

Never Rarely Sometimes Always

Never Rarely Sometimes Always is a 2020 drama film written and directed by Eliza Hittman. It stars Sidney Flanigan (in her acting debut), Talia Ryder, Théodore Pellerin, Ryan Eggold, and Sharon Van Etten. It had its world premiere at the Sundance Film Festival on January 24, 2020. It was also selected to compete for the Golden Bear in the main competition section at the 70th Berlin International Film Festival, where it won the Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize. [4][5][6] The film was released in the United States on March 13, 2020, by Focus Features. It received widespread acclaim from critics, with praise for Flanigan's performance and Hittman's direction and screenplay. [7][8]

Plot

Seventeen-year-old Autumn Callahan suspects she is pregnant and goes to a <u>crisis pregnancy center</u>. At the center, she takes a drugstore test that confirms she is pregnant. She is told she is 10 weeks along, given literature on adoption, and shown an antiabortion video. After learning that she cannot get an <u>abortion in Pennsylvania</u> without parental consent, she tries to <u>induce a miscarriage</u> by swallowing pills and punching herself in the stomach. When those methods fail, she tells her cousin, Skylar, that she is pregnant. Skylar steals cash from the grocery store where they work, and the two buy bus tickets to New York City. On the bus they meet Jasper, a young man persistently interested in Skylar even though she tries to blow him off.

At a <u>Planned Parenthood</u> clinic in Brooklyn, Autumn learns that the crisis pregnancy center lied to her about how far along she was and that she is actually 18 weeks pregnant. Though she is still able to get an abortion, she must go to a Manhattan clinic the next morning to have it performed. Autumn and Skylar spend an uncomfortable night riding the subway and playing games at an arcade. The next morning at the clinic, Autumn learns that a second-trimester abortion is a two-day procedure and that paying for it will take most of her funds. The counselor also asks her a series of questions about her sexual partners that reveal that Autumn's partners have been physically and sexually abusive.

Out of money, Skylar realizes the two have no way of going home. As Autumn asks Skylar not to call either of their mothers, Skylar reaches out to Jasper, who takes them bowling and to

Never Rarely Sometimes Always



Theatrical release poster

	-	
Directed by	Eliza Hittman	
Written by	Eliza Hittman	
Produced by	Adele Romanski	
	Sara Murphy	
Starring	Sidney Flanigan	
	Talia Ryder	
	Théodore	
	Pellerin	
	Ryan Eggold	
	Sharon Van Etten	
Cinematography	Hélène Louvart	
Edited by	Scott Cummings	
Music by	Julia Holter	
Production	Focus Features	
companies	BBC Films	
	Pastel	
	Productions	
	Tango	
	Entertainment	

karaoke. At the end of the night, Skylar asks Jasper to lend them money for their bus tickets, and he agrees. Skylar leaves with Jasper to find an ATM, and Autumn later goes looking for them. She finds them kissing. Realizing Skylar is only doing it for the loan, Autumn discreetly grabs Skylar's hand to comfort her.

In the morning, Autumn goes to her appointment and has the abortion. Autumn and Skylar go to a restaurant, where Skylar asks her questions about the procedure, which Autumn answers tersely. The two ride a bus back to Pennsylvania.

Cast

- Sidney Flanigan as Autumn Callahan
- Talia Ryder as Skylar
- Théodore Pellerin as Jasper
- Ryan Eggold as Ted
- Sharon Van Etten as Autumn's mother
- Kelly Chapman as Social Worker
- Kim Rios Lin as Anesthesiologist
- Drew Seltzer as Manager Rick
- Carolina Espiro as Financial Advisor

	Mutressa Movies
	Cinereach
Distributed by	Focus Features (United States) Universal Pictures
	(international) ^[1]
Release dates	January 24, 2020 (Sundance)
	March 13, 2020 (United States)
Running time	101 minutes
Countries	United States
	United Kingdom
Language	English
Budget	<\$5 million ^[2]
Box office	\$891,527 ^[3]

Production

In April 2019, it was announced that <u>Sidney Flanigan</u>, <u>Talia Ryder</u>, <u>Théodore Pellerin</u>, <u>Ryan Eggold</u> and <u>Sharon Van Etten</u> had joined the cast of the film, with <u>Eliza Hittman</u> directing from a screenplay she wrote. <u>Adele Romanski</u> and Sara Murphy produced the film under their Pastel Productions banner, while Rose Garnett, Tim Headington, Elika Portnoy and Alex Orlovsky executive produced the film under their <u>BBC</u> Films and Tango Entertainment banners, respectively. Focus Features was slated to distribute. [9]

The film shot for 29 days in February and March 2019, in New York City and Shamokin, Pennsylvania. [10]

Release

Never Rarely Sometimes Always had its world premiere at the <u>Sundance Film Festival</u> on January 24, $2020.^{[11]}$ It was released in the United States on March 13, $2020.^{[12]}$ Due to the <u>COVID-19 pandemic</u>, the film was released on video on demand on April 3, $2020.^{[13]}$ Focus debated re-releasing the film theatrically but was concerned about competition once theaters reopened. It was released through video on demand in the United Kingdom on May 13, 2020, after being initially planned for a theatrical release.

