



Jury Finds Julius Henson Guilty Of Conspiracy For Leaving Off Authority Line In Robocall Case

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BALTIMORE (WJZ) — A Baltimore jury convicts political consultant Julius Henson on one of the four charges brought against him in the Election Night robocall scandal.

Derek Valcourt has been following the trial for two weeks. He has reaction from Henson and the jury.

For Henson this is a partial victory — an end to his two-week trial and a 20-month ordeal with only one guilty verdict against him.


“Obviously, we’re elated,” Henson said.

As Republican Bob Ehrlich and Democrat Martin O’Malley squared off in a 2010 rematch, Henson— Ehrlich’s campaign consultant— wrote and sent a robocall to 112,000 registered Democrats before polls closed on Election Night, suggesting there was no need to go vote because O’Malley was already winning.

The robocall said: “I’m calling to let everyone know that Governor O’Malley and President Obama have been successful. We’re OK. Relax. Everything is fine. The only thing left is to watch it on TV tonight.”

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For that robocall, Henson was charged with influencing or attempting to influence voter turnout through the use of fraud, publishing campaign material without an authority line and conspiracy.

Jurors found him not guilty on the two most serious charges against him– charges of election fraud and conspiracy for the robocall he wrote on behalf of Republican Bob Ehrlich’s campaign.

“The jury has spoken on it and we respect their verdict,” state prosecutor Emmet Davitt said.

Davitt tried to convince jurors the robocall was an illegal attempt to trick African-Americans into not voting. Henson argued the robocall was reverse psychology and jurors agreed there was nothing illegal about it.

“When you come down to dealing with voters and everyone’s trying to get folks on their side, it’s a tactic. You see it in the media everyday,” Renee Johnson, the jury forewoman, said.

Jurors found him guilty of conspiracy for leaving off the legally required authority line, which should have said the calls were paid for by the Ehrlich campaign. Ironically, that same jury returned a not guilty verdict for leaving off the authority line. That decision has confused both the prosecution and the defense.

Johnson told **WJZ** that jurors felt an experienced consultant like Henson should have known better.

“He should never have put his business involved in that,” Johnson said. “He should have never done that.”

Henson insists he left it out at the Ehrlich campaign’s request.

“When I wrote that call– less than 50 words, 25 second call on a napkin– that was a good call with or without an authority line. The client chose not to put an authority line on that call,” he said.

Henson was also found not guilty for both charges of election fraud.

Henson spoke with **WJZ** shortly after the verdict was announced about his experience during this 20-month ordeal, and he also talked to **WJZ** about what the Ehrlich campaign knew on Election Night.

“He knew and I know the campaign manager knew and probably some other senior people in the campaign office that day,” Henson said. “I’m not sure what he knows. I don’t think the state was ever interested in them. The state was interested in Julius Henson only, and they didn’t bother to get their phones or raid their house or do anything. From day one, they decided ‘Oh, it’s Julius. Let’s do him.’”



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But Ehrlich's campaign manager Paul Schurick faced the exact same charges as Henson. A jury found him guilty of all four of those criminal charges in December. He served a month of home detention and must complete 500 hours of community service.

Henson promises an appeal on his one guilty charge. He says he's moving on and that he will now be putting his political knowledge to work fighting against same-sex marriage in Maryland.

Julius Henson faces the possibility of up to a year in jail and up to a \$1,000 in fines when he is sentenced on June 13.

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