



WOKING FILM CLUB

The Main Feature

Season 45 – Issue 13 – Screening 26th March 2026

How to make Millions Before Grandma Dies (Lahn Mah)

Thailand
125 mins

2025
Certificate 12A

Director
Writers

Pat Boonitipat
Pat Boonitipat &
Thodsapon
Thiptinnakorn
B Kraithong
Patchara Lertkai

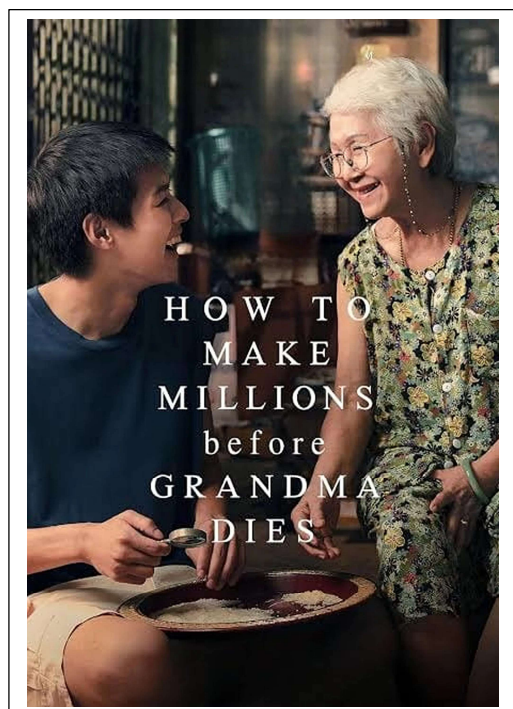
Cinematographer
Production Design

Cast

Putthipong Assaratanakul
Jear Sarinrat Thomas
Usha Seamkhum

Sanya Kunakorn
Pongsatorn Jongwilas
Duangporn Oapirat
Himawari Tajiri
Wattana Subpakit
Tontawan Tantivejakul

M
Sew (M's mother)
Mengju (Amah or
Grandma)
Kiang (eldest son)
Soei (younger son)
Pinn (Kiang's wife)
Rainbow
Mengju's brother
Mui (M's cousin)



Our film tonight is the first we have ever shown from Thailand. Set among the Chinese Thai community in Bangkok, it's a bittersweet drama about generational rivalry over inheritance. It is a sometimes-sentimental movie which still manages some barbs about how a patriarchal society unfairly marginalises women carers but rewards feckless older men.

The film opens on the day of the Qingming Festival where extended families visit the tombs of their ancestors to clean gravesites and make ritual offerings. We meet the feisty but traditional Mengju (Amah or Grandma) and her adult single son Soei and daughter Sew, with Sew's college drop-out slacker son M there but glued to his phone. Mengju's other son (Kiang – an affluent stockbroker), his rather flinty wife (Pinn) and cute toddler daughter (Rainbow) join by video. Mengju has a fall by the graves and whilst in hospital is diagnosed with cancer and given a year to live. Her children agree to keep this from her. M meets his cousin Mui, who has been nursing her paternal grandfather through his own terminal illness. She subsequently inherits his estate and suggests that M “jump the queue” by caring for his own grandmother to secure his inheritance. M moves into Mengju's home and offers to look after her. He reveals her diagnosis and takes her to chemo (*see the very Thai approach to queuing at the hospital – I don't think*

it will catch on in A & E here). Mengju is no pushover, guarding her independence and looking to continue her small congee [rice porridge] business. M proves to be a dutiful and resourceful carer and gradually wins her trust. His two uncles are less comfortable with his involvement, with Kiang looking to help (but only on his terms) while conversely the indebted gambler Soei has a more immediate need for financial support. Mengju takes M to visit her brother (who earlier inherited all their parents' wealth despite leaving their care to his sister). He tartly refuses to fund Mengju's funeral plan. As Mengju's cancer worsens, she makes a decision on her estate (pleasing no-one). The film ends with another (less fraught) graveside scene.

This was the debut feature for the director/co-writer Boonnitipat, who said that he leant heavily on his own family experience for the screenplay. It was also the first film for the actors playing M (previously a local pop singer) and Mengju (a 78-year-old housewife who had never acted before). The director paid particular tribute to her performance stating that she "completed the film's most challenging scenes in one take" and that "she is a magical person. Each take was a masterpiece."

The film struck a chord with Asian audiences (particularly among the Chinese diaspora) and was a surprise smash hit becoming the highest grossing Thai-language film of all time with a \$74m global box office gross. There was a limited release in most Western markets, with the film quickly ensnared by Netflix for these territories. It was selected as Thailand's first-ever submission for Best International Feature Film at the 2024 Oscars but was not nominated.

Critics were impressed. Variety praised the "engaging cast" and noted that it "renders universal the central message of cherishing those we love while there is still time." The Hollywood Reporter commended "strong ensemble acting [that] makes the family a believable unit, their differences notwithstanding. But it's the evolving rapport between M and Amah that makes the film so captivating." Here, The Times described it as "an audience-pleasing tear-jerker" and Little White Lies called it "a beautifully-judged and performed dramedy that's sentimental without ever being saccharine" presciently adding "...see it before the inevitable Hollywood remake."

Indeed, after a bidding war, Miramax secured the English language rights in May commenting "[it] is a rare gem that manages to be hilarious, surprisingly poignant, and moving all at once. Like the original, we hope our adaptation brings generations of families to the cinema together." I guess we shall see...

Enjoy the film! Or, as they apparently say in Bangkok, "kho hai sanuk kap phapayon!"

