

**Stephen Harper,
Serial Abuser
of Power:**

**THE EVIDENCE
COMPILED**



Photo illustration by [Bob Preston](#)

By David Beers and Tye Staff and Contributors

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Stephen Harper, Serial Abuser of Power: THE EVIDENCE COMPILED

By David Beers and Tye Staff and Contributors

Stephen Harper and his Conservatives have racked up dozens of serious abuses of power since forming government in 2006. From scams to smears, monkey-wrenching opponents to intimidating public servants like an Orwellian gorilla, some offences are criminal, others just offend human decency.

We originally published 59 examples, and asked our readers to suggest any we may have missed. Among the many suggestions we gratefully received, we concluded that 11 more met the criteria for “abuses of power.” This ebook is a compilation of all 70 items into one omnibus of abuse by the Stephen Harper government.

Thanks, again, to friends of [The Tye](#) who help with this list.

“

Let me be perfectly clear...

”

Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper:
His government has piled up dozens of
abuses of ethics and the law since coming
to power in 2006.



SECTION I

ABUSING PARLIAMENT: SABOTAGE, SCANDALS, CORRUPTION AND CONTEMPT

This section includes examples of willful misgoverning by the PM and his team, 31 times they have lied, flouted rules and stymied democracy to achieve political and ideological ends.

PMO Tied to Senate Hush Money Scandal

An RCMP affidavit [reported](#) widespread involvement by PMO staffers in a secret payment to Senator Mike Duffy to try and make a political problem go away. The Senate expenses scandal brought on [allegations](#) of a cover-up, a [breach](#) of the public trust, and a whitewashing of a Senate report. The PMO was found to have hand in the [altering](#) of a damning Deloitte audit.

Harper Found in Contempt of Parliament

For refusing to disclose information on the costing of programs to Parliament, which Parliament was entitled to receive, the Harper government became the first in Canadian history to be [found](#) in contempt of Parliament.

Against Court Order, Refusal to Share Budget Info

Even though it lost a court case and was ordered to comply, the Harper government nevertheless refused to share [170 times](#) reasons and impacts for cuts with Canada's independent budget watchdog, mocking Parliament's right to control the public purse.

Conservative Cabinet Staffers Granted Immunity from Testimony

A PMO edict [absolved](#) political staffers from ever having to testify before parliamentary committees.

Conservatives Falsify Reports and Documents

Among documents deliberately altered in the writing or the quot-

“

***That \$25-billion number
was...known to government.
It would have been
primarily members of
the executive, yes.***

”

Auditor-general Michael Ferguson reporting in 2012 that Harper and cabinet lied to the public before the last election, pegging the cost of F-35 jets \$10 billion less than the real figure.



ing by the government: [CIDA document](#) by Bev Oda's office on Kairos; the [Senate Committee Report](#) on the Duffy affair; a report by former auditor general Sheila Fraser on financial management.

Repeated Duplicity in Afghan Detainees Controversy

Among the [abuses](#): Parliament was misled and denied documents. An inquiry was shut down. Tories attempted to discredit diplomat Richard Colvin whose testimony diverted from the government's line.

Repeated Duplicity on Costing of F-35 Fighter Jets

An auditor general's report revealed serial deceptive practices [used](#) by the Conservatives in [misleading](#) the public and Parliament on the projected cost of the fighter jets.

Harper Minister Lies, Blames Statistics Canada for Killing Long Form Census

Under fire for Conservatives killing the long form census, Industry Minister Tony Clement falsely [stated](#) that StatsCan backed the idea and assured the voluntary substitute would yield valid statistical data. Neither was true, outraged StatsCan sources confirmed.

Conservative MP Admits He Lied to Parliament

As opposition members claimed the Harper government was out to rig election rules in its favour, Conservative MP Brad Butt rose in the House of Commons to say why the bill was needed – all the voter fraud he had personally witnessed. Weeks later he rose again to say his statements were false. Delivering his strained apology, he failed to explain why he [lied](#) in the first place.

Conservative House Leader Admits to Mockery of Question Period

Criticized far and wide for farcical [answers](#) in question period, Paul Calandra, parliamentary secretary to Harper, made a tearful apology for abuse of the democratic process.

