

N O

EEN FILM VAN
PARK CHAN-WOOK



MOSTRA INTERNAZIONALE
D'ARTE CINEMATOGRAFICA
LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA 2025
Officiele selectie

O T H E R
C H O I C E

cinéart

PERSMAP



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Drama, thriller - 2025 - ZK - 139 minuten
Bioscooprelease: 5 februari 2026

Meer informatie: Cineart.nl/films/no-other-choice
Download persmaterialen: Cineart.nl/pers/no-other-choice

Distributie

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Synopsis

NO OTHER CHOICE is de nieuwe film van Park Chan-wook (OLDBOY, THE HANDMAIDEN, DECISION TO LEAVE). Het nieuwe bioscoopsucces uit Zuid-Korea waarbij zwarte komedie en cinematografisch meesterwerk samenkomen in een maatschappijkritische thriller.

Na 25 trouwe dienstjaren verliest Man-su (Lee Byung Hun, SQUID GAME) zijn goede baan als opzichter van de papierfabriek wanneer deze in buitenlandse handen komt. Als blijkt dat het vinden van een nieuwe baan lastiger is dan gedacht, moeten Man-su en zijn gezin hun levensstijl drastisch aanpassen. In een wanhopige poging bij de volgende sollicitatie als beste uit de bus te komen, besluit Man-su de concurrentie uit te schakelen. Hoe ver ga je als er geen andere keuze meer is?

NO OTHER CHOICE ging in première op het Filmfestival van Venetië en won de Internationale Publieksprijs op het Toronto Filmfestival. De Koreaanse Oscarinzending staat op de shortlist voor Beste Internationale Film. ★★★★★ 'A deliriously entertaining masterpiece' - BBC.





Director: Park Chan-wook

"I wanted to make a film that would encourage viewers to ask questions. What is considered the lowest level of life for Korea's contemporary middle class? What standard of living must you maintain to be able to consider your life decent? So, what exactly does this man desire to protect?"

Beginning with *JOINT SECURITY AREA* and continuing with *OLDBOY*, *THIRST*, *THE HANDMAIDEN*, and *DECISION TO LEAVE*, director Park Chan-wook has consistently broken new ground in Korean cinema with his fascinating characters, provocative boundary-breaking narratives, and captivating mise-en-scène. He became the first Korean to win three awards at the Cannes Film Festival: the Grand Prix of the Jury at the 57th Cannes Film Festival, the Jury Prize at the 62nd Cannes Film Festival, and the Best Director Award at the 75th Cannes Film Festival, solidifying his status as a world-class filmmaker.

Director Park Chan-wook returns with his new film, *NO OTHER CHOICE*, after three years. Through the desperate struggles of a father unexpectedly thrown off the trajectory of capitalist society, the film will leave an intense resonance and emotional impact on people living in our contemporary cutthroat world. "If my previous films had a more subtle humor, *NO OTHER CHOICE*, you could say, is a bit more explicit," said Park Chan-wook. With his direction that seamlessly blends humor, tension, reality, and extremities of emotion, he promises to once again electrify film fans worldwide.

THE STORY DIRECTOR PARK CHAN-WOOK MOST WANTED TO MAKE

A drama about a desperate struggle for survival, completed through the eyes of Park Chan-wook.

Winner of the Grand Prix at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival for *OLDBOY*, winner of the Cannes Special Jury Prize in 2009 for *THIRST*, invited to the Main Competition in 2016 with *THE HANDMAIDEN*, and winner of the Best Director Award at Cannes in 2022 with *DECISION TO LEAVE*. Master director Park Chan-wook, who has captivated audiences with his taboo-breaking plots and finely rendered *mise-en-scène*, is back. With *NO OTHER CHOICE* - a story he has long wanted to tell - he presents a film that is completely different from his previous works.

