



Kevin Costner plays Bud Johnson, a mediocre Father and apathetic American who, after a mistake at a polling Booth, becomes the single vote that would decide the fate of the Oval Office. Dennis Hopper and Kelsey Grammer play warring political hopefuls; Hopper as the Ralph Nader like Presidential hopeful and Kelsey Grammer as the current president looking to gain another run. With the help of his daughter played by the magnificent Madeline Carroll can Bud Johnson break out of his self absorbed world and realize that he has the power to speak for the voiceless or will he blow it?

Swing Vote begins with a charm that I would most likely compare with one of the many Judd Apatow films. Costner's Bud Johnson is a vulgar character with a tweaked moral compass living kind of a no priorities type of lifestyle with his young daughter Molly who is the exact opposite. Director and writer Joshua Michael Stern gives the duo a clichéd parent/child reversal role which has been seen many times before but young actress Madeline Carroll simply shines in her role and it makes the cliché less obvious. The rest of the cast simply becomes cookie cutter as far as character development goes. All of them find out one way or another the same moral lesson that Costner's character does. Costner of course has a much longer road to travel as far as realizing who and what he is. The rest just seems to be filler and in a sense taking pokes at politicians and the media.

I was intrigued by Swing Vote because it seemed to build up to something that any human being can relate to. There were many social commentaries running through the film from immigration to the effects of divorce on our children to child neglect. The one social commentary that may or may not bypass some of the films audience is Kevin Costner's representation of the American people. His character was apathetic and content like most of America who shrug at the issues and feel as if the issues do not effect their own personal space why should they even bother, let it be someone else's problem. His progression in the film, to me, was frustrating and I really hated that if some of the key issues in the film were given more time to develop there would have been a better ending then what we got. I felt like all the campaign realignments could have been reduced in order to illuminate the considered issues at the end of the film. For a film whose moral message to society is that you can make a difference it simply failed to do so. What you get is really just a very expensive "Don't Forget To Vote" commercial that doesn't know if it wants to be taken seriously or not.

Tags: [Kevin Costner](#) [1]

[Dennis Hopper](#) [2]

[Nathan Lane](#) [3]

[Stanley Tucci](#) [4]

[George Lopez](#) [5]

[Swing Vote](#) [6]

[Madeline Carroll](#) [7]

[Paula Patton](#) [8]

[Kelsey Grammer](#) [9]

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Links

[1] <http://shakefire.com/tags/kevin-costner>

[2] <http://shakefire.com/tags/dennis-hopper>

[3] <http://shakefire.com/tags/nathan-lane>

[4] <http://shakefire.com/tags/stanley-tucci>

[5] <http://shakefire.com/tags/george-lopez>

[6] <http://shakefire.com/tags/swing-vote>

[7] <http://shakefire.com/tags/madeline-carroll>

[8] <http://shakefire.com/tags/paula-patton>

[9] <http://shakefire.com/tags/kelsey-grammer>