Reception

Box office

Critical response

On <u>Rotten Tomatoes</u>, the film holds an approval rating of 99% based on 238 reviews, with an average rating of 8.6/10. The site's critical consensus reads, "Powerfully acted and directed, *Never Rarely Sometimes Always* reaffirms writer-director Eliza Hittman as a filmmaker of uncommon sensitivity and grace." On <u>Metacritic</u>, the film has a weighted average score of 92 out of 100, based on 38 critics, indicating "universal acclaim". [8]

Critics praised the film for its approach to visual storytelling and naturalistic acting, particularly its avoidance of polemic to focus on the lives of and the bond between its two lead characters. Justin Chang of the <u>Los Angeles Times</u> wrote, "What makes *Never Rarely Sometimes Always* so forceful—and certainly the most searingly confrontational American drama about abortion rights in recent memory—is its quality of understatement, its determination to build its argument not didactically but cinematically."

[17] Richard Lawson of <u>Vanity Fair</u> wrote, "It's rare that the topic of abortion gets such a empathetic and holistic film treatment: passionate but unsentimental, principled without any predetermined moral."

[18] Chang concluded, "if the picture Hittman paints is stirringly bleak, it is not without its passages of tentative hope, even grace."

Karen Han of <u>Polygon</u> wrote, "The slow build-up—and Autumn and Skylar's stoicism through it all—makes it all the more affecting when the reasoning behind the film's title is revealed." [19]

Naomi Fry of *The New Yorker* wrote, "In its profound sensitivity to everyday detail, *Never Rarely Sometimes Always* makes the viewer aware of the mundane challenges that dog every step its heroines manage to take along that path—from the large, cheap suitcase bumped along with difficulty on subway steps, to the dwindling-down-to-nothing funds in a secreted-away pouch, to the flutter-lidded, late-night dozes taken on the subway, in lieu of a place to stay, waiting out the hours."

[20]

Critic Mark Kermode gave the film a 5-star rating and wrote, "Perfectly pitched and sensitively played, this is truthful, powerful and profoundly moving fare from a film-maker at the very top of her game" and added the film "is perhaps best described as a perfectly observed portrait of female friendship; a coming-of-age story with road-movie inflections, piercingly honest and deeply affecting." [21] Kermode also lauded cinematographer Hélène Louvart, "who here manages to capture moments of intense intimacy in unobtrusive fashion. Through her camera, we become both observers and participants—watching these young women's lives but also empathetically experiencing their shared journeys." [21]

In 2023, it ranked 42nd on *The Hollywood Reporter*'s list of "The 50 Best Movies of the 21st Century So Far". The *Reporter* wrote that while the COVID-19 pandemic affected the film's theatrical release, its artistic impact on independent cinema prevailed, its relevance and resonance still enduring even after the

<u>U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*</u> and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. [22] It also ranked 15th on <u>Collider</u>'s list of "The 20 Best Drama Movies of the 2020s So Far". *Collider* called it "one of the most excruciating viewings of the decade". [23]

Accolades

Award	Date of ceremony	Category	Recipient(s)	Result	Ref.
Sundance Film	February 1,	U.S. Dramatic Special Jury Award: Neo-Realism		Won	[24]
Festival	2020	U.S. Dramatic Competition Grand Jury Prize	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	[24]
Berlin International	March 1,	Golden Bear		Nominated	[25]
Film Festival	2020	Silver Bear Grand Jury Prize		Won	
		Best Picture	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Nominated	
Hollywood Critics Association	July 2, 2020	Best Actress	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	[26]
Midseason Awards		Best Female Director	- Eliza Hittman	Nominated	
		Best Original Screenplay	Eliza Hillilari	Nominated	
Boston Society of Film Critics Awards	December 13, 2020	Best Actress	Sidney Flanigan	Won	[27]
		Best Film	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Runner-up	
IndieWire Critics Poll	December	Best Director	Eliza Hittman	3rd Place	ace [28] ace ace n [29]
	14, 2020	Best Cinematography	Hélène Louvart	5th Place	
		Best Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	3rd Place	
New York Film	December	Best Actress	Sidney Flanigan	Won	[29]
Critics Circle Awards	18, 2020	Best Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Won	
Los Angeles Film Critics Association	December 20, 2020	Best Screenplay		Runner-up	[30]
Florida Film Critics Circle	December 21, 2020	Breakout Award	Sidney Flanigan	Won	[31]
Chicago Film Critics	December	Most Promising Performer		Won	[32]
Association	21, 2020	Best Original Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Won	[02]
		Best Film	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Nominated	
Alliance of Women	January 4,	Best Woman Director		Nominated	[33]
Film Journalists	2021	Best Woman's Screenwriter	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	. [55]
		Best Woman's Breakthrough Performance	Sidney Flanigan	Won	
National Society of	January 9,	Best Actress	, 3	3rd Place	[34]
Film Critics	2021	Best Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Won	

