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# Foreign Company Caused Chicago's "Ballot Chaos" \*PIC\*

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CHICAGO ELECTIONS RUN BY FOREIGN COMPANY  
RESULT IN WIDESPREAD FAILURES AND "BALLOT CHAOS"

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American Free Press

Chicago's new \$50 million computerized voting system, operated by a privately-owned foreign company, offers no transparency and resulted in widespread failures causing "ballot chaos" during the recent Illinois primary.

COOK COUNTY, Illinois – The right to vote and elect a representative government, the "democratic franchise" supposedly deeply cherished by Americans, has become an absolute farce in the United States. Chicago's use of an extremely flawed computerized voting system operated by a privately-held foreign company reveals how meaningless and absurd the "democratic" process in America has become.

Having observed voting systems across Europe, from Serbia, Germany and Estonia to Holland and France, I have noted that the most honest and transparent elections are also the most simple. The more complicated methods of voting, such as the computerized voting systems widely used across the United States, lack the most essential element of democratic elections – transparency.

As the \$50 million touch-screen and optical scan voting system provided by Sequoia Voting Systems failed across Chicago and suburban Cook County during the March 21 Illinois primary, the leading corporate-controlled newspapers merely lamented the failures of the system without addressing its fundamental flaws or even reporting that the company running the election is foreign-owned.

The "high-tech" computerized voting system was "cumbersome" and "slow," the Chicago Tribune reported. The machines failed across the county causing "plenty of frustration and confusion for voters," the paper reported. The ballots and votes from more than 400 precincts were still uncounted two days after the election due to machine malfunctions and lost memory cartridges which contain the results.

The Tribune reported that as of noon Wednesday, Chicago was missing memory cartridges

from 252 polling stations while Cook County officials "couldn't find" the results from 162 suburban precincts.

Election officials tried to assure the public that although nobody knew where all the ballots and computerized memory cartridges were, they were "most assuredly not lost."

"I don't trust that," U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush (D-Ill.) said. "This is Chicago. This is Cook County, We created vote fraud, vote scandal and stealing votes. We created that mechanism. It became an art form."

"Ballot chaos" is how The Chicago Sun-Times described the situation in which the votes from hundreds of precincts could not be found or counted on Election Night. "We have accounted for the votes," Langdon Neal, city election chairman told the Sun-Times. "What we haven't been able to do is count them."

In one precinct on the Near South Side, for example, the Sequoia optical scanner failed to register anything but Republican ballots. Although "election officials" tried to repair the machine four times, by the end of the day it had failed to register a single Democratic ballot in a precinct in which some 86 percent of the voters are Democrats.

When this reporter went to vote, the touch-screen machine went completely dead as the voter in front of me pressed the button to print. When the poll workers were asked if other voters had had similar problems with the equipment they said it had happened all day and showed me an unplugged machine that had broken down earlier. Unlike most elections, no identification was required of the voters.

When the polls closed at 7 p.m., American Free Press was at the Cook County Clerk's office to see how the votes were tallied. Citizens in Chicago, as in most American cities, are, however, forbidden from viewing or participating in the any aspect of the vote-counting process.

The so-called counting of the votes is managed by some two dozen employees of Sequoia Voting Systems, a privately-held foreign company. These employees, many of whom are not even U.S. citizens, have "full access" to the "back room area," a sealed-off section of the 5th floor of the county clerk's office which is called the "tally area."

In Chicago, the person in charge of the tallying of the votes was a British employee of Sequoia named David Allen from London. Allen, who ran the "Sequoia War Room" in an office next to that of Cook County Clerk David Orr, oversaw the "tally room" team, which included a dozen Venezuelan employees, who operated the hidden computer equipment that supposedly "counts" the votes.

As American Free Press has noted before, there are wire services such as the Associated Press, who could be seen having direct connections leading from their computers to the hidden mainframe computer of the Sequoia tallying system located behind the wall on the 5th floor of the clerk's office.

Senior executives of Sequoia Voting Systems and its partner company, Smartmatic, such as company president Jack A. Blaine and Roger Alejandro Piñate Martinez, vice president of special operations, also had "full access" to the tally area.

