



**CLOSE-OUT MEMO**  
**Criminal Investigation**  
**Public Corruption Unit**

A.S.A.: Howard R. Rosen

INVESTIGATION #: 64-10-52

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: March 14, 2011

JOSEPH M. CENTORINO, Division Chief, PC Unit

DATE: 3/15/11

JOSE J. ARROJO, Chief Assistant

DATE: 4.4.11

ORIGINATION DATE: 5/18/10

SUBJECT(S): Carlos Lopez-Cantera

EMPLOYMENT: State Representative District 113

INVESTIGATOR: Det. Myriam Gordils

AGENCY: Miami-Dade Police Department  
 Public Corruption Investigations Bureau

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONCLUSION**

CHARGES FILED

COURT CASE NUMBER:

	<b>CRIME</b>		<b>STATUTE</b>		<b>DEGREE</b>
Theft		§812.014		3°	

OTHER:

Alex Morales, the former Executive Director of the Hialeah Housing Authority, made allegations against State Representative Carlos Lopez-Cantera, who is the State Representative for District 113. Morales alleged that Lopez-Cantera misused campaign funds from his 2008 reelection campaign by siphoning out several thousand dollars through a fictitious company which did not do any real work for the campaign and which was owned by his family members.

The company in question is called High Ridge Consultants, Inc. Records filed with the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations indicate that High Ridge Consultants, Inc. was formed effective October 9, 2008, just one month prior to the election. The Corporate President of High Ridge Consultants, Inc. is Lopez-Cantera's brother-in-law, Gadyaces Serralta. Serralta is a Lieutenant with the Miami-Dade Police Department's Narcotics Bureau. The Corporate

Secretary of High Ridge Consultants, Inc. is Monica Cantera, who is Serralta's wife and Lopez-Cantera's sister. The address for this corporation is the home address of Gadyaces Serralta and Monica Cantera. Monica Cantera-Serralta is also Carlos Lopez-Cantera's campaign treasurer.

Bank records, as well as records from High Ridge Consultants, were subpoenaed and obtained during the course of this investigation. These records were reviewed along with campaign records. It was determined that High Ridge Consultants was paid a total of twenty-two thousand and five hundred dollars (\$22,500.00) from the campaign account of Carlos Lopez-Cantera, in three (3) payments. The first payment, in the amount of seventy-five hundred dollars (\$7,500.00), was made on October 20, 2008, eleven (11) days after the corporation was established. The second payment, in the amount of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00), was made on November 5, 2008, the day after the election. The final payment, in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00), was made on December 9, 2008.

Records obtained from High Ridge Consultants revealed that, in fact, High Ridge Consultants did do campaign work for the Carlos Lopez-Cantera campaign. There were a total of approximately forty-three (43) checks in the amount of one hundred and twenty dollars (\$120.00) each, and three (3) checks in the amount of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) each, which High Ridge Consultants, Inc. paid to various campaign poll workers on November 5, 2008, the day after the election. Each of these checks had the notation "poll worker" on the memo line of the check.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, there was a check for eight hundred and seventy-five dollars (\$875.00) made out to Juniors Catering on November 6, 2008, and a check for two hundred dollars (\$200.00) made out to Tropical Ice on November 5, 2008. High Ridge Consultants provided an invoice to the campaign from Juniors Catering in the amount of eight hundred and seventy-five dollars (\$875.00), dated November 4, 2008, for one hundred and twenty-five (125) boxed lunches, at seven dollars (\$7.00) each. High Ridge Consultants also provided documentation for an additional five thousand and eight hundred and twenty-three dollars and five cents (\$5,823.05) in various campaign-related expenses incurred, including purchases from BJ's, Costco, Office Depot, purchases of polo shirts, printing expenses, rental cars, gasoline, and a victory party.

The total amount of these expenses is twelve thousand and six hundred and fifty-eight dollars and five cents (\$12,658.05). High Ridge Consultants submitted three (3) invoices to the Carlos Lopez-Cantera campaign for their services. The first invoice was dated October 20, 2008, and was for seventy-five hundred dollars (\$7,500.00). The invoice stated that it was for "Campaign Services". This invoice was the invoice that resulted in the payment in that same amount that same day. The second invoice was dated November 4, 2008, and was for five thousand dollars (\$5,000.00). The invoice also stated that it was for "Campaign Services". The final invoice was dated November 5, 2008, and was for ten thousand dollars (\$10,000.00). The invoice stated that it was for "Election Day Services".

In addition to the materials provided pursuant to a subpoena, Gadyaces Serralta provided a memorandum which states as follows:

High Ridge Consultants is a consulting firm owned and operated by Gadyaces Serralta. The goal of the company is to succeed in the election of its clients to their desired office. This is accomplished through planning, executing and critiquing various political strategies, reaching goals and meeting objectives. As simple a task that casting a vote may be, the process leading to an election is a complicated one with many moving parts. High Ridge Consultants is hired to address both Election Day and the long road to Election Day.

In regards to the Carlos Lopez-Cantera for State Representative District 113 campaign, High Ridge Consultants was paid \$22,500.00 and provided itemized billing for approximately \$12,894.00 in expenses. The remaining uncommitted funds totaling approximately \$9,606.00 were paid to High Ridge Consultants for its work in the below listed services.

Early voting strategies/ supervision, phone bank strategies/ supervision, election sign prep work, election sign delivery/installation district wide/ supervision, Election Day signage, Election Day workforce recruitment/ training/ supervision/ payment, Pre-Election Day + Election Day volunteer workforce coordination and training, manpower allocation, day to day troubleshooting, walk lists results review, polling location identification and suggested ingress/egress, quality control early voting sites,

---

<sup>1</sup> One of the checks for \$120.00 had the notation "campaign work" instead of "poll worker" on the memo line. This is of no consequence.

transportation of elderly and special needs individuals to early voting sites, core team strategy meetings concerning media (television, cable, radio and internet), campaign office supervision and maintenance, all election day logistics, coordination of post election celebrations and the process of closing the election cycle.

There is no written contract between High Ridge Consultants and its client State Representative Carlos Lopez-Cantera. All agreements are verbal due to the familial proximity and prior experience in this process. There is also no e-mail correspondence between the two parties as the majority of the communications are made in person or on the telephone.

While High Ridge Consultants only demonstrated actual expenses that they had of twelve thousand and six hundred and fifty-eight dollars and five cents (\$12,658.05), yet they billed the Lopez-Cantera campaign a total of twenty-two thousand and five hundred dollars (\$22,500.00), there is nothing precluding High Ridge Consultants from making a profit in providing their services. Viewing the records in their totality, it is clear that High Ridge Consultants did actually do work for the campaign. Printing materials were purchased, office supplies were paid for, vehicles were rented, gasoline was purchased, polo shirts were purchased, numerous poll workers were paid, people were fed, and a victory party was held. While it may not look good to campaign contributors or to the general public that a company wholly held by the candidate's sister and brother-in-law made a profit on the campaign, actual work was done by them, and there is nothing to preclude them from profiting from their work. This investigation is being closed at this time, as there is no evidence upon which to prove a criminal violation for theft beyond a reasonable doubt.