

Luckiest Girl Alive (film)

Luckiest Girl Alive is a 2022 mystery thriller film directed by Mike Barker from a screenplay by Jessica Knoll, based on her 2015 novel of the same name. The film stars Mila Kunis, Finn Wittrock, Scot McNairy, Chiara Aurelia, Justine Lupe, Thomas Barbusca, Jennifer Beals, and Connie Britton.

Luckiest Girl Alive was released in select cinemas on September 30, 2022, before its streaming release on October 7, 2022, by Netflix.

Plot

In 2015, 35-year-old Tifani "Ani" Fanelli, a respected New York women's magazine editor, appears to have a picture-perfect life. As she prepares to marry her fiancé, Luke Harrison, Ani meets with Aaron Wickersham, a documentary director who wants to make a short film about the school shooting she survived as a teenager. He informs her that a former classmate, Dean Barton, who went on to become a successful writer and advocate for gun control, has agreed to take part. Ani declines to be involved.

Luke informs Ani that his firm has offered him an opportunity to move to London and suggests Ani can take an MFA program there to allow her to write for herself. She agrees, despite having hopes of someday working at *The New York Times*. They later have dinner with a couple Luke knows; the husband turns out to be Ani's former teacher, Andrew Larson.

In flashbacks to 1999, Ani is seen joining the prestigious Brentley School, where she quickly befriends a clique of popular students, including Dean and his friends Liam and Peyton. Over the course of the film, it is revealed that Ani was gang-raped at a party by all three boys while intoxicated. She shared what happened with Mr. Larson, who encouraged her to tell her eccentric mother, Dina, but Ani refused. However, she told her friend Arthur, who had been continuously bullied by the three boys.

Ani's past slowly starts to haunt her, which begins to affect her relationship with Luke. Aaron tells Ani that Dean wants to meet with her to apologize on camera; she agrees, under the condition that Aaron keeps them separate until she is ready.

Luckiest Girl Alive



Official release poster

Directed by	<u>Mike Barker</u>
Screenplay by	<u>Jessica Knoll</u>
Based on	<i><u>Luckiest Girl Alive</u></i> by <u>Jessica Knoll</u>
Produced by	<u>Bruna Papandrea</u> <u>Jeanne Snow</u> <u>Erik Feig</u> <u>Lucy Kitada</u> <u>Mila Kunis</u>
Starring	<u>Mila Kunis</u>
Cinematography	<u>Colin Watkinson</u>
Edited by	<u>Nancy Richardson</u>
Music by	<u>Linda Perry</u>
Production companies	<u>Picturestart</u> <u>Made Up Stories</u> <u>Orchard Farm Productions</u>
Distributed by	<u>Netflix</u>
Release dates	September 30, 2022 (United States)

Meanwhile, Ani struggles with her strained relationship with her mother Dina, who claims she always found Ani difficult and alludes that she is only marrying Luke for his money.

At the documentary filming, Dean shows up unexpectedly early and Ani flees in a panic. Flashbacks see young Ani struggling to deal with the trauma of what happened to her, and not long after, the school shooting took place, perpetrated by Arthur and his friend Ben. Peyton and Liam were killed, and Dean was wounded severely and left unable to walk. Prior to the funerals, Dean started a rumor that Ani slept with him and helped Arthur and Ben plan the shooting because he did not want to be her boyfriend. Ani is consequently shunned by everyone, including Dina, who blamed her for causing her own rape by drinking and partying excessively.

Back in 2015, at the publishing of his new book, Ani meets with Dean, who shows little remorse for what he did and threatens to recapitulate his story of her participation in the shooting if she tells anyone. However, after being confronted by Ani during the conversation, Dean admits he raped her. Having secretly recorded their conversation, Ani leaves. She decides to share her experience after encouragement from her boss and ends up writing a piece for *The New York Times*.

At their rehearsal dinner, Ani receives the final article, which is about to be published, much to Luke's dismay, who says he wishes she had dealt with it privately. Ani then confesses she has been using him to hide from her past and decides not to marry him. Ani finally begins to move on; she receives an overwhelming reaction from other women who tell her their stories of sexual assault, as she begins her career at *The New York Times*.

