



## NEW RELEASES

# Reality

### Reality

Director: Tina Satter

A Seaview and 2 Sq Ft production

In association with: Burn These Words, In The Cut, Fit Via Vi, Cinereach, Tanbark Pictures, MK2 Films  
Executive Producers: Elyn Daniels, Will O'Connor, Daniel Ginsberg, Andrew Beck, Bill Way, Elliot Whitton, Eva Maria Daniels, Phillip Engelhorn, Caitlin Gold, Tina Satter

Producers: Noah Stahl, Brad Becker-Parton, Riva Marker, Greg Nobile

Co-Producers: David Duque-Estrada, Rita Walsh  
Unit Production Manager: Adam Samuels

Casting: Douglas Aibel

First Assistant Director: Gerardo Coello Escalante

Second Assistant Director: Berenice Vignoli

Screenplay: Tina Satter, James Paul Dallas

Based on the play by: Tina Satter

Director of Photography: Paul Yee

Editing: Jennifer Vecchiarello, Ron Dulin

Production Design: Tommy Love

Costume Design: Enver Chakartash

Music: Nathan Micay

Cast

Sydney Sweeney (*Reality Winner*)

Josh Hamilton (*Special Agent Garrick*)

Marchánt Davis (*Special Agent Taylor*)

Benny Elledge (*Joe, unknown male*)

John Way (*FBI agent*)

Darby (*Mickey*)

Arlo (*Mina*)

USA 2023

83 mins

A Vertigo Release

## NEW RELEASES

### Reality

From Fri 2 Jun

### Medusa Deluxe

From Mon 12 Jun (preview + Q&A on Mon 5 Jun 20:40)

### Pretty Red Dress

From Fri 16 Jun (Q&A screening on Fri 16 Jun 18:00)

## RE-RELEASES

### Le Mépris (Contempt)

From Fri 2 Jun

### The Wicker Man

From Fri 30 Jun

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**SIGHT AND SOUND**

On 3 June 2017, 25-year-old Reality Winner returns from running errands to find two FBI agents at her home in Augusta, Georgia. An Air Force veteran and yoga instructor, Winner spends the next two hours being questioned about her work as an intelligence contractor – specifically, whether she leaked a classified document about Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections.

With all dialogue taken from the FBI transcript, *Reality* tells the tense, mesmerising story of what transpired inside Winner's home that afternoon. As she navigates the federal agents' questions, Winner is revealed to be a fairly typical 20-something: She treasures her pets, loves to travel, teaches CrossFit, shares selfies on social media. Written and directed by Tina Satter in a powerful feature film debut, *Reality* stars Sydney Sweeney (*Euphoria*, *The White Lotus*) as Reality, Josh Hamilton (*Eighth Grade*, *The Walking Dead*) as Special Agent Garrick and Marchánt Davis (*The Day Shall Come*, *Tuscaloosa*) as Special Agent Taylor. Satter and cinematographer Paul Yee (*The Fits*, *Colewell*) employ an array of visual techniques to remind viewers of the story's truth and the woman at its centre – real social media posts and news segments, images of the transcript being typed – as well as others that help create a taut, immersive and dreamlike piece of cinema. (For instance, flashes of colour illuminate redacted moments in the conversation, and lingering close-ups highlight Sweeney's astounding performance.) A score by Nathan Micay (*Industry*, *The Last Bus*) amplifies the tension. *Reality* examines truth, power and the US legal system through the lens of one intimate, disconcerting and very real encounter, provoking conversations that endure long after the final frame.

From start to finish, *Reality* is a film like no other: Inspired by the true story of former American intelligence specialist and whistleblower Reality Winner, the dialogue is taken from the transcript of an FBI recording made on 3 June 2017, when agents confronted the then 25-year-old at her Georgia home. 'As soon as I started reading this document, it just felt like a movie to me,' says writer and director Tina Satter, who found the transcript linked from a news story. 'On one hand, it's an administrative document from the FBI, but it also holds this whole life force. It holds Reality and this life-changing moment.'

In 2019 Satter's acclaimed play about Winner's interrogation, *Is This a Room*, debuted to sold-out audiences in New York City. When crafting the screenplay for *Reality*, Satter was excited to layer beautifully composed shots, arresting visuals and an immersive soundtrack on top of the captivating dialogue, which incorporates the same stutters, coughs, awkward exchanges – and redactions – in the transcript that she first read in 2017. 'It's an amazing document, because it gives you literally how people are trying to communicate,' she says. 'I felt like (the film) was strongest if it was, "This is what happened." Part of the integrity is that the language is kept intact', says the actors who play the film's three main characters – Reality Winner, Special Agent Garrick and Special Agent Taylor – contributed to the palpable energy both in front of and behind the camera.

