

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

One Life (2023 film)

One Life is a 2023 biographical drama film directed by James Hawes.^[3] Based on the true story of British humanitarian Nicholas Winton, the film alternates between following Anthony Hopkins as a 79-year old Winton reminiscing on his past, and Johnny Flynn as a 29-year old Winton attempting to help groups of Jewish children in German-occupied Czechoslovakia to hide and flee in 1938–39, just before the beginning of World War II. Helena Bonham Carter, Lena Olin, Romola Garai, Alex Sharp and Jonathan Pryce co-star in supporting roles.^[4]

One Life had its world première at the Toronto International Film Festival on 9 September 2023, and its European première at the 2023 London Film Festival. It was released in the United Kingdom on 1 January 2024 by Warner Bros. Pictures,^{[5][6][1]} and later in the United States on 15 March 2024 by Bleecker Street.^[7] The film received mostly positive reviews, with praise for the performances of the cast, particularly Hopkins and Bonham Carter.

Plot

When 29-year-old London stockbroker Nicholas Winton visits Czechoslovakia in 1938, just weeks after the Munich Agreement was signed, he encounters families in Prague who had fled the rise of the Nazis in Germany and Austria. They are living in poor conditions, with little or no shelter or food and in fear of the invasion of the Nazis. Winton is introduced to Doreen Warriner, head of the Prague office of the British Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia (BCRC). Horrified by the conditions in the refugee camps, Winton decides to save Jewish children himself. Actively supported by his mother Babette, herself a German-Jewish migrant who has since converted to the Church of England, he overcomes bureaucratic hurdles, collects donations and looks for foster families for the children brought to England. Many of them are Jews who are at imminent risk of deportation. A race against time begins as it is unclear how long the borders will remain open before a probable Nazi invasion.

Fifty years later, in 1988, Winton, now 79 years old, cleans up some of the clutter in his office, which his wife Grete asked him to do. He finds his old documents in which he recorded his work for the BCRC, with photos and lists of the children they

One Life



Film poster

Directed by	<u>James Hawes</u>
Screenplay by	<u>Lucinda Coxon</u> <u>Nick Drake</u>
Based on	<i>If It's Not Impossible...The Life of Sir Nicholas Winton</i> by <u>Barbara Winton</u>
Produced by	<u>Joanna Laurie</u> <u>Iain Canning</u> <u>Emile Sherman</u> <u>Guy Heeley</u>
Starring	<u>Anthony Hopkins</u> <u>Helena Bonham Carter</u> <u>Johnny Flynn</u> <u>Lena Olin</u> <u>Romola Garai</u> <u>Alex Sharp</u> <u>Jonathan Pryce</u>
Cinematography	<u>Zac Nicholson</u>
Edited by	<u>Lucia Zucchetti</u>
Music by	<u>Volker Bertelmann</u>
Production companies	<u>BBC Film</u> <u>MBK Productions</u> <u>See-Saw Films</u>

wanted to bring to safety. Winton still blames himself for not being able to save more. At lunch with his old friend Martin, Winton thinks about what he should do with all the documents. He is considering donating them to a Holocaust museum, but at the same time he wants to draw some attention to the current plight of refugees, so he does not do it.

The documents end up in the hands of the *That's Life!* production team, a TV show produced by the BBC with presenter Esther Rantzen. Winton is invited onto the show and asked to sit in the audience. *That's Life* surprises Winton by inviting some of the children he helped save onto the show to meet him.^{[8][9]}

Cast

- Anthony Hopkins and Johnny Flynn as Nicholas Winton, a British stockbroker and the son of two German-born parents who takes on an important role in the *Kindertransport*, an organised effort to rescue children from Nazi-occupied territory, in the lead-up to World War II. Hopkins portrays Winton as a 79-year old reminiscing on his past, while Flynn portrays him as a 29-year old on the eve of the war.
- Helena Bonham Carter as Babi Winton, Nicholas's British, German-born mother who actively assists in his humanitarian efforts.
- Lena Olin as Grete Winton, the elderly Winton's wife
- Jonathan Pryce as Martin Blake, another *Kindertransport* humanitarian who remains friends with an elderly Winton. The film marks the third time Hopkins and Pryce worked together, after a one-night theatre performance of *Under Milk Wood* in 1992 and the 2019 film *The Two Popes*.^[10]
 - Ziggy Heath portrays a young Martin Blake
- Romola Garai as Doreen Warriner, an English *Kindertransport* humanitarian helping on-site in Czechoslovakia
- Alex Sharp as Trevor Chadwick, a British *Kindertransport* humanitarian who accompanied some of the children during their escapes by train
- Samantha Spiro as Esther Rantzen, the British presenter of the BBC TV show *That's Life!*, which runs a story on Winton
- Juliana Moska as Hana Hejdukova
- Ella Novakova as Lenka
- Samuel Finzi as Rabbi Hertz
- Henrietta Garden as Vera Gissing
 - Frantiska Polakova as young Vera Diamontova
- Alzbeta Cerna as Eva Diamontova