NO OTHER CHOICE is the story of Man-su, an employee at a paper company who is so satisfied with his life that he can truthfully say to himself, "I've got it all." However, after suddenly being fired, he finds himself in a battle to get re-hired in order to keep the family home he has worked so hard to buy, and to protect his wife and two children. *NO OTHER CHOICE* depicts, through the unique perspective of director Park Chan-wook, how an ordinary person tries to overcome the crisis of being suddenly fired and draws deep empathy from the audience through its realistic situations that anyone in modern times could go through. As Man-su faces increasingly cutthroat competition to be re-hired, he comes to consider resorting to extreme measures. The inner conflict he experiences pulls the audience into a tense and unpredictable narrative.

Director Park Chan-wook's sharp sense of ironic humor instills the distinctive appeal in *NO OTHER CHOICE*. The film has an attractive cast of characters that add richness to the drama, including Miri, the strong wife who finds herself facing a crisis; Sun-chul, line manager at the highly successful Moon Paper, Man-su's aspiration; Bummo and Sijo, job seekers who compete with Man-su for open positions; and Bummo's wife Ara. With dramatic developments that oscillate between tension and release, sensuous *mise-en-scène* and meticulous directing, added with black comedy, *NO OTHER CHOICE* is a truly original film that will captivate audiences in Korea and around the world.

MAN-SU, A JOB SEEKER WHO STARTS HIS VERY OWN WAR. MIRI, WHO GROWS STRONGER IN THE FACE OF CRISIS.

**From objects of envy to potential rivals and unexpected disruptors,
a host of compelling characters breath life into the drama.**

NO OTHER CHOICE creates unexpected tension and fun through its colourful cast of characters and the relationships that develop between them.

After devoting his whole life to his job, Man-su is tossed out “like an old pair of shoes”. While working part-time at a retail store, Man-su secretly prepares to launch his own war when cornered to lose even the family home he is so attached to. He draws up meticulous plans and starts to put them into action, but the clumsy side of Man-su that emerges in the process becomes a source of ironic humour. Man-su, who once was full of satisfaction and pride in life, gradually starts to transform due to the inevitable anxiety of being unemployed, leaving the audience with mixed feelings because it’s the kind of story that could happen to any of us.

Man-su’s wife Miri has a positive nature and comforts her husband with a bright face when he is suddenly fired, but she also rationally deals with the reality of her family’s declining fortunes. A woman who grows stronger in times of crisis, Miri breathes dramatic life into the story and continues the lineage of captivating female characters in director Park Chan-wook’s works.

Line manager at the most successful paper company in the industry, Sun-chul is an object of envy to Man-su. The cheerful yet sensitive Sun-chul adds an unpredictable vein to the story with his ever-changing appearance. Bummo, a veteran of the paper industry and a potential competitor to Man-su, is desperate to get rehired, but when things don’t go his way in his job search, he spends his days in a helpless stupor. Ara, his wife who feels deeply conflicted about what he has become, is a theatre actress with overflowing emotions, and she misses the husband she once loved. This couple, who gaze at each other affectionately while reminiscing about their days in the past, but soon quarrel, leave a strong impression with their unique chemistry. A caring family man and another potential rival of Man-su, Sijo, works at a shoe store to earn a living after losing his job. The sight of Sijo trying so hard to please his customers that he becomes servile evokes a sad sense of pity.

In this way, the relationships between the characters, each with their own conflicting and entangled positions, unfold in unexpected directions until the very end, further deepening the drama of NO OTHER CHOICE.

GREAT ACTORS YOU HAVE 'NO OTHER CHOICE' BUT TO ANTICIPATE

Lee Byung Hun's third collaboration with Park Chan-wook. Son Yejin, Park Hee Soon, Lee Sung Min, Yeom Hye Ran, and Cha Seung Won all presenting their never-seen-before faces.

NO OTHER CHOICE raises viewers' expectations with the coming together of charismatic actors who possess both popularity and acting skills.

Lee Byung Hun, who takes on the role of Man-su, enters into a deeper and more nuanced collaboration with director Park Chan-wook in NO OTHER CHOICE, following their previous work together on JOINT SECURITY AREA and THREE... EXTREMES. With his ability to inhabit characters of all types, regardless of genre, Lee portrays the lonely and struggling job-seeker Man-su with a completely new look. Lee Byung Hun said, "I worked hard to portray Man-su while paying the utmost attention to how to make this extreme situation come across as convincing." His nuanced performance delineates Man-su's multi-layered psyche intricately, pulling viewers into his inner world.

