

Film Review: 'Churchill'

Churchill

Director: Jonathan Teplitzky

Screenplay: Alex von Tunzelmann

Cast: Brian Cox, Miranda Richardson, James Purefoy, John Slattery, Julian Wadham

Length: 98 minutes

Rating: PG

In the 21st century, we appear to be in a new golden age of Winston Churchill as the subject of cultural depictions. Most notable are Albert Finney in 'The Gathering Storm' (2002), Brendan Gleeson in 'Into The Storm' (2009), Michael Gambon in 'Churchill's Secret' (2016) and John Lithgow in 'The Crown' (2016). Before Gary Oldman plays the former Prime Minister in 'Darkest Hour' later this year, Brian Cox becomes the latest actor to bring one of the most influential people in British history to life.

In June 1944, Operation Overlord saw the Allied Forces invade Normandy, France in what would be a decisive victory against Nazi Germany, turning the tide of the Second World War against them and forcing them to retreat across Western Europe. 'Churchill' is the biographical drama that follows the titular character in the days leading up to this massive military deployment, a game changer that would either see those Allies Forces claim glorious victory or hand the Third Reich unconquerable domination.



We all know the eventual outcome, of course, but at the time the result was far from certain with the largest doubting of the plan cast by none other than the great war leader himself. Haunted by his failure as one of the commanders of the disastrous Gallipoli Campaign during World War One, for which

he accepted most blame for the defeat after eight months of fighting, Churchill (Cox) upholds major concerns about the effectiveness of this new campaign to end a war which had now grinded on for over four years.

He attempts to overrule the leaders involved in the engineering of the campaign, President Dwight D. Eisenhower (Slattery) and Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery (Wadham), in a desperate effort to change these plans which he views as suicidal. In this historical war film, the only battles on screen are the furious verbal altercations between the leaders while being set in the relative peace of the British countryside.

We are presented with two polarizing illustrations of Winston Churchill. One is the iconic brash bulldog, with huge cigar and surrounding smoke clouds most associated with the leader whom we recognise very well. Another is mentally scarred and irrationally vulgar, frequently overruled and consistently undermined, altogether a rather isolated and vulnerable old man at war with himself. A liability more than an asset.

One of the greatest assets of 'Churchill' is the intimate and statuesque central portrayal by Brian Cox who spits and rattles his way through arresting monologues. His version of the 'We will never surrender' speech via live radio broadcast to the entire country is utterly exceptional. Wonderful supporting performances by Miranda Richardson as a tired but faithful Clementine Churchill and James Purefoy as a flawed but trusting King George VI are complimented by the spirited, swirling score by Lorne Balfe from the misty, secluded stately homes to the windswept, deserted muddy beaches.

V is for Victory.

'Churchill' is in cinemas now.

Details of VUE cinemas [here](#).