Harper Maligns the Supreme Court Chief Justice

The Prime Minister took the unprecedented step of [alleging](#)

“

Parliament has become so undermined that it is almost unable to do the job that people expect of it.

”

Former Auditor General Sheila Fraser on Harper's omnibus bills.



inappropriate conduct by Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin. Facts [undermined](#) the credibility of the PM's position.

Conservatives Engage in Abuse of Process with Omnibus Bills

Harper's party pushed legislation through Parliament via omnibus bills, the [scale](#) of which Parliament had never seen. Such bills are widely [condemned](#) as an abuse of the democratic process, because they blend and bury so many controversial laws within one dense package. Harper himself once railed against them, and his born again love for them [made](#) his own MPs queasy. Referencing such bills, former auditor general Sheila Fraser said that "Parliament has become so undermined that it is almost unable to do the job that people expect of it."

Harperites Deliberately Sabotage, Stymie Committee System

Conservatives used [tactics](#) such as barring witnesses, closure, time limitations, and in camera sessions to an extent rarely, if ever, witnessed in Canada. In their early days in power, top Conservatives prepared a [handbook](#) instructing committee chairpersons how to obstruct proceedings.

Harper's Own MPs Protest Muzzling

In a caucus known for his tight discipline, in 2014 some members finally [rose up](#) to contest being censored at question period by the Prime Minister's Office. Former Conservative backbencher Brent Rathgeber turned independent and published a book, *Irresponsible Government*, [decrying](#) anti-democratic practices.

Conservative Bill Rewrites History to Protect Mounties from Potential Criminal Charges

To protect the RCMP, the government retroactively [made](#) an old bill come into force before it was passed by Parliament.

Harper Minister Caught in Advertising Scam with Public Funds

The Globe and Mail revealed that Harper's chosen Minister for Democratic Reform Pierre Poilievre [commissioned](#) a team of public servants for overtime work on a Sunday to film him glad-hand-

“

Information is the life-blood of a democracy. Without adequate access to key information about government policies and programs, citizens and parliamentarians cannot make informed decisions, and incompetent or corrupt governance can be hidden under a cloak of secrecy.

”

Stephen Harper Montreal Gazette 2005.

Photo: Source: PMO Flickr



ing constituents. The vanity video on the taxpayer dime was to promote the government's benefits for families.

Corrupt Conservative Cronies

The Senate scandal is just the [latest](#) eruption of crony corruption in Harperite ranks. Take Bruce Carson. He was a convicted fraudster before Harper made him a key advisor in the PMO. There, Carson was [lobbied](#) for money for a new University of Calgary eco-think tank. He then left the PMO to run the same think tank, converting it to an oil industry booster with a \$15-million grant from the Harper government. The complex saga [added](#) one more criminal charge to others Carson faces for allegedly illegally [working](#) his connections with the Harper government.

Access to Information System Impeded

Many new [roadblocks](#) have been put up by the Harper Conservatives. Former Information Commissioner Robert Marleau [concluded](#) that having obtained absolute power, the prime minister "has absolutely abused that power to the maximum."

The Silencing of the Public Service

The PMO took an unprecedented step in instituting a [system](#) wherein the bureaucracy has all its communications vetted by the political nerve centre. The policy contribution role of the public service is significantly reduced. Complaints from insiders allege that the Privy Council office has become increasingly politicized.

Loyalty Oaths Imposed on Public Servants

Archivists and librarians were made to [swear](#) strict oaths of allegiance and were [hit](#) with restrictions on freedom of speech that editorialists of the right and left described as chilling. Integrity Commissioner Christiane Ouimet sat on more than 200 whistleblower files before quitting. Her style? 'Gross mismanagement,' concluded the auditor general.

Harper Government Sued by Justice Department Whistleblower

Time and again the Harper government proposes bills that end up being shot down by the courts, prompting critics to say such legislation is more about making political statements than lasting

“

***It was a world class library...
certainly the best in Canada, but
it's no more. The government is
either incompetent or
malevolent.***

”

Scientist Burt Ayles, former regional director general for freshwaters in central Canada and the Arctic, on trashing of federal aquatic research libraries, including part of the Maurice-Lamontagne Institute library collection in this dumpster.

