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The Hill Times, March 10th, 2008

# "Pollster Nik Nanos says that the Chuck Cadman affair could end up being as politically dangerous for the Tories as the sponsorship scandal proved to be for the Liberals. Do you agree?"

By Abbas Rana

**Mike Storeshaw**  
Conservative strategist

"I suppose I would be more inclined to agree with Nik if anyone, anywhere could come up with a single shred of evidence to back up their ridiculous smears. Unless and until they do, that's all we have—smears. The only people who were ever in the meeting in question on May 19, 2005, have said that no offer was made other than to have Chuck Cadman rejoin the Conservative caucus. Chuck said so himself, on the record, and it's a shame that the Liberals don't believe him.

"In truth, it can't even be said that St  phane Dion believes his own potentially libelous allegations. Let's not forget that there were budget votes last week. He had every opportunity to take his theory to the people on the campaign trail if he thought there was irredeemable corruption. But he couldn't even bring his party to vote for their own amendment, save for seven token 'yeas'.

"Nik's very proposition, though, exposes Dion's high horse for the weather-beaten old nag that it is. He leads the party that used public funds to pad its own coffers, \$40-million of which we still can't find, in a scandal that has led to actual criminal charges. What's more, he's ready to welcome those deeply involved in the sponsorship scandal back into the fold."

**Sarah Bain**  
Liberal strategist

"Here's what I know: it has been alleged by Chuck Cadman's widow, his daughter, and his son-in-law that Conservative officials offered financial compensation, in the form of a \$1-million life insurance policy, to the terminally ill Mr. Cadman in exchange for his vote. Moreover, in a taped conversation between journalist Tom Zytaruk and Stephen Harper, Mr. Harper is clearly heard making comments which could imply he was aware of this offer.

"If—and I have to be careful, I wouldn't want to end up in court—these allegations are true, they would amount to an alleged attempt to bribe a sitting MP, which is against the law. Worse, as Mr. Harper confirms on the tape, these officials, who are alleged to have bribed Mr. Cadman, were 'legitimately representing the party.'

"So, I suppose if Canadians find it distasteful that a sitting Prime Minister may have allegedly been implicated in an attempt to bribe a dying man with a \$1-million life insurance policy, then, yes, the Chuck Cadman affair could prove very problematic for the Conservatives."

**Karine Sauv  **  
Bloc strategist

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"The Cadman affair could definitely be explosive, even though some questions remain unanswered. . . for now. On the one hand, Chuck Cadman's widow, daughter, and son-in-law all say that two Conservative Party representatives offered Mr. Cadman a \$1-million life insurance policy in exchange for his vote. On the other, the Prime Minister said, in an interview given for a biography of Mr. Cadman, that an offer was made to 'replace financial considerations he might lose due to an election.' This statement is all the more significant by 'financial considerations'? How did he plan to cover these financial losses? The Bloc Québécois has been asking these same questions over the past few days, but we're still waiting for answers. The Harper government's story is especially questionable because it tries to sidestep the issue with a completely ridiculous version of the facts—that the offer to Mr. Cadman was solely to bring him back into the Conservative fold. This is ludicrous because we know that Mr. Cadman was dying and that a candidate had already been chosen to represent Surrey North. It is critical that we get to the bottom of this."

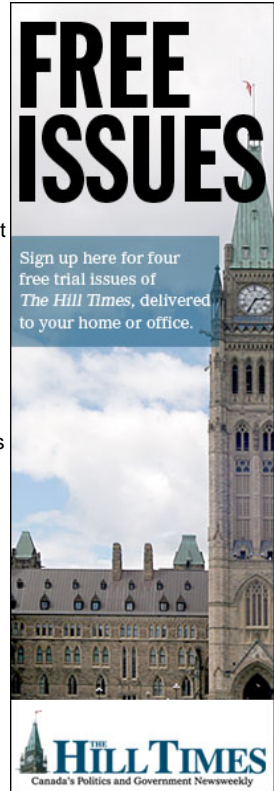
**Karl Bélanger**  
**NDP strategist**

"Stephen Harper is facing a lot of problematic allegations these days, isn't he? His own chief of staff may have leaked the memo that shook up the U.S. Democratic primaries. His deputy press secretary is caught in accusations of interference at Public Works. The Environment Minister is entangled with municipal politics and Ottawa's LRT. And of course the Cadman affair.

"Is it politically dangerous? Well, it has the potential to be dangerous but right now, no, it is not really dangerous because the Leader of the Official Opposition keeps the Conservatives in power. Every afternoon in Question Period, Dion's Liberals are going after the Cadman affair, a scandal they claim is the worst political scandal in the history of Canada since.... Well, since the Liberals' own sponsorship scandal.

"Yet, they are rubber-stamping Harper's agenda at every opportunity. The Throne Speech, the economic update, the prolongation of the war in Afghanistan, the budget. Even on the environment, Dion's so-called favourite issue, the Liberals are supporting Stephen Harper.

"But one thing is certain: These allegations against the prime minister and two Conservatives operatives are very serious. Serious enough to warrant an RCMP investigation as soon as possible. And that's exactly what the New Democratic Party has called for. Because the last thing we need is to turn this into a political circus that could drag on and on, even running the risk of preventing the truth from coming out. Chuck Cadman's memory deserves better."



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