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Woman convicted in Dothan election fraud case serving out jail sentence

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Crime and courts reporter
Aug 22, 2016

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Lesa Coleman is escorted down the hallway of the Houston County Courthouse in May 2015 after being sentenced to 180 days in jail.

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One of the four people convicted in a Houston County Sheriff's voter fraud investigation has started serving her sentence at the Houston County Jail.

Officials at the Houston County Jail confirmed 51-year-old Lesa Renee Coleman recently turned herself in to the correctional facility to start serving her sentence.

Circuit Court Judge Butch Binford ordered Coleman to serve a three-year sentence split, with 180 days in the Houston County Jail. The court also ordered Coleman to serve three years probation after completing the 180 days in the county jail.

A jury found Coleman guilty of seven felony counts of absentee ballot fraud in April 2015. She appealed her convictions, and they were upheld in March, but she was not immediately ordered to report to jail to begin serving her sentence. The *Dothan Eagle* inquired with the Houston County court system recently about why Coleman was not serving her sentence, months after her conviction was upheld. It appears a piece of paperwork in her court file that was necessary to order her to begin serving her sentence had been overlooked.

Coleman was one of four people convicted for fraudulently obtaining absentee voter ballots during the 2013 city commission candidacy of District 2 Commissioner Amos Newsome. Coleman was one of four people charged who worked on the 2013 campaign for Newsome.

Newsome won his seat in 2013 by 14 votes. He received 119 of the 124 absentee votes cast. Three others have been convicted and sentenced on voter fraud charges in connection with the 2013 District 2 race.

A jury also found 67-year-old Olivia Reynolds guilty of two dozen felony election fraud charges. A third person, Janice Hart, pleaded guilty to reduced misdemeanor absentee ballot fraud charges. A fourth person, Daniel Webster Reynolds III, received probation after pleading guilty to three felony election fraud charges.

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