	October 7, 2022 (Netflix)
Running time	113 minutes ^[1]
Countries	United States Australia
Language	English

Cast

- [Mila Kunis](#) as Tifani "Ani" Fanelli
 - [Chiara Aurelia](#) as young Ani
- [Finn Wittrock](#) as Luke Harrison
- [Scoot McNairy](#) as Andrew Larson
- [Justine Lupe](#) as Nell Rutherford
- [Thomas Barbusca](#) as Arthur Finneman
- [Jennifer Beals](#) as Lolo Vincent
- [Connie Britton](#) as Dina Fanelli
- [Alex Barone](#) as Dean Barton
 - [Carson MacCormac](#) as young Dean
- [Dalmar Abuzeid](#) as Aaron Wickersham
- [Isaac Kragten](#) as Liam Ross
- [Gage Munroe](#) as Peyton Powell
- [Nicole Huff](#) as Olivia Kaplan
- [Alexandra Beaton](#) as Hilary Hitchinson
- [Rodrigo Fernandez-Stoll](#) as Williams-Sonoma Salesman

Production

In August 2015, it was announced Lionsgate had acquired film rights to *Luckiest Girl Alive* by Jessica Knoll, with Reese Witherspoon set to produce under her Pacific Standard banner.^[2] It was scrapped, however, due to scheduling conflicts and poor budgeting. In February 2021, it was announced the film would be happening with Mila Kunis starring and Mike Barker set to direct. Netflix was to distribute.^[3] In July 2021, Finn Wittrock, Scout McNairy, Chiara Aurelia, Thomas Barbusca, Justine Lupe, Dalmar Abuzied, Alex Barone, Carson MacCormac, Jennifer Beals, and Connie Britton joined the cast.^[4]

Principal photography began June 2021 in Toronto, Canada, and ended in September 2021 in New York City, USA.^[5] Filming locations included the cities of Whitby and Cobourg in Ontario, Canada, and Shelter Island, New York, USA.^[6]

Release

Luckiest Girl Alive was released in select cinemas on September 30, 2022, before its streaming release on October 7, 2022, by Netflix.^[7]

Reception

On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, 44% of 57 critics' reviews are positive, with an average rating of 5.4/10. The website's consensus reads: "*Luckiest Girl Alive* means well and Mila Kunis does strong work in the central role, but those positive points are overshadowed by a treatment that risks trivializing its themes."^[8] Metacritic, which uses a weighted average, assigned the film a score of 54 out of 100, based on 15 critics, indicating "mixed or average" reviews.^[9]

References

1. "*Luckiest Girl Alive* (18)" (<https://www.bbfc.co.uk/release/luckiest-girl-alive-q29sbgvjdgjlvbjpw-wc0xmda2mte2>). British Board of Film Classification. Retrieved September 21, 2022.
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3. N'Duka, Amanda (February 22, 2021). "Mila Kunis Set To Star In 'Luckiest Girl Alive' Film Adaptation For Netflix" (<https://deadline.com/2021/02/mila-kunis-jessica-knoll-luckiest-girl-alive-netflix-1234698145/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Retrieved February 22, 2021.
4. Kroll, Justin (July 15, 2021). "Finn Wittrock, Chiara Aurelia, Connie Britton, Scout McNairy, Others; Round out Cast Of Netflix's 'Luckiest Girl Alive' Adaptation" (<https://deadline.com/2021/07/finn-wittrock-chiara-aurelia-connie-britton-scout-mcnairy-netflixs-luckiest-girl-alive-1234793977/>). *Deadline Hollywood*. Retrieved July 15, 2021.
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6. "Luckiest Girl Alive Filming Locations" (<https://www.solosophie.com/luckiest-girl-alive-filming-locations/>). Retrieved December 18, 2023.
7. "Luckiest Girl Alive release date, cast, synopsis, and more" (<https://netflixlife.com/2022/08/30/luckiest-girl-alive-release-updates-cast-synopsis/>). *Netflix Life*. Retrieved August 30, 2022.
8. "*Luckiest Girl Alive*" (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/luckiest_girl_alive). *Rotten Tomatoes*. Fandango Media. Retrieved October 18, 2023.

9. "*Luckiest Girl Alive*" (<https://www.metacritic.com/movie/luckiest-girl-alive>). *Metacritic*. Fandom, Inc. Retrieved 7 October 2022.

External links

- *Luckiest Girl Alive* (<https://www.netflix.com/title/80992607>) on Netflix
 - *Luckiest Girl Alive* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4595186/>) at IMDb
 - *Luckiest Girl Alive* (<https://www.allmovie.com/movie/v732859>) at AllMovie
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