Source: <http://thetyee.ca/News/2013/12/09/Dismantling-Fishery-Library/>



policy. The wasted efforts bothered senior justice department lawyer Edgar Schmidt so much he finally [sued](#) the government for breaking the law by inadequately evaluating whether proposed bills violate the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. He was promptly suspended without pay.

Conservatives Block Accreditation for Opposition MPs

In another example of partisanship taken to new heights, the PMO [blocked](#) opposition members from being accredited for international environment conferences and from visiting military bases.

Tactic Borrowed from North Korea's Dear Leader

Ostensibly neutral public servants were [used](#) as stooges, falsely posing as new citizens in a staged Citizenship Renewal public relations exercise by the Immigration Department. Media critics had a field day comparing the charade to practices undertaken by North Korean dictators.

Clampdown on Freedom of Speech of Diplomatic Corps

Ottawa's diplomats must get all communications [approved](#) from Conservative political operatives. Under Harper, the country's ambassadors are hardly heard from any more. In a recent speech, former United Nations ambassador Stephen Lewis [said](#) our political culture under the Conservatives has descended into "a nadir of indignity."

Aquatic Science Libraries Decimated

The Harper government's downsizing of federal libraries included sudden closing of seven world famous Department of Fisheries and Oceans archives. A leaked memo revealed the destruction and consolidation would save less than half a million dollars. Scientist patrons of the libraries, who witnessed chaotic chucking of rare literature, called it a "[book burning](#)" with no logical purpose other than to [restrict](#) environmental information. The Harper government claimed [vital](#) works would be digitally preserved, but [never provided](#) a plan or cost for doing so, nor any proof it had happened. No scientists interviewed by The Tyee [believed](#) digitizing would or could replace what was lost.

“

***In the interests of democracy,
I ask how can members
represent their constituents
on these various areas when
they are forced to vote on a
block of such legislation?***

”

Stephen Harper in 2005 decrying the use of complex omnibus bills to ram through controversial laws – a tactic his government now aggressively employs.

Source: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/john-ivison-how-stephen-harper-learned-to-love-omnibus-bills->

Photo: Wikiwand Commons



UN Blasts Canada's Treatment of Immigrants

Changes made to the Canada's immigration and refugee system under Harper were investigated by the United Nations Human Rights Committee, whose report [blasted](#) how thousands of migrants are detained indefinitely without due process, many for over a year or more, as well as poor [mental health support](#) for those incarcerated.

Harper Government Denies Khadr Basic Rights

Defying court rulings, the Conservative government refused to [accord](#) Omar Khadr basic rights such as access to media. Editorialists of right and left persuasion described the move as unbecoming a democratic government.

Illegitimate Prorogation of Parliament, Twice

Prorogations are a legitimate procedure that can be abused depending on motivations. The Harper government [provoked](#) 60 protests across Canada and beyond its borders in 2010 after [shutting](#) the legislature's doors to escape condemnation on the Afghan detainees' file. It was the second prorogation in a year's period.

Undue Interference with Independent Agencies

Command and control system was extended to [meddling](#) in bodies like National Energy Board and CRTC whose arms-length autonomy is significantly reduced. A special [target](#) was the Parliamentary Budget Office, which was hit with [condemnations](#) and budget cuts for its critical reports.

Billions Borrowed without Parliament's Permission

The auditor general sounded alarms about the "prodigious" growth and size of federal borrowing. Those billions in "non-budgetary" spending used to get Parliament's oversight, but no more. The finance minister can borrow what he wants without Parliament's permission. Why? A [loophole](#) buried in a 2007 Harper omnibus bill.

Lapdogs Appointed as Watchdogs

The most controversial was the case of former Integrity Commis-

“

*It is so pervasively dishonest
they can't even fake a plausible
apology when caught posing
irresponsibly before our
special forces.*

”

May 8, 2015 National Post editorial on
PMO promo video that put soldiers at risk.

