

THE IMPOSSIBLE

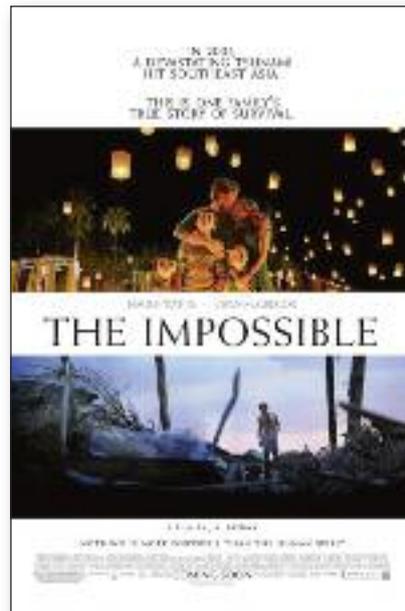
**A Summit Entertainment / Mediaset España Presentation
An Apaches Entertainment & Telecinco Cinema Production
A Film by J. A. Bayona**

A film review by Franco P. Visser

26 December 2014 will mark the 10th anniversary of the so-called 'Boxing-Day Tsunami', a day that conjures up dark and distressing memories for many of those who experienced the horrific events and lived to tell their stories. Having seen the famous interior designer Nate Burkes tell the story of his experiences of that extraordinary day and the loss of his life-partner as a result of the tsunami on an episode of the Oprah Winfrey Show a few years ago, the haunting and heartbreaking tale stuck with me as the years went by. It was when I came across this film that I thought here is a chance to see what happened on that fateful day through the eyes of actual survivors.

The Impossible is a brilliantly made film based on the true-life events as experienced by the Bennett family. Henry and Maria Bennett (played by Ewan McGregor and Naomi Watts respectively) and their three young sons Lucas (played by Tom Holland), Thomas (played by Samuel Joslin) and Simon (played by Oaklee Pendergast) were on Christmas holiday on the island of Khao Lak in Thailand. Upon arrival in Thailand the Bennett family's room was upgraded to an ocean front villa right on the coast in Khao Lak. On the morning that the tsunami struck, the family were in and around the resort's swimming pool when they suddenly became aware of an almighty roar, not realising that it was the first monstrous wave that was nearing the coast and their resort. As the wave hit, the family members were scattered about by the force of the water slamming into the resort, and Maria and Lucas were pulled in one direction and the rest of the Bennett family members in other directions. Naturally chaos ensued, but it was only the first in a series of huge and very powerful waves, some up to 30 metres in height, to batter the coastline that day. As the masses of water flowed inland, so too did tons of debris and mud. Maria and Lucas were able to find each other in the raging torrents of water, although Maria was very badly injured. Fearing for their lives and further monstrous waves, Maria and Lucas made their way to higher ground on the island in addition to trying to find their missing family members. As they struggled to find their way through the devastation, Maria and Lucas came across many dead and injured people and animals.

Unbeknown to Maria and Lucas, Henry and the other boys survived. Following the water settling down, Henry made his way back to the resort and found both Thomas and Simon in the ceiling of the devastated villa room that they had occupied. What was once a lush tropical paradise was turned into what looked like scenes from hell in a matter of a few minutes. Henry



and the two boys then set out to find Maria and Lucas, not knowing whether they had survived or not, nor where they were located. A truly heartbreaking but heroically inspiring story ensues as, on the one hand, Maria fights for her life in an ill-equipped hospital with Lucas by her side, and on the other Henry, along with the two other children, trying to find out what had happened to them and where they were. The two stories of the family members' experiences together on a small island though miles apart from each other, run parallel until the end where..... (And you thought I was going to tell you!)

The 2004 'Boxing Day tsunami' was the worst natural disaster to strike humankind in modern times, killing over 230,000 people in fourteen countries. The series of devastating waves that caused the massive

destruction was triggered by what is known as the 'Sumatra-Andaman earthquake', an earthquake that occurred shortly before 1 a.m. on the morning of the disaster along the Sunda 'megathrust', a geological fault-line extending some five and a half thousand kilometres from Myanmar (old Burma) in the north, along Sumatra's southwest, and the south of Java and Bali before ending near mainland Australia. The hypocentre of the earthquake was some 160 km off the coast of Sumatra under the Indian Ocean at a depth of 30 kilometres under sea level, and the fault-line's rupture was the longest duration of continuous 'faulting' ever seen and lasted an estimated 10 minutes. With a magnitude of 9.3 it was the 3rd largest earthquake to have ever been recorded on a seismograph. The length of the rupture in the Sunda megathrust was 1,300 kilometres, and it is estimated by researchers that the amount of energy released by the fault-line's rupture was equivalent to 9,600 gigatons of TNT explosives - that is roughly 550 million times the energy of the hydrogen bomb that was exploded over Hiroshima during the Second World War. Truly awesome, even mindboggling, figures and thoroughly scary and humbling at the same time!

The Impossible, like many of the films that I review for the *Journal*, is a worthwhile film to view and I would really urge you to get your hands on a copy. My viewing of the film was an awe inspiring experience to say the least and the film has bragging rights in my opinion in having a stellar cast and being an exceptionally well executed film. Well Done! In the next issue I will be reviewing a 'truly American' film, the name thereof I will not divulge here, although I will add another hint that the film was 'history-making stuff'. Can you guess the name of the film?