



FILM: **WEINER**

FDG RATING: 3.7

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

Josh Kriegman and Elyse Steinberg: *Directors and Writers*
(Kriegman was once Anthony Weiner's chief of staff)

DATE: July 17, 2016

DISCUSSION SUMMARY: **WEINER**

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Hoping to re-launch his political career and redeem himself so that his previous sexting scandal 3 years prior would be buried in old news archives and forgotten memories, former U.S. Representative (D-NY) Anthony Weiner's embarks on a catastrophic race for Mayor of New York City in 2013. His notorious previous escapade caused him to resign from Congress. The documentary, simply titled *Weiner*, follows Anthony, his wife, Huma, toddler son, and his campaign staff through the minute-by-minute challenges of overcoming his tainted reputation, presenting his platform, and trying to win the allegiance of the voters of New York City.

Documentary filmmakers, Kriegman and Elyse, thought it would be the ultimate comeback story. But to their surprise as well as his wife and supporters, Weiner becomes embroiled in a second more disastrous, widely publicized sexting scandal using the pseudonym "Carlos Danger" during the race. His nemesis was "Pineapple," the code name for Sydney Leathers, the then-23-year-old who goaded Anthony into sexting and then showed up in front of his campaign office. His 2nd chance at a promising political career disintegrates before our eyes. Toward the end of the film, admitting his narcissistic persona, Anthony reflects, "I think politicians are probably wired in some way that needs attention."

Our discussion noted that throughout history politicians had affairs. But Anthony's escapades seem perverted. He's more like a compulsive flasher. He admits his first sexting scandal was a mistake but is in denial about having a problem and is blind to the consequences of his actions. He said it wouldn't happen again. But it did. (We all hope he will seek help so we won't hear about yet another Weiner sexting scandal.)

As a documentary, the film was exceptionally well done giving us an extremely interesting behind the scenes view of a real campaign. We saw how so much depends on image control and how sound bites are powerful manipulators. The film-makers actually ended up with a much more interesting film than the intended political come back story. Why did so many of his supporters stick with him? Anthony is a passionate politician, very articulate, quick-witted, and is very convincing when he speaks.

The unexplored question that we all are wondering is whether Huma Abedin will stay with him. As the very successful private personal aide-confidant to Hilary Clinton, strong, soft-spoken, charismatic, well educated, with exceptional organizational skills and engaging calculated people skills, Huma seems to be the one with the promising political career.

We definitely wouldn't vote for Anthony, but *Weiner*, the film won high votes from our resident reviewers resulting in 3.7 on a scale of 1 to 5. (5 is the best.)



See you at the movies!

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[Film Discussion Group](#) (FDG) organizer