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2>[Canadian 'Gone Green' Is Smart, Sweet And Funny](#)

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BY ROB THOMAS

Call it "Garden Province." From its offbeat humor to its likable twentysomething hero, the Canadian "Everything's Gone Green" treads a lot of the same ground as Zach Braff's "Garden State" and a host of indie comedies that have gone before.

But "Green" (which was a quick sellout at the Wisconsin Film Festival earlier this month) is a slight but winning entry in the genre, largely devoid of the melodramatic touches that marked some of Braff's film.

It's also particularly noteworthy because it's the first feature screenplay by author Douglas Coupland ("Microserfs," "JPod"). In print, Coupland has a tendency to make his characters little more than vessels for his satiric points, but in Paul Fox's film his sharp and funny observations aren't required to carry the load, thanks to appealing young cast members who have genuine, unforced chemistry with each other.

Paulo Costanzo, who has the look and demeanor of a frizzy-haired Jon Stewart, is very charming as the film's protagonist, Ryan, a Vancouver cubicle drone on the verge of turning 30. The film's opening credits are barely over before he's dumped by his girlfriend and fired from his job for writing bad anti-corporate poetry on company time.

As he figures out what to do next, Ryan encounters a world where everyone seems to be pursuing get-rich-quick shortcuts to wealth, rather than actually providing any sort of goods or services or, heaven forbid, actually doing something meaningful with their lives.

His yuppie brother makes money off glitzy apartment buildings that are basically tax write-offs for the Japanese Yakuza, while his recently downsized father invests his energy into the lottery, an Amway-style franchise and marijuana farming, all with equal disaster. And when Ryan asks his young niece what she wants to be when she grows up, she chirps, "a trophy wife."

Figuring he needs to get his share of the pie, Ryan gets a job working for the provincial lottery, interviewing and photographing winners for the official lottery magazine so that others can be lured into buying tickets. Every encounter for Ryan has just a touch of the surreal about it; this is likely the first film that has its "meet-cute" with a potential love interest take place next to a beached whale.

The love interest is Ming (the sweet Steph Song), a set dresser who keeps busy dressing up Vancouver to look like Seattle, San Francisco or any of the other American locales that the city doubles for in budget-minded U.S. movies and television. There's a great running joke about a single palm tree that's carted from one set to the next to signify

"Southern California!"

Ryan eventually gets roped into a lottery scam with Ming's seedy boyfriend Bryce (JR Bourne), fattening his bank account and eventually leading him to a moral crossroads of sorts. But the real charm of "Everything's Gone Green" lies in the detail work, the dozens of slightly odd, hyper-real characters that the bemused Ryan runs across.

There are some jokes that probably play better with native Vancouverites, such as the rush for everyone to learn Mandarin Chinese, invariably referred to as "The Language of Tomorrow." But the film's wry affection for Vancouver and its denizens is contagious, especially since Fox films the city and surrounding mountainside in such glowing terms.

Add in a must-get soundtrack that showcases Canada's exploding indie rock scene, including Sloan and Broken Social Scene's Jason Collett, and "Everything's Gone Green" is a smart and generally cliché-free take on familiar material.

#### EVERYTHING'S GONE GREEN

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Rated: R for language, sexual material and drug content.

Stars: Paulo Costanzo, Steph Song.

Length: 1:35.

Where: Westgate.

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