aussie accent)

Immediately after the tsunami, the tourists all disappeared from Thailand. The place was totally deserted for months.

(pause)

The weather was perfect - as usual. But the Europeans wouldn't come. They didn't want to holiday and party where the locals were still in shock and grieving.

(pause)

And the Asians - well, they stayed away because they're all shit-scared of ghosts.

Bill gets up from his desk and walks to the door.

BILL (V.O.)

Tuk-tuk drivers started telling all kinds of tall tales about picking up complete Swedish families and taking them to their destinations, only to look in the back seat and see no one there. There were heaps of those sorts of weird ghost sightings reported.

(pause)

Well, I reckon it's a load of shit. You gotta believe in ghosts to see them. And, for some reason, I never believed in 'em. Lucky too, because if I did, I'd be in bloody trouble.

EXT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - DAY

Bill lights up a cigarette and exhales a billow of smoke with a sigh.

BILL (V.O.)

I know where the hundreds of bodies they never found are - yep, they're all buried under a few meters of sand on these beaches. Probably a few Billy-Bones under me right now...

(pause)

Ghosts or not, Phuket was still a ghost town. It was a wrecked coastline, although the economic wreck of the first year after the tsunami wiped out many more businesses than the waves ever did.

(pause)

My office was destroyed; all except for my shipping

container building, which was saved by its stilts.

FLASHBACK TO:

A thinner but still stressed-looking Bill stands back and watches as a cable precariously lowers an undented, untwisted shipping container towards the ground.

BILL (V.O.)

When the crane came to pick up and move my container office onto new 'pegs' on the beachfront, they unfortunately fucked up the weight and the cable broke mid-lift-

SNAP! Bill's eyes widen as his office/shipping container falls about 12 meters and CRASHES on the ground!

Bill slaps his hands to the top of his head and falls down, too. He lands on his rear, cross-legged and stunned. All the Thai workers start laughing. Bill feigns anger at them then starts rolling around on the ground laughing,

BILL (V.O.)

That was very funny and tragic at the same time. Pretty much summed everything up for me.

A SURF BUM FRIEND walks up behind Bill patting him on the shoulder reassuringly. The Surf Bum is sipping a cold bottle of beer and smoking a joint.

Bill looks around slowly and the Surf Bum nods solemnly and then offers the Singa Beer bottle to Bill in an outstretched hand...

FLASH-FORWARD TO:

A fatter 2005 Bill looks back at the broken shipping container behind him.

BILL (V.O.)

I started smoking again, and eating... Overeating - so I

looked like the meat coming  
out of a sausage skin.

(pause)

You know, all the usual  
dysfunctional middle-aged man  
coping skills I'd honed over  
the years.

INT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - NIGHT

Bill on his knees, praying, sweaty-faced and disturbed.

BILL

(pleading)

Help me Lord! Help me lift  
these merciless obsessions  
from me!

EXT. SHIPPING CONTAINER - DAY

Bill looks disdainfully at the Cuban cigar in his hand.

BILL (V.O.)

In many ways, I'd ceased to  
function at all. I was  
apathetic about everything -  
even smoking.

He tosses the half-smoked cigar into the sand.

BILL (V.O.)

Ever since that fateful day  
of December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004... at  
approximately 10.10 am... I  
was a little dead inside.  
Hollowed out.

In the background, a line of MONKS walk along the beach,  
chanting to themselves, ringing little bells.

EXT. STREETS - DUSK

Bill drives his pickup truck along - past cars that have  
been pushed around like toys, and empty shells of buses  
tossed carelessly on to their sides; left to rust and die.

THAI CHILDREN walk at the sides of the roads, dirty and alone. They beg as cars slow down for traffic lights and stop signs.

INT. TRUCK - DUSK

Bill rubs his hand down his tired face. He looks in the rear-view mirror - into his own eyes. Cold and frightened and lost.

CAROLYN (O.S.)  
You're fat!

INT. BILL'S THAI HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bill and CAROLYN, his wife, 30s, stand in the kitchen as Bill looks hopefully inside the open fridge. He appears affronted by her statement.

CAROLYN  
And you're smoking again.

BILL  
At least I'm not drinking and drugging, Carolyn. You want me to start again?

CAROLYN  
(angry)  
Is that an option? No, I don't think so. Think of your kids and your family, for God's sake.

BILL  
(stammering)  
I can't- It's that- fucking wave. I've worked all my life on the sea and it's been kind to me. Till now..

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. THE BEACH - DAY

The sea receding; a sucking noise as the tsunami draws in every inch of water.

The SCREAMS as the waves return, with all their might.

FLASH-FORWARD TO:

INT. BILL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bill is standing, staring vacantly.

CAROLYN

(angry)

It was hard on all of us,  
Darl. I thought you'd bloody  
drowned. You and the kids,  
remember?

Bill still appears stunned. Carolyn wraps a comforting arm  
around his shoulders.

CAROLYN

(softer)

Bill, why don't you do  
something for someone? You  
know, get out of your own  
head...?

Bill ponders this.

BILL (V.O.)

Yeah, that's what they reckon  
in recovery too. If I want  
higher self esteem, I should  
do esteem-able acts. Maybe I  
could do something for Cathy  
and Bill Heinecke's orphan  
charity?

He closes the fridge door, holding a salami sausage in his  
hand.

Carolyn quickly takes the sausage out of his grip, starts  
smacking him upside the head with it and puts it back in  
the fridge.

INT. TRUCK - DUSK

Bill has a cell phone to his ear as he drives, absent-mindedly.

BILL (V.O.)

Bill told me about this fund  
his wife had put together.

BILL HEINECKE (O.S.)

Cathy has put together this  
new charity fund.

BILL (V.O.)

It looks after the 13 orphans  
whose parents got killed in  
Khao Lak, a resort beach  
north of Phuket that was one  
of the hardest hit by the  
tsunami.

BILL HEINECKE (O.S.)

Yeah, we're looking after a  
dozen or so orphans from our  
hotel property in Khao Lak.  
They desperately need money  
for education.

BILL

(sighs)

Sounds like a good cause,  
Bill - but, I hate how  
there's thieving bastards out  
there; robbing all the  
charity money sent in from  
around the world. No good  
deed goes unpunished.

BILL HEINECKE (O.S.)

Well, yeah I've heard the  
same on the news.

BILL

Seems like everyone's a cheat  
over here.

BILL HEINECKE (O.S.)

Well, not everyone Bill.  
Can't let a few bad apples

spoil everything for the rest  
of us. Besides, what could be  
a better way to raise money?

INT. O'LEARY RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bill awakes in bed, lit by a twilight hue from the moon  
outside the window. Carolyn stirs.

Rolling over, Bill turns on a bedside lamp.

BILL

A book.

CAROLYN

What? What's that? Is  
something wrong?

BILL

No, I was thinking: a book.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bill paces, with a long-corded phone in his hand.

BILL

We can share stories of those  
who survived.

BILL HEINECKE (O.S.)

And memorialise those who  
lost their lives-

BILL

I know a few people here in  
Khao Lak and Phi Phi Island  
that have amazing stories to  
tell.

Bill stops pacing and leans against the wall, looking down  
at the floor.

BILL

(emotional)

You know, I've done nothing  
to help anyone.

(pause)

I want to start this project.  
I don't really know what to  
do or where to start. But, I  
want to try.

(excited)

If we can get these stories  
in a book form, for sale to  
raise money for these kids.  
What do you think?

BILL HEINECKE (O.S.)

All proceeds would go to the  
Minor Tsunami Relief Fund?

BILL

(passionate)

Yeah. Connecting with those  
who've suffered - by telling  
true stories, and giving back  
to those who suffered the  
most. The Kids. We give all  
the money to the kids.

(pause)

I'll call Damian now - he'd  
be a good one.

BILL HEINECKE (O.S.)

I wouldn't, mate.

BILL

(incredulous)

Why not? He nearly got  
killed.

BILL HEINECKE (O.S.)

It's not that - it's midnight  
mate.

Bill looks to the clock on the kitchen wall. Both hands  
pointing to the twelve.

BILL

Oh - right.

Bill nods and hangs up the phone receiver. He thinks for a  
second then picks up and dials.

BILL

Hey Dame? It's me, Billo.  
 What? Yes, actually, I do  
 know what time it is. But,  
 it's important mate. I've got  
 an idea and I need your help.

EXT. PIZZA PLACE - DAY

DAMIAN BARRETT - dark hair, 40s - is sat in front of a white patio table with a sun umbrella propped in the middle. He sips a bottle of Thai Singha beer.

Bill strolls purposefully in between the other tables as Damian, his right arm in a sling, glances up.

Bill spins a Dictaphone onto the table, stopping it with his hand so the microphone faces Damian.

BILL

So, Dame Mate. Are you ready?  
 Just tell me your story on  
 Tsunami day. I'll write it up  
 and you can check it later.

Bill clicks 'Record' on the Dictaphone.

A waiter walks over with a piece of pizza on a plate.

DAMIAN

Yeah, ok. But, can I finish  
 me pizza first?

CUT TO:

EXT. DAMIAN'S HOUSE - DAY

TITLE: "December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004 - 9:37 am"

BILL (O.S.)

Take your time.

Damian, sans sling, walks casually out of his home, in shorts and a short-sleeved shirt with ELECTRICAL MARINE sewn onto the pocket.

TWIN DAUGHTERS

Daddy! Daddy!

Damian turns around, just in time, to catch his Euro-Asian DAUGHTERS, 6, who run into his arms.

DAMIAN

Gotta go to work, my loves.  
But, I'll be back in time for  
dinner.

1<sup>st</sup> DAUGHTER

I'll draw you a picture.

DAMIAN

That sounds nice.

2<sup>nd</sup> DAUGHTER

I'll draw you on a boat.

DAMIAN

That's right, I'll be out on  
a big boat just in from  
Singapore.

DAUGHTERS

Bye, Daddy. We Love you.

DAMIAN

You too. Now back inside with  
mummy, okay. Good girls.

Damian's daughters runs back inside. He smiles to himself.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

TITLE: "Patong Bay -10am"

Damian walks onto the beach.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

I walked down the beach  
toward the jetty in front of  
the Coral Beach Resort to  
work on a boat called  
"Serenity" anchored out in  
Patong Bay.

A whooshing sound catches his ear. He turns bemused as he watches the shoreline - receding, leaving damp sand behind. A flock of seagulls race overhead and three dogs run up the beach at him then swerve jumping over the beach wall and keep running.