	<div>Cross City Films</div> <div>FilmNation</div> <div>Entertainment</div> <div>LipSync</div>
Distributed by	<div>Warner Bros.</div> <div>Pictures (United Kingdom)^[1]</div> <div>Bleecker Street</div> <div>(United States)</div>
Release dates	<div>9 September 2023</div> <div>(TIFF)</div> <div>1 January 2024</div> <div>(United Kingdom)</div> <div>15 March 2024</div> <div>(United States)</div>
Running time	110 minutes
Countries	<div>Australia</div> <div>United Kingdom</div> <div>United States</div>
Language	English
Box office	\$52.4 million ^[2]

- Jolana Jirotkova as gap-toothed girl
- Anna Darvas as Lady Milena Grenfell-Baines
- Marthe Keller as Elisabeth Maxwell
- Michael Gould as Leadbetter
- Adrian Rawlins as Geoff
- Antonie Formanová as Marta

Production

In September 2020 Anthony Hopkins and Johnny Flynn were announced as being attached to a biopic about Sir Nicholas Winton called *One Life*. From a Lucinda Coxon and Nick Drake screenplay, Aisling Walsh was set to direct with See-Saw Films and BBC Film producing through executive producers Rose Garnett and Simon Gillis, and producers Iain Canning, Emile Sherman, and Joanna Laurie. FilmNation Entertainment and Cross City Films were to be managing international sales.^[11] In September 2022 it was revealed that James Hawes was attached to direct his feature film debut while Helena Bonham Carter had joined the cast as Winton's mother, Babi Winton. It was also revealed that Guy Heeley was on board as producer and that the screenplay was based on the book *If It's Not Impossible...The Life of Sir Nicholas Winton*, written by his daughter Barbara Winton. Also announced as joining the cast were Jonathan Pryce, Romola Garai and Alex Sharp.^[12] Filming took place in London in September 2022,^[13] with principal photography also taking place in Prague.^{[14][15]}



The film set of *One Life* at Prague Main Railway Station

Winton's daughter requested that Hopkins should play her father. Hopkins read the script and accepted the part.^[16] Winton's son praised Hopkins' portrayal of his father.^[17] One survivor called the film a "fitting tribute".^[18] The extras making up the recreation of the show's audience are the actual children of those Winton had saved.^[19]

The film's publicity campaign sparked outrage when the predominantly Jewish heritage of the children on the *Kindertransport* was omitted and they were instead described as 'Central European'.^[20]

Critical response

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 90% of 135 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 7.3/10. The website's consensus reads: "Held aloft by outstanding work from a tremendous cast, *One Life* pays heartwarming tribute to a remarkable humanitarian effort."^[21] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 69 out of 100, based on 30 critics, indicating "generally favorable" reviews.^[22]

Ian Freer in *Time Out* described it as a "remarkable World War II story told conventionally but elevated by a superb Anthony Hopkins".^[23] In *The Guardian*, Peter Bradshaw wrote "You'd need a heart of stone not to be touched by this extraordinary true story".^[24] In another review for *The Guardian*, Wendy Ide gave the film three out of five stars.^[25]

Robbie Collin of *The Daily Telegraph* gave the film four out of five stars.^[26] *The Spectator*'s Deborah Ross praised the themes, performances and the film's message.^[27] Clarisse Loughrey of *The Independent* offered a more mixed review, though praised Hopkins' performance.^[28]

Writing for *The Guardian*, Matthew Reisz, whose father was one of the children Winton had saved, felt the film betrayed Winton.^[29] Nicola Gissing, another descendant of a saved child, wrote a letter to the paper in response, defending the film.^[30]

Controversy

Despite rescuing predominantly Jewish children, on the BBC Film website, this fact was omitted. Cinema operators in the UK therefore mentioned in their advertising for *One Life* that Nicholas Winton had saved "children from Central Europe". Following protests, BBC Film changed the film's description, writing instead that Winton had saved "predominantly Jewish" children.^{[31][32]}

Awards

One Life won Cinema for Peace Dove for The Most Valuable Film of the Year 2024 in Berlin, February 19th.^[33]

