

REALITY

USA (2023) 83 minutes

Director: Tina Satter

Cast: Sydney Sweeney (Reality)

Josh Hamilton (Garrick)

Marchant Davis (Taylor)



Screening 22nd October 2025 at Swindon Arts Centre

Reality is based on the FBI interrogation transcript of American intelligence leaker Reality Winner. On a Saturday afternoon in June 2017, 25 year old Winner is confronted at her Georgia home by the FBI. A cryptic conversation begins and her life quickly begins to unravel.

Reviews



"Sydney Sweeney, whose Emmy-nominated work in *Euphoria* was attuned to that show's maximalism, dials it down for her best performance yet. *Reality* masks her guilt behind nonchalance, but as the FBI agents chip away at her evasiveness and precarious half-truths, her almost imperceptible twitches tell all, captured in extreme close-up.

Eschewing the peril of true crime, *Reality* settles in the sheer mundanity of its characters, sprinkling in comedy in a way that never feels inorganic — such as a recurring aside involving Winner's cat, who refuses to get out from under her bed. In-between leading questions, officers Taylor (Marchánt Davis) and Garrick (Josh Hamilton) attempt to diffuse the tension by falling into regular small talk. They amicably chat with Reality about her dog's dislike of men and trade stories of Crossfit injuries. Are they just being polite, or are their faux niceties a tactic to coax a confession out from her? In either case, *Reality* is fascinating as an exploration of everyday humanity, and the film excels in portraying how the most banal of exchanges are also the most thrilling."

Iana Murray, Empire

"Adapting her own stage play, *Is This a Room*, Satter finds herself transforming a story that really feels better suited as a theatrical production. Like many other single setting, dialogue-dependent narratives, *Reality* often feels like a stripped down version of what the cinematic medium is able to offer. There's also an added layer of difficulty for Satter since the film's dialogue comes directly from the FBI's actual transcripts, limiting her creative license on the story. Yet, she's able to inject a level of emotional tension that seers through each scene, amplifying real life interactions that might otherwise feel flat.

At its core, *Reality* offers a dramatic take on real events through purposeful staging, discrete camera angles and a phenomenally restrained performance by Sweeney to underscore the social and gender dynamics straining the entire interrogation process."

Wilson Kwong, Film Enquiry

Film Facts

- *Reality* was shot in chronological order over 16 days.
- Photos of the real Reality Winner are interspersed throughout the film.
- Before she was accused of mailing classified information, Reality Winner was a Texas-raised linguist, yoga instructor and animal lover who regularly took to social media to blast President Donald Trump.
- Winner was sentenced to five years in prison, the longest sentence ever given for leaking classified documents.