Having proven her wide acting spectrum in global hit films and TV series such as CRASH LANDING ON YOU, THE NEGOTIATION, THE TRUTH BENEATH, and THE PIRATES, Son Yejin has her first collaboration with Lee Byung Hun in NO OTHER CHOICE as Miri, a character who faces crises with positivity and rationality. "Miri is an optimistic character and never loses her smile. I approached each scene thinking about what Miri would do in this situation," said Son Yejin, who thoroughly immersed herself in the character and left a deep impression.

Actor Park Hee Soon, who has been active on the big screen as well as OTT platforms with works such as THE WITCH: PART 1. THE SUBVERSION, MY NAME, and MOVING, takes on the new role of Sunchul, the line manager of a successful paper company. "Sun-chul is a character with a lot of internal conflict, so finding the right balance was key," said Park Hee Soon, who spoke of his thoughtful endeavours to build up the character of Sun-chul, delivering an impressive performance that highlights his bold charm.

Actor Lee Sung Min, with a proven track record of great performances in every work he has done, including the films 12.12: THE DAY, THE SPY GONE NORTH, and the series REBORN RICH, plays Bummo, a paper industry veteran in desperate need of re-employment. He said, "Bummo is an ordinary, analogue person. I was always prepared with various versions of my character to best express Bummo through the eyes of Director Park Chan-wook."

The role of Ara, an actress with a delicate and rich sensibility, is played by Yeom Hye Ran, who won Best Supporting Actress in the TV category at the Baeksang Arts Awards for two consecutive years for her roles in MASK GIRL and WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU TANGERINES. Always producing astonishing transformations in each of her projects, Yeom Hye Ran said, "Ara is a new character the likes of which I've never played before," raising expectations for her appearance in NO OTHER CHOICE.

Finally, actor Cha Seung Won, who exudes an overwhelming aura in the films UPRISING and BELIEVER as well as the series THE TYRANT and OUR BLUES, takes on the role of Sijo, a seasoned expert in the paper industry. He reveals, "I divided my depiction of Sijo into three distinct colours to add more enjoyment to the film," piquing curiosity about Cha's signature performance.

A UNIQUE WORLD CREATED BY A TOP-NOTCH PRODUCTION TEAM

From landscaping to Bonsai, an unusual collaboration that brings details to life. A unique production process enhancing the richness and completeness of the story.

Efforts to further elevate the artistry of NO OTHER CHOICE were made across all disciplines, including cinematography, art direction, costumes, makeup, and music. Each main character's individuality was reflected in the creation of distinct spaces and styles.

Director of Photography Kim Woo-hyung, who won Best Cinematography at the BAFTA TV Craft Awards for his BBC series THE LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL directed by Park Chan-wook, once again collaborates with Park on NO OTHER CHOICE. Kim captures the flow of the story from Man-su's perspective, drawing the audience into his character's experience. Nonetheless, at certain moments, he places shots that obscure the viewer's perspective, allowing the audience to observe the characters from a neutral perspective. The cinematography that captures this original perspective and spatial aesthetics will help viewers become completely immersed in the story.

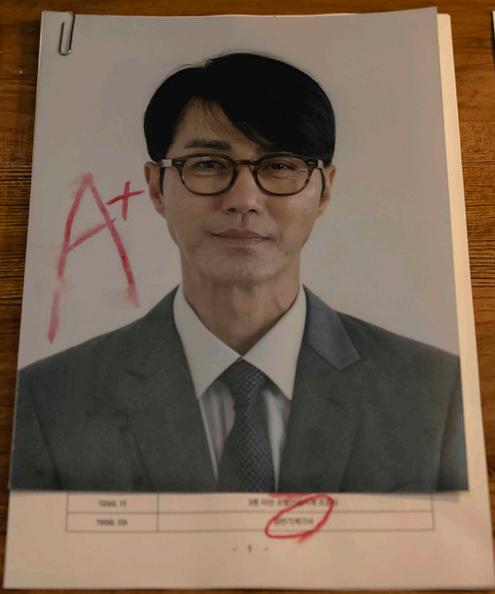
From OLDBOY to DECISION TO LEAVE, production designer Ryu Seong-hie, a long-time collaborator of director Park Chan-wook, won the Vulcan Award at the 69th Cannes International Film Festival for THE HANDMAIDEN. In this film, she meticulously designed each character's space according to their own characteristics. In particular,