DAMIAN  
(alarmed)

Oi!

He spins around, but there is nobody else nearby him.

He watches hopelessly as the water departs; leaving boats high and dry...

CREAK! The boats fall to lean onto their sides, redundantly, as the whooshing noise stops.

DAMIAN  
(to himself)  
What the hell?

Damian reaches into his pocket and retrieves his mobile phone.

DAMIAN  
(on the phone)  
Hello, Nick?

EXT. YACHT HAVEN MARINA - DAY

NICK, Marina Manager 35, Hawaiian-shirted, is holding a phone to his ear, standing beside a sparkling marina, full of boats.

NICK (O.S.)  
Dame? What are you talking about? Everything's fine over here at the marina.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

DAMIAN  
(puzzled)

Mate. I've never seen  
anything like this before.  
It's bullshit - the whole  
fucking bay just went dry.

(pause)

Hold on. Nah, it's ok. It  
seems to be coming back in.  
Whooooaaa, holy shit! It's,  
it's... Wait, it's coming back-

The water suddenly returns, past the high tide line, with a roar, lifting the sitting boats with it.

A huge boat, The Asian Lady, is flying head on - in Damian's direction - riding the crest of a frothy wave. He instinctively turns and runs.

Damian drops the phone and runs as fast as he can, as the wave - and The Asian Lady - bears down on top of him.

Asian Lady's anchor swings idly, suddenly lose out of the water, and narrowly misses Damian's head as the force of the wave throws the anchor forward, cutting through the water like hot butter.

He dodges the anchor and his feet kick up sand as he runs, but he can't stay ahead of the impending wave.

The fifteen meter wave breaks and, in another ferocious snapping roar, Damian's feet are knocked out from under him.

He is fighting gravity and is thrown upside down, submerged in the sea, struggling for air.

His head breaks the surface in a gasp as he is carried in a flash, right over the cement esplanade beach wall.

INT. DAMIAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Damian's daughters sit quietly in front of plain pieces of paper. Using crayons, one has drawn a picture of a boat on the spiky blue waves of the sea.

The other sticks a tongue out from the corner of her mouth as she concentrates and carefully scrawls a stickman (Daddy) aboard the boat.

EXT. BEACHFRONT STORES - DAY

The huge wave, now carrying Damian and various boats, splashes onto the esplanade road pavement, still surging forward violently.

Damian crashes in a roll through a cluster of rental motor bikes and across the road toward a bank of stores, facing the ocean.

Damian yelps, shielding his face as he slams into the open front of a jewellery shop.

INT. JEWELLERY SHOP - DAY

Damian splashes around in the shop, his feet kicking over displays of gold earrings and necklaces. He stops against a glass cabinet, and looks back, scrambling to his feet.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

The water was filling the shop and I knew I had to get back outside or I'd drown.

Damian's face is a mask of panic.

He pushes back his wet hair and charges at the wall of water rushing inside. He tries to swim against it, but cringes in pain.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

Somewhere between the beach and the jewellery shop, probably clutching at something in the mess of jumbled rental motor bikes; my right arm had been dislocated... The ball joint sat jutting forward and my arm hung Quasimodo useless as the waters rose.

Damian flaps at the water, his right arm motionless.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

I thought, it'll stop soon,  
but it just kept on filling  
up till my feet came off the  
floor.

Damian is floating now, the ceiling closing in on him. The water around him is black with dirt.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK - DAY

Strip-lights flicker, reflecting in the rising flood waters. A YOUNG THAI WOMAN with a baby is shouting and struggling against the currents.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAR PARK, STAIRWAY - DAY

THREE THAI MEN are washed down the stairway. The water breaks their fall on each step, but they hit heavily into the wall at the bottom of the flight of stairs. They're screaming swearwords in local PAK THAI dialect.

INT. JEWELLERY SHOP - DAY

Damian is neck-deep in rising water.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

I started to tread water to keep my head above the filthy swirling water. Looking up at the approaching ceiling lights, I smiled and thought, how bloody ironic. I'm a marine electrician and I'm going to be electrocuted and bloody drowned.

Damian takes a deep breath as his forehead touches the ceiling, to the right of a glowing light bulb. He sinks below the surface.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

Deep in my soul, I knew I was a goner... I wasn't happy, but as I ran out of air a weird calm came over me. The fear had subsided as I

resigned myself to my own  
imminent death.

UNDERWATER: Damian floats down, with his eyes closed, his lips pursed as he holds in his last breath. His body looks eerily relaxed, light glimmering on him from the floating pieces of gold and silver-plated jewellery.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

I was flooded with constant thoughts of my son and twin daughters, all under seven years old. I wondered how they would take the news of my demise. So many things I had not yet told them. So much love I'd never share. Life's tough already, without having to grow up fatherless.

A small golden crucifix necklace drifts past Damian's eyelid. He opens his eyes and grabs it.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

I prayed I wouldn't suffer too much and that my kids and wife would be all right... The prayer must have worked because just as I was passing out, I felt the water come off my forehead.

WATER RECEDES: Damian tilts his head back and takes a huge breath. GASP!

He watches the ceiling again and the waterline in the store drops rapidly. Suddenly, Damian is sucked by the flow of water toward the entrance of the shop.

EXT. BEACHFRONT STORES - DAY

Damian is propelled back out into the sunlight of the street, into a swirling washing machine of salty foam filled with motorbikes, cars, broken cement walls, sheets of tin roofing and SCREAMING PEOPLE.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

I didn't like my chances,  
scrambling in that death  
soup.

Damian reaches out to a tree, partly submerged in the  
water.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

I hit a tree on the esplanade  
that the Buddhists tie  
coloured ribbons around. Each  
ribbon symbolized a wish  
waiting to come true - and I  
had a wish of my own. I  
didn't have a ribbon so  
instead I tied myself to the  
tree - holding on for dear  
life.

Using his good arm, he holds onto a ribbon, and locks his  
legs around the tree's trunk. Still he is getting struck by  
debris in the water.

Damian looks up - a Tuk-tuk is turning over and over, as it  
gushes forward in his direction. His eyes widen in horror.

DAMIAN (V.O.)

Bugger this. I didn't survive  
drowning in the bloody gold  
shop just to get cut in half  
by a rolling Tuk-Tuk.

Then an expensive roll of Indian tailor's fabric floats  
past, catching onto his left ankle. It entwines his leg and  
he starts kicking to free himself.

Trapped! And the Tuk-tuk is closing in.

DAMIAN

Ah - fuck no!

He outstretches his leg and he quickly pulls at the fabric  
and untangles it from his foot. He's free and the roll  
drifts off, out to sea.

Damian then shimmies further up the tree, just as the Tuk-tuk bounces off the trunk below him, before folding into the rising sea.

From his vantage point, Damian looks out over the white water rapids carrying cars, motorbikes, deckchairs and FLOATING BODIES into the open sea.

He stares stoically at a passing body, realizing his own fortune.

CUT TO:

Within a few minutes, the water has receded back down to road level.

High above Damian, on the roof of a Department Store, a YOUNG THAI MAN waves.

YOUNG THAI MAN

(shouts)

Hey you Farang down there.  
Are you okay?!

DAMIAN

My Koi Sabai Krup. Chuay Noi.  
( I'm not Ok! Can you help  
me? )

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

The Young Thai Man assists Damian toward an escalator, taking him to higher ground. Damian hobbles onto it.

As they ride, Damian glances over the edge of the railing, to the basement level below.

DAMIAN

I was one of the lucky ones.  
Down below - in the  
underground car parks, in the  
basement of the department  
store; there were lots of  
people stuck and no air  
pockets down there.

(pause)

Just a watery grave.

Damian and the Young Thai Man silently ride the escalator, along with a bunch of other WET SURVIVORS.

SURVIVOR (O.S.)  
It's coming back again!

Damian and the Young Thai Man exchange worried looks, and then the other Wet Survivors panic.

They all rush up the escalator in a mad dash.

EXT. DEPARTMENT STORE, ROOFTOP - DAY

Damian, the Young Thai Man and Wet Survivors burst through a door and rush onto the rooftop, just in time to look down as the next wave crashes into the buildings below.

Damian gasps as he surveys the mayhem and havoc of the scene below...

*CLICK!*

EXT. PIZZA PLACE - DAY

Bill glances down at the tape recorder as it runs out of tape.

DAMIAN  
(wiping his  
eyes)  
After they reset my shoulder,  
I went home and, when I  
finally got back to my  
family, I just cried and  
hugged my kids and my wife  
all night long. I never  
wanted to let them go again.

Bill surveys Damian's creased and emotionally-drained face.

They sit in silence, and Damian drinks the last drop of his bottle of beer. Bill looks to his right, over the still surface of the presently calm sea in the BOAT LAGOON MARINA.

A battered Tuk-tuk whizzes past the pizza place.

INT. TUK-TUK - DAY

Zippering in and out of traffic at a million miles per hour, the TUK-TUK DRIVER speeds through the streets.

HONK! Another Tuk-tuk barely misses the front of the Tuk-tuk as it cuts off the path ahead. The second Tuk-Tuk turns off abruptly down an alleyway, leaving the road ahead clear once again.

A PEDESTRIAN steps out and then retreats back to avoid the Tuk-tuk, which starts to slow down, skidding to a halt beside a beach, with a large watch tower.

EXT. WATCH TOWER, BEACH - DAY

RICHIE, 23, surfer, sits in the watch tower looking out over the same ocean that Bill was contemplating only moments ago.

BILL (O.S.)

Richie!

Richie flips his head around, to see Bill walking down the beach.

RICHIE

Giddy, Billo! I'm coming down.

Richie descends from the watch tower, clambering down the ladder.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Bill and Richie sit side by side. Bill flips to the B-side of the mini-cassette tape and places it back into the Dictaphone.

BILL

I appreciate you taking the time to do this, mate.

RICHIE

It helps the orphans, how can  
I say no.

BILL

I'm just saying - it takes a  
brave man to play back the  
events of a day like this.

RICHIE

Bravery had little to do with  
it. I was just in survival  
mode, you know. I mean, you  
were out there, too - out on  
the open sea, and you didn't  
know what was going to  
happen.

Bill is pale and quiet, seemingly frozen in the moment.

EXT. SEA - DAY

TITLE: "Amanpuri Resort Bay, December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004 - 9:50 am"

On shore, across stunning aquamarine waters, the watch  
tower stands tall - and empty - looming over the beach  
horizon.

