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## MOVIE REVIEW

### 'Stealing America: Vote by Vote'

Documentary explores whether every vote really counted in 2004.

By Gary Goldstein, Special to The Times

If the prospect of reliving 2004's U.S. presidential election — or any of the other key domestic political races from the last dozen years — is too much to bear, then Dorothy Fadiman's documentary "Stealing America: Vote by Vote" might seem like homework. Settle in for 90 brief minutes, though, and this persuasive refresher course on our increasingly sketchy electoral process will prove essential viewing for any constitutionally minded American.

"Stealing America's" real strength lies in its head-shaking regurgitation of the political realities — and surrealties — that helped cement George W. Bush's reelection against a tide of contrary exit polling. Electronic machines rigged to switch votes; a barrage of rejected, destroyed or uncounted ballots; and race-based voter suppression tactics — all get incriminating close-ups here, with compelling anecdotal support from experts on both sides of the political aisle such as economist and Reaganite Paul Craig Roberts, lawyer-activist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and polling authority John Zogby as well as from average citizens caught in various voting fiascos.

While the film inherently tilts left, Fadiman justly spreads the blame among underreporting mainstream media outlets, compliant Republican operatives and hobbled Democrats who chose to fold their tents rather than fight to the finish.

Ultimately, though, "Stealing America" maintains that the American people are responsible for the nation's electoral future.

If the film closes on a bit of bald-faced rhetoric, it can be excused if it helps rally viewers to hold political leaders accountable for the integrity of our long-beleaguered voting system. Sounds like a plan.