



NEW RELEASES

Talk to Me

Talk to Me

Directed by: Danny Philippou, Michael Philippou

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Adelaide Film Festival, Screen Australia

A Causeway Films production

Produced in association with: Rackaracka

Presented by: Screen Australia

In association with:

South Australian Film Corporation

Presented by: Adelaide Film Festival, Head Gear
Films, Metrol Technology, Bankside Films

Executive Producers: Stephen Kelliher, Sophie
Green, Phil Hunt, Compton Ross, Daniel Negret,
Noah Dummett, John Dummett, Jeff Harrison,

Ari Harrison, Miranda Otto, Dale Roberts,

Danny Philippou, Michael Philippou

Produced by: Samantha Jennings, Kristina Ceyton

Co-producer: Christopher Seeto

Line Producer: Carly Maple

Castings: Nikki Barrett

Written by: Danny Philippou, Bill Hinzman

Based on a concept by: Daley Pearson

Cinematographer: Aaron McLisky

VFX Supervisor: Marty Pepper

Additional VFX by: Modelfarm

Editor: Geoff Lamb

Production Designer: Bethany Ryan

Costume Designer: Anna Cahill

Make-up & Hair Designer: Rebecca Buratto

Special Make-up Effects Designed & Created by:

Paul Katte, Nick Nicolaou, Make-up Effects Group

Original Music by: Cornel Wilczek

Music Supervisor: Andrew Kotátko

Sound Design: Emma Bortignon

Sound Recordist: Nick Steele

Produced & filmed in South Australia at:

Adelaide Studios

Cast:

Sophie Wilde (*Mia*)

Alexandra Jensen (*Jade*)

Joe Bird (*Riley*)

Otis Dhanji (*Daniel*)

Miranda Otto (*Sue*)

Zoe Terakes (*Hayley*)

Chris Alosio (*Joss*)

Marcus Johnson (*Max*)

Alexandria Steffensen (*Rhea*)

Ari McCarthy (*Cole*)

Hamish Phillips (*Tyson*)

Kit Erhart-Bruce (*Peck*)

Sarah Brokensha (*Fiona*)

Jayden Davidson (*Jayden*)

Sunny Johnson (*Duckett*)

Kidaan Zelleke (*Aunty Lee*)

James Oliver (*James*)

Jett Gazley (*Alex Varolli*)

Cookie (*dog*)

Helene Philippou (*possessed girl on phone*)

Jude Turner (*possessed boy on phone*)

Australia-UK 2022©

94 mins

An Altitude release

Danny and Michael Philippou on 'Talk to Me'

In *Talk to Me*, grief-stricken 17-year-old Mia (Sophie Wilde) becomes fascinated by a viral Snapchat video of spiritual possession. She convinces best friend Jade and former boyfriend Daniel to join her at a séance and – using a ceramic embalmed hand that once belonged to a psychic – becomes briefly seized by a profanity-loving demon. Mia's excitement leads to further séances and evil spirits attacking other Adelaide teens. Perhaps fittingly, Australian twin-brother directors Danny and Michael Philippou, who are behind the RackaRacka YouTube channel, direct their fiercely energetic Sundance smash debut feature like men possessed – there's little screen time wasted, from the vicious opening party scene to its gasp-inducing final shot.

How did you come up with the idea for Talk to Me?

Danny Philippou: The big inspiration was these three neighbour boys we helped raise. We watched them grow up and one of them was experimenting with drugs. He was having a really bad reaction to the drug, convulsing on the floor, and his friends were just laughing and filming him, no one was helping. I saw the footage and that image always stuck in my head.

How did séances come into the story?

DP: We think that everyone has a morbid obsession these days. Everyone's so fascinated by death, ghosts, paranormal stuff or serial killers. That isn't scary to people: it's glorified and exciting.

The film reminded me of Jordan Peele and Ari Aster's horror. Are you influenced by or interested in either of those directors?

DP: There was no direct inspiration. Maybe subconsciously everything we look up to and admire is embedded in our material. We love both of those directors and both want to produce our next movie.

Why did you use the suicide of Mia's mother as a catalyst to push the story on?

DP: Every part of the film, I tried to draw on what I was terrified of. Our mother has really big depression issues and her mother committed suicide. It was always something that was in my head. I could feel myself getting those feelings at times. It was always the biggest fear for me, that I could fall down that path. It was always about finding things that tap into – or express – what terrifies me personally; terrifying thoughts that would just get into your head and stay there.

There were other things as well, as we were saying with those neighbour kids. You've got a responsibility when you are a big brother figure or a babysitter. I'd be terrified of hurting one of those kids or an accident happening on my behalf. Let's say I'm driving this neighbour to school and then I crashed the car. The thought of that terrifies me, of having to face their mum. That's embedded in there as well.

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Talk to Me

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From Fri 4 Aug

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From Fri 4 Aug

L'immensità

From Fri 11 Aug

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From Fri 25 Aug (Preview + Q&A on Tue 15 Aug)

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How do you divide the labour of directing a film between the two of you?

Michael Philippou: Danny is the one that's mainly speaking. If I've got changes, I'll be looking at things outside of the main action, I'll speak to Danny and he'll speak to the actors if it's a big change I want to try.

DP: In post-production, we lead different parts of it as well. With the YouTube stuff we both did our cuts and then the editor did an amazing cut as well. I was more looking at the colour grade and the VFX, Michael was obsessed with sound effects and music. He was really in touch with the sound designer and the composing. We had separate strengths in each of those areas, too.

Do you believe in evil spirits or the supernatural?

MP: It's something we're fascinated by. I don't know if I necessarily believe but I'm open to it and I love speaking to psychics and mediums. People who have ghost stories or haunted places, that fascinates me.

DP: Whenever we stay in a city, we always try to find out where the most haunted place is and stay there overnight.

Has your approach changed from making films for your YouTube channel to making feature films?

MP: Even before YouTube, we were crewing on films. I was a production runner, [did] grip work, we worked for stunt guys, Danny did lighting. We saw how film sets were run. It would've been more of a shock going from YouTube to film if we hadn't experienced that. Because it is a lot slower and there's a lot of people involved with it. It's not just us with a camera.

Did you mess around with ouija boards when you were younger?

DP: Of course. The film is a bit of an ouija board. It's connected to the dead.

MP: It's a modern-day take on possession and the ouija board stuff where, back in the day, it was not encouraged to do those things. 'Don't do this, you're going to attract bad energy.' Whereas this generation it's like, 'Do that stuff, go into the dark and film it.' I was always scared of the ouija board.

Interview by Lou Thomas, *Sight and Sound*, Summer 2023