RICHIE (V.O.)

It was like any other day; I  
had been in Phuket about  
three months already.

(pause)

Every morning it was the same  
routine: arrive at the  
Amancruises base, a little  
idle chitchat as me and the  
boys fuel up the boats and  
wash 'em down to get them  
ready for the day.

MONTAGE OF IMAGES: Richie and THREE THAI GUYS - THE BEACH  
BOYS - work on the water-ski boats. Richie grabs the hose  
and sprays down a ski-boat, Hobie Cat and a rubber dingy.

RICHIE (V.O.)

Together with the Amanpuri  
beach staff, we are the Beach

Boys. We'd set up the equipment and wait for the guests to enjoy their holiday.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Richie strolls across the picture-perfect beach, toward his watch tower.

                  RICHIE (V.O.)

How good can this be? Clear blue skies, turquoise water lapping at the white sand, beneath the hot sun. Yep... this is the life, I thought as I took in the view.

                  (pause)

And I got my favourite spot - the watch tower - which is usually taken by one of the permanent staff who have worked here for years.

Richie flashes a grin at two BIKINI GIRLS who smile as the hotel beach staff lay out their towels on their sunbeds and pitch an umbrella in the sand for another day of sun worship.

Richie nods to himself and then ascends the ladder to take a seat in the watch tower. He opens his Marine Captain's book and starts reading.

                  RICHIE (V.O.)

Unlike the Boxing Days of previous years, I didn't have a hangover... Back home in Australia, this time of year is typically spent surfing a lot with mates, and enjoying the festive season as merry as can be. But, it was just before 10am when I noticed something was wrong.

EXT. WATCH TOWER, BEACH - DAY

Richie looks up from his book, back down, then back up with eyes wide open. He sits up high and looks over the edge of the watch tower. Where there was once turquoise sea, the bay is suddenly being sucked dry.

Richie's mouth gapes open in shock. The bikini girls are up off their sunbeds, standing and pointing at the retreating water; they appear confused.

                  RICHIE (V.O.)

                  Even with a basic  
                  understanding of school  
                  science, I knew it took a  
                  very powerful force to move  
                  all that water so quickly.

Richie glances down the beach to see damp sand and a pair of previously floating ski-boats sitting flat on the ground.

                  RICHIE (V.O.)

                  When I saw our ski-boats  
                  sitting on the sea floor,  
                  where usually they float over  
                  meters of water, it suddenly  
                  hit me. I thought: a bloody  
                  tidal wave is coming.

                  RICHIE

                  (shouts)

                  Hey, Everyone. Move! Move!

Richie waves his arms at the bemused bikini girls and a smattering of TOURISTS meandering around the beach.

                  RICHIE (V.O.)

                  The water was drawing out...  
                  but so much... so fast... I  
                  thought at any second we were  
                  going to be hit by a 20-meter  
                  wave... right then!

Richie descends the ladder and looks toward where the water disappeared. But nothing is happening. The water is way out but seems to be staying out there.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Richie puts his fingers to his mouth and lets out a loud whistle.

Across the beach, the Beach Boys look up. Richie points to the lack of water.

Various tourists appear mesmerized by this phenomenon and stand rigid, watching, waiting.

Richie grabs a BIG MAN carrying snorkelling gear down to the water.

RICHIE

Sorry, Sir but you have to leave!

BIG MAN

Why?

RICHIE

This isn't right - it's not normal. The water's going to come back. You know? Like a tidal wave.

The Big Man squints his eyes as he looks out into the distance.

BIG MAN

It looks fine to me. I'm going snorkelling.

The Big Man looks at Richie like he's crazy and continues toward the waterline hundreds of meters away.

Richie lets out a desperate sigh and looks toward the Beach Boys - they are shrugging.

RICHIE (V.O.)

With no other visible signs on such a beautiful day, people couldn't fathom that something very dangerous was already on the way. It

probably looked like I was  
overreacting.

Richie spins around in circles; looking out to the sea,  
then looking back up the beach to the mesmerized tourists.  
He rubs his hands over his face. What to do?

Suddenly, a light comes on inside his head and he runs back  
to the watch tower. He climbs the ladder.

EXT. WATCH TOWER, BEACH - DAY

Richie picks up his mobile phone. He fumbles as he attempts  
to type a text message; he's visibly shaking.

TEXT MESSAGE: "TIDAL WAVE COMING WEST COAST PHUKET..."

Richie takes a deep breath to restore his nerves.

Then, he shakes his head, scrolls through the Phonebook on  
his phone - finds "THE BOSS" - he presses 'Call'.

EXT. BILL'S BOAT - DAY

Bill is steering a large speedboat from the flybridge, out  
through a mangrove river.

ANIL, a grey-haired INDIAN man in his 50's, is standing by  
the rails, smiling and enjoying the day with his FAMILY.

A phone rings and Bill checks the caller ID, then answers.

BILL  
Yeah, Giddy Richie? What's  
up, mate?

RICHEL (O.S.)  
Bill - we've got a problem  
over here.

Bill listens intently for a minute.

BILL  
(nodding) Hmmm.

Holy Shit. Well just keep  
doing what you're doing.  
Yeah, Yeah, Keep clearing the  
beach.

(commanding)

Hurry Mate. Just clear the  
beach, Richie...

Anil overhears half of the conversation and steps closer to  
hear more.

ANIL

(nervous)

Something wrong, Bill?

BILL

(to Richie)

The only place that's safe is  
open sea or high ground.

Bill looks over at Anil. Both of them appear concerned.

EXT. WATCH TOWER, BEACH - DAY

Richie ends the call on his phone and looks down at the  
beach.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

By this time dozens of Tourists have walked all the way  
down to the false waterline, way out by a high and dry teak  
swimming platform.

RICHIE

Phew. Son of a bitch.

EXT. WATCH TOWER, BEACH - DAY

Richie's eyes widen with fear, then he hurries, skipping  
the ladder and instead jumping down from the tower.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Richie lands on all fours in the sand and rushes off toward  
the distant waterline.



Fucking run!!

CUT TO:

Richie and the young guy are running as fast as they can towards the base of the hill at the top of the beach.

Without looking back, they run - a wave growing behind them; water licking at their heels.

Richie and the young guy make it to the top of the beach, just as the water engulfs their legs.

                  RICHIE (V.O.)

I found out later that it happened differently everywhere - for us the first wave was more like a big surge. People here had a chance to get off the beach up to the hill. Elsewhere the effects of the first waves were even more devastating.

EXT. SAND DUNES - DAY

The 6 meter wave arrives and smashes with a BOOM!

Water washes over the sand dune, sweeping effortlessly and knocking over half of the deck chairs and beach furniture.

The young guy is buckled over, catching his breath. He looks up as the wave hits, and he appears astonished.

                  YOUNG GUY

Oh my God.

Then the sea retreats again. The tourists are amazed and start taking photos with cameras and camera-phones.

The Big Man, still holding his snorkelling gear, walks over to the soaked furniture, laying on its side, disturbed by the waves.

                  RICHIE

(calls out)

Hey Mate! Leave it. Get away  
from the beach.

(to the young  
guy)

This isn't over yet.

FRED, AMANPURI GENERAL MANAGER - GOOD LOOKING AUSSIE -  
ASIAN 30's, walks over to Richie. He is wearing an Amanpuri  
shirt and looks like he's in charge.

RICHIE

(to Fred)

It's not over, Fred. I reckon  
a bigger wave is coming -  
trust me on this.

FRED

Okay, let's zone off the  
lower beach area, try and  
hold back these crowds.

The Beach Boys listen and nod, then set to work.

BEACH BOY 1

(to the crowds in Thai-English -Tinglish)  
Back, everyone. Get back.

Richie wipes the sweat from his face with his sleeve.

The tourists start to move back.

CUT TO:

Regardless, the crowd of tourists has multiplied. All eager  
to see what the fuss is about.

RICHIE (V.O.)

After a period of calm at  
sea, the crowd had tripled in  
size and become restless. My  
warnings probably seemed a  
little over the top. But, I  
did still feel as if we were  
going to be hit with a 20-  
meter wave at any second.

Richie looks down onto the beach.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The Beach Boys pick up pieces of strewn and soggy teak beach chairs and furniture.

RICHIE (V.O.)

Somehow, a guest managed to get down to the beach, and started to pick up strewn pieces of the hotel's furniture. Then of course, all the staff joined in, but I strongly objected to anyone being down on the beach. I was adamant in the belief that another bigger wave was coming.

The water starts rushing up the beach again.

RICHIE

(shouts)

Come on! You bloody idiots.  
Get off the beach!

The Beach Boys start running up the beach to escape the sudden surge.

Beach Boy 1 is dragging a sea kayak to safety.

RICHIE

(angry)

Leave the bloody kayak!

Beach Boy 1 runs up to the wall of the beachside hotel gym. He turns fearfully to see the water is following him. He drops the kayak, which is quickly washed away.

Richie leans down from the hotel stairs.

RICHIE

(panicked)

Get over here!

Beach Boy 1 hesitates a moment too long. A torrent of foamy wash hits the sandbank, along with beach furniture, debris and the sea kayak, all collected en route.

Richie puts up an arm to stop the water and a broken chair from knocking him over. Beach Boy 1 reaches out. The water pushes Beach Boy 1's legs and he falls down into the waves.

Plunging an arm into the ocean, Richie grabs Beach Boy 1 and pulls him up. The pair retreat quickly up the stairs.

The wall, where Beach Boy 1 was momentarily standing, suddenly gives way, as the water punches through into the gym building.

INT. HOTEL, GYM - DAY

Tens of thousands of litres of water thrash through the gym - a fierce flood that lifts giant pieces of fitness equipment and pushes over dumbbells.

A TV hanging from the ceiling, showing an aerobics exercise video, is hit by the incoming wave and torn off its brackets -- SPLASH into the murky waters.

EXT. SAND DUNES - DAY

Richie and the soaked-through Beach Boy 1 walk up to join the others on higher stairs.

FRED

Richie, you alright? There are warnings on the news of another massive wave coming. We need to evacuate everyone to the highest point of the hotel.

EXT. BILL'S BOAT - DAY

BINOCULARS' P.O.V.: A massive, miles long 5-metre high broken tsunami bore wave is the full way across Phang Nga Bay moving rapidly up the coast of Koh Yao Yai.

Bill looks to Anil.