References

1. Goodfellow, Melanie (11 August 2023). "James Hawes' 'One Life' Starring Anthony Hopkins As 'British Schindler' Heads To London Film Festival" (<https://deadline.com/2023/08/james-hawes-one-life-starring-anthony-hopkins-london-film-festival-1235460194/amp/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Retrieved 8 September 2023.
2. "*One Life* (2024)" (<https://www.boxofficemojo.com/title/tt13097932/>). *Box Office Mojo*. IMDb. Retrieved 15 May 2024.
3. "Anthony Hopkins and Helena Bonham Carter Join World War II Drama 'One Life'" (<https://collider.com/one-life-cast-helena-bonham-carter-anthony-hopkins-johnny-flynn/>). *Collider*. September 2022.
4. Lee, Benjamin (10 September 2023). "Review *One Life* review – Anthony Hopkins moves in stirring second world war drama" (<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2023/sep/10/one-life-review-anthony-hopkins>). *The Guardian*. Retrieved 8 December 2023.
5. D'Alessandro, Anthony (24 July 2023). "TIFF Lineup Unveiled Amid Strikes: Awards Contenders 'Dumb Money', 'The Holdovers', 'Rustin'; Starry Pics For Sale With Scarlett Johansson, Kate Winslet, Michael Keaton, Viggo Mortensen & More" (<https://deadline.com/2023/07/2023-toronto-film-festival-lineup-movies-list-1235446040/>). *Deadline*. Retrieved 24 July 2023.
6. "James Hawes' *One Life*, starring Sir Anthony Hopkins, announced as American Express Gala film at the 67th BFI London Film Festival" (<https://www.bfi.org.uk/news/one-life-announced-american-express-gala-film-67th-bfi-london-film-festival>). British Film Institute. Retrieved 11 August 2023.
7. Ortiz, Andi (22 March 2024). "How to Watch 'One Life': Is the Anthony Hopkins Holocaust Drama Streaming?" (<https://www.thewrap.com/how-to-watch-one-life-anthony-hopkins-movie-online-streaming-theaters-where/>). *TheWrap*. Retrieved 30 April 2024.
8. *James Hawes' One Life, starring Anthony Hopkins, announced as American Express Gala film at the 67th BFI London Film Festival*. (<https://www.bfi.org.uk/news/one-life-announced-american-express-gala-film-67th-bfi-london-film-festival>) In: [bfi.org.uk](https://www.bfi.org.uk), 11. August 2023.

9. Leslie Felperin: *'One Life' Review: Anthony Hopkins Is in Peak Form in a Stirring, if By-the-Numbers, Period Piece*. (<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-reviews/one-life-review-anthony-hopkins-1235587474/>) In: *The Hollywood Reporter*, 11. September 2023.
10. "'The Two Popes' Reunites Jonathan Pryce With Anthony Hopkins After 27 Years, Even If Pryce Can't Recall Their Last Collaboration" (<https://deadline.com/2019/11/the-two-popes-anthony-hopkins-jonathan-pryce-netflix-interview-news-1202794985/>). *Deadline*. 27 November 2019.
11. "Anthony Hopkins & Johnny Flynn To Star In Holocaust Drama 'One Life' About Nicholas Winton, Who Saved 669 Children From The Nazis; See-Saw & FilmNation Launch For Toronto Market" (<https://deadline.com/2020/09/anthony-hopkins-nicholas-winton-kindertransport-holocaust-nazis-movie-see-saw-filmnation-1234573522/>). *Deadline*. 9 September 2020.
12. "Helena Bonham Carter Joins Anthony Hopkins And Johnny Flynn In Holocaust Rescue Drama 'One Life'; 'Black Mirror' Director James Hawes To Make Feature Debut" (<https://www.deadline.com/2022/09/helena-bonham-carter-anthony-hopkins-johnny-flynn-one-life-james-hawes-1235105052/amp/>). *Deadline*. September 2022.
13. "Now Filming in London: September 2022" (<https://filmlondon.org.uk/latest/now-filming-in-london-september-2022/>). *Filmlondon.org*. 7 September 2022. Retrieved 21 March 2024.
14. "Nicholas Winton biopic 'One Life', with Anthony Hopkins, to shoot in Prague this autumn" (<https://www.praguereporter.com/home/2022/9/2/nicholas-winton-biopic-one-life-with-anthony-hopkins-to-shoot-in-prague-this-autumn/>). *Praguereporter.com*. 2 September 2022.
15. "One Life films in Prague and UK with Anthony Hopkins, Johnny Flynn" (<https://www.kftv.com/amp/news/2022/08/31/one-life-films-in-prague-and-uk-with-anthony-hopkins-johnny-flynn/>). *KFTV.com*.
16. Singh, Anita (30 December 2023). "Sir Nicholas Winton's family said film could only go ahead if Anthony Hopkins was cast" (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/12/30/winton-film-nazis-hopkins-thats-life-ww2-jewish-children/>). *The Daily Telegraph*.
17. Sir Nicholas Winton: Holocaust saviour's son lauds 'extraordinary' film <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-67089259>
18. Sir Nicholas Winton: Woman saved by Holocaust hero praises new film <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lancashire-67876587>
19. Alberge, Dalya (30 December 2023). "'The worst meeting I have ever had': why a Kindertransport hero rejected a film about his life" (<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2023/dec/30/the-worst-meeting-i-have-ever-nicholas-winton-one-life-kindertransport-hero>). *The Guardian*.
20. Yossman, K. J. (4 January 2024). "Anthony Hopkins Holocaust Feature 'One Life' Amends Marketing Materials to Include Jews Following Backlash (EXCLUSIVE)" (<https://variety.com/2024/film/global/one-life-anthony-hopkins-marketing-materials-jewish-backlash-1235861287/>).
21. *"One Life"* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/one_life). *Rotten Tomatoes*. Fandango Media. Retrieved 28 April 2024.
22. *"One Life"* (<https://www.metacritic.com/movie/one-life-2023>). *Metacritic*. Fandom, Inc. Retrieved 16 March 2024.
23. Freer, Ian (15 November 2023). *"One Life"* (<https://www.timeout.com/movies/one-life-2023>). *Time Out*. Retrieved 24 November 2023.
24. Bradshaw, Peter (28 December 2023). "One Life review – Anthony Hopkins in extraordinary true story of 'British Schindler'" (<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2023/dec/28/one-life-review-anthony-hopkins-in-extraordinary-true-story-of-british-schindler>). *The Guardian*. Retrieved 5 January 2024.

