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Linwood man pleads guilty to voter fraud in failed 2009 Marty Small mayoral campaign in Atlantic City

By LYNDA COHEN, Staff Writer

Aug 2, 2010

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Ernest Storr of Linwood pleaded guilty to voter fraud in Marty Small's failed 2008 Atlantic City mayoral campaign. Bill Gross

By LYNDA COHEN, Staff Writer

MAYS LANDING - A Linwood man admitted Monday to tampering with ballots in the Atlantic City mayoral campaigns of Marty Small and former Mayor Scott Evans.

Ernest Storr, 44, was one of 14 people arrested in September on various voter fraud charges involving Councilman Small's failed 2009 mayoral bid. In exchange for his plea, the state will recommend that Storr be sentenced to probation.

Storr not only admitted to instructing a Small campaign worker on how to tamper with absentee ballots, but said he previously committed the crime in 2008, while working on Evans' campaign during a special mayoral election. Small was working on Lorenzo Langford's campaign at that time. Langford was successful in both elections.

While both candidates ran in Democratic primaries, Storr is a registered Republican, according to voting records.

Evans denied any knowledge of wrongdoing during his campaign and said he did not even know Storr was collecting ballots.

"I wasn't involved in any of the campaign strategy meetings whatsoever," Evans said Monday. "To my knowledge, Ernie wasn't involved in anything other than handing out signs."

Evans said he was surprised to find his longtime friend involved in something like this.

"He's always been a decent person and good businessman," Evans said. "Whatever unfortunate situation he ended up in, it's sad that he got caught up in it. The guy really is a decent guy. To me, it sounds like an isolated, unfortunate incident."

Small would not comment on the plea deal Monday but has previously maintained his innocence in the case.

Storr is the second Small campaign worker to plead guilty. In October, Ronald Harris, 24, of Atlantic City, admitted to third-degree conspiracy to commit absentee ballot fraud, under a plea agreement that would likely give him probation under the condition he serve a county jail sentence not to exceed 364 days.

Harris later told The Press of Atlantic City that he was not involved but pleaded because he was scared.

Both plea deals would require truthful testimony if called upon.

The Press reported in June that Edward Colon Jr. taped conversations for state investigators while working inside the Small campaign.

The investigative report quotes Storr during an April 2009 meeting at Small's campaign headquarters.

"I just have the people bring the ballot to me, and I fill them out," Storr told Colon, the report states. "I just did it myself, that way I knew."

Colon told the two men that most of the Hispanic voters are older and are unaware of who the candidates are.

"Just get the ballot and have them sign it," Storr replied.

Then Martin Crumble allegedly warned, "Make sure you don't let nobody see you."

"Right," Storr interjected. "Because that's not ... you're not allowed to do that."

The remaining defendants have until Aug. 16 to accept a plea or face trial on the charges. Superior Court Judge James Isman has scheduled jury selection for Oct. 4 and estimated the multidefendant trial could last about three months.

The Atlantic County Clerk's Office tossed out a significant number of ballots in the primary election before the investigation was revealed.

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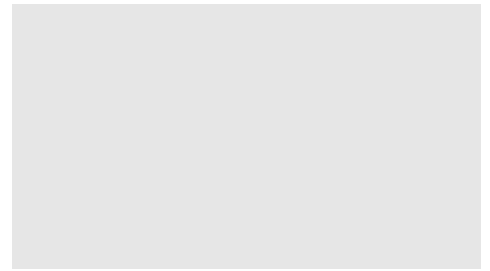
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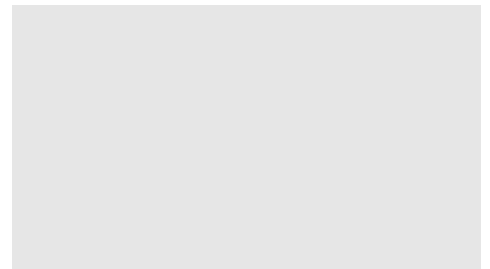


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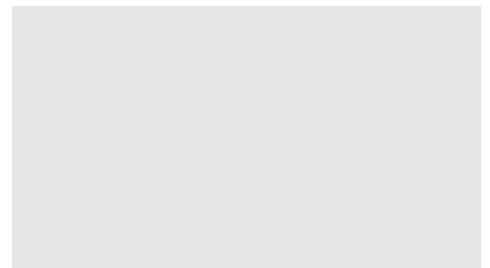
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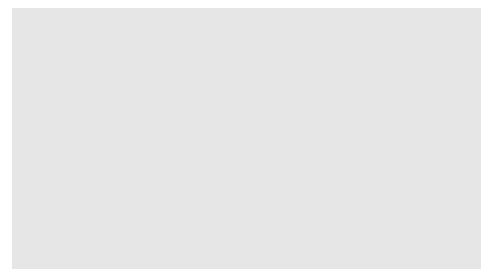
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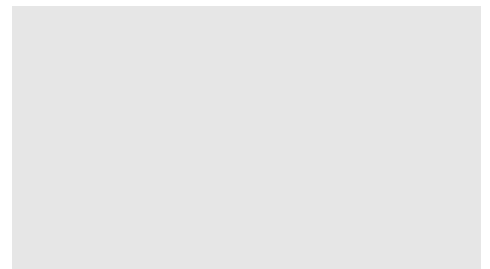
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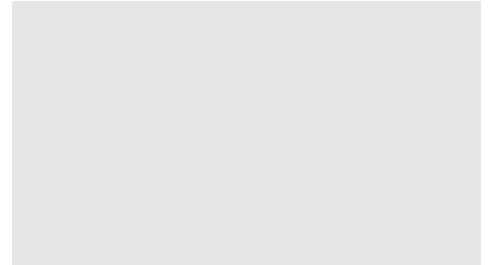
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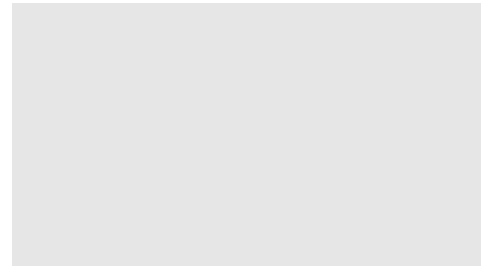
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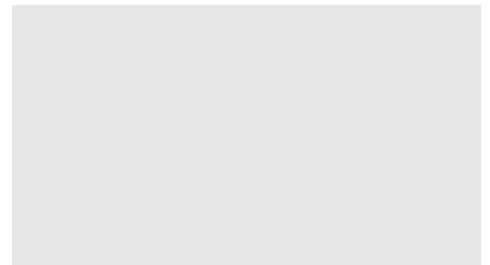


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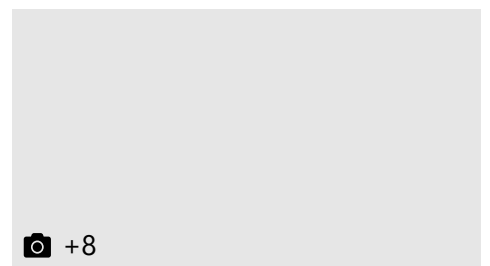
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