



## P.O.V.'s "CAMPAIGN"

By Kazuhiro Soda

Tuesday, July 29, 2008 at 10 p.m. on PBS (Check local listings)

### Filmmaker's Statement

I don't think of **Campaign (Senkyo)** as a political piece, though politics is its subject matter. Rather, it is what I call "an observational film" in which the viewer is expected to perceive and interpret the complex, difficult-to-articulate reality of an election campaign run by the Liberal Democratic Party, the party that has held power in Japan for the last 50 years.

Most documentary filmmakers conduct extensive research on their subjects and to write detailed scripts and treatments before they begin shooting. The scripts are often written to persuade members of the production team — executive producers, staff members, and investors — that the movie is interesting and worth producing, both artistically and financially.

In making **Campaign** I broke with this tradition. I made a conscious decision not to write a word before shooting. I was determined to record whatever took place in front of me and to avoid research and pre-shoot meetings with the subjects. This wasn't because I was lazy. It was because I wanted to be true to my philosophy of documentary filmmaking, that a filmmaker should minimize preconceived ideas and should simply learn from the crude reality captured on camera. This strategy was a luxury made possible by the fact that this was a self-financed one-man operation; I both operated the camera and recorded sound simultaneously. As a result, the shoot was one of the most thrilling ones I've ever had, full of eye-opening experiences.

In the editing room as well I chose the most naturalistic path. I constructed the cinematic reality using only moving pictures and sounds recorded during the shoot. I did not use any narration, super-imposed information, computer graphics, special effects, or music. This is because I wanted the viewers to observe and experience the election campaign as directly as I did while I was shooting it.

**Campaign** asks viewers to observe and think about what they see on screen. In this sense, reality is not painted in black and white. Instead it is gray and complicated, the way we experience it every day. I hope that viewers will leave the theatre with unanswered questions, ones they will continue to think about for days, weeks, even years to come.

— Kazuhiro Soda, Director