Man-su's house, which combines the "French house" style, which was popular among wealthy Koreans in the 1970s and 1980s, with a brutalist approach based on exposed concrete, symbolises Man-su's multi-layered inner self. Director Park Chan-wook and art director Ryu Seong-hie consulted with experts in bonsai and landscaping to realistically express the greenhouse where Man-su spends time tending to bonsai trees and the yard where his family spends happy times together. In this way they achieved a detailed and beautiful mise-en-scène to create the perfect look.

Costume Designer Cho Sang-kyung, who brought the characters in SYMPATHY FOR LADY VENGEANCE, THE HANDMAIDEN, and EXHUMA to life with costume designs that maximised the individuality of each character, utilised various materials and colours to delicately express each character's occupation and psychology.

Makeup & Hair Designer Song Jong-hee, whose styling heightened the individuality of characters in OLDBOY, THE HANDMAIDEN, and DECISION TO LEAVE, naturally expressed the subtle changes in Man-su and the people surrounding him before and after losing his job through makeup.

Finally, Music Director Cho Young-wuk, who won Best Original Score at the 43rd Blue Dragon Film Awards, the 42nd Korean Association of Film Critics Awards, and the 31st Buil Film Awards for DECISION TO LEAVE, once again contributed his talents to NO OTHER CHOICE. His multifaceted score, which alternates between tension and humour, not only enriches the storyline but also enhances the emotional arc and atmosphere of the film. In particular, to achieve a sound that gracefully bridges contemporary and classical styles, the film's music was recorded in collaboration with the London Contemporary Orchestra at the iconic Abbey Road Studios, maximising the sense of immersion for the audience. In addition, the internationally acclaimed cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras, beloved for his profound performances, will deliver a unique and lingering emotional experience for the audience with his rendition of *Le Badinage*.



CAST

Man-su: an unemployed man who launches his own war

"I'm fighting a war."

Man-su took a job at a paper mill straight out of high school and relentlessly divided his time between work and studies, ultimately earning his bachelor's degree online. He once struggled with alcohol but has since established himself as an expert in speciality paper manufacturing. This ordinary head of a family, living a comfortable life with his beloved wife, two children, and two dogs, was suddenly laid off from the company where he had dedicated 25 years of his life. Despite constantly reassuring himself that "Being unemployed is not my fault" and "I'll surely find a new job," he fails at every job interview and is on the brink of losing the family house he'd worked so hard to buy. With nowhere else to turn, Man-su prepares to launch his own war.

LEE BYUNG HUN

A true leading actor of South Korea, Lee Byung Hun captivated critics and viewers alike in the blockbuster hit series SQUID GAME, as well as films THE MAN STANDING NEXT, ASHFALL, MASTER, and INSIDE MEN. Having recently perfected his portrayal of the genius Go player Cho Hoon-hyun in THE MATCH and voiced the character of Gwi-Ma in KPOP DEMON HUNTERS, Lee Byung Hun has continually pushed his own limits with every role. With NO OTHER CHOICE, he enters new territory once again. Taking on the role of Man-su, an unemployed man trying to protect his family and home, he meticulously expresses the desperation of a man driven to the brink and the clumsy actions he makes at crucial moments in the drama, enhancing the film's realism. As director Park Chan-wook said, "Lee Byung Hun was able to shift between a wide range of emotions in seconds, making for a performance that was never dull from beginning to end." Through a fully dimensional character that shifts fluidly between warmth and quiet menace, Lee Byung Hun will showcase his own distinctive world of acting.