Source: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/national-post-view-the-pmos-selfish-special-forces-blunder>

Photo: PMO Flickr



sioner Christiane Ouimet. Her office reviewed more than 200 whistleblowing cases. Disciplinary action followed on none of them. Ouimet's own angry staffers blew the whistle on their boss. The auditor general [found](#) Ouimet intimidated her employees, took "retaliatory action" against them and may have breached their privacy, all part of the Harper appointee's "gross mismanagement." Ouimet was [paid](#) more than \$500,000 to leave her post.

SECTION II

'HARPER BRAND' ABUSES: LIES, SPIES, AND THIS PORK SMELLS REALLY BAD

This election began the minute the last one ended. Since his first day as PM, Stephen Harper has reinforced his party's 'brand' by rewarding cronies, slapping the Conservative logo on government cheques, perfecting the no questions photo-op, instructing bureaucrats to start calling Canada's government "the Harper Government." The flip side has been relentless monitoring, muzzling and attacks on anyone who might tarnish the image. Here are 22 instances of power abused to build the Harper brand.

PMO Attempts to Cover up Video Leak Putting Troops at Risk

On an Iraq visit, the PMO was caught [lying](#) to try and cover up the [leak](#) of a promo video, which constituted a security breach. The PMO, noted a National Post [editorial](#), "stumbled from blunder to evasion and falsehood in the service of shamelessly manipulative partisanship, especially in using our troops as PR props."

The 'Harper Government' Labelling Deception

Public servants were [told](#) to use "Harper Government" instead of "Government of Canada" in publicity releases. The Conservatives denied it was happening – until internal memos [revealed](#) by the Canadian Press revealed the denial to be without basis.

“

[N]ot only a waste of precious resources, it's also an affront to fairness in a democracy.

”

Canadian Taxpayer Federation, May of 2015, blasting Harper for spending \$750 million in taxpayer dollars on Conservative-boosting ads, and calling for third-party review to assure public funded ads are non-partisan.

Source: www.cbc.ca/m/news/politics/taxpayer-group-urges-tories-to-stop-pumping-public-money-into-partisan-ads-1.2999889

Photo: PMO Flickr



Conservatives Place Party Logos on Government of Canada Cheques

Once “[caught red-handed](#),” they backed off. The federal ethics commissioner, adopting the exasperated tone of an adult lecturing a child, [noted](#): “Public spending announcements are government activities, not partisan political activities, and it is not appropriate to brand them with partisan or personal identifiers.”

Record Amounts of Partisan Political Advertising, on the Public Purse

Several media reports [told](#) how the Conservatives used taxpayer money for partisan political advertising in record quantity, [costing](#) the public treasury \$750 million since Harper became PM. In one instance, the Tories [spent](#) lavishly on ads for the promotion of a jobs grant program that had yet to be made public or presented to parliament or the provinces. Even more nakedly partisan, a [mailed blast](#), charged to the taxpayers, targeting Justin Trudeau.

Conservatives Stack Their Own Ridings with Infrastructure Funds

In a display of brazen pork barreling, the Conservatives [arranged](#) for no less than 83 percent of infrastructure fund projects go to Conservative ridings.

\$50 Million Spending Deception as Documented by the Auditor General

The auditor general [ruled](#) Conservatives diverted \$50-million from spending slated for border infrastructure to political spending on projects in Tony Clement’s [riding](#) at the time of the G-8 summit. Parliament was willfully [misled](#).

Patronage Run Amok

After promising a new way, the prime minister dismantled his newly created Public Appointments Commission and reverted to old-styled patronage by the barrel. In June 2015, the PM [made](#) 98 patronage appointments. That included stocking the National Capital Commission with loyalists in advance of decisions on the controversial monument to the victims of communism.

“

We have a situation in Ottawa where partisan matters take almost complete priority over the formulation of good policy and MPs tend to represent their parties and their party leaderships, often at odds with what's in the best interest of their constituents.

”

MP Brent Rathgeber who quit the Tory caucus in June 2013, protesting the government's "lack of transparency and open government."

Photo: Brent Rathgeber twitter



Undermining Statistics Canada, Killing Data

Against pleas from [everyone](#) who needs and uses data from the long form census, the Harper government scrapped it, prompting the Statistics Canada chief to [resign](#) in protest.

