



Senior government liars deserve to be outed

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I had a 3,000 word diatribe ready to go this morning reacting to John Ibbitson's story that the Conservative government - with the support of the Liberals and NDP - had [reached a deal](#) to kill the government's own legislation that would return some semblance of representation by population to Canada.

The rant was epic and took on every flaccid argument presented by both named and unnamed sources in the story.

Ibbitson is of course a good, experienced reporter and while the minister responsible for Bill C-12 denied on the record (through a spokesperson) the legislation was being scrapped, he wrote the story based on "higher officials within