		Best Film	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	3rd Place		
San Diego Film Critics Society Awards	January 11, 2021	Breakthrough Artist	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	[35]	
Gotham Awards	January 11,	Best Feature	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Nominated	[36]	
<u>2021</u>	2021	Breakthrough Actor	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated		
St. Louis Film Critics Association Awards	January 17, 2021	Best Scene	Never Rarely	Nominated	[37]	
		Best Picture	Sometimes Always	Nominated		
San Francisco Bay	January 18,	Best Director		Nominated	[38]	
Area Film Critics Circle	2021	Best Original Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	[၁၀]	
		Best Actress	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated		
Houston Film Critics	January 18,	Best Picture	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Nominated	[39]	
Society	2021	Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	[00]	
		Best Picture	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	4th Place	d	
Online Film Critics	January 25, 2021	January 2E	Best Director	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	[40]
Online Film Critics Society		Best Actress	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	[[40] [41]	
		Best Supporting Actress	Talia Ryder	Nominated		
		Best Original Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Nominated		
National Board of	January 26,	Top 10 Independent Films	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Won	[42]	
Review	2021	Breakthrough Performance	Sidney Flanigan	Won		
New York Film Critics Online	January 26, 2021	Top 10 Films	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Won	[43]	
Hollywood Music in Media Awards	January 27, 2021	Best Original Song in an Independent Film	Sharon Van Etten (for "Staring At A Mountain")	Nominated	[44]	
Washington D.C.	February 8,	5	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	[45]	
Area Film Critics Association	2021	Best Youth Performance	Talia Ryder	Nominated	[45]	
		Best Picture	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Nominated		
	February 15,	Best Actress in a Leading Role	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	[46]	
Association Awards	2021	Best Actress in a Supporting Role	Talia Ryder	Nominated		
		Best Youth Performance		Nominated		
British Independent Film Awards	February 18, 2021	Best International Independent Film	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Nominated	[47]	

		Best Picture	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	11th Place	
International Cinephile Society Februar 2021	February 20, 2021	Best Actress	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	[48]
		Best Supporting Actress	Talia Ryder	Nominated	
		Best Original Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	
Hollywood Critics	March 5,	Standout Performance by an Actor or Actress 23 or Under	Sidney Flanigan	Won	[49]
Association	2021	Best Female Director	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	
		Best Actress	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	
Critics' Choice Movie Awards	March 7, 2021	Best Young Actor/Actress	Talia Ryder	Nominated	[50]
		Best Original Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	
		Best Movie About Women	Never Rarely	Runner-up	
Momon Film Critica	Morob 7	Best Movie By A Woman	Sometimes Always	Nominated	
Women Film Critics Circle	March 7, 2021	Best Woman Storyteller (Screenwriting Award)	Eliza Hittman	Won	[51]
		Courage in Filmmaking		Runner-up	
Georgia Film Critics	March 12,	Best Actress	Sidnov Florigan	Nominated	[52]
Association	2021	Breakthrough Award	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	
		Best Film	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	5th Place	
Austin Film Critics	The Robert R McCurdy Mer Breakthrough Best Screenp Best Unsung	Best Director	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	[53]
Association		The Robert R. "Bobby" McCurdy Memorial Breakthrough Artist Award	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	
		Best Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	
		Best Unsung Film	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Nominated	[54]
Dorian Awards		Best Film Performance — Actress	0:1 5	Nominated	
		"We're Wilde About You!" Rising Star Award	- Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	
		Best Feature	Adele Romanski and Sara Murphy	Nominated	
		Best Director	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	
Film Independent	April 22,	Best Female Lead	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	
Film Independent Spirit Awards		Best Supporting Female	Talia Ryder	Nominated	[<u>55]</u>
		Best Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Nominated	
		Best Cinematography	Hélène Louvart	Nominated	
		Best Editing	Scott Cummings	Nominated	
Gold Derby Awards	ld Derby Awards N/A	Best Picture	Never Rarely Sometimes Always	Nominated	[56]
		Best Actress	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated	

	Best Original Screenplay	Eliza Hittman	Nominated
	Best Breakthrough Performer	Sidney Flanigan	Nominated

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External links

- Official website (https://www.focusfeatures.com/never-rarely-sometimes-always)
- Never Rarely Sometimes Always (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7772582/) at IMDb
- Script (https://deadline.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Never-Rarely-Sometimes-Always-F INAL-Screenplay.pdf) Archived (https://web.archive.org/web/20210126185307/https://deadlin e.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Never-Rarely-Sometimes-Always-FINAL-Screenplay.pd f) January 26, 2021, at the Wayback Machine

