



For Immediate Release

VERDICT

RAW AND REAL VENICE PRIZE-WINNER GETS UK RELEASE



"The subject matter is urgent as well as important"
The Hollywood Reporter

"Engrossing and sophisticated procedural with universal audience appeal"
Variety

"Whips along with the pace of a thriller"
Screen Daily

[Watch Trailer HERE](#)

**THE VERDICT IS IN: REMARKABLE AWARD-WINNING DEBUT
COMES TO THE UK, 12th March 2021.**

13 January 2021, London UK - Sovereign is proud to announce the release of writer/director Raymund Ribay Gutierrez's harrowing domestic abuse drama, on 12th March, across streaming services.

Joy and her six-year-old daughter Angel live in Manila, with her husband, Dante, a small-time criminal. As so often in the past, Dante comes home drunk at night and brutally beats Joy. This time, he also hurts Angel. Joy grabs her daughter and flees to the local police station, to finally get him sent to jail. But Joy is to discover that the search for justice comes at a price. Her case, obstructed by corruption, bureaucracy and seemingly indifferent officials. Lacking witnesses to support her case, and her husband released back onto the street, Joy starts to feel that she and her daughter are increasingly under threat.

Verdict was the official Philippine entry to the International Film Category for the Oscars in 2020 and the deserved winner of the prestigious Horizons Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival. It is in good company - previous winners include 2015's *Free In Deed*, and *Court* (2014), about the Indian legal system. **Verdict** is equally compelling, an affecting examination of the dubious notion of 'justice for all'.

Filmed in a semi-documentary style, **Verdict** stars Max Eigenman, who won an Asia Pacific award for her bruised, and bruising, role, and Kristoffer King, who sadly died last year. The timely film casts an unflinching gaze at a difficult subject, too often ignored - the dark heart of male violence and its appalling consequences; and how the law courts seems to favour only the fortunate and connected - with barely a concern for the victims.

Gutierrez's remarkably confident debut feature is extremely real, at times, blood-boilingly infuriating, and demands to be seen.

VERDICT WILL BE RELEASED ON 12 MARCH 2021

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NOTES TO EDITORS

VERDICT: FESTIVALS & AWARDS

Verdict screened in Official Selection at the Toronto International Film Festival and Telluride Film Festival. Its numerous accolades include; Best Film and Best Cinematography at the 2019 Stockholm International Film Festival; Best Director at the 2019 Thessaloniki International Film Festival; the Cinevision Award at the 2019 Munich Film Festival; the Silver Screen Award at the Singapore International Film Festival. 'Verdict' was the official Philippine entry to the International Feature Film (formerly Foreign Language Film) Category for the Oscars in 2020.

ABOUT SOVEREIGN FILM DISTRIBUTION

Sovereign Film Distribution aims to release auteur driven feature films in the UK from exciting emerging and established international talent. Our carefully curated titles have played to strong critical and audience acclaim, often premiering at renowned international film festivals, including Cannes, Berlinale, Toronto, Venice and many more. The first four titles for release include; Philippine crime drama 'VERDICT', which received the Special Orizzonti Jury Prize at the 76th Venice Film Festival; historical drama 'MALMKROG' which won Best Director in the Encounter section at opened the 70th Berlin Film Festival; Argentine psychological thriller 'A COMMON CRIME' which received its world premiere at the 70th Berlin Film Festival; and Peruvian drama 'SONG WITHOUT A NAME' which screened in the Directors' Fortnight section at the 72nd Cannes Film Festival and has been the recipient of numerous other festival awards and accolades.

Sovereign Film Distribution is part of **Sovereign Media Group**, an experienced and established UK based media and entertainment company committed to telling important and relevant stories across film, theatre, music and the arts with cultural links to our past, present and future. Since establishing Sovereign Films, their productions include Palme d'Or winner 'The Tree of Life' (3 Oscar nominations), starring Sean Penn, Jessica Chastain and Brad Pitt; 'Effie Gray', starring Dakota Fanning, Emma Thompson and Julie Walters; and 'Voyage of Time' with Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett. Their upcoming productions including 'Memoria' from Palme d'Or winner Apichatpong Weerasethakul, starring Tilda Swinton; and 'Triangle of Sadness' starring Woody Harrelson from acclaimed director Ruben Ostlund (winner of the Cannes Palme d'Or for 'The Square').

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