

EUR FILM REVIEW: Stealing America Vote by Vote

Post-Democracy Documentary Questions the Sanctity of the Ballot Box in U.S. Elections

By Kam Williams

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*Up until about ten years ago or so, public opinion pollsters were capable of accurately forecasting the results of political elections in America.

But with the country's increasing reliance on unverifiable electronic balloting and the employment of shady shenanigans, the outcomes of the contests have become more and more unpredictable.

According to the exit polls, George Bush actually should have lost each of the last two presidential elections.

For instance, in 2004, they had him trailing in 10 of 12 critical swing states, yet by evening's end he had somehow miraculously prevailed in 7 of them.

So, is the voting process tainted or sacrosanct? That is the question addressed from every conceivable angle by *Stealing America Vote by Vote*, a chilling expose' which paints a disgraceful picture of the nation as a land where power-hungry manipulators will do whatever it takes to ensure that their candidates prevail.

Directed by Dorothy Fadiman and narrated by Peter Coyote, the film doesn't just focus on problems with computerized voting, but with a host of other tactics employed to subvert the desire of the electorate. Thus, we hear the anecdotal testimony of black folks and college students forced to wait on line in Ohio for as long as 12 hours in order to cast their ballots, while the average wait for whites in suburbia was about 18 minutes.

It is ironic that African-Americans ostensibly comprise the segment of society most frequently victimized by various vote suppression schemes, given their long, hard-fought civil rights struggle for enfranchisement. However the movie sheds light on a popular Republican trick employed in the last election involved sending registered letters to the homes of over a hundred thousand black soldiers serving overseas in order to have their names removed from the voting lists when they were unable to sign the return receipt.

The film also furnishes evidence that equipment malfunctions have occurred in 42 states, with problems ranging from vote switching to frozen electronic screens to touch screens going blank to machine shortages to computer breakdowns to inaccurate tallies. This leaves one wondering, if the technology is so unreliable, why not revert to the old system?

The answer might lie in testimony offered by a Princeton professor who deftly demonstrates how easy it is to hack into a Diebold Voting Machine in less than a minute, if you come equipped with a pre-programmed memory card designed to install malicious software. Big Brother might very well prefer not leaving a paper trail.

Remember, the Supreme Court is still leaning to the right, which might mean the only chance Obama has of a fair shot at the White House is if United Nations monitors the polling places in the Battleground States.

America revisited as a post-democratic Banana Republic.

Excellent (4 stars)

Unrated

Running time: 90 minutes

Studio: Direct Cinema Limited