

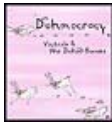
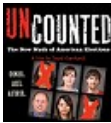


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"Voting Machine Company Co-Founder Killed in Small Plane Crash in Caracas"



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Voting Machine Company Co-Founder Killed in Small Plane Crash in Caracas

Smartmatic Co-Founder, Employee, and Shareholder Dead After Both Engines on Small Plane Reportedly Failed Just After Takeoff

News Follows Reports by The BRAD BLOG Concerning the Venezuelan Firm's Continuing Control Over Beleaguered American E-Voting Outfit, Sequoia Voting Systems...

A small plane, carrying the co-founder of Venezuelan voting machine company Smartmatic, crashed earlier this week shortly after take-off from the Caracas airport, killing two employees of the company, and several others on board and on the ground.



Smartmatic has been named as a subject in several recent, exclusive, investigative reports here at The BRAD BLOG, surrounding questions of the Venezuelan firm's apparent continuing control over the American e-voting company, Sequoia Voting Systems.

Reports of Monday's crash also indicate that several highly-placed Venezuelan officials were, interestingly, among the first to respond after the plane crashed.

Here's the lede from yesterday's English-language coverage in the Miami Herald:

Voting system creator dies in plane crash

A founding partner of the Smartmatic voting system, headquartered in Boca Raton, was killed this week in Venezuela when a private plane he was traveling in plummeted into a home near the Caracas airport.

Alfredo Jose Anzola Jaumotte, 34, one of the creators of the voting system program, died at an area hospital Tuesday.

Also killed in the accident were the pilot, Mario Jose Donadi, a convicted drug-trafficker in both the United States and Venezuela; Smartmatic employee Eduardo Ramirez and two residents of the home that was struck by the falling aircraft at about 10 a.m. Monday



Smartmatic is the once-owner and --- as a very recent series of investigative reports from The BRAD BLOG has revealed (see, most notably: here, here and here) --- the still-controlling parent company to Oakland/Denver-based Sequoia Voting Systems, which is currently amidst a hostile takeover imbroglio with competitor Hart

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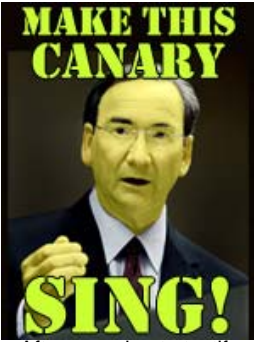
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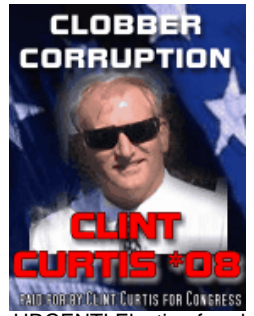


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InterCivic of Austin, TX.

Despite claiming to have sold Sequoia to a management-led buyout team last November, and thus divested of all control of the company under pressure from an investigation by the U.S. Treasury Departments Commission of Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), our recent exclusive investigative reports here have revealed that Smartmatic still holds direct and/or indirect control over several key aspects of Sequoia's operation, including ownership of the intellectual property (IP) rights for Sequoia's voting machines and tabulator software, and the right to negotiate where Sequoia may or may not compete in foreign markets...

Smartmatic also controls the \$2 million loan note used by the former management team, calling themselves SVS Holdings, Inc., to purchase Sequoia from Smartmatic last year. That purchase effectively ended the CFIUS investigation which had been looking into the ties of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez' government in the ownership and control of Sequoia, which currently owns some 20% of the American "election industry" market.

Court documents unearthed during the course of our reporting, also reveal that Smartmatic will continue to retain licensing rights over Sequoia software whether or not Hart takes over the company, or even if SVS Holdings is able to stave off the takeover. The cash poor owners of SVS/Sequoia are currently scrambling (so far unsuccessfully) to find financing partners prior to May 15th, when the deal with Hart --- or SVS, if they are able to match Hart's proposal --- is scheduled to close.

[El Universal's Spanish-language coverage](#) of the small plane crash which killed Smartmatic's co-founder indicated that the pilot of the small plane had radioed back to the airport that one engine had failed, just minutes after takeoff. Though he signaled his intention to circle back for an emergency landing, he did not issue an SOS call.

El Universal's report, as translated for [The BRAD BLOG](#) by a Spanish-speaking colleague, who also happens to be very familiar with the Smartmatic/Sequoia story, included a graf charging:

Other sources in the investigation revealed that the first clues suggest the plane lost its second motor while returning to the Maiquetía international airport.

A few more key points of note from *El Universal's* coverage, as translated by our colleague, beyond the matter of the reported second engine failure:

Also killed were Mario Donadi, the plane's pilot, passenger Eduardo Ramírez (59), of the Finance Department of Smartmatic and the shareholder of that company Alfredo Anzola, co-pilot of the plane, who died last night before being transferred to Caracas.

...
"It was seen that the [Venezuelan] Interior Minister Ramón Rodríguez Chacín rushed to the [hospital] to check on the status of the co-pilot, Alfredo Anzola, who apparently is a relative of his.

Our colleague also notes that, "other news reports say that Jorge Rodriguez, the former head of the electoral commission and former vice president of Venezuela, also visited the hospital."

Such reports would seem to underscore the close relationship that Smartmatic continues to have with the government of Venezuela, even while Smartmatic retains such important control over the software, intellectual property, and financial business of Sequoia Voting Systems here in the United States.

Last week, [The BRAD BLOG reported](#) that Sequoia/SVS CEO and President Jack Blaine announced to employees during a company-wide conference call, convened to answer questions after [our initial exclusive report](#) of the attempted hostile takeover of Sequoia by Hart (still unreported by any other media source, beyond *ComputerWorld* where we ran a short, greatly [condensed version of our report](#)) that his company does *not* have claim to the intellectual property of Sequoia's e-voting systems.



"It doesn't matter really whether we have the IP or not," Blaine told his employees during the call. "I didn't particularly want the IP," he admitted, when discussing the terms of last year's still-confidential purchase agreement between SVS and Smartmatic for "ownership" of Sequoia.

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Sequoia currently controls some 20% of the election industry in the United States, while the attempted takeover of the company by Hart InterCivic, which controls some 8% of that market, would create a new e-voting powerhouse in this country, second only to Omaha-based Election Systems and Software, Inc. (ES&S).

In related news, as Blaine is increasingly panicked over the impending hostile takeover, while he and other company executives in Denver frantically seek financing to save themselves; [The BRAD BLOG](#) has learned from several sources that Sequoia's recently hired general counsel, and head of human resources, Lina George, abruptly resigned this week. We've not yet been able to learn the reasons given for her departure. Company VP, part-owner, and spokesperson Michelle Shafer, the only one officially allowed to speak with the media, according to a recent email missive she sent to all employees following one of our recent reports, continues to refuse to answer our queries.

[The BRAD BLOG](#) will continue to follow developments, and expects to have still more exclusive news on this matter next week.

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