

Region of the Heart

A Proposed Film Project from Prankster Entertainment



Logline:

Cynical photojournalist CHARLIE BOYD arrives in Bangkok to do an exaggerated piece on the “exotic Asian woman”. He meets an intriguing bar hostess, TOI, who acts as his guide, then helps her search for her daughter, who has disappeared under mysterious circumstances. A cross-country journey leads to a dangerous conflict with Thai mafia, and a revelatory discovery of love.

Potential Casting Types

We list the following actors as desired or types for the film’s lead characters:

Charlie – Dan Stevens/James Franco/Keanu Reeves

Jessup – Jeremy Irons/Richard Gere

Toi – Lucy Liu/Moon Bloodgood

Production Budget Strategy and Estimates

Largely depending upon casting decisions, we estimate *Region of the Heart* can be produced in a gross budget range of **\$1.6M**.

Distribution Strategy and Budget

We suggest a limited theatrical release driving critical and general interest in wider distribution for the film.

Target Audience

Region of the Heart is a high-quality love story/adventure for audiences age 17 and up. Its strong characters, exotic locales, and insightful story make it an award calibre film experience.

Potentially Comparable Films or in The Style Of:

The Year of Living Dangerously, The World of Suzie Wong

Synopsis: Bangkok, Thailand. CHARLIE BOYD, late 30s, arrives in Bangkok to do an article on Bangkok's night life. A talented writer, Charlie is warned by his editor that he's not in Thailand to write a novel.

Charlie meets up with his local contact JESSUP, 55, a British diplomat who is a self-appointed expert on Bangkok night life. He takes Charlie on a whirlwind tour of various "sights", but Jessup's favorite haunt is friendly hostess bar called Crazy Lady. Jessup confides that, in his experience, all women are looking for love. Charlie, who has a checkered past when it comes to relationships, is intrigued.

At the Crazy Lady, Charlie meets TOI, early 30s, a spirited woman who manages a couple of bars. Charlie contracts Toi to show him around, and she gives him a behind the scenes look at the the people who work there, their real lives and dreams, and Thai culture. In the process, Charlie and Toi get to know each other and feel a growing attraction.

Once Charlie has enough for his story, he schedules a celebratory evening with Toi at the Crazy Lady, where Jessup is hanging out with his younger girlfriend, CHU. Toi seems attracted to Charlie, but rebuffs his advances, hinting about a problem from her past, then leaving abruptly.

The next day, on his way to the airport, Charlie impulsively stops at Toi's residence to say goodbye, and finds her disconsolate. She confesses that she has an 11 year old daughter, AOW, who has gone missing. Moved by her plight, Charlie postpones his return and vows to help her. Toi embrace Charlie.

Toi and Charlie arrange to go to the beach resort of Pattaya, to visit Toi's cousin, JINJARA, who may have clues about Aow, who was left in the care of Jinjara's father, UNCLE WO. Before leaving, Jessup warns Charlie to never get involved in a "native squabble" and gives him his card, just in case.

In Pattaya, Toi takes Charlie to a seedy males-only club for locals, where Jinjara, sultry, early 40s, works. After some banter, Charlie discloses the reason for his visit. Jinjara says she'll check into it, and gives Charlie a ferocious French kiss. As he's leaving, Charlie notices Jinjara flirting with some men, who pull up her skirt and expose an unexpected bulge in her panties. Charlie is flabbergasted...

Toi and Charlie tour the island the next day, stopping at a remote beach. While Toi swims, Charlie jots a poem in a journal. Toi reads it, impressed, and suggests Charlie pursue his creative impulse. Charlie says he's tried, but it hasn't worked out. Charlie then asks Toi about Aow. Toi proudly describes Aow as a girl with big dreams. "The world is full of people with broken dream," says Charlie. Toi asks Charlie what happened to him to make him so sad. "I'll tell you about it sometime," he responds evasively.

