

# Oranges and Sunshine

Cert 15 UK 2010 104 mins

## Crew

Director	Jim Loach
Screenplay	Rona Munro
Original story (Title: <i>Empty Cradles</i> )	Margaret Humphreys
Cinematographer	Denson Baker
Film Editor	Dany Cooper
Music	Lisa Gerrard

## Cast

Emily Watson	Margaret Humphreys
Hugo Weaving	Jack
David Wenham	Len
Richard Dillane	Merv

## Synopsis

*Nottingham, the late 1980's. Margaret Humphreys is a wife and a mother, and also a social worker, responsible for ensuring that the families within her catchment are given the best possible care.*

*In 1986, on separate occasions a few days apart, two women seek her help. The first says she had been forcibly sent to Australia as a child and was now searching for the mother she'd never met. The second, an English woman, had been contacted by a middle-aged Australian who said he was her brother.*

*Initially sceptical, Margaret investigates their stories, and uncovers evidence of the organised deportation of children in care from the United Kingdom to Australia, tearing apart families for decades.....*



**Film website:**

[www.orangesandsunshine.com.au](http://www.orangesandsunshine.com.au)



## Reviews

...The danger of *Oranges and Sunshine*, which takes Humphreys's book, 'Empty Cradles', as inspiration, is that by honouring the extraordinary feats of Humphreys - a wife and mother of two - this would become a tale of a woman against the machine, even drowning out the stories of the migrants.

Loach doesn't do that. He makes wise decisions. He doesn't focus too much on Humphreys's family life. He avoids both easy emotional showdowns and cascades of horror stories. And he has an eye for a contradictory character who can direct us to the truth by the back route.

Like his father, Loach has made a film uncluttered by an obvious director's stamp, peopled by sympathetic characters and driven by a desire to say something about the world without losing sight of human experience. In casting Watson, he's also secured a performance that boldly lacks vanity while exuding a strength that leads you confidently through difficult, troubling terrain.

*Dave Calhoun, Time Out London, March 2011*

...The filmmakers have taken a great deal of pains not to misrepresent Margaret or her clients, which often makes them sketches in gratefulness, and gives her a slightly saintly mien. Not all the brushwork is broad however. Hugo Weaving is terrific as Jack, a gentle, emotionally scarred deportee ..... and David Wenham is even better as the blustering, self-made Len, exacting an exquisite revenge on the Christian brothers who terrorised him at the Bindoon orphanage....

Loach, prolific TV director and son of British cinema's foremost political filmmaker, manages to make his own definite mark here, despite debuting in the 'social issue' genre strongly identified with his father. *Oranges and Sunshine* may blaze with the familial concern for the underdog and outrage at institutionalised cruelty, but it marries this with a quiet emotional directness and an almost documentary clarity in its storytelling that is entirely its own. Poignant rather than polemical, it's a film with a strong and moral sense of responsibility. We could use a few more of them.

*Kate Stables, Sight and Sound, April 2011*