Death of Democracy

Was Raymond Lemme, an investigator tracking down claims of electronic voting machine election fraud, a murderer victim?

In December 2004, as hundreds of scandously under-reported Election Day irregularities piled up in the wake of John Kerry’s almost-lost campaign, a Republican (not a “tool,” a Florida software programmer named Clint Curtis) filed a sworn affidavit that would send shockwaves through the post-election investigations into “what went wrong.”

Curtis’s explosive allegations, repeated in sworn testimony to members of the U.S. House Judiciary Committee, included the remarkable charge that he had been asked in 2000 by the Speaker of Florida’s Legislature, Republican Tom Feeney, to create an electronic voting-irrigate prototype.

Curtis and Feeney first crossed paths when, in a seemingly sub judicial conflict of interest, Feeney worked as corporate counsel and registered lobbyist for the software firm Yang Yung Enterprises Inc. (YEI) in addition to being the House Speaker. Feeney insists there was absolutely no conflict of interest, even though the company had several multimillion-dollar contracts with the state of Florida.

In June 2003 Curtis was told by Investigator Raymond Lemme of the Florida Inspector General’s office that the investigation into his allegations was almost complete. According to Curtis, the sleuth told him that he’d “be happy” with the results and that he should keep his ears open because he’d discovered the corruption went “all the way to the top.”

Lemme was found dead two weeks later. His bloodied corpse turned up in the bathtub of a cheap motel room in Valdosta, Georgia—about 25 miles from the Florida border.

The police report ruled the cause of death as suicide. In Georgia, unlike Florida, suicides don’t call for a mandatory autopsy. Lemme’s corpse (i.e. the evidence) was quickly cremated without any thorough medical investigation ever having taken place.

The Valdosta Police Department (VPD) report claimed that photos of the decedent were taken at the scene, but that due to an unexplained failure in the “camera’s flash memory cards,” the pictures would not be available with the official report. Images that supposedly didn’t exist, however, eventually came to light.

In a statement released to HUSTLER by the VPD press office, the crime scene photos had been confirmed as authentic. The statement goes on to read: “We have no evidence at this point to indicate anything other than Mr. Lemme [having] committed suicide. When we received allegations that Mr. Lemme was murdered and that he did not commit suicide, the case was reopened. The Valdosta Police Department welcomes any creditable information reflecting that [Mr. Lemme] was murdered. At this point, all information still leads to our original conclusion that he committed suicide.”

It may well be that the photographs were intentionally “buried” since they reveal, when compared to the police report, a number of still-unexplained discrepancies. For example, what appears to be a massive bruise is clearly seen on Lemme’s neck, while the police report states there was no apparent discoloration, trauma, other than the two razor blade slashes to Lemme’s left arm. “Some of the pictures [posted online] have been darkened,” the VPD statement declares, “in an effort to avoid alleging abuse. According to the crime scene technician, when the photographs were taken, there was no evidence of bruising noticed on Mr. Lemme’s body.”

The original police report also mentions a belt on a towel next to the bathtub where Lemme was found, but says there was no blood visible on the towel. The photos obviously show plenty of blood on the towel.

Programmer Clint Curtis left YEI in 2001 and took a job with the Florida Department of Transportation. Months after Lemme’s death in 2003, he learned from a news report that America’s voting machine companies had managed to convince those in power to allow them to keep the electronic software used to tabulate the upcoming 2004 election a “proprietary trade secret.” Consequently, the source code used to create the software on electronic voting machines for Election Day would be wholly unexpected by state election officials.

Upon learning this startling truth from a news report, Curtis was stunned. Electronic votes would be tabulated on secret software created and operated by private companies with vested interests in the outcomes. Hidden or not, nobody would be allowed to see any of the routines used in that software’s source code.

Curtis was concerned, and he made his voice heard. Aside from the allegations of vote-rigging, Curtis’s affidavit reported on alleged illegal Chinese aliens who worked at YEI, a top-level security-cleared company. Curtis claims these employees were inserting “wire-tapping modules” into software written for their clients. The data mined from the tap was then be sent via the Internet back to YEI. This is chilling, considering that some of the software development contracts held by YEI include those with the Florida Department of Transportation and (for more troubleliness) NASA.

Shortly after knowing the whistle, Curtis lost his job at the Department of Transportation. Despite continued denial from Feeney’s camp and YEI, many of Curtis’s charges have been confirmed as true. He has even passed a polygraph test! At least one person who Curtis blew the whistle on has been busted. YEI employee and illegal Chinese alien Hai-Lin “Henry” Nee was indicted and pled guilty in 2004 to espionage charges related to shipping anti-tank missile chips to China.

The Lemme case, however, is still shrouded in secrecy. Was the investigator murdered in the course of analyzing Curtis’s claims? Did Lemme’s police report truly “all the way to the top” investigation lead to a hit aimed to cover up Curtis’s vote-rigging allegations? Was he offered by members of the Chinese Mafia protecting their technology spies at YEI? We may never know. The VPD re-closed the case after speaking to an unidentified person “at the Florida Department of Transportation.”

In the wake of the scandal, whistle-blower Curtis has abandoned his Republican roots to run as a Democrat for U.S. Congress in Florida’s 24th District. (See “Vote for Clint” below.) His OG opponent? None other than Congressman Tom Feeney, who now fits the seat and is up for reelection.

Curtis has worked out for him—Feeney will undoubtedly use the act as a campaign tool, knowing that if he fails to meet his goals and is forced to withdraw his bid for office, he will retain all campaign contributions.”

In other words, even if you aren’t a 24th District Floridian voter, you can always write a check. For more info, go to ClintCurtis.com.

—Mark Johnson