Miri: Man-su's wife who becomes stronger in times of crises

"I'd like us to all face the fact that we're in crisis."

Miri, with her bright and cheerful personality, is assertive and unwavering in any situation. Rather than scolding her husband Man-su when he loses his job, she offers comfort and serves as the family's anchor. She abandons her hobbies of dancing and tennis to dive into the hardships of life, handling the crisis with the utmost rationality. However, as time passes, she begins to sense that Man-su's intense job search is no ordinary endeavour.

SON YEJIN

Son Yejin, who left a lasting impression on countless viewers in iconic Korean melodramas such as *A MOMENT TO REMEMBER* and *THE CLASSIC*, followed by her elevated performances with her fluid emotional expression in *SOMETHING IN THE RAIN*, has cemented her status as the "Queen of Melodrama". Seven years after earning global acclaim for *CRASH LANDING ON YOU*, she makes a return with *NO OTHER CHOICE*. Playing the loving wife, Miri, Son Yejin showcases a compelling married pair with Lee Byung Hun. Simultaneously, she enriches the film by perfectly portraying unwavering rationality despite facing sudden financial difficulties. As Director Park Chan-wook highly praises, "She's a professional actress who knows how to express what's needed with pinpoint precision." Son Yejin's solid acting skills, perfectly executed in this unique character, will captivate audiences once again.



Sun-chul: line manager at a successful paper company.

"If you have any shame, don't do this."

Even amidst the restructuring of the paper industry, Sun-chul has retained his position as line manager at the thriving company Moon Paper. He scolds Man-su for desperately coming into Moon Paper with his resume but also takes pity on him and cares for him. On social media, Sun-chul is always cheerful and seems to have everything, making him the object of Man-su's envy and jealousy.

PARK HEE SOON

An actor who has meticulously portrayed the complex inner lives of characters in diverse works such as the films THE POLICEMAN'S LINEAGE, THE WITCH: PART 1. THE SUBVERSION, MOVING from Disney+, MY NAME, A MODEL FAMILY, and seasons 2 and 3 of SQUID GAME from Netflix. Park Hee Soon, who marked his presence in each project with his wide acting range, once again leaves a deep impression on audiences in NO OTHER CHOICE. Playing the role of Sun-chul, line manager at a successful paper company, Park Hee Soon effortlessly moves through a wide range of emotions that are changed drastically by each situation. As director Park Chan-wook stated, "I wanted to see Park Hee Soon play a protean character with great emotional ups and downs, and I thought this was a great opportunity to do so." Rising to that challenge, Park delivers a gripping performance that deepens the film's emotional core and intensifies its overall impact.

Bummo: an industry veteran desperate for reemployment

"Losing my job is not my choice."

Man-su's potential rival for employment, Bummo, is an analog man who has spent his life working for a paper company, insisting on using a typewriter for writing and vinyl for music. His only goal is to find a new job in the paper industry. However, as his job search drags on, he succumbs to alcohol, becoming listless and gradually losing his wife's affection. Then one day he spots a job posting like a ray of sunshine.

LEE SUNG MIN

An actor who has earned the trust of the public and critics for his unmistakable presence that transcends genres. Following his solid and sophisticated performances in the film 12.12: THE DAY and the series REBORN RICH, he recently demonstrated the breadth of his craft with a sly comedic performance in HANDSOME GUYS. Lee Sung Min, who plays Bummo in NO OTHER CHOICE, adds realism to the film through his portrayal of a tenacious character with a special attachment to paper. As director Park Chan-wook remarked, "The performance had to be over the top, but actor Lee Sung Min pulled it off without a hitch," and his seasoned acting skills further solidify the story.

Ara: Bummo's wife, and a woman of rich emotions.

"Losing your job isn't the problem! The problem is how you deal with it!"

Bummo's wife Ara is a woman of artistic temperament. Despite repeatedly failing her acting auditions, she never loses her confidence or romanticism. Exasperated with Bummo's lethargy after losing his job, Ara yearns for the charming person he used to be, constantly wavering between love and disappointment, reality and ideals.