BILL

Don't worry. We should bbe  
safe here in deep water  
between the islands. Good  
thing you cancelled your jet-  
ski ride this morning and  
decided to go out on the boat  
instead. God knows what the  
waves would do to a jet-ski.

EXT. WORKSHOP - DAY

TITLE: "Earlier that day"

The purr of a cell phone ringing.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

CAPTAIN BERNARD, a large bearded French man, 50's, digs in his short's pocket for his phone.

BERNARD  
(accent)

Hello?

BILL (O.S.)  
Hey Nana. Thank God I got to  
you. Just got a call from Mr  
Thadani, and he won't be  
needing his jet-ski today.  
Fancies a change, so we're  
taking the boat out. You can  
work at Bang Tao for the day.

BERNARD nods stroking his beard. Through the open roll-a-door doorway, he surveys a large white and blue-striped jet-ski, sat on the back of a trailer, beside the workshop.

BERNARD  
Alright, Bill.

BERNARD (V.O.)  
Bill's second call of the day  
wasn't quite so laid back.

CUT TO:

Bernard is grief-stricken, with the cell phone to his ear.

BERNARD

What?

BILL (O.S.)

(frantic)

Nana! Get out of the workshop

- NOW!

EXT. BILL'S BOAT - DAY

BINOCULARS' P.O.V.: The 5 metre broken wall bore wave heads toward the shoreline of the sand peninsular protecting their boat.

Bill lowers the binoculars and talks into his cell phone.

BILL

(concerned)

Maaaate. Go to the mountain,  
Bernard. A really big wave is  
heading right for you.

EXT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Bernard wanders out of the workshop and hangs up his phone. He appears awestruck by the sight.

BERNARD (V.O.)

I walked out of my workshop,  
in the south of Bang Tao Bay,  
and went down to the beach to  
see for myself. I could  
hardly believe it when I saw  
the ocean level was all the  
way out about half a  
kilometre. I'd never seen  
anything like it before.

THREE THAI KIDS are running on the beach, trying to catch flopping FISH, lying everywhere on the sand banks.

Bernard's brow furrows.

CUT TO:

The water suddenly returns. Several longtail boats bash together and drag anchor as a rushing wave pushes the boats inland, towards the main beach.

BERNARD (V.O.)  
I realised then, something  
very strange was happening.

Bernard's mouth opens in shock. He suddenly picks up his toolbox and moves quickly back to the workshop.

INT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Bernard enters in a hurry, and walks to a wall of hooks with hanging keys. He searches, and finds his car keys, and turns -

Water rushes over his knees. Bernard drops his toolbox - SPLASH! The heavy metal box sinks out of sight.

BERNARD (V.O.)  
In fifteen seconds, the water  
was over my head.

Bernard splutters to keep afloat as the water washes him around and around the workshop in a whirlpool.

UNDERWATER: Bernard's legs hit various loose mechanic tools, fallen from their hanging places on the walls.

Bernard ducks his head under the surface and dives under the half-open roll-a-door.

EXT. WORKSHOP - DAY

Bernard emerges from the water, coughing.

BERNARD (V.O.)  
I needed help. I needed an  
escape route. I needed a  
float. I don't swim so well.

BUMP! Something hits his head.

BERNARD (V.O.)

Thank God for Mr Thadani's  
jet-ski.

Bernard clammers onboard, his clothes sopping wet.

BERNARD (V.O.)  
But, I wasn't safe yet.

EXT. FLOODED RURAL STREET - DAY

Bernard, on the back of the jet-ski, is washed into the top branches of a big tamarind tree. The branches snap, as they scratch his face and shirt. He holds on tight to the jet-ski handles as he battles the branches.

Bernard tries to steer the jet-ski, but the waves are in control. The jet-ski careens out of control, washing across a water-logged road.

THAI FISHERMAN (O.S.)  
(broken English)  
Help me!

Bernard spots the THAI FISHERMAN perched in a small tree, surrounded by waves and water. He appears terrified.

The water is rising up the trunk, and getting close to the Thai Fisherman's perching branch.

Bernard starts the jet-ski's engines - with a roar and a spurt of bubbles, suddenly he's in control of the vehicle.

Sneering at the sea-spray as he cuts through the waves, Bernard doubles back in a u-turn.

The stranded Thai Fisherman climbs to a higher branch as the water rises further...

The jet-ski fights against the mighty sea and Bernard rides her expertly.

But then, the jet-ski drives over the top of a PLASTIC BAG and other debris, which are floating in his path.

UNDERWATER: The plastic bag gets sucked up and caught inside the jet-ski motor.

Bernard immediately loses power. He looks puzzled for a minute, then looks to see the Thai Fisherman is still 10 feet away.

BERNARD  
(shouts)  
Jump to the water!

The Thai Fisherman is nervous but jumps from the tree into the water. SPLOSH!

The jet-ski suddenly starts to swirl, out of control. Bernard extends his hand to the Thai Fisherman.

BERNARD  
(gruffly)  
Come on! You can do it - come on!

The Thai Fisherman's hand finds Bernard's. He clumsily climbs onto the back of the jet-ski.

CRACKLE! Bernard turns in horror at the strange sound.

SPARKS are flying in the air. And the jet-ski is drifting backwards, toward where an electric post is shooting yellow and white sparks.

Bernard tries again to start the jet-ski. It shoots bubbles for a second then stalls.

The Thai Fisherman's shocked face is illuminated by the flashing sparks as he looks back.

THAI FISHERMAN  
Yet Mear. Hua Door!  
We gots to go, Mister. We  
gonna get elecicity fried.

Then, the Thai Fisherman glances down, letting out a tremendous gasp.

HISSS! A 3 metre long King Cobra snake is slithering on the surface of the water, struggling to board the back of the jet-ski. Its hooded neck is reared up, fangs bared.

THAI FISHERMAN

(frightened)

Mister! Mister! Noo! Noo! Sar-nake!

The Thai Fisherman kicks at the hissing snake, rocking the jet-ski.

BERNARD

(frustrated)

(in French)

I'm trying- What the hell's your-

Bernard spins around; he spots the snake.

BERNARD

(shocked)

Putarn, De lar Bordel, De Meard. Jesus!

The Thai Fisherman is still kicking frantically, and the jet-ski almost topples over from the rocking, into the live sparking wires.

Bernard realises this and punches the Thai Fisherman in the chest.

BERNARD

(angry)

(in French)

Meard. It's better to get bitten by the snake than to get us both shocked to death!

The Thai Fisherman appears to be confused by the French mother tongue of Bernard. Yet, the Thai Fisherman stops moving and the jet-ski stabilises.

The King Cobra watches the jet-ski and flashing electricity bolts with a hypnotic interest; sparks glowing in its beady eyes.

Slowly, the jet-ski untangles from the sparking wires and moves on.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

Now sailing along at the height of rooftops, the jet-ski scrapes the top of a roof and Bernard tries to grab a

passing chimney/ventilation pipe. It's too slippery to get a grip. Bernard grits his teeth as he loses his hold.

Behind, the King Cobra is still following along with hundreds of rats and cockroaches. Suddenly heaps of swimming RATS attempt to board the slow-moving jet-ski, hopping on and off Bernard's feet; all fur and tails.

Bernard grimaces and kicks the wet gnawing faces away.

The edge of the roof is coming and Bernard holds tight to the jet-ski handles. The Thai Fisherman clings onto Bernard's back.

A drop - the jet-ski slides off of the roof, leaving the rats and snake behind.

KER-SPLASH! The jet-ski floats on.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The Thai Fisherman leans an arm over Bernard's shoulder, pointing where the wave is pushing the jet-ski, in the direction of a partly-submerged block of new apartments.

Floating near the second storey balcony, the jet-ski is edging past the building.

Bernard and the Thai Fisherman exchange knowing glances. They both climb off and grab hold of the passing railing of a balcony.

The jet-ski washes away, out of view.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING, BALCONY - DAY

Bernard looks back to the water below, with a shudder. Thousands of COCKROACHES and hundreds of RATS are swimming on the surface. A sea of creatures atop an actual sea.

Now he is safe on the other side of the railing, he looks in all directions. Pandemonium. Devastation. Human misery.

TERRIFIED PEOPLE clinging to trees and sitting on rooftops.

FLOATING PEOPLE, holding onto anything buoyant.

In the silence, A 10-YEAR-OLD BOY, sitting inside a small ice cooler, as a raft. He sees them and starts screaming as his cooler starts to circle the black, churning water.

Bernard looks to the corner of the balcony, where the Thai Fisherman is weeping into his hands.

BERNARD (V.O.)

We couldn't help anyone or we would die. Soon the water sucked back out to sea and it was dry for about fifteen minutes. I thought there may be more waves so I stayed on the apartment balcony. I was angry because my cigarettes were wet!

CUT TO:

Puddles of water are all that's left of the tsunami. PEOPLE are cautiously leaving their places of security. Venturing down, tempted by the prospect of dry land.

BERNARD (V.O.)

I could see many locals who climbed down from the trees and roofs. I shouted to them to stay up high, but they all went back to their houses between the waves to collect cash and land title deeds and other 'valuable' things. Memories, keepsakes, photos.

(pause)

The second wave came so fast, I think it took even more lives than the first.

A THUNDERING BOOM - a mighty squall swallows up the shallow puddles and swarms the empty, people-less trees.

Bernard looks down at his feet, despondently.

EXT. BILL'S BOAT - DAY

Anil looks stunned as he watches the doom on the horizon. His wife CONI and two DAUGHTERS stand with him, in tears and bewilderment. Bill's three children are in shock.

They all watch the bore wave crash over the sand spit of Koh Yao Noi. It uproots coconut trees and swamps the land. The smaller waver heads right at them. Bill shouts hang on as he guns the engines and the 40 foot boat runs head first into the white-water. Safely on top of the wave Bill turns to Anil and smiles.

BILL (V.O.)

Anil is a great bloke and one of my bosses at Amanpuri. He had been vacationing in Phuket for the festive season for the past sixteen years, with his wife Coni and two daughters.

(pause)

I had three of my own children on board that day. But, I was lucky to have called my wife, telling her to get herself and our youngest daughter out of the house and to higher ground. Just in time, I hoped.

ANIL

Bill, what should we do now?  
Go back into shore?

BILL

If another wave hits when we're in shallow water, the boat could capsize or be slammed into the rocks.

