

The Thai Cave Rescue

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In 2018 a group of 12 boys and their assistant soccer coach were trapped by early monsoon rains in Thailand's Tham Luang cave complex for 17 days. Parts of the cave were underwater and could only be traversed by cave divers.

Cave diving was not an option for the boys; it is psychologically taxing, and over the course of an hours-long dive, trapped underwater with low visibility, squeezing through impossibly narrow crevices, the boys were likely to panic. One of the rescuers said, "You try and dive those kids the whole way, all you'd be bringing out is dead bodies."

One of the rescue divers was also trained as an anesthetist, which allowed him to come up with a last-ditch solution that even he didn't have much faith in: "I expected the first two kids to drown and then we'd have to do something different," he told National Geographic in 2019. "I put their odds of survival at zero." Before he would proceed, he asked the Thai government to grant him immunity so he couldn't be punished if the rescue failed.

Rescuers dosed the boys with ketamine and Xanax, which would keep them calm and possibly render them unconscious; crucially, unlike other sedatives, these would not impair breathing. Finally, the boys were sealed into oxygen masks and tied to flexible stretchers. This way, divers could maneuver them, as National Geographic put it, "like human duffle bags."

All of the boys and the assistant coach survived the rescue. Unfortunately, one rescue diver died from asphyxiation while placing air tanks in the cave, and another contracted a blood infection during the rescue and died in late 2019.

The rescue is documented by:

The PBS/Nova documentary **Thai Cave Rescue** Available for \$3.99 on Amazon Prime

https://www.amazon.com/Thai-Cave-Rescue-Eric-Meyers/dp/B08CVVD8L1/ref=sr_1_3?crid=8VATIMXM0R0Z&keywords=the+rescue&qid=1659993477&s=instant-video&sprefix=the+resc%2Cinstant-video%2C162&sr=1-3

Ron Howard's **Thirteen Lives** Available free for Amazon Prime members

https://www.amazon.com/Thirteen-Lives-Viggo-Mortensen/dp/B09ZTCRQH/ref=sr_1_1?crid=1LTRFBHXV1BWE&keywords=13+lives&qid=1659993020&s=instant-video&sprefix=13+loves%2Cinstant-video%2C310&sr=1-1

The National Geographic documentary **The Rescue** Available on Disney Plus (preview free for everyone)

<https://www.disneyplus.com/movies/the-rescue/6u1VV7RFriRz>

Most of this summary was taken from **The True History Behind Ron Howard's 'Thirteen Lives'**
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-true-history-behind-ron-howards-thirteen-lives-180980489/>

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