



FILM: **DIDI**

FDG RATING: 3.4 😊😊😊○○

Film Discussion Group (FDG) Scale is 1-5 (5 is best)

Sean Wang: *director*  
Izaak Wang: *actor, Didi*

DATE: October 20, 2024

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **DIDI**

Didi, the 2024 coming of age film by Sean Wang, is semi-autobiographical featuring a 13 year old Taiwanese teenager, Chris Wang, growing up in ethnic diverse Fremont, CA in 2008. It's an excellent portrayal of an ethnic teen with conflicting feelings about his family culture and trying to fit in; trying to figure out who he is, and experiencing all the angst of that awkward age during the summer before he enters high school. He is affectionately called Didi by his mom, but everyone else calls him Wang-Wang.

Understandably, we were especially interested in a film about a city in our own Bay Area. A few of us could directly relate since we were parents of teens growing up in Fremont at that same time. But for the rest of us, it was a bit of an eye opener to see how teens were obsessively addicted to social media even in 2008.

We meet Wang hanging out with his mischievous ethnically mix of friends. One discussion participant thought the collective diversity was unusual, but this was typical in Fremont at that time which had a large Asian and Indian population. Sibling rivalry is in full force in early scenes as he and his older sister, Vivian, scream tauntingly at each other. She later makes an about face and in big sisterly fashion, comforts her intoxicated little brother when he had too much to drink at a party. Her personality shift was partly due to the fact she will be leaving for college in the fall.

One discussion participant noted that ordinary early teen experience is bad enough, but Didi's difficulties seemed extra-intense and numerous although there was a tinge of humor.

Didi has a passion for filming videos which he uploads on You Tube. We liked that he was so resourceful in searching how to film skateboarding when, trying to impress a group of skateboarders, he claimed he was really good at filming skaters in action and could film them doing their tricks. This is an authentic peek at the film maker's actual early passion for making films.

It was a satisfying twist when the skaters chastised Wang for being rude to his soft-spoken Mom played by the well known Asian actress Joan Chen. Too bad her role didn't allow her to shine. Wang has no male role model since his father is absent taking care of business in Taiwan.

The acting was excellent, especially the young star playing Chris Wang, but also his Nai-Nai (grandmother) who lives with them and adds a bit of humor. Some favorite scenes are when he has a crush on a girl named Madi who he befriends at a party and talks with on AOL Instant Messenger. "You're pretty cute, for an Asian boy," Madi, says which ignites another web research session as Didi searches for lessons on kissing a girl.

Entertaining, and insightful but also a bit painful to watch the teen angst, we gave Didi a 3.4 on our scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!  
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