They meet with Jinjara again, who has learned that Uncle Wo left for Chiang Mai with Aow three days earlier... Toi and Charlie take a flight to the North of Thailand, then drive to a monastery, where Toi's brother, WISHAN, lives, hoping he has heard of Aow's whereabouts, only to learn Wishan is away until the next day.

That night, Charlie and Toi visit the village of Wiang Chai, where Toi grew up. They run into Toi's old friend, GIAP, who gushes she is glad to finally meet Toi's new "husband." Charlie goes along with the unexpected ruse, sharing a few drinks with Giap and her husband, a local policeman. Later, Toi explains that she had written Giap about a fictitious Western husband, to cover her true activities in Bangkok, and thanks Charlie for playing along.

Toi confides to Charlie that her actual husband, whom she has said died in political troubles years before, may actually be alive. She last saw him when he was fleeing from some local gangsters, called Chao Pao, and hasn't seen or heard anything since...

The next morning Wishan returns and takes Charlie and Toi to an opium den, where they find Toi's Uncle Wo on a bender. He makes a shocking confession - he has sold Aow to human traffickers.

For the next several days, Charlie and Toi engage in a futile search for Aow. One evening, Charlie asks Toi how she is able to tolerate the horror of the situation. "Mi ben rai" she responds, which translates as "it's all right." She explains that "mi ben rai" reflects her Buddhist philosophy of acceptance, and understanding that there is a higher plan.

The next day they visit a place where, after Charlie shows a photo of Aow, a shrewish woman tells him to wait in a tiny room. Moments later, the woman delivers a terrified Aow. Charlie calms Aow, signals Toi outside, and sneaks Aow out a bathroom window. They manage to zoom away just before Chao Pao gangsters, searching for Charlie and Toi, raid the place.

Toi explains the Chao Pao are looking for her because, after her husband disappeared, she was forced to become the girlfriend of his enemy, a Chao Pao godfather called BIG MAN. Big Man is furious that she has left Bangkok, and now both she and Charlie are in big trouble. They decide to flee to Laos. Wishan and Aow travel separately by bus to the border town of Nongkhai, while Charlie and Toi plan to meet them after taking refuge for the night at Wishan's monastery.

That night, Charlie confesses he has been phobic about water and relationships ever since his mother died in a rafting accident when he was boy, which is seen in flashback. Toi and Charlie perform a healing ceremony called "krathong", lighting candles and sending them downstream, to let go the pain and sorrow of the past.... The next morning, while Charlie is still asleep, Toi meets with a mysterious older man...

Charlie and Toi drive to Nongkhai, where they meet up with Wishan and Aow. The Chao Pao are closing in. Charlie tries to hire native boatmen to take them across the Mekong to Laos, but none are game. Finally, Charlie gives Jessup a call. Jessup gives him a local contact who agrees to arrange transport.

Just before they are to cross the river, Toi reveals that her husband has unexpectedly shown up. Charlie feels betrayed, but Toi assures him she didn't know he was alive - now she is hopelessly conflicted - she loves Charlie, and her husband too. Just then, government patrol boats are seen approaching.

Charlie has Toi and Aow take off in one boat, and commandeers another small boat to create a distraction on the river, keeping a patrol boat at bay. Toi and Aow make it to Laos and safety, while Charlie is taken into custody. The next day Jessup arrives and bails Charlie out - as a diplomat, he has a few chips to play. He remarks to Charlie that he got in over his head, and could have been killed. "Mi ben rai," Charlie responds.

The scene flashes forward to several years later - Charlie is in his study, writing, while his wife, in silhouette in the background, tends to their unseen child. In voiceover, Charlie reveals that he wrote a successful novel inspired by his trip to Thailand, and heard from Toi that she had started life over with her husband. Toi ends her letter with "Always remember Charlie, though we apart, we not separate." Charlie reflects "I still carry a part of her with me, and guess I always will," then retires to his bedroom and family.

THE END