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MARCH 13, 2007

## SXSW Film Reviews: Campaign, The Ten, and Everything's Gone Green



The following films played Saturday, March 10th as part of the SXSW Film Festival:

**Campaign** - This Japanese doc follows the travails of a "parachute" candidate for the Kawasaki city council. He's called that because he moved to the city specifically to run for office through his allegiance to the powerful LDP party. Japan is as big a character as the candidate, as the candid shots of life there offer revealing snippets of the ultra-modern yet amazingly traditional society. The candidate's working wife must refer to herself as "housewife" in order not to offend, older politicians badger and chastise him for not bowing properly, and other party politicians get petty and territorial. While it's about 20 minutes too long, we loved learning the differences (and the similarities) between our elections and theirs. Politics may be murky, but this doc benefits from strong source material and a sympathetic protagonist. He may be flawed, but you want him to succeed. **Recommended.**

*Next showing: Tuesday @ 1:30pm (Alamo S. Lamar), Friday @ 1:30pm (Alamo S. Lamar).*

**The Ten** - David Wain's ten-sketch comedy loosely based on The Ten Commandments defines hit-and-miss. Segments on a parachuting accident, a Mexican vacation, and a CAT-scan battle just kill, while others like a bad doctor on trial just don't connect with an audience with high comedic expectations. The cast is stellar, and kudos go to Liev Schreiber especially for shattering his 'serious Broadway actor' veneer by making an ass of himself here. Paul Rudd stars as the narrator but doesn't have a lot to do, and other notables include a

puppet-loving Winona Ryder and all cast members from *The State*. Overall, we enjoyed the film - when you're in a good segment, you'll really laugh often. We just wish all of the segments were as genius as the best of them. **Recommended.**

*Next showing: None. Opens in Austin in August.*

**Everything's Gone Green** - *Very Garden State* meets *Office Space*, this one. This Canadian export mines late 20's angst and dating dilemmas to great effect thanks to very good lead actors and a script from "Generation X" author Douglas Coupland. It's great to see a movie this Canadian - people say "sorry" and "about," Vancouver looks amazing, and it reminds you that our North American neighbor is quite different from us. Paulo Costanzo (*Road Trip*) and Steph Song both give breakout performances here in roles that could become trite or cliched in lesser hands, and you'll likely see more of both of them in the near future. The story also hangs together thanks to generous doses of comedy between the serious bits. All told, Coupland works this tricky genre to positive and original effect here. **Recommended.**

*Next showing: None. Opens in Austin in late April.*

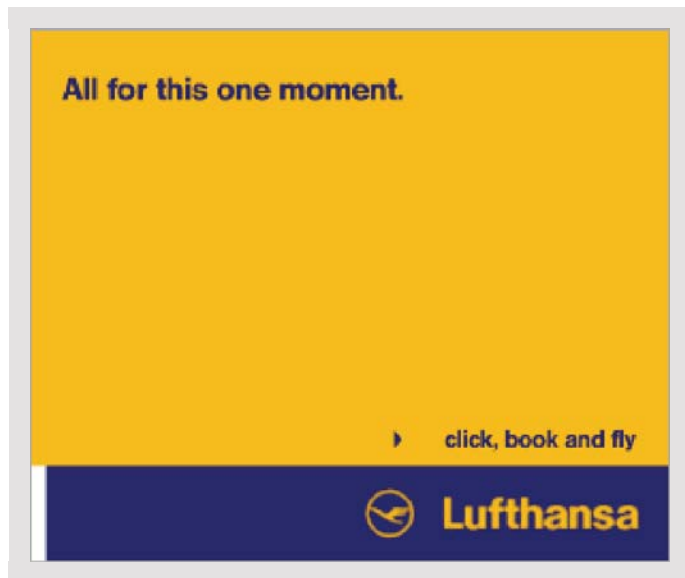
*David Wain image via [TheTenMovie.com](http://TheTenMovie.com). Photographer uncredited.*

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