(pause)

Look, Anil - I still have a wife and one kid back on the shore, who are safe; you have your entire family here on this boat. So, this is your call. You tell me whether we should go back to Phuket or not.

Anil pauses for a short time. The sound of the wind and sea whistling around them.

ANIL  
(decisively)  
Let's go in.

EXT. BOAT LAGOON MARINA - DAY

Bill's boat moves into the narrow mangrove channel, and everything seems fine - except for DEAD FISH and BROKEN FURNITURE littering the ocean.

EXT. BILL'S BOAT - DAY

ANIL  
So far, so good.

Bill frowns.

BILL  
Look.

EXT. MARINA - DAY

The river suddenly starts to drain. Every inch of water emptying out. Getting shallower and shallower.

Bill's boat keeps pressing forward. A gurgling sound surrounds them.

ANIL  
Oh no. Shit.

EXT. BILL'S BOAT - DAY

Bill pushes hard on the boat control throttles, furrowing his brow with concentration.

EXT. MARINA - DAY

THREE AMANCRUISES STAFF, in their white uniforms come down the dock to watch Bill's arrival. They all appear nervous for them.

BILL (V.O.)

No real need to worry. As it turns out, we had taken the speedboat called 'Blowfish', which had been designed to operate in only eighteen inches of water.

(pause)

As a result, even with the water running out very quickly, we made it into the Marina safely.

Bill's boat carves through the shallow water and parks safely by the dock.

EXT. BILL'S BOAT - DAY

Bill helps tie up and they all hop to the doc, breathing sighs of relief.

ANIL

Thanks, Bill.

BILL

What Now? I guess we'd better get back to the hotel and see how Richie and Fred are fairing. The mobile phones are all out.

EXT. BILL AND BERNARD'S OFFICE ON BANG TAO BEACH - DAY

DOZENS of DEAD BODIES lying everywhere. Strewn. Water-logged. Buildings half demolished, boats broken, cars on their sides.

TIM O'LEARY (O.S.)

Dad?

EXT. BILL SITTING STARING AT HIS OFFICE FROM HIS PICKUP TRUCK - DAY

Bill is shaken out of his stupor.

BILL

Yeah Tim.

He tries to shield his son, TIM O'LEARY, 10, from the view of the many bloated corpses.

TIM

What's that man doing?

Bill looks in the opposite direction to the bodies.

EXT. ON THE DEBRIS STREWN ROAD - DAY

An ISLAM MAN dressed in robes is chanting and gesticulating.

ISLAM MAN

(echoing voice)

Allah Akbar!! Allah Akbar!!

BILL (O.S.)

Yeah. Allah Akbar alright.  
Come on son - let's get out  
of here.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Bill pulls into his driveway, with Tim and his KIDS in the back.

Carolyn rushes out of the house, her mascara running from tears.

She rips open the truck door and kisses Bill, putting her hand into the backseat.

KIDS

(unison)

Mum!

CAROLYN

God, I was so worried about  
all of you. Are you alright?

BILL

Yeah, no worries. We're good.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carolyn enters as Bill sits at the table, rubbing his head.

CAROLYN

The kids are in bed.

BILL

Lucky if they'll get any  
sleep after a day like that.

(pause)

Bodies were washing up on the  
beach, like jelly fish. You  
couldn't tell if they were  
Thais or foreigners. All  
black and bloated. Fuck.

(pause)

It was horrible.

Carolyn stands behind Bill and puts a hand on his shoulder.

KNOCK KNOCK.

Carolyn looks puzzled and walks to the back door. She pulls  
open the curtain to see who's there.

Carolyn opens the door.

CAROLYN

Sawasdee Kar, Khun Phom -  
how's your family?

KHUN PHOM

Sawasdee Krup Khun Carolyn. Yeah  
Good, good. Thank you.

BILL

How bad is it out there?

KHUN PHOM

( Wais with two hands to Bill who Wais back )  
Well, it seems Amancruises  
lost many small boats and  
trucks. Though, they found Mr  
Thadani's jet-ski in a swamp,  
just here near your house

actually. And they found Khun A's Mum in there too. She had only underwear on and it was filled with money and here land title deed. She went back to her house between the waves. Silly woman...

CAROLYN

Come in and sit down. I was just going to bed.

BILL

I'll be up in a minute, Darl.

Khun Phom sits down opposite Bill. He watches as Carolyn leaves, and Bill notices this.

BILL

What's on your mind?

KHUN PHOM

(whispers)

Khun Bill, I was wondering - do you need to make any 'hits' on anyone?

BILL

Pardon? What are you saying? Hits? Have you gone nuts?

KHUN PHOM

A group of "enterprising" friends have connections to the local Thai Mafia and they are offering a special low 'tsunami price' on assassinations.

(pause)

They're drowning people in their own bathtubs, then they're taking the dead drowned bodies and dropping them into the beach disaster zones.

INTERCUT WITH MONTAGE OF SCENES: A GANG OF MEN break into a house, grabbing a VILLAGE HEADMAN, who is screaming and kicking.

The Village Headman is pushed under the water in his Thai water pot and held there, fighting, until the fight stops and the Village Headman's body is limp.

His body is loaded into the back of a pickup truck where a few other BODIES are already lying. The bodies are taken to a moonlit beach and thrown into the sea by the gang.

CUT BACK TO:

Bill's face devolves from partly curious for a few seconds to a mask of horror.

KHUN PHOM

Just 100K Thai baht - about  
\$2,500.

Bill holds his chin, thinks hard, shakes his head 'no.'

EXT. SEA - DAY

Suddenly, thrust into the middle of the deep blue ocean...

MR BLUE, a well-built German guy in his 40s, and a NAKED GIRL, are floating on a new plastic-covered mattress.

The mattress is writhing like crazy, and the waves below are fierce and unfriendly.

MR BLUE is staring lost in love with the NAKED GIRL...

BILL (O.S.)

No, no. Blue, start further  
back - at the beginning Mate.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFE - DAY

Mr Blue looks at Bill with a steely glare. Mr Blue sips his mug of coffee thoughtfully. Bill has large bags under his eyes.

MR BLUE

You look like shit, Bill.

BILL

Do you mind, I was up late working on this. Now, if you could start before the tsunami first hit Phi Phi Island.

MR BLUE

Yar. Okay.

INT. MR BLUE'S BUNGALOW HIGH ON THE HILL IN LUDLUM BAY- DAY

TITLE: "December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004 - 10:25 am"

Mr Blue looks out from his bungalow; the floor-to-ceiling windows face the natural beauty of the bay below.

MR BLUE

My name is Bernd Kunkel but they all call me 'Mr Blue'. I run a game fishing boat for tourists from Phi Phi Island.

(pause)

Whenever we don't catch any fish - which is rare - I tell the tourists, "At least we have THE BLUE." Fish or no fish, we spent the day on the stunning blue ocean. So, everyone knows me as Mr Blue.

(pause)

On that day, December 26<sup>th</sup>, I was staying in my bungalow on the mountain 40 meters up, opposite Ludlum Bay.

HANS, blonde-haired, walks into the room.

HANS

What is that strange sound, Blue?

MR BLUE (V.O.)

I had an annoying friend from Germany staying with me.

MR BLUE  
(rolling his  
eyes)

It's just the water from the  
full moon and high tide.

The noise is getting louder, like a jet engine turbine  
warming up.

MR BLUE (V.O.)  
This guy doesn't speak much  
English at all so he is  
always trying to speak it  
with me. We're both German  
and it's so annoying. I was  
sick of him always asking me  
questions so I would always  
just give him a stupid  
answer.

HANS  
(In very bad English)  
No way. It's far too loud to  
be that.

Mr Blue turns to look at Hans, furrows his brow, then walks  
over to the door.

Mr Blue opens the door, to hear a very loud whooshing  
noise.

His eyes open wide and his mouth makes an 'O'.

MR BLUE (V.O.)  
I saw the first wave coming  
up the Ludlum Bay side into  
the backside of the isthmus.

EXT. LUDLUM BAY - DAY

A powerful wave pushes into the village with a vengeance.

EXT. MR BLUE'S BUNGALOW - DAY

Mr Blue runs down the steps, down to the water level below.

Hans walks out behind Mr Blue.

HANS

Where are you going?!

EXT. LUDLUM BAY - DAY

Mr Blue stops in his tracks. Out ahead of him, down in the water, a very attractive fully developed naked 20-something girl with blonde hair. She is beside a coconut tree, with blood and scratches over her nude body. Submerged up to her waist in water, she appears helpless.

MR BLUE (V.O.)

I saw a naked young lady  
nearby, she was  
beautiful, maybe she was  
Swedish. She was bleeding all  
over and stuck in the water.  
I didn't even think. I jumped  
in to rescue her.

Mr Blue dives straight into the water. Immediately, he struggles against the current.

Swimming with all his strength, Mr Blue manages to reach the naked girl.

Clinging onto the coconut tree, he introduces himself.

MR BLUE

Hello.

His mouth instantly fills with water. He spits.

MR BLUE

I'm Mr Blue.

NAKED GIRL  
(in a state  
of shock)

Hi, I'm Sarah.

A sudden gushing wave strikes Mr Blue and the naked girl, disconnecting them from the coconut tree.

Still floating on the surface of the sea, they hold hands and float in the ocean together.

Mr Blue is paddling when something catches his eye - a mattress. He can hardly believe his eyes.

MR BLUE (V.O.)

It was a mattress from some new hotel and still covered in thick plastic. I knew we must get on top of it because being in the water was dangerous with roofing metal and debris floating around.

MR BLUE

Let's go.

They swim toward the mattress and Mr Blue helps the naked girl to climb on top. He joins her.

MR BLUE

Don't worry. The danger is inside the water with all that crap floating around.

The naked girl, sitting on the mattress, suddenly appears embarrassed and uncomfortable. Pulling off his t-shirt, Mr Blue leans forward offering the shirt in his hand.

She smiles for a second and puts it on. Then, lying on their fronts, they ride the waves, aboard the mattress.

EXT. SEA - DAY

For an eternity it seems, the mattress floats along, facing the demolition on shore. Mr Blue and the half-naked girl watch mindlessly as the waves crash into the mainland.

Mr Blue looks over to the girl and she smiles back at him, nodding.

MR BLUE

We didn't talk much to each other after that. It's so strange. She was so beautiful.

(pause)

The water changed direction and we were taken all the way back out to sea; maybe over one kilometre from the Phi Phi shore.

(pause)

The tsunami surges kept coming in and out for about an hour, getting less and less powerful every time.

