

AFFIDAVIT

I, **ARSENIO B. RASALAN**, of legal age, married and residing at the City of Parañaque, Metro Manila, after having been duly sworn in accordance with law, do hereby depose and state:
THAT -

1. I was a direct and active participant in a big clandestine operation conducted after the May 2004 national election proclamation made by the National Board of Canvassers that involved Gloria Macapagal Arroyo (PGMA), her trusted allies and lieutenants;
2. It started on or about the month of July 2004. I was called to an urgent meeting with Atty. Roque Bello, a well known election lawyer, at the House of Minis Steakhouse along C5 Road in Pasig City, Metro Manila. At that meeting, Atty. Roque Bello informed me that PGMA was facing a potentially explosive crisis which could adversely affect her continued stay in office. He said that Fernando Poe, Jr. and Loren Legarda both filed protests with the Supreme Court, acting as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal (PET), questioning the proclamation of PGMA as president and Noli de Castro as vice-president, and sought the opening of ballot boxes containing precinct election returns (ERs) in key Mindanao provinces, among others, which were stored at the Batasang Pambansa complex, and the recounting of the same by the PET;
3. Atty. Roque Bello stressed that the major headache of PGMA and de Castro was the fact that the votes written down for both of them in the Provincial and City Certificates of Canvass (COCs) canvassed by Congress, acting as the National Board of Canvassers, were actually fabricated and bloated independently and in disregard of the actual results found in the authentic precinct ERs;
4. Atty. Roque Bello then told me that he had been engaged by Retired General Hermogenes Ebdane, Jr., upon orders of PGMA, to plan and execute a grand clandestine operation designed to head off this looming crisis. Atty. Bello said that with PGMA's knowledge and approval, he designed a plan to produce a new set of precinct ERs which would replace the existing and genuine ERs found inside the ballot boxes under the custody of the House of Representatives. The purpose of this plan was to make sure that the votes indicated in the new ERs for PGMA and De Castro, on the one hand, and Fernando Poe, Jr. and Loren Legarda, on the other, would match, when totalled, the Provincial and City COCs which were already canvassed by Congress, acting as the National Board of Canvassers, thereby ensuring that the margin of victory of said highest-ranking officials as announced by Congress would remain intact;
5. Atty. Roque Bello said that he was recruiting me for this operation because we had worked together in many previous election operations, and also because he knew that I have the necessary experience required in orchestrating this type of secret and highly-sensitive operation. He then asked me to closely work with his son El Bello to execute his plans, and he promised me that I would be rewarded generously;
6. At the same meeting and also subsequently, Atty. Roque Bello explained to me the mechanics of the said special operations. The operations were intended to produce at least 10,000 new elections returns duly accompanied by the appropriate COMELEC envelopes; officially numbered envelope seals; and the official COMELEC inks for thumbmarking. In particular, the operations involved –
 - a. securing blank genuine COMELEC ER forms;
 - b. procuring supplies and other paraphernalia needed for the operation;
 - c. hiring seasoned and tested document and signature forgers; and
 - d. bringing the fabricated ERs to the Batasang Pambansa complex and substituting them for those inside the ballot boxes stored there for safekeeping;

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7. Atty. Roque Bello told me that the new and fabricated precinct ERs will replace those from nine (9) provinces in Mindanao and Luzon, namely, Sulu, Basilan, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and Isabela in Luzon;
8. Around the month of September 2004, I met Atty. Roque Bello again. I was told by Atty. Roque Bello that he was coordinating closely with then COMELEC Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano. He said the money for this special operation will be provided by PGMA. As a matter of fact a few days thereafter, I was told by Atty. Bello that Commissioner Garcillano met with PGMA at her La Vista home to receive the money. He also said that Commissioner Garcillano then turned over this money to him;
9. With the funds then made available, Atty. Bello's son El Bello proceeded to purchase and acquire all the necessary supplies and paraphernalia needed for the operations. El Bello also rented a large function room which served as working area for the operations located at the fourth floor of the former Milestone Hotel now Sogo Hotel, located at 836 Banawe Street, Quezon City. We rented this place beginning mid October up to mid November 2004;
10. The operations actually started around the middle of October 2004. El Bello brought a huge pile of blank genuine precinct ERs bearing appropriate COMELEC watermarks and security markings to our working area at the said hotel. El Bello also provided us with documents supplied by Commissioner Garcillano, including original and photocopies of ERs, which contained needed information including the names of candidates and corresponding numbers of votes tallied, and the precinct election officers' names and their specimen signatures. The information supplied by Commissioner Garcillano were then used as reference for the substituted entries in the new ERs;
11. By that time El Bello had already hired a first batch of professional document forgers. This group consisted of five or six persons to serve as the secretariat who collated the data given by Commissioner Garcillano, and more than forty (40) other personnel to write down the appropriate entries in the precinct ERs, including the candidates' names, their corresponding taras, the names of members of Board of Election Inspectors and all other necessary entries usually found in the precinct ERs. We fabricated the election results for the Presidential and Vice-Presidential but we no longer changed the results for the other national candidates and party list. These two teams worked close to 14 hours a day;
12. At around November 2, 2004 a second batch of forgers numbering five or six persons was hired by El Bello and their task was confined solely to forging the signatures and manufacturing the thumb marks of the members of the Board of Election Inspectors, specifically those of the Chairman, the Poll Clerk, the third member and also those of the poll watchers;
13. In accordance with my agreement with Atty. Roque Bello, I supervised these special operations on a day to day basis jointly with his son El Bello. I continually gave detailed instructions on how to correctly fill out the new ERs in such a way that the finished products would be free from possible detection and suspicion, after any future scrutiny;
14. When the need arose, I was consulted by some of the members of the two groups, as these operations occasionally encountered certain problems. For instance, in preparing the new ERs from Sultan Kudarat the photocopied ER supplied by Commissioner Garcillano contained signatures which were hardly legible. In that particular case, we had to defer the completion of new ERs from Sultan Kuradat until Commissioner Garcillano could supply us with clearer copies;
15. Consistent with the principal purpose of this whole operation, I instructed them to fill in the details in such a manner that when all of these new ERs are examined and recounted, the total number of votes reflected therein for president and vice-president would match correspondingly with the canvassed COCs;

Lucina Bello

