

FILM

On Screen

Stealing America: Vote by Vote

by [DAVID SCHMADER](#)

Dorothy Fadiman's documentary is exactly what you fear it is: A boringly thorough point-by-point investigation of the various scandals surrounding the 2004 presidential election. From voter suppression and vote switching to irregular tallies and software tampering, *Stealing America: Vote by Vote* assiduously details the components that added up to what felt like an election stolen by the Republicans, and before the film is over, your blood will be boiling.

So why am I recommending you spend 90 minutes of your life watching a boringly thorough movie that makes you murderously furious? For the primary reason anyone watches any documentary: To see amazing real-life shit that you can't fucking believe you're watching. Such amazing shit is on parade for the duration of *Stealing America*, and the plain-spoken, patient presentation of the material is crucial, allowing the film's dozen or so horrifying revelations—offered by a carefully bipartisan cast of commenters—to land with a weight beyond the scope of a Michael Moore rant.

Among the revelations: an investigation of vote switching that found a 12-to-1 bias for Bush (exploding claims of randomness, which would've divided the bias close to evenly), horrifyingly specific sworn testimony from a computer whiz asked to create a vote-switching prototype for a Republican Party official in 2002, real-time demonstrations of how quickly and easily tainted software can be installed into existing voting machines. Even the film's weakest component—an overreliance on comedy material, from okay *Daily Show* clips to unfunny internet spoofs—proves revelatory, as the mainstream media's failure to investigate the scandals becomes a major component of the story. There's no denying that *Stealing America* goes exactly where you think it will go, but it does a remarkable job of getting there. ★



Stealing America: Vote by Vote
dir. Dorothy Fadiman