(pause)

When it pushed us back close to the shore we picked up some short wooden planks that were floating in the soup, and paddled in the last few hundred meters to the beach.

EXT. SHORE - DAY

A strange sight as Mr Blue and the t-shirted naked girl paddle with planks of wood, aboard a plastic-wrapped mattress. They are silent except for grunting from all the energy being expelled.

The mattress hits the sand and Mr Blue jumps off, pulling the mattress ashore. The naked girl disembarks pulling the t-shirt down to cover herself and leaves, heading up the beach.

MR BLUE (V.O.)

We got off the mattress and then separated. I don't know where she went.

(pause)

I think about that all the time; why we didn't talk to each other at all. Floating on a mattress in the middle of a tsunami and we just looked at each other and smiled and nodded. We were in

shock maybe and she was cut up pretty bad. I think she got hit by a door or a piece of roof.

Mr Blue watches as the girl walks up the beach, holding the t-shirt over her body like a short dress.

MR BLUE (V.O.)

I really want to meet this mystery lady Sarah again. Maybe she was not Swedish but English or even maybe Dutch? Maybe, one day, we can meet again. That was my favourite t-shirt.

A wave comes in, quietly picking up the mattress and taking it back out to sea.

INT. BILL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bill is sat at the table with a laptop computer, burning the midnight oil. He rewinds and replays the last section of tape again.

MR BLUE (O.S.)

Maybe, one day, we can meet again.

Bill smiles briefly and types Mr Blue's words on the screen.

Carolyn appears in the doorway.

CAROLYN

Coming to bed, Darl?

BILL

Yeah, Soon. I just want to finish this.

CAROLYN

Bill, this is becoming an obsession with you.

Bill turns to look at Carolyn, disgruntled.

BILL

You wanted me to do something. Get out of my own head, you said.

CAROLYN

Yeah, but - just don't let this tsunami book run your life, that's all.

BILL

(upset)

What life? There's no fucking guests. Carolyn, it's important, and I'm making a genuine difference. I'm helping.

(pause)

And just because we try to ignore what happened, doesn't make it go away. These stories are the truth and the world needs to hear from us, in our own words.

CAROLYN

(sighs)

Alright, Bill. But, if you're going to stay up all night, at least let me make you a coffee.

Carolyn heads over to the coffee machine and fills the pot with water.

Bill smiles to himself. Carolyn then walks over to look over Bill's shoulder.

CAROLYN

Hey, this doesn't read well. There's typos! Come on, move over. I'll fix these while you make me a cup of tea.

Bill smiles broadly and pinches her on the arse.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Bill drives with a sense of melancholy.

BILL (V.O.)

I couldn't help but feel a pit in my stomach on my way to meet Patrice. I was still feeling "zombied," like I was going through the motions just to get through each day. Yet, this was my wake-up call. Patrice's story had to be told in this book, if it was going to be any kind of account about the day the tsunami hit Thailand.

(pause)

He had lost more in five minutes than many lose in a lifetime.

INT. BAR - DAY

PATRICE, French, 30s, handsome with chin-length scraggly dark hair and a short fuzzy goatee, is sat waiting for Bill to arrive. He flips a beer coaster over and over on the tabletop.

BILL

Patrice. How are you keeping?

PATRICE

(with a forced smile)

Okay, you know. Under the circumstances.

Bill takes a seat. He is sweating. He places the Dictaphone on the table.

BILL

Are you ready to talk about this?

Patrice looks around the bar.

PATRICE

(accent)

I miss Paris some days, but not the weather. It's always so warm and sunny here. I like the ocean, too. Isn't that funny? I actually like the sea.

Bill nods uncomfortably.

PATRICE

My wife Samantha, our six-month-old baby girl Ruby Rose and I were staying in a bungalow in Khao Lak - about one hundred metres from the beach. We were on our holidays.

(sighs)

Around five in the morning, the Thai street dogs went crazy. They were barking for about an hour and a half then they went quiet and we were able to sleep again.

Patrice looks up abruptly from the coaster he's been flipping over and over on the table. He stares directly into Bill's eyes.

PATRICE

I woke up again about fifteen minutes before the wave hit.

INT. BUNGALOW - DAY

Patrice is lying in a large bed, with white linen sheets. The room is bathed in white, with white-washed walls and long white flowing curtains at the French-doors leading to a terrace.

The sounds of splashing - a shower is being taken outside of the room.

PATRICE (V.O.)

My wife and daughter were already up and were having a shower. Apart from their noises, it felt strange because there was no noise at all.

The squeak of a tightening tap, the splashing stops.

SAMANTHA, wearing a nightgown, enters carrying RUBY ROSE wrapped in a white plush towel.

PATRICE

Do you hear that?

Samantha rubs her long hair with an extra towel.

SAMANTHA

What do you hear?

Patrice gets out of bed, and walks to the billowing curtains.

PATRICE

(thoughtful)

That's just it. Nothing. There are no dog or bird noises at all.

Patrice pulls back a curtain and walks out onto a small terrace.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

Patrice squints his eyes up the street, into the distance.

EXT. SMALL STREET - DAY

A single ISLAM THAI WOMAN is running, very fast. Her hat blows off her head but she doesn't stop to retrieve it.

EXT. TERRACE - DAY

Patrice's eyes widen. He races back inside.

INT. BUNGALOW - DAY

Samantha appears worried.

SAMANTHA

What is it?

PATRICE

(panicked)

I don't know. Come on, Sam.  
We have to run!

SAMANTHA

(screaming)

Run where? What's going on?!

A rumbling. Somewhere. Getting louder. Patrice and Samantha are suddenly quiet. They both know. They must run.

Patrice picks up Ruby Rose, still wrapped in a towel.

EXT. BUNGALOW - DAY

Patrice carrying Ruby Rose, and Samantha behind them, start jogging up the street. A wave is surging up the street, hot on their heels.

SAMANTHA

(looking back)

Oh my God!

PATRICE (V.O.)

I remembered there was a concrete water tower, very high, about two kilometres from where we were, so we raced towards that. We ran and ran for about five minutes over the flat ground, but every time I turned around, the wave was catching up on us.

Patrice looks over his shoulder.

A black wall of dirty water, around five meters high, is chasing Patrice and his family. Inside the wall of water; rocks, building debris, and dirt swirls around menacingly.

PATRICE (V.O.)

We were not fast enough and  
it caught up to us.

SLOW-MOTION - The water washes over Patrice and Samantha's  
legs.

SAMANTHA

Nooo!

Patrice and Samantha manoeuvre behind a thick trunk of a  
palm tree. The water slices either side of the trunk, then  
circles around to submerge Patrice and Samantha's torsos.

PATRICE

Go! Up the tree.

Patrice forcefully pushes Samantha by the rear, as she  
tries to shimmy up the tree. Patrice is clutching Ruby Rose  
to his chest. He pulls himself up on a branch with one  
hand. The water is rising fast - he gasps as the murky  
blackness engulfs his head.

Two hands are raised above the surface, holding the baby  
just above the black waves.

SLOW-MOTION - The water rises up the hands and fingers, and  
then the current takes Ruby Rose away all of a sudden, torn  
from Patrice's grip.

PATRICE (V.O.)

The image haunts me every  
night when I try to sleep.  
She was carried away on the  
surface for a time. We looked  
at each other for a long  
moment but no matter how hard  
I tried, there was no way I  
could reach her.

Patrice pops up on the surface, his hair drenched and  
blackened with dirt. Ruby Rose is floating up the street  
quickly. Her eyes are wide, and confused.

PATRICE (V.O.)

I have always taken very good care of my daughter, waking her up every morning and spending my special times with her.

(pause)

As she was carried away from me, I could see in her eyes that she was asking me, "Daddy, why aren't you taking care of me now?"

(pause)

Then she disappeared under the water into the black wave.

Patrice fights back the tears as he watches Ruby Rose disappear. His face contorts in unimaginable pain at this cruel torture.

PATRICE

(screams)

Ruby!!

Samantha is floating ten meters away. She sees Patrice, baby-less, and starts screaming hysterically.

Patrice swims over to Samantha, trying to comfort her and support her in the still-rising flood waters.

Holding onto each other tightly, a 10 meter high, fast-moving, black water wave seizes the couple and hurls them along.

Ahead, a heart-stopping drop, as the wave meets a small river with high banks. Patrice sees the waterfall approaching, but they are helpless. He closes his eyes and hugs Samantha tightly. He whispers, I love you.

EXT. SMALL RIVER - DAY

They fall, in a splash of debris and murky water.

A few seconds underwater, and then Patrice and Samantha resurface, choking and spluttering.

They continue being pushed down this raging river until another steep drop - CRASH! They fall violently into the water again.

UNDERWATER: Patrice and Samantha are separated by the churning waters. Their hands reaching out for one another.

Patrice spins around and round in the water.

PATRICE (V.O.)

At first, I tried to fight the water but it was no use. Then I somehow became calm... I have been swimming and free diving all of my life and I knew that I had to become at one with the water and let it take me. I knew that at sometime the current would finally bring me back to the surface again, so I waited for that.

Patrice appears serene, with his eyes shut, waiting...

PATRICE (V.O.)

If you fight, you don't know where the surface is because you are moved by the water upside down and totally lose your bearings. You don't know which way is up anymore. So I calmed myself down and saved my air until I was eventually forced back upwards - to fresh air.

Patrice breaks the surface and takes a huge gasp of air. Then he is abruptly sucked back under.

PATRICE (V.O.)

The water took me down under again. I had to do that many times, up with the up current, and take a deep

breath, before it pulled me  
back under again into the  
black.

A big log zips along on a current and collides into  
Patrice's chest. He winces in agony, letting out a few  
bubbles of valuable air.

Tangled junk and tree roots at Patrice's feet suddenly  
catch hold of him, and he is trapped.

Patrice opens his eyes and looks down. He pulls at his leg  
but it's hopelessly caught. Can't move. His struggling is  
futile.

He winces again where the log had struck his chest. Ribs  
broken. Hard to breathe.

He looks upward at the underside of the rolling wave.  
Beautiful - in a frightening, mighty kind of way.

PATRICE (V.O.)

I had broken three ribs and I  
was running out of air. My  
leg was trapped and this  
seemed like the end for me.  
So, I said to myself, "You  
only have this one chance,  
Patrice. You have to break  
your leg or foot to get free,  
or you will die this time."