YEOM HYE RAN

Yeom Hye Ran, who won the Best Supporting Actress Award in the TV category at the Baeksang Arts Awards for two consecutive years for her heartfelt performances in the Netflix series WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU TANGERINES and MASK GIRL, sets out for another transformation with NO OTHER CHOICE. Playing Ara, who falls into inner turmoil after seeing Bummo in his lethargic state, Yeom Hye Ran portrays a sensitive and free-spirited character in full dimensions, while her excellent chemistry with Lee Sung Min adds life to the film. Director Park Chan-wook expressed his deep trust in Yeom Hye Ran, saying, "I had confidence in her from the beginning, and she delivered an incredibly entertaining performance. I guarantee that watching Bummo and Ara as a couple will be extremely fun." True to Director Park Chan-wook's rave reviews, Yeom Hye Ran is sure to captivate audiences with her irreplaceable presence.

Sijo: a seasoned veteran in the paper industry.

"I'm a machine repairman."

Another potential competitor for Man-su. Originally a technician in charge of equipment at a paper company, he now works as a shoe store manager in his hometown after losing his job from downsizing. Despite facing a completely different environment, he treats his customers kindly and tries his best to sell every single pair of shoes.

CHA SEUNG WON

Cha Seung Won, who has built his career in acting with extraordinary energy and charisma in films such as UPRISING, BELIEVER, and series THE TYRANT, OUR BLUES, and THE GREATEST LOVE, takes on the role of Sijo in NO OTHER CHOICE. With Sijo, a shoe store manager who never shows his dissatisfaction or frustration and steadfastly tries to make a living, Cha Seung Won has shed his characteristically strong image and created a relatable character who evokes compassion. Park Chan-wook says, "Actor Cha Seung Won is tall and striking, but I thought it would be fun if he acted in a hunched and servile way despite his height." As expected by director Park, Cha will entertain the audience with this different side of himself..

Credits

**CJ ENM CO., LTD. PRESENTS
A MOHO FILM PRODUCTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH KG
PRODUCTIONS**

**A PARK CHAN-WOOK FILM
“NO OTHER CHOICE”**

STARRING

LEE BYUNG HUN
AS YOU MAN-SU
SON YEJIN
AS LEE MIRI
PARK HEE SOON
AS CHOI SUN-CHUL
LEE SUNG MIN
AS GU BUMMO
YEOM HYE RAN
AS LEE ARA
CHA SEUNG WON
AS GO SIJO

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

MIKY LEE

CO-EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

YOON SANG-HYUN
PIOUS JUNG

SCREENPLAY

PARK CHAN-WOOK
LEE KYOUNG-MI
DON MCKELLAR
JAHYE LEE

FINANCING EXECUTIVE

HYUNJOO JUNG

CO-FINANCING EXECUTIVE

JERRY KYOUNGBOUM KO
BAE SUNGMIN

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

KIM WOO-HYUNG

GAFFER

KIM MIN JAE

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

RYU SEONG-HIE

COSTUME DESIGNER

CHO SANG-KYUNG

MAKE-UP & HAIR DESIGNER

SONG JONG-HEE

PRODUCTION SOUND MIXER

AHN BOCK NAM

EDITED BY

KIM SANG-BEOM

KIM HO-BIN

MUSIC BY

CHO YOUNG-WUK

SOUND SUPERVISOR

KIM SUK WON

VFX SUPERVISOR

LEE SEUNGJE

COLORIST

PARK JINHO

CO-PRODUCER

OH HYUN-ARM

PRODUCED BY

PARK CHAN-WOOK

BACK JISUN

MICHÈLE RAY GAVRAS

ALEXANDRE GAVRAS

SCREENPLAY BY

PARK CHAN-WOOK

LEE KYOUNG-MI

DON MCKELLAR

JAHYE LEE

BASED ON THE NOVEL

‘THE AX’ BY DONALD E. WESTLAKE