

Win the Election; Find Out Too Late

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United States elections tend to be well run events in every Precinct. Sometime a delay in counting; seldom a genuine dispute in the announced results.

That was almost true in the narrative I will relate.

It happened in a Western State many years ago. A veteran Representative in the US Congress had handily defeated opponents six times. He was considered a sure thing to represent his community for as long as he wished.

He had never had an opponent in the Primary, raised few dollars for re-election. Shunned the infant TV, appeared at every event the local Press might cover for he was certain to be seen with other dignitaries. He was a nice guy, dependable.

He and the Press were surprised when a young lawyer from his Party contested the seat the Veteran considered his. The Veteran ran the same Primary campaign once again. His opponent reached into every Precinct, established himself as a tireless, energetic activist, promising national change with his ideals, ideas.

The rebel received more votes in the Primary.

The defeated veteran and his allies openly opposed the victor in the November General Election..

That November, the opposition candidate was the winner, He was duly sworn in as the Representative for that District the following January. He would be a one term Congressman. And in defeat, he never returned to his state to live.

End of story.

Not quite.

Each of the 435 States' Congressional Districts is defined by their State following the National Census every ten years. The State population is divided into the National population, determining the number of Congressional Seats the State will have. Districts are outlined by the State legislature. These Congressional districts remain fixed for all elections held the next ten years.

As is true everywhere, cities tend to grow faster than the State. More people in the territory. In addition the city may Annex from the surrounding community.

In the District I mention, the District boundary set by the 1950 Census count was important as it was set by By State law a year later.

Through oversight, annexed properties and residents had been included In the city vote, were counted in that overall total.

The defeated Congressman's staff were cleaning out their offices when they unearthed this discrepancy.

Parts of several Precincts completely outside the city boundary the previous census had been counted. Removing all such vote totals from the Primary result, the defeated Congressman had won the Primary. He petitioned that that he be declared the Congressman.

The unpublished protest was denied; lacking merit.

The Protest period had long expired.

.....There was no possibility, excepting proven fraud, the National Election Commission would unseat a Congressman once sworn into Office.

.....The defeated Congressman was convinced not to cry openly, complain to the media.

The National Election Commission did initiate rules that made it mandatory for each state's local Election Commissions to rigidly recognize boundaries established every Census for their respective Congressional Districts.

Today every voter has an identification number, more cumbersome than the Social Security number, equally unique, to prevent count irregularities.

All parties involved are believed dead.
Including the gentleman who related this tale.