Eugene Smith



We thank Red Eye for subsidising the cost of printing these notes. Red Eye Print, Unit 2D, Lansbury Estate, 102 Lower, GU21 2EP Tel: 01483 772111

Club website: www.wncc.org.uk. Prefer to leave your comments on the film and your score online rather than on paper? Email to reactions@wncc.org.uk by Wednesday 1st April
Discs of most of our previous shows are available to hire for a modest fee.

Films Shot in Thailand

Last year, it is estimated that 1 million British tourists went to Thailand, attracted by the lush greenery, picture-postcard beaches and (in)famous city nightlife. For similar reasons, it's also proved a popular location for several big-budget Hollywood films. Here's 6...

The Man With the Golden Gun (Dir Guy Hamilton, 1974)

Filmed around Bangkok and Phang Nga Bay near Phuket. Bond attended a boxing match at Ratchadamnoen Boxing Stadium in Pom Prap Sattru Phai District. One of the islands seen in the film is known as Nail Island. It is the hideout of Scaramanga (Christopher Lee) and is now known as "James Bond Island"

The Beach (Danny Boyle, 2000)

Environmentalists criticised the film because the production crew altered the beach of Ko Phi Phi Leh (on an island off Phuket). A 2006 court ruling held that 20th Century Fox was among the parties responsible for damages. The beach is now closed pending repair/recovery.

The Impossible (J Bayona, 2012)

The story of one (Western) family's ordeal after the 2004 tsunami. Filmed in Spain and various locations in Thailand. Much criticised locally as none of the cast were Thai actors (though survivors played extras).

Many films set in Vietnam

A long list including *Casualties of War* (1989), *The Deerhunter* (1978), *Good Morning Vietnam* (1987), *The Rambo Series*, *Operation Dumbo Drop* (1995), *Saigon* (1988), *Da 5 Bloods* (2020)

The Killing Fields (Hugh Hudson, 1984)

Locations in Hua Hin (south of Bangkok) and Phuket stood in for Khmer Rouge-era Cambodia. Shown by the Club in 1988.



The Hangover Part II (Todd Phillips, 2011) Proof that not every film made in Thailand is worth watching!

And for completeness. There are a few Thailand-set films largely filmed elsewhere. **The Bridge on the River Kwai** (1957) was mainly shot in Ceylon/Sri Lanka. **The King and I** (1956) was made in California – it is still banned from being shown in Thailand as it “disrespects the Monarchy and is historically inaccurate.” The ban was also extended to **Anna and the King**, the 1999 remake with Jodie Foster.

Eugene Smith

More examples at

<https://fanclubthailand.co.uk/40-of-the-best-movies-filmed-in-thailand/>

Comments and reactions to: **Girls Will be Girls** (shown 12th March 2026)
 No of reaction slips received = 34 Average score = 6.29

Rating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number	0	0	2	2	4	11	8	5	2	0

Position	Film	Score	Reactions
1	Mr. Burton	8.41	29
2	Touch (Snerting)	8.20	30
3	Conclave	8.15	34
4	Frantz	7.91	32
5	The Dressmaker	7.73	26
6	Perfect Days	7.34	29
7	Thelma	6.92	24
8	Chevalier	6.80	25
9	Girls Will be Girls	6.29	34
10	Maria	6.16	25
11	Jimi - All is By My Side	4.77	26
12	A Christmas Tale/Conte de Noel	3.72	25

Great film – with a mesmeric performance from Preeti Panigrahi

A bit grubby

Rather slow but well-acted and well put together film, Preeti Panigrahi acted very well for someone so young

The teenage years are never easy! Difficult story well told

Well-acted but rather slow and too long

Good story – but graphic sex to watch in the Hall. NO

Charming, beautifully observed, wonderful performances from Preeti Panigrahi, Binoy Kiran and Kani Kusruti

Sensitive growing up film of first love and realisation that most choices are manipulating!

A slow-burn film. Very good acting. An alternative title would have been “Girls Will be Girls and Boys will be Boys”!

Good acting. Better knowledge of schooling in India would have benefitted me. Lost on occasions

I loved this film. It has everything I look for – cinematography, simple yet evocative dialogue, symbolism, a modern exploration of girlhood. Big fan, been on my watch list for some time

Great performances from the 3 main actors. A disturbing illustration of how a teenage girl's life can be wrecked by the thoughtless actions of a more worldly boy

Gripping after a slow start

Very poignant and enjoyable

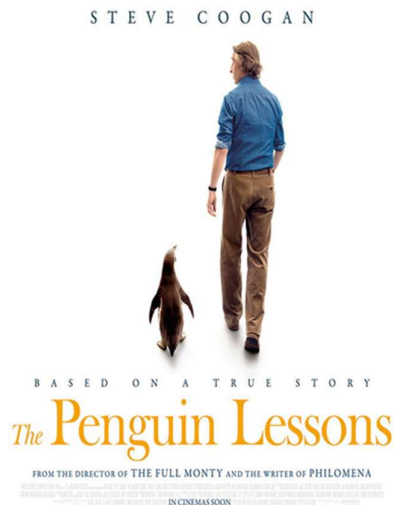
Lovely to look at

Couldn't see the point of it – sorry!

Boys will be boys!

Disappointing. Too slow-moving, First half was better than second

Our Next Film - 9th April – The Penguin Lessons



Adapted from Tom Michell's autobiographical book, The Penguin Lessons counters the inspirational teacher clichés with a bumbling charm that's boosted considerably by a first-rate performance from the scene-stealing penguin – The Observer

If you do pick up a penguin, you could do worse than experience Michell's kind of spiritual and moral awakening. Still, the film is thankfully sharper and less cute than it initially appears – Empire

It emerges as an engaging delight from start to finish – The Hollywood Reporter