25. Ide, Wendy (10 January 2024). "One Life review – stirring tale of the 'British Schindler' predictably told" (<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2024/jan/07/one-life-review-stirring-tale-of-the-british-schindler-predictably-told-anthony-hopkins-johnny-flynn-helena-bonham-carter-romola-garai>). *The Guardian*.
26. Harvey, Chris (1 January 2024). "One Life: Anthony Hopkins is stirring as the 'British Schindler' who saved 600 Jewish children" (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/2023/10/12/one-life-review-anthony-hopkins/>). *The Daily Telegraph*. Retrieved 5 January 2024.
27. Ross, Deborah (3 January 2024). "It'll make you cry despite being very ordinary: One Life reviewed" (<https://www.spectator.co.uk/article/itll-make-you-cry-despite-being-very-ordinary-one-life-reviewed/>). *The Spectator*.
28. "Anthony Hopkins dramatises the That's Life! hero in a poignant biopic – review" (<https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/reviews/one-life-review-nicholas-winton-b2472629.html>). *The Independent*. 4 January 2024.
29. Reisz, Matthew (1 January 2024). "Nicholas Winton saved my father from the Nazis – here's how One Life betrays him" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20240221113106/https://www.theguardian.com/film/2024/jan/01/nicholas-winton-saved-my-father-from-the-nazis-heres-how-one-life-betrays-him>). *The Guardian*. Archived from the original (<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2024/jan/01/nicholas-winton-saved-my-father-from-the-nazis-heres-how-one-life-betrays-him>) on 21 February 2024.
30. Reisz, Matthew (10 January 2024). "In defence of One Life, the story of Nicholas Winton" (<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2024/jan/08/in-defence-of-one-life-the-story-of-nicholas-winton>). *The Guardian*.
31. Simpson, Craig (4 January 2024). "BBC description of Anthony Hopkins film failed to describe kindertransport children as Jewish" (<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/01/04/bbc-description-of-anthony-hopkins-film-changed-after-back/>). *The Telegraph*. ISSN 0307-1235 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/0307-1235>). Retrieved 24 January 2024.
32. Urbach, Karina (24 January 2024). "(S+) Vor Internationalem Holocaustgedenktag: Warum die Rettung jüdischer Kinder im Zweiten Weltkrieg heute zum Streitthema wird" (<https://www.spiegel.de/geschichte/grossbritannien-warum-die-rettung-juedischer-kinder-im-zweiten-weltkrieg-heute-zum-streitthema-wird-a-38f5aae8-7bf3-46c5-99d0-ad74a8139c93>). *Der Spiegel* (in German). ISSN 2195-1349 (<https://www.worldcat.org/issn/2195-1349>). Retrieved 24 January 2024.
33. "Hillary Clinton Teases Sharon Stone On "Gigantic Bath Robe" Gown At Cinema For Peace Gala In Berlin" (<https://deadline.com/2024/02/hillary-clinton-sharon-stone-cinema-for-peace-navalny-october-7-1235831358/>). *deadline.com*. 19 February 2024. Retrieved 21 March 2024.

External links

- *One Life* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt13097932/>) at IMDb
-

Retrieved from "[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=One_Life_\(2023_film\)&oldid=1224406289](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=One_Life_(2023_film)&oldid=1224406289)"

▪