Government Muzzles Science Community

Top scientists came under such heavy [monitoring](#) by the Conservatives that they [staged](#) “Death of Evidence” protests for being denied freedom of speech. The Conservatives sent out chaperones or “media minders” [to track](#) Environment Canada scientists and report on them.

Like Never Before, Limits Placed on Media Access

Journalists have been [hard-pressed](#) to recall another time when controls put on them were [so tight](#). At the Conservatives’ 2013 Calgary convention, reporters [wrote](#) of being harassed and penned in at every turn by the PMO’s command and control system. In his book *Killing The Messenger*, journalist Mark Bourrie [charts](#) the many examples of new limits on freedom of speech introduced in the Harper era.

Harper’s Team Tries to Ban Journalist for Asking Question

Veteran TV cameraman Dave Ellis covered a Harper speech about oil to a business audience. Though media had been instructed no questions allowed, Ellis posed one about charges laid against a Conservative MP. The PMO tried to [punish](#) Ellis and his network by kicking him off covering Harper’s trip to Malaysia. After media hue and cry, Harper backed down and Ellis went.

Suppression of Research

In the gun registration debate, incriminating research and documents such as a Firearms Report were deliberately [withheld](#) from the public. While ramping up their prison building, Conservatives [suppressed](#) related research and studies contradicting their political priorities.

Harper Minister Sucker Punches CBC Budget

After the 2011 federal election Heritage Minister James Moore

“

Freedom of expression is no longer a right enjoyed by Canadian government scientists.

”

Jeff Hutchings, professor of biology, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS.

Source: <http://theyee.ca/Opinion/2012/07/16/Death-of-Evidence>



assured Conservatives would “maintain or increase support for the CBC. That is our platform and we have said that before and we will commit to that.” The next year, Harper’s Cons [delivered](#) the biggest government cut to CBC since the mid-1990s, much deeper in proportion than overall trims to federal programs, [defying](#) public sentiment.

The Vic Toews Porno Smear

In a vivid example of the browbeating of opponents, the minister of public safety [said](#) anyone who opposed federal plans to make electronic surveillance of Canadians easier for authorities was siding with child pornographers.

Harper’s Fallen Soldiers Blackout

Emulating George W. Bush’s optics tactics, Stephen Harper [banned](#) media coverage of fallen soldiers’ caskets returning from Afghanistan. He also refused to lower the flag half-mast. Soldiers’ family members expressed confusion and anger at the perceived show of disrespect.

Protesters Put Under Blanket Surveillance

According to a leaked [memo](#), as part of its command and control approach, the Conservatives have approved a system wherein all [advocates](#), protesters and demonstrations can be [monitored](#) by authorities. The Government Operations Centre has requested federal departments to assist it in compiling a comprehensive inventory of protesters. Security specialists have called it a [breach](#) of Canadians’ Charter of Rights. Conservatives have [moved](#) to give CSIS even more powers than the spy agency wants.

Rights and Democracy, Other Groups, Dismantled

In a show of [brute force](#), the Montreal-based group Rights and Democracy was [pole-axed](#) for its alleged political leanings and eventually disbanded. Organizations like the church group [Kairos](#) were de-budgeted or dismantled for political leanings. Nuclear Safety Commission head Linda Keen was [dumped](#). Among the complaints [cited](#) by the PM was that in her distant past, she had some Liberal ties.

“

I was stunned and afraid. It felt like I was being stalked. How many other Canadians are subject to government surveillance?

”

Aboriginal policy expert Cindy Blackstock on finding out 189 Harper government officials were routinely spying on her.

Source: www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2014/06/21/the_government_spied_on_me_without_a_warrant.html



Harper Government Spied on Aboriginal Critic, ‘Retaliated’

Aboriginal child welfare advocate Cindy Blackstock was [spied on](#) by the Harper government, and when she arrived for a meeting with other First Nations leaders at the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs only she was barred entry. [Finding](#) Blackstock had been “retaliated” against by a ministry official, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal awarded her \$20,000 for pain and suffering.

