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Vote fraud, crumbling democracy's bedrock



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Rating: ★★☆☆

Stealing America: Vote by Vote begins with a quote from founding father Thomas Paine: "The right to vote . . . is the primary right by which other rights are protected."

Dorothy Fadiman's persuasive documentary ends with accounts of massive vote switching; hacked, whacked voting machines; and destroyed voting records. Both of George W. Bush's presidential wins are called into question.

If the film shows a liberal bias, it also makes the point that rigged elections are antithetical to everything this country stands for. In one of many clips from Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show* mixed in with the talking-head interviews (economist Paul Craig Roberts, pollster John Zogby, Ohio State Sen. Bob Hagan), Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is asked about allegations that his uncle stole the 1960 election by fixing the ballots in Illinois. JFK's nephew winces at Stewart, then says voter fraud is wrong, no matter who the perpetrator.

It's a people's issue, the film emphasizes time and again. Not a red-state, blue-state, liberal or conservative one.

Stealing America lays out one jolting scenario after another: lost, miscounted and deleted ballots, incidents of racial bias at the polls, and sworn testimony before Congress from computer engineers who say computerized voting machines can be, and have been, tampered with.

And the mainstream news media - the networks, CNN, newspapers - also are culpable, Fadiman says, failing to address voter concerns, and ignoring off-the-chart discrepancies between historically accurate exit polls and final tallies in the 2004 election.

Stealing America: Vote by Vote is sobering. The film suggests that come Nov. 4, the votes of Republicans, Democrats and independents alike might not be counted fair and square.

Thomas Paine must be spinning in his grave.



Election protest, 2004. The film lays out jolting scenarios: Lost, deleted ballots; racial bias at the polls; sworn testimony of computer tampering.