As Reality Winner, Sydney Sweeney embodies a woman who manages to stay on her toes throughout the tense exchange, communicating just as powerfully with her body language as with her words. 'To me, Reality Winner was this incredible archetype of American youth in 2017 who somehow held all the contradictions in her body and in her actions,' Satter says. 'Emotionally,

## IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

### Preview: Chevalier

Thu 1 Jun 18:10

### Dexter Fletcher in Conversation

Sun 4 Jun 14:00

### Ghosted + intro by Dexter Fletcher

Sun 4 Jun 16:20

### Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI

Mon 5 Jun 18:30

### TV Preview: The Full Monty + Q&A with cast members Robert Carlyle, Lesley Sharp, Mark Addy and Talitha Wing and director Andrew Chaplin

Tue 6 Jun 18:00

### Preview: War Pony

Wed 7 Jun 20:45

### TV Preview: Black Mirror – Beyond the Sea + Q&A with writer/creator Charlie Brooker, actor Josh Hartnett, executive producer Jessica Rhoades, director John Crowley

Mon 12 Jun 18:15

### Sonic Cinema presents: Preview: I Am

### Weekender + Q&A

Thu 15 Jun 20:30

### Preview: Elemental + Q&A with director Peter Sohn, producer Denise Ream, actors Leah Lewis and Mamoudou Athie

Sun 18 Jun 12:45

### TV Preview: Champion + Q&A with writer Candice Carty-Williams, cast members Déja J Bowens, Malcolm Kamulete, Ray BLK, and director John Ogunmuyiwa

Mon 19 Jun 18:15

### Refugee Week: UK Premiere: The Woodman

Mon 19 Jun 20:50

### Refugee Week: Preview: Name Me Lawand + discussion with director Edward Lovelace and Steve Crump OBE, founder and chair of Deaf Kidz International

Tue 20 Jun 18:10

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Sydney felt like she understood Reality, and I felt like she understood Reality. She was so all in. The first time reading the script I was fascinated by how bizarre, funny and dark it was,' Sweeney says. 'Reality embodies all sorts of interesting contradictions that defy easy assumptions about what it means to be a woman, a veteran and a millennial.'

To prepare, Sweeney studied the transcript and Reality's speech patterns – and spoke with Reality over Zoom and via text. 'Being able to have actual communication with her was an incredible resource,' she says.

Veteran stage and screen actor Josh Hamilton (*Eighth Grade*, *Kicking and Screaming*) had already seen and loved Satter's play before he was approached to play Special Agent Garrick, who maintains control over the interrogation. 'I saw *Is This a Room* off-Broadway at the Vineyard Theater in 2019 and was just floored by the production,' Hamilton says. 'The precision of it – the tension that Tina and the cast created with this hyper-naturalistic language in this heightened theatrical setting was mesmerising. So three years later, when I opened the email asking if I was interested in being part of the film, my heart leaped and I just couldn't believe my luck.'

Hamilton prepared for the role by studying videos of interrogations – and trying to learn every stutter, cough and 'um' in the text. 'You don't get to work with this kind of language very often, if ever,' he says. 'The ingenious little word salads that no writer would ever come up with. The ways in which these seemingly innocuous conversational asides were actually quite manipulative interrogation techniques.' Adds Satter: 'He was a great person for me as a director to have, because he deeply understood my attraction to (the material). He just had a feeling about its language and was really, really helpful.'

Marchánt Davis (*The Day Shall Come*, *Tuscaloosa*) was also familiar with the material and the character of Special Agent Taylor. 'I was enamored with the play when it was done on Broadway,' Davis says. 'It's quite a rare, unique challenge Tina is giving the actor.' To prepare, Davis spoke with a retired FBI agent about her experiences with interrogations and took a deep dive into the agents' search warrant. While Agent Taylor tries to seem casual and conversational, his words come off as calculated – because, like Agent Garrick, he knows exactly how the conversation will end.

'Both Josh and Marchánt are phenomenal actors,' Sweeney says. 'Everything I was able to do was because of them. Josh was so captivating with every mannerism he adopted, and Marchánt brings such an energy to every scene you never know what's coming.' Adds Hamilton: 'Sydney's ability to drop into the complicated emotional life of Reality on a dime – over and over again – was frankly something I've never seen before. And Marchánt – I just love him. Deep, funny, and so subtle that I never once caught a glimpse of acting. Exactly what you dream of in a scene partner.'

Finding the right actors was especially important in *Reality*, since they share nearly all of their screen time together – in a confined space, no less. 'Josh and Sydney are wonderfully talented actors who both bring a unique set of skills to the table,' Davis says. 'Josh gives a masterclass on working on set, and I've stolen a number of tools from him. Sydney has somehow managed to garner life experiences far beyond her years, and it's a constant unexpected treat to hear the gems she drops and how those things have influenced her work.'

Production notes