Sequoia, which was previously held by the British-based firm De La Rue PLC, a company which produces bank notes, travelers' checks and cash handling equipment, was merged or combined with Smartmatic in March 2005.

Smartmatic, which has a U.S.-based office in Boca Raton, Florida, is headed by three young Venezuelans along with Blaine, a former vice president with Unisys. A dozen Venezuelans could be seen managing the most sensitive aspects of the recent election in Chicago.

Smartmatic, the parent company of Sequoia Voting Systems, obtained the company for a "ridiculously low amount of money," Charles D. Brady, an analyst with Hibernia Southcoast

Capital Inc., said at the time of the merger. While De La Rue purchased 85 percent of Sequoia in 2002 for \$35 million, it reportedly sold the growing global company for only \$16 million in 2005. Tracey Graham, then president of Sequoia, said more than 30 organizations had expressed interest in buying her company, yet no names of other bidders were given "citing confidentiality agreements."

The chief officers of Sequoia-Smartmatic are two 32-year old Venezuelan friends based in Caracas, Antonio Mugica and Alfredo Anzola. Anzola also works as a Venezuela-based lawyer brokering international oil deals with the Cleveland law firm of Squire, Sanders & Dempsey.

"With the combination of Sequoia and Smartmatic, both proven innovators with accomplished track records in either the U.S. or abroad, we are creating the first truly global leader in providing voter-verified electronic voting systems," Blaine said in March 2005 when the merger was announced.

There is, however, nothing verifiable about the Sequoia voting system used in Cook County. The voter has no way of knowing if his vote has been counted or how it was counted. The absolute lack of transparency in U.S. voting systems yields unverifiable election results which can only be accepted on faith. In Chicago, voters are asked to trust the results produced by malfunctioning machines operated by a privately-owned and secretive foreign company.

Asked about the nature of the foreign company that runs elections in Cook County, Scott Burnham, spokesman for David Orr simply said, "Ask Sequoia" and hung up the phone. Asked about the ownership of the privately-held company, Allen, who supervised the tally, refused to answer and handed the phone to Michelle Shafer, the company's vice president and spokesperson.

Pressed about Allen's citizenship, Shafer finally admitted that the Sequoia employee who oversaw the tally was, indeed, a British citizen who had been assisted by a team of Venezuelans. The Sequoia system used in Cook County was first used in Venezuela in 2004 during a national referendum to decide whether President Hugo Chavez should continue with his Bolivarian Revolution or not. Chavez won the referendum, according to the results produced by the Smartmatic voting system.

Dimas Ulacio, one of the Venezuelan technicians who worked in the tally area spoke with American Free Press. "Who really owns Sequoia?" Ulacio was asked. "Is Sequoia-Smartmatic truly a Venezuelan company or is it a British-owned company masquerading as a Venezuelan company?" Ulacio laughed but refused to answer.

While a high percentage of the precinct results, about 90 percent, are usually reported within one hour of the polls closing, the Sequoia system failed to produce any results for nearly two hours. Only 44 percent of the precinct results had been reported four hours after the polls closed.

The widespread failures of the Sequoia voting system in the Cook County election, Shafer said, was a "very typical Election Day in a jurisdiction where they are changing voting technology." Rather than blame the machines, Shafer blamed human error.

In France, on the other hand, where every vote is openly counted by hand, election results from the last presidential election were reported two hours after the majority of the polling stations closed at 6 p.m. French citizens are allowed to watch the counting of their votes, the sine qua non of any democratic and transparent system of voting.

The open and observable counting of the votes is the indispensable prerequisite of any democratic election and is precisely what is lacking in the computerized and electronic voting systems widely used in the United States.

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When French voters elect their president or participate in an important referendum, such as

the European Union constitutional treaty, the election is very simple, clean and correct. The voter takes a ballot for each choice, yes or no, Chirac or Le Pen, and put their choice in a simple envelope.

When the polls close the envelopes are counted and then the votes from each packet of 100 votes are counted - twice. This is all done in front of the public and the press - in each polling station. The results are then compiled and tallied.

This is how a proper democratic election should be held. The complexity of U.S. ballots and use of computerized voting machines is the tool by which the criminals have taken control of the American republic.

When will Americans realize that we are living under a dictatorship of criminal gangs masquerading as a democratic republic?



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