Revenue Canada Loosed to Attack Charities

Not all charities, just the ones that don’t seem adequately [aligned](#) with the Harper brand. Enough to include many environmental, aid, human rights and free speech charities that [banded together](#) to push back against what looks like a politically [motivated](#) witch hunt.

Conservatives Use Unheard of Tactic to Force through Anti-Union Bill

Conservative senators went to the unprecedented extent of overruling their own Speaker. What could be so important to [break](#) Senate rules? A bill pushed by Harper that is almost certainly unconstitutional for its privacy invading measures forced onto unions, unlike other groups. Latest in a [steady stream](#) of Conservative attacks on organized labour in Canada.

Harper Smears Liberal Sikh MP, Insinuating Tie to Terrorism

When Liberals opposed a 2007 Conservative plan to extend anti-terror legislation, Stephen Harper singled out Grit MP Navdeep Bains, seeming to [suggest](#) that Bains’ party was motivated by a desire to protect Bains’ father-in-law, Darshan Singh Saini. A recent news story had claimed Singh Saini was on a list of witnesses sought by the RCMP for its Air India investigation, but provided no proof he was involved. In the House, Liberals erupted with outrage and Bains asked, in vain, that Harper apologize.

Veterans’ Advocates Smeared

Medical files of Sean Bruyeya, a strong advocate for veterans’ rights, were [leaked](#) in a case that privacy commissioner Jennifer Stoddart described as “alarming.” Veterans Affairs Canada ombudsman Pat Stogran was [dumped](#) after criticizing the government.

“

***You're a democracy, as we are.
These kind of things shouldn't
be done. It's a shame.***

”

Former Nixon political saboteur Donald Segretti (pictured in 1973) said because the Conservatives' Robocalls scandal sought to dupe voters, it was worse than his team's dirty tricks.

Source: www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/robo-calls-worse-than-watergate-dirty-tricks-op-opines/article550730



SECTION III

ELECTION ABUSES: SCAMS, SLIMES, STINGS AND CROOKED SPENDING

Stephen Harper's Conservatives have made federal elections a gladiators' arena where anything goes – unless and until you are caught, that is. Here are 17 times his team violated election laws or ethics.

Conservatives Run Undercover Sting Operations

Conservatives secretly recorded political opponents and also used agent provocateur techniques to try and entrap them. A [sting operation](#) against Marlo Reynolds, a Liberal candidate in Alberta, was [backed](#) by then employment minister Jason Kenney.

Conservative Convicted on Robocalls Scam

Tory operative Michael Sona was given jail time for his role in the [robocalls](#) scam. The judge [indicated](#) more than one person was likely involved. In another court judgment in a case brought by the Council of Canadians, the ruling said the robocalls operation was [widespread](#), not just limited to the Guelph riding. Donald Segretti who did dirty tricks for the Nixon White House [told](#) a Canadian reporter his skullduggery didn't go so low as to run schemes sending voters to the wrong polling stations.

Harper's Ex-Parliamentary Secretary Jailed for Breaking Election Law

Dean Del Maestro was one of Harper's favourites. As his parliamentary secretary, the PM frequently [used](#) him as an attack dog to allege misdeeds by opposition members. Del Maestro was [given](#) a jail sentence in June for his own election spending violations.

'Reprehensible' Dirty Tricks Campaign against Irwin Cotler

Conservative Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer [ruled](#) his party's

“

A reprehensible tactic.

”

Conservative House of Commons Speaker Andrew Scheer slamming his own party for phoning voters with lies that a Liberal candidate was going to step down.

Source: www.thestar.com/news/canada/2011/12/13/commons_speaker_slams_reprehensible_politics.html



own tactics in [running](#) a surreptitious misinformation campaign in the riding of the highly respected MP were “reprehensible.”

Conservatives Bar Crosbie Candidacy

In a clear-cut case of the party hierarchy’s undercutting of democratic rights, Ches Crosbie, son of former Tory cabinet minister John Crosbie, was [barred](#) from running for the party in Newfoundland.

Election Violations Prompt Resignation of Cabinet Member

Peter Penashue, another Harper Conservative was [compelled](#) to step down over election spending [violations](#).

