

Enough of this bribe nonsense

The unendingly fractured decorum in the people's House of Commons has reached a previously unthinkable zenith of insanity: The prime minister is a criminal, did you know?



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REBEL WITH A CLAUSE

commit a crime? Has the burden of proof been satisfied?

Would you relax that exacting standard if you were the accused?

Mr. Zytaruk's feeble effort to

With all the joyful qualities of severe stomach flu, Stephane Dion, in uncontrollable eruptive motion, has further sullied what has long been tolerated as a House of Commons that more resembles feeding time at the zoo. In the process, think what you will of him, a deeply decent fellow, the prime minister has had his honour injured and his character assassinated on Liberal websites and by Liberal MPs, with accusations that just do not pass the smell test.

Tom Zytaruk's book, *Like A Rock: The Chuck Cadman Story*, has revealed allegations that Mr. Cadman was approached with a bribe by two Conservative operatives, prior to the infamous vote in 2005 that could have caused the fall of the Liberals.

Belinda Strawhead, being considerably less sensitive than Peter MacKay's dog, we've since discovered, crossed to join then-prime minister Paul Dithers in keeping his government afloat.

Remember all that?

The allegations are further bolstered by the bizarre comments by Cadman's wife and daughter, in particular, whose complicity in this embarrassing melee, has done nothing but cast a long shadow over the memory of an exceedingly good man, whom they loved.

The revelations, on the face of it, are indeed shocking.

Offering a bribe to secure Cadman's vote in bringing down the then-Grit government, would certainly qualify as the lowest of efforts from the absolute gutter of political inducements.

Even though Cadman steadfastly denied any such offer, twice, prior to his death.

But did Stephen Harper

present this story is woefully below the journalistic minimum bar requirement. His uneven effort to sell his book, begins with Paul Martin himself doing the self-serving forward, and ends with Mr. Zytaruk's pitiful explanations to media questions, post-book launch, about why, among other glaring inconsistencies, he didn't follow up with Harper about how a Tory gunslinger could get any insurance company on God's green orb, to give a man two months from the great beyond, a life insurance policy?

"I'll let the public decide," said the author Zytaruk.

Not good enough – a responsible journalist follows the story thoroughly and to its logical end. Only then can the public decide anything. It's otherwise miserably incomplete.

The release of an entirely inconclusive taped conversation between Zytaruk and Harper confirms only that Stephen Harper knew of Chuck Cadman's understandable concern for his family and their finances.

If Cadman had run again, essentially on his deathbed, the benefits, pension and otherwise, would have been far less than if he died a sitting MP. A key fact seemingly missed in all the anti-Harper spit-balling.

Can you imagine the wrenching conflict in Cadman's cancer-ravaged body? Drop the government on its derriere, or, through death, leave behind more comfort for his family.

Cadman's memory deserves leagues better than this ridiculously convoluted, proof-impossible mess.

Enough already.

Alex G. Tsakumis' column will appear in this spot every Friday.