

I, ARSENIO B. RASALAN, of legal age, married, residing at the City of Parañaque, Metro Manila, after having been 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 Mini's 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 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 Batasan Pambansa complex, and the recounting of the same by 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 asked 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 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 totaled, 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 the 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 election returns duly accompanied by the appropriate COMELEC envelopes: officially numbered envelope seals and the official COMELEC inks for thumb marking. 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.

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 her;

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 a 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 operation actually started around the middle of October 2004. El Bello brought a huge pile of blank genuine 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 submitted entries in the new ERs;

11. By that time El Bello had already hired the first batch of professional document forgers. This group consisted of five or six persons to serve as secretariat who collated the data given by Commissioner Garcillano and more than forty (40) personnel to write down the appropriate entries in the precinct ERs including the candidates' names, their corresponding taras, the names of members of the 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 partylist. Those two teams worked close to 11 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. 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 ER 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 those operations occasionally encountered certain problems. For instance, in preparing the new ERs from Sultan Kudarat, the photographed ER supplied by Commissioner Garcillano contained signatures which were hardly legible. In that particular case, we had to defer the completion of new ERs for Sultan Kudarat until Commissioner Garcillano could supply us with clearer copies;

15. Consistent with the principal purpose of this operations, I instructed them to fill in the details in such a manner that when all these ERs are examined and recounted, the total number of votes reflected therein for the president and vice president would match correspondingly with the canvassed COCs;

16. After working for almost a month and the essential tasks were accomplished by said two groups of forgers, the fabricated ERs numbering about 10,000 were then all delivered to the residence of Atty. Roque Bello at Cambridge Street, Brookside Hills Subdivision, Cainta Rizal for the purpose of printing the correct ad original serial numbers thereon;

17. I know for a fact that the entire operations consisted of four compartmentalized operations groups. We made sure that the groups did not know each other. As stated, the first group was tasked to fabricate the contents of the ERs. The second group was tasked to forge the signatures of the precinct election officers as mentioned above, and manufacture fingerprint marks for the same. The third group was tasked to print the serial number on the fabricated ERs. And the fourth group was assigned to deliver and replace the ERs in the ballot boxes at the Batasan Complex with the new fabricated ERs our operations had produced;

18. I also know for a fact that El Bello did his best to procure an authentic numbering machine which was not available in local printing presses. However, I also learned that he was able to borrow the same numbering machine used by the COMELE, from the owner thereof and use the same to print the needed serial numbers on the new and falsified ERs we have produced;

19. I also knew for a fact that in accordance with the elaborate preparations and work done by Atty. Roque Bello, on instructions of Gen. Ebdane and PGMA, he succeeded with the aid of civilian and police personnel in replacing the original and authentic ERs in the ballot boxes at the Batasan Complex and putting in their place the new fabricated ERs which our special operations produced;

20. I am making this affidavit on my own free will. Many will be shocked to learn about the operation which I have exposed here but the people should know the real and honest truth. There was no one who intimidated or forced me to make these revelations or promised me any reward. Having witnessed the political unrest which our post-election operations have caused, I feel deep regret and remorse. I offer these admissions in the hope that justice will be served and the grievous wrongs resulting from our actions will be corrected.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this July 26, 2006 at the City of Quezon City.

(signed)

ARSENIO B. RASALAN
Affiant