Patrice closes his eyes, seemingly in defeat - then, with a  
snarling mouth, he pushes down hard, twisting his entire  
body.

The bones in Patrice's ankle crunch and break. He pulls his  
loose foot free of the tangled roots, and ascends to the  
surface again.

GASP! Completely exhausted, he looks to the sky as he is  
carried away by the waves.

EXT. RIVER BANK - DAY

Patrice finally finds himself washed up onto a small bank,  
with green grass and rubber trees to cling to. The water

relinquishes its ownership of Patrice and starts to retreat back to the sea.

PATRICE (V.O.)

I was so tired, injured and in shock. In fact, I have never been so exhausted in all my life. I thought I might die right there.

(pause)

Then I saw her - a woman limping in the mud. She was naked. I looked down at myself. I was naked, too.

Patrice is muddy and nude, like THE NUDE WOMAN, smeared with grime and filth from the fierce wave. The Nude Woman is shivering and shell-shocked.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Patrice and the Nude Woman walk, not together but near to one another, in a zombie-like state. Other NUDE PEOPLE join them, one by one. A naked army of survivors, bloodied and dirty.

PATRICE (V.O.)

Everyone I saw was totally naked. The wave had stripped us all. Even the dead bodies were mostly naked.

The bare feet of the nude people sink into the muddy earth, as they slowly walk and hobble up a hill.

Patrice picks up a scrap of clothing/material from amongst the junk washed to the side of the road. He hands the material to the nude woman, who nods and covers her lower half, modestly. Patrice ties another piece around his own waist.

PATRICE (V.O.)

It was very hot and silent - We were all walking silently like zombies in deep shock and horror, except for the

horrible screaming of people  
when they found their loved  
ones' bodies.

(pause)

Like a war zone. No clean  
water to drink and everyone  
blackened by the dirty wave,  
cut deep or with multiple  
broken bones.

(pause)

I was limping along because  
of my broken ankle and could  
not breathe well because of  
my broken ribs. But I was one  
of the very lucky ones.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP OF HILL - DAY

The semi-nude, partially-covered survivors reach the top of  
the mountain hillside. LOCAL THAIS emerge from their homes,  
with water and clothing. They tend to the injured and  
distraught.

AN OLD THAI MAN puts a blanket around Patrice's shoulders.

PATRICE

(concerned)

I've got to go back down  
there - my wife and daughter.

OLD THAI MAN

No, no - next wave will be  
bigger - kill you. Then you  
be no good, if wife alive.

Patrice nods and slumps down on the ground, shaking, and  
weary.

EXT. TOP OF HILL - SUNSET

Cars of varying sizes, shapes and colors all start to  
arrive.

OLD THAI MAN

Takuapa hospital is full -  
but a car take you to  
hospice. Okay?

The Old Thai Man helps Patrice to his feet.

INT. HOSPICE - NIGHT

A MONTAGE OF IMAGES: Patrice in a daze. DOCTORS rushing  
around. OTHER PATIENTS bleeding and injured.

PATRICE (V.O.)  
I rested there but  
desperately wanted to go back  
to Khao Lak to find my wife  
and kid.

Patrice sits and climbs off the stretcher-bed. He wanders  
aimlessly through the hospice. He stops a STRANGER in the  
corridor.

PATRICE  
(delirious)  
Will you take me back to the beach?

The stranger breaks Patrice's arm-hold and walks away,  
shaking his head.

EXT. HOSPICE - NIGHT

Patrice sneaks outside, quickly climbs inside an ambulance  
and starts the engine.

EXT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

The ambulance stops at the side of the road and Patrice  
gets out, leaving the engine running and door wide open.

PATRICE  
(crying)  
Sam?! Ruby?!

He spins around in the empty dark street. He looks at the  
watermark left by the high tides on the surrounding  
buildings.

He weeps, alone.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAWN

A battle-worn Patrice, now stubbled and bleary-eyed, is mindlessly steering the ambulance down the ravaged back streets.

PATRICE (V.O.)

I looked all night but could not find any sign of them. So, I returned the ambulance and got a ride back down to the beach.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Patrice trudges purposefully along the war-zone beach. A man with nothing to live for, except the bleak hope that his family was still out there, alive.

A THAI ARMY RED BEREA SPECIAL FORCES SOLDIER - wielding a gun - confronts Patrice, aggressively.

SOLDIER

(broken English)

You're not allowed to be here - you Farang - you go away.

(shouts)

This beach is our beach. This is a Thai Beach. This beach belongs to the Thailand people, so you must go away now! Or I will shoot you for looting.

The soldier harshly pokes Patrice with the tip of his gun. Patrice snaps in a rage.

Patrice grabs the gun barrel, and puts it up against his own head. Ready to fire.

PATRICE

(shouts)

Come on then you asshole!  
Shoot me! Shoot me! Pleeese.

The soldier is stunned and wrestles to regain full control of his gun.

PATRICE

(shouts)

My wife and baby died here on this beach. This is not your fucking beach. This beach belongs to everyone who died here. Farang and Thai. So, go ahead and pull the fucking trigger. You can't kill me, because I'm already dead!

The soldier stops wrestling with the gun. He is stunned.

PATRICE

(wild-eyed)

Just do it! Go on!!

SOLDIER

No, move along. You go look for your family. Every body here is dead already.

Patrice releases his grip of the gun barrel. He pants as he regains his breath.

The soldier steps away as Patrice scowls and continues scouring the beach.

PATRICE (V.O.)

I checked many dead bodies but didn't find them. I didn't get my foot or ribs fixed. I spent the next seven days going around Khao Lak and all the hospitals in Takuapa, Phang Nga and Phuket looking for them.

Patrice keeps walking up the beach, into the distance, until he is a speck on the horizon.

PATRICE (V.O.)

I would limp into all of the hospitals, go to every room,

open the doors, look at the patients, then apologize and leave. The hospital staff were sick of me.

(pause)

Then I started to look through all the dead Caucasian bodies wrapped in plastic, in the open-air morgues. The ones that had not yet been identified. It was a horrid job.

INT. TENT - DAY

Rows and rows of BODIES, covered in sheets and plastic.

PATRICE (V.O.)

They were all very badly destroyed and decomposing. Smashed heads, black, bloated with bones and guts hanging out. Some had been out in the sun for many days.

(pause)

They finally identified my wife in February and we buried her in London, in a cemetery very near where she grew up. I still have not yet recovered my daughter's body - my darling Ruby Rose.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Bill gets into his truck and throws the Dictaphone onto the passenger seat. He looks at the Dictaphone disdainfully and starts to cry.

A cell phone rings. Bill pulls himself together.

BILL

Hello? Hi, Carolyn. Yeah - I'm fine. Just met with Patrice and, now I'm heading up to Khao Lak for the last interviews in the book.

(pause)

Will do Darl. I'll talk to  
you tonight. Bye. Yeah, Love  
you too.

EXT. SARASIN BRIDGE - DAY

Bill is standing, weeping, at the edge of the Sarasin  
bridge that joins Phuket to the Thai mainland. His truck is  
parked in the middle of the bridge, behind him.

TITLE: "Sarasin Bridge, Andaman Sea"

He doesn't look down. He just swan dives into the sea.

EXT. SEA - DAY

SPLASH! Bill emerges on the surface and lets himself be  
carried around by the ocean out the passage into the open  
sea.

As he swirls around -

A MONTAGE OF IMAGES - Patrice underwater, his foot trapped,  
then calling out for his wife and daughter in the  
darkness... Mr Blue diving into the ocean to rescue the  
girl... Richie running from the wave on the beach...  
Bernard swimming under the roll-a-door... Damian in the  
jewellery shop, filling with water... Drowning.

A wave washes over Bill's face. His own personal tsunami.

Under he goes.

An eternity passes, it seems, and he resurfaces, fighting  
for his life. Bill swims to shore, against the currents and  
the waves.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Bill sits on the wet sand.

BILL

(to himself)

I'll do it for them.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Bill's truck passes a sign to 'Khao Lak.'

INT. THAI HOUSE - DAY

KHUN NOOT, KHUN BOOM and KHUN KWAN, three pretty Thai women, sitting around a wooden circular table. Bill sits opposite them. His hair is still damp from his 'swim.'

Khun Noot is already telling her story in very broken Tinglish.

KHUN NOOT

They were running and screaming. I don't know why but I just couldn't run. I became like a statue of fear. My legs felt weak and I had to sit down on the ground and shake... I heard the water coming and glass breaking all around me... I was crouching down and the wave came over the top of me.

She begins to cry.

KHUN NOOT

(sobbing)

The water was very dirty and many things were in it and floating on it. My blouse stayed on but the force of the water tore my shorts and underpants off... Two times the water circle pulled me down under very powerfully, like inside a washing machine. Around and around I went, deep down.

(pause)

I swam up to the surface and grabbed a small empty gallon fuel tank to hold onto, because I cannot swim very well.

(pause)

I breathed water inside my lungs and I started to kick and die. At first was very painful inside my body and scary but then after a few minutes, the pain went away and then it was very beautiful sound and light...

EXT. LIGHT - DAY

A bright aura envelops a half-naked and soiled Khun Noot. She is bathed in the light and floats, not quite underwater and not quite on dry land - just floating in the ether.

Her eyes are closed tightly.

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)

I thought of my baby and my husband and my family but I wasn't so afraid anymore... I was sorry about all the things I never said to my family. All the times I should have said sorry, but I knew I couldn't make it right, so I started to sing the Buddhist prayer "Nar More" for my soul to become clean.

Her whispered song echoes in the bright-light abyss.

Suddenly, a large FRIENDLY MAN appears above Khun Noot. The Man smiles warmly.

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)

Just then my father, who died ten years before, came to me. He smiled, grabbed my arm, and told me not to be afraid.

The Man's lips move as he speaks to Khun Noot. Her eyes open, and illuminate with happiness.

With a large extended arm, and a hand - seemingly the size of a truck - the Man scoops Khun Noot, plucking her from the light and into DARKNESS.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. BEACHFRONT - DAY

The huge hand carries Khun Noot and then lowers her body into a tall, yellow-flowered Buddha tree, high above the flood waters.

Khun Noot is upside down, hanging from her legs in the tree, drenched head to toe in muddy water.

She looks around her.

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)

I woke up after about one hour of awake and not awake, you know, like a dream.

(pause)

My father was gone and I was alive, rescued in a tree.

