

Case 2

On 8 May, Dean Hiram pulled his pickup truck into the Posey County 4-H Center in New Harmony, Indiana, just after 6 a.m. to vote. As he waited outside for the polling station to open, he still hadn't decided what to do.

Among friends, Dean had always characterized himself politically as a "conservative Democrat" and nearly always voted a straight Democratic ticket in general elections. Representative Joe Donnelly of the 2nd Congressional District, a moderate, was running unopposed for the Democratic nomination for the US Senate. On the Republican side, the moderate incumbent Richard Lugar was in a race for his political life against a Tea-Party-backed candidate, Richard Mourdock. Dean would be happy with either Donnelly or Lugar as his senator, but a win by Mourdock would trouble him.

Dean had voted for a majority of Democratic candidates in the last general election. Therefore, Indiana election law forbids him from participating in the Republican primary. Dean, though, wanted to cast his vote for Lugar. Regardless of how Mourdock might fare against Donnelly in the general election, went his thinking, a win by Lugar would ensure Indiana continue to have a centrist senator come January.

Still ambivalent, Dean found himself requesting a Republican ballot from the poll worker as he worked his way station by station toward the voting booth. Lugar had his vote. He tried to assuage his feelings of guilt by not voting in any of the other Republican races, but it didn't seem to help.