Conservatives Attempt Election Campaign Frame-up

In an attempted [smear](#) in the last week of the 2011 election campaign, a senior Harper strategist planted a [false story](#) in Sun Media that Michael Ignatieff was an Iraq war planner. (Neither Conservative operatives nor Sun Media opted to make hay with the true story that Stephen Harper had, while leader of the Canadian Alliance in 2003, published a [letter](#) in The Wall Street Journal [itching](#) to get Canada into that disastrous war and slamming then PM Jean Chretien for saying no.)

Harper’s Office Deploys Interns for Dirty Tricks

In one instance that brought on allegations of Nixonian tactics, junior PMO staffers in the guise of normal citizens were [sent out](#) to disrupt a Justin Trudeau speech.

Citizens Ejected from Conservative Rallies

Tory operatives [hauled out](#) citizens from a Harper rally in the 2011 campaign because they had marginal ties to other parties. A spokesperson for the PM was [compelled](#) to apologize. Problem fixed this time around: Only fully vetted Harper supporters will be [allowed](#), by invite only, to attend the PM’s campaign stops. If they have a ticket.

Conservatives Make Campaign Event Attendees Sign Gag Order

Not only have Harper’s campaign handlers made his campaign

“

***Cheating is cheating ... and
(the crimes here) displayed a
profound disrespect for
the other candidates and
the electorate.***

”

Judge sentencing former Harper right hand man Dean Del Mastro to jail for election spending violations.

Source: www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2015/06/25/del-mastro-was-once-harpers-right-hand-man

Photo: CBC



events by invite only, they were [forcing](#) anyone let in to sign an agreement not to transmit any description of the event or any images from it – but [dropped](#) the gag orders after news stories made them an issue.

Conservatives Unfix Their Own Fixed Date Election Law

In 2008, Harper pulled the plug on his own government, [violating](#) his own new law, which stipulated elections every four years.

Guilty Plea on In and Out Affair

The Conservative Party and its fundraising arm [pled guilty](#) to some Elections Act charges stemming from their exceeding spending limits in the 2006 campaign. The investigation [cost](#) taxpayers over \$2 million.

Copyright Grab for Attack Ads

CTV News [found out](#) Conservatives aimed to rewrite copyright law to let political parties grab any media content and use it for free in their ads. The impact, [warned](#) CTV's Don Martin, "will be to cast a chill on every broadcast appearance" by MPs, commentators and reporters, who "must now be aware their views could end up featured in a political attack ad." By asserting "unlimited access to the airwaves for propaganda purposes," Martin said, the Harper government "could be seen as flirting with fascism."

Elections Bill Strips Power from Elections Canada

The Fair Elections Act also makes it [harder](#) for Canadians to vote as more ID is required. Nationwide [protests](#) in which more than 400 academics took part forced Pierre Poilievre to withdraw some measures in the bill because of their alleged anti-democratic bent.

Harper Minister Smears Head of Elections Canada

In a bid to [impugn](#) his integrity, Democratic Reform Minister Pierre Poilievre [accused](#) the Elections Canada CEO Marc Mayrand of being a power monger and wearing a team jersey.

Conservatives Use Terrorists' Propaganda in Attack Ad

Harper's party created a political ad [incorporating](#) music and

“

Mr. Harper has not played within the rules. Having attained absolute power, he has absolutely abused that power to the maximum.

”

Canada's former commissioner of information, Robert Marleau.

Source: www.nationalnewswatch.com/2014/11/12/absolute-power-in-the-hands-of-just-one-man/#.VfxcqN9Vikp

Photo: Wikimedia Commons



horrifying images of doomed captives pulled straight from the Islamic State’s own promotional video. The target: Justin Trudeau, whose views on the risks and rewards of bombing ISIS differ from Harper’s.

Record Use of Personal Attack Ads

Under Harper’s leadership, Conservatives became the first to routinely [use](#) personal attacks ads outside an election writ period. Their ads often [used](#) quotes deliberately taken out of context. Incidence of attack ads by Harper Conservatives was heavier than by any other government.

David Beers is founding editor of The Tyee. He is grateful for the help of members of The Tyee community in creating this project.

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www.thetyee.ca