

# Sydney Sweeney – Plan A Only

Photography – Olivia Malone  
Styling – Britt Mccamey





Melitta Baumeister leather dress, Area earring, Alexander Wang gloves

Whether lighting up our TV screens with raw teenage angst in *Euphoria*, averting her gaze in *The Handmaid's Tale* or as a cult tagalong in *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, there's no denying Sydney Sweeney's captivating presence.

Interview by Gemma Lacey

When I enter the shoot she looks like a young Edie Sedgwick, her gamine features perfectly poised as the stylist arranges props around her. She has the kind of lithe elegance that calls to mind ballerinas and that trademark of a skilled actress, the ability to say a thousand things with her expression.

This is something Sweeney is a master of, whether she's playing the ebullient and vulnerable Cass in *Euphoria* or the cosseted Eden in *The Handmaid's Tale*, she brings a truth and an authenticity to each of her roles. A Virgo, she has a natural instinct for planning, this after all is the girl who, legend has it, presented her parents with a business plan to convince them to let her act. In her acting this translates to meticulous prep, she creates a journal for each role, immersing herself in the character's world and imagining their reality as she becomes a character by "putting myself in her shoes from different memories and life experiences that she's had that you won't have seen on screen – that's what makes a person."

Given that her own upbringing was fairly traditional, I ask what her thoughts are around *Euphoria*, especially the commentary from concerned parents everywhere. We discuss the comparison to *Kids* in the 90s. Her take is, "I think it's reality for a lot of teens, whether all of these characters and scenarios are happening at once in one school,

probably not, but every character and storyline, that is happening to someone out there and a lot of parents are like, this is not real, this is too much and all of it at once, yes it's a lot but all these people are out there but we just had it all show up in one place."

Her work on *Euphoria* brings for her both great joys, and challenges too. She loves the collaborative nature of the show, citing the way that the show's creator works with them to ensure things feel authentic. "It's amazing being able to be honest and it allows you the freedom to say, 'I don't know if my character would do that', which is an amazing thing." The challenges of playing Cassie come more from the outside world, her mum was initially nervous to watch because she comes from a small town and "a lot of people there can be close-minded and not understand that I'm playing a character. Sometimes family members don't understand I'm playing someone else and that story could maybe help someone in their life." She says that once her mum watched the show she understood why she loved it and that her family are coming around too. "My family had a hard time with *Everything Sucks*, and me kissing a girl, so it's been a lot of me introducing my family to the world and waking them up, which I'm glad I did."

I ask her thoughts in general on social media and the pressures

on Gen-Z as it's so prevalent in *Euphoria*. Especially with Cassie, who deals with slut shaming, and if she thinks it's hard for teens? "100%! I'm not far from being a teen myself, I still struggle with those things and comments and situations." She believes it's made the typical tensions in high school "crazy and even worse, it's a huge struggle and we won't figure it out for a very long time. People say it'll go away and it's like, it won't."

For all the pressures of life in the public eye, she seems to take things very much in her stride, and I was immediately charmed by her enthusiasm for the snack table at the shoot, with most of our interview conducted over a bag of gummy bears. It's this mix of sweetness and strength that makes her so beguiling, but be warned, she's tougher than she looks. In fact, trained MMA fighter tough. She started training when she was around 12 years old. "When I came to LA my friends were working with this personal trainer and my parents were like, that's so stupid for a 12-year-old, but they wanted me to hang out with my friends so I went and they were doing kickboxing and my trainer said, 'You're really good, I'm gonna take you to this dojo.' So I went and they're like, 'We're gonna take you under our wings,' and they started training me! So I was grappling guys, in the ring, fighting. I don't train as hard now because





This page: Area dress  
Opposite page: Alexander Wang bodysuit







I bulked up really hard when I was fighting but I'd love to do a film where I can use those skills."

She's not looking to take on Wonder Woman though, ever surprising Sweeney has her sights set on another project, to be more specific a Rhonda Rousey biopic, as she puts it, "I think her story is incredible and I'm trained by her Sensei so we have that connection too." Not something many people can say, but she doesn't seem to be a fan of the obvious path.

This is evident on her Instagram where red carpet shots are equally balanced with shots of her in nature and on set of *The Voyeurs* having hot pockets sewn into her leggings to keep warm. "The first three weeks we filmed exterior night shoots in Montreal so it was negative degrees, snowing, windy and

we were freezing. My dog had a frickin Canada Goose jacket on! She was freezing, and she's a big dog." She says people don't see this side and think it's all glamorous. That's not to say that she doesn't enjoy the shinier side of her job too, though fashion is new to her. "I love everything right now, because I grew up in a small town and fashion is not really a thing, you wear overalls and leggings every day, it's fine, and if you do dress up people are like, what are you doing?"

Coming from someone who's just starred in her first Tarantino movie that's quite something, in fact that experience is one which elicits awe from her, describing in detail how each part of the Spahn Ranch was built out in detail, "Even houses we didn't shoot in were created with everything inside, so

there were couches, beautiful paintings as if we'd been living there, but we were just hanging out, it was the most extravagant but dirty set, it was crazy." The vibe on set she loved because "I didn't wear make-up so they put dirt on me, and I didn't wear a bra so my back wasn't hurting." The toughest part for her was filming *Euphoria* simultaneously, and juggling different hair colours. I ask if this was challenging and she replies deadpan, "It was, my hair is dead."

Don't mistake this sweetness for a lack of focus though, I ask what she'd be if she wasn't acting and her reply is lightning fast, "I've always believed if you have a plan B you prepare to fail." Strong words but something tells me this will be the reason we'll be seeing a lot more of her on our screens.







This page: Louis Vuitton top, Saint Laurent by Anthony Vaccarello trousers  
Opposite page: Mugler jacket, stylist's own tights, Emporio Armani pumps







This page: Alexander Wang jacket, Angostura finger tips  
Opposite page: Area dress

Makeup: Sandy Ganzer  
Hair: Bobby Eliot  
Manicure: Stephanie Stone  
Prop Stylist: Lauren Machen  
Casting: Emily Coyne  
Production: Home Agency  
Photographer's assistants: Brook Keegan & Yolanda Leaney  
Stylist's assistant: Shannon Mirpanah  
Retouching: Post Apollo

