



Steal This Vote!

BEHIND THE CURTAIN OF AMERICAN ELECTIONS

Everyone I know lugs around a low-grade dread about the upcoming presidential election. Many Democrats (as well as a surprising number of non-partisans and Republicans) stoically retain the knowledge that something terrible happened during the 2000 and 2004 elections—But what, exactly? How can it be righted? And who's going to do it?

As increasingly they are wont to do, documentary filmmakers rush in where the media fears to tread. *Documentaryspoke* to two directors and an executive producer of two of the most prominent efforts: *Stealing America Vote by Vote* (Dorothy Fadiman, dir.; Mitchell Block, exec. prod.), released theatrically in August, and continuing a nationwide rollout in September, with the DVD scheduled to be released in October (www.stealingamericamovie.org/); and *Uncounted: The New Math of American Elections* (David Earnhardt, dir.), which has been screening

at festivals and universities since January, and whose DVD is available through www.uncountedthemovie.com/.

As frustrating and enraging as the revelations in these films are, fortunately, they also provide specific and practical plans of action for individuals and activist groups to increase vigilance and ensure election integrity. For, as Earnhardt, Fadiman and Block concur, it's all about grassroots organization.

After the 2004 presidential election and the first comprehensive use of electronic voting machines, Earnhardt, a Nashville-based filmmaker, set out to unravel the mystery of why the election results were inconsistent with the exit polls. After three years of hearing "the election was stolen," he said, "I wanted to find out how it was done." Three years later, the answer is *Uncounted*, which systematically catalogs "the myriad of different ways the election was manipulated. It's

never just one thing," Earnhardt says. He has "linked the dots" of information seemingly randomly gathered by the media. The film makes a compelling case for election fraud by examining in-depth issues such as exit poll discrepancies, systematic purging of voters, suppression of African-American voters, the fallibility of electronic voting, et al.

In addition to fine production values and a powerful investigative journalism approach, *Uncounted* tackles the two voting machine companies—ES&S and Diebold—that electronically counted 80 percent of the votes in the 2004 presidential election. Both private, for-profit companies have extensive ties to the Republican Party. But, while Diebold's primary business is manufacturing ATM machines, which provide a paper receipt for transactions and has an audit trail, its voter machines have neither.

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