(pause)

Everything was full of dirt, mud, and dead fish and dead people with broken trees and smashed cars and rubbish everywhere. Like a big wet bomb exploded.

She blinks, upside down, tears and drips of muddy sea water running in reverse from her chin to her eyes, eyes to her forehead, then falling onto the ground below.

CUT TO:

A BEARDED THAI MAN assists to get Khun Noot down from the tree. Her hearing is impaired from being underwater, and every sound seems to be distorted and muffled.

The Bearded Thai Man speaks to her, but his voice is unintelligible.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILL - DAY

Khun Noot is now walking with a crowd of NAKED ZOMBIES. Beside her walking is PATRICE. Her feet are red and blistered. She pulls her blouse down, to act as a skirt over her lower half. PATRICE stops, takes a sarong from a dead THAI BODY and gives it to Khun Noot.

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)

Together with many other naked people, we all walked up the road and then climbed up to the hill. A kind Farang man found a sarong for me. He lost his wife and baby. Someone said we must go up high to the waterfall in the national park so we walked there... No one really if they were naked or not.

A MONTAGE OF IMAGES: Naked Zombies of various races, sizes, nationalities. Their faces and bodies are flecked with dirt and grime.

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)

Short and tall, fat and thin, old and young, white and black, Thai and foreigner with no clothes, but nobody cared about that. We were all together walking to the waterfall.

EXT. WATERFALL - DAY

A thundering frothy waterfall with a lush body of water at the bottom. Unlike the filthy waves, the water is crystal clear and heavenly.

The Naked Zombies and Khun Noot slowly approach and stroll into the rippled waters emanating from the falls.

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)

After about one hour of walking, we reached the waterfall - we drank water, washed, and had a rest.

Khun Noot cups a handful of water and drinks it quickly. She holds her dizzied head.

She looks around at the approximately 200 PEOPLE congregating around the waterfall. Mostly standing and sitting in silence and utter bewilderment.

An OLD LADY touches Khun Noot's arm; she nods and kindly gives Khun Noot a dry sarong. Khun Noot musters a smile and ties the new sarong around her waist.

On the opposite bank, an INJURED MAN sits down by the edge of the water with a broken leg. He winces in pain.

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)

How could he walk all that way uphill with a badly broken leg? Many people were like that. They only found that they were hurt when away from danger.

(pause)

One Farang lady - she was in a bad way.

EUROPEAN LADY (O.S.)

(shouting)

I'm cold! I'm cold!

Khun Noot turns around. The LADY, with brunette hair, holding her shivering body with both hands, walks around the falls in distress, waving her arms hysterically. The lady stops and lies down.

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)

She lay down and died immediately, as we looked on... Some cried for her family.

The lady appears pale and still.

EXT. WATERFALL - DUSK

Two pick-up trucks arrive, escorted by a single police car.

INJURED PEOPLE climb into the flat-bed backs of the trucks.

Khun Noot walks over to the DRIVER of the truck.

DRIVER

Get in, we'll take you to the hospital.

KHUN NOOT

No, no, please I want to go home, to my family, to Takuapa.

The Driver looks into Khun Noot's eyes.

KHUN NOOT

Please - I'm fine, just take me home.

EXT. TRUCK - NIGHT

Khun Noot sits in the back of the truck, beside a few other PASSENGERS. She rocks as the truck rattles and bounces over holes in the road.

INT. KHUN NOOT'S HOUSE - DAY

The door opens and Khun Noot enters, bedraggled and exhausted.

KHUN NOOT'S HUSBAND approaches, frowning. He rubs his chin.

HUSBAND

(matter-of-factly)

Kit war, Khun Die Lao.

I thought you were dead.

Khun Noot walks over and hugs her husband. He stares back at her blankly.

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)

I was so happy to see my family. Because everyone else at our hotel was dead or missing, they thought I was killed, also.

HUSBAND

(bemused)  
You're not dead?

KHUN NOOT (V.O.)  
I wished my husband showed  
more joy to see me not  
dead... But, My Pen Rai.  
Never mind. Spirit my father  
saved me. I will never  
forget.

INT. THAI HOUSE - DAY

KHUN NOOT  
The next day, they took me to  
Surat Thani hospital to help  
identify all the dead bodies  
there...

(sighs)  
All my thirty-five hotel  
staffs were dead and more  
than one hundred of my Farang  
guests were dead, too. I was  
the only staff member to  
survive along with just nine  
hotel guests.

Khun Boom puts her hand atop Khun Noot's. Khun Boom looks  
over to Bill.

KHUN BOOM  
As you know, Khun Bill, my  
husband, Kevin, and I run a  
luxury private villa in Khao  
Lak. Our guests from 2003 had  
such a great time at the  
villa, they bought land in  
Khao Lak, a hundred meters  
from Bang Niang beach. They  
decided to build villas like  
ours and, just before  
Christmas 2004, all four  
villas were finished and  
ready for the owners'  
enjoyment.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Khun Boom is standing on a white sandy beach. She looks clean-faced and happy.

KHUN BOOM (V.O.)

That morning of Boxing Day, I saw lots of bodyguards and Navy on the beach for the security of Princess Ubonrat and her family. They were all staying at the La Flora Hotel, which is not so far from us.

(pause)

The Princess lost her son in the tsunami that appeared moments later.

Khun Boom's jaw suddenly drops open. In the distance, a huge wall of white curling water is coming in her direction.

KHUN BOOM (V.O.)

I knew straight away it was a tidal wave.

Khun Boom turns and runs.

KHUN BOOM

(shouts)

Tidal wave! Tidal wave! Run!

EXT. VILLA - DAY

KEVIN, a 40-year-old British guy, is sat outside the villa. He stands from his chair, dropping the newspaper.

KHUN BOOM

Tidal wave! Go! Get in the car.

KEVIN

Wait! No! No one should drive, not on the bike or car, get to the second floor now.

Kevin is amazed as he sees the huge wave approaching.

KEVIN  
(abruptly)  
The roof! Get on the roof!

CUT TO:  
EXT. VILLA, ROOF - DAY

Kevin, Khun Boom and several STAFF MEMBERS are clinging to the roof.

The wave hits a 12-meter high building, which is a wing of the villa. It immediately collapses like a house of cards.

KEVIN  
Holy shit!

This starts a chain reaction and the roof where they're standing lifts right off, catapulting Kevin, Khun Boom and staff members into the angry sea.

Khun Boom screams as she falls.

CUT TO:

EXT. WATER - DAY

Khun Boom is disorientated. She looks around. Blood is gushing down her face, creating a slick red mask.

She is alone in the water. Khun Boom removes her shirt as she floats and presses it to the wound on her head.

KEVIN (O.S.)  
Boom, is that you? Stay right there - I'm coming. I'm coming.

INT. THAI HOUSE - DAY

KHUN BOOM  
We lost 37 friends that day. Still, Kevin and I feel very fortunate to both be alive. We just lost our houses but

we are still together. That is the most important thing. What we care about is that people we love lost their lives. We can't bring them back anymore. Houses we can build again but not people's lives.

The three Thai ladies nod in unison, as Bill watches the revolving wheels of the Dictaphone.

Khun Kwan leans forward.

KHUN KWAN

I still have questions about what happened to me - things I can't understand. Like, why did the guests at my company say it was hot in my office that morning and ask if we could talk outside instead? That saved my life. And why did my husband not let me back into the office to get my personal things? Again, I would have died. Also, why did my nephew come to work early on that day? I always got angry with him because he was always late. The day he comes early is the day that he dies.

Bill looks up from the Dictaphone into the deep brown eyes of Khun Kwan.

KHUN KWAN

(voice breaking  
with emotion)

Why did my best friend go to the beach to see her friend at that time? Why?

(pause)

Why were my kids safe on higher ground and not down on the beach, playing like usual? I don't know.

There is a heavy silence in the room. Bill looks out the window to the blue sea on the horizon. So still and tranquil.

KHUN KWAN

I still cannot go down to the sea at Khao Lak. I can go at the other beaches, but not here. I can't trust the sea here. I must stay up on the hill. If I go low, I get very nervous and cannot stay there longer than about twenty minutes.

(pause)

I am mostly depressed now. My best friend is dead, my business is ruined, Khao Lak will take many years to rebuild.

(pause)

I started smoking again. My husband and kids want me to stop but I can't stop. I put on a lot of weight too, but now I've lost it again. Sometimes I sit and shake and cry and it seems I cannot stop.

(pause)

Who can ever forget the day of tsunami? Not me. I will never forget when the wave came into my life. Never.

CUT TO:

COMPUTER SCREEN - Khun Kwan's final words appear on a computer screen, typed by Bill:

"Who can ever forget the day of tsunami? Not me. I will never forget when the wave came into my life. Never."

CUT TO:

INT. PRINTERS - NIGHT

The Tsunami Stories Thailand book rolls, hot off the presses, stacking into a neat pile.

EXT. BILL'S HOUSE - DAY

Bill sits quietly on his deck, with a glass of lemonade on the floor by his side. In between his legs, a torn open cardboard box of books. He is holding one copy in his hands. He looks down at it.

A blue cover, with the painting/illustration of a tsunami wave.

BILL (V.O.)

I'll never forget the tsunami  
either. It changed my life.  
In some ways, for the better.

Bill looks into his garden and watches Carolyn playing with the kids - spraying them with a garden hose. They run and laugh. Happy.

BILL (V.O.)

I value life more than ever  
before. The little things,  
each day. I cherish being  
with my family. I'm glad that  
I'm alive. I survived. Not  
just the tidal wave - but the  
wave of grief that later hit  
many of the survivors and  
those who lost someone they  
loved.

EXT. BEACHSIDE CAFE - DAY

Stacks of books on tables at a book launch. Patrice, Damian, Richie, Anil, Khun Kwan, Khun Boom, Khun Noot, Mr Blue and OTHERS all mingle and talk, holding copies of Bill's book.

BILL (V.O.)

We will never forget. Never.  
And neither will the orphans  
at Khao Lak who benefited  
from this book. It's the  
least we could do.

CUT TO:

A SLIDE-SHOW of REAL LIFE PHOTOS of PATRICE, DAMIAN,  
RICHIE, ANIL, KHUN KWAN, KHUN BOOM, KHUN NOOT, MR BLUE,  
BILL AND THE O'LEARY FAMILY...

As well as, REAL PHOTOS of the KHAO LAK ORPHANS, now grown  
up and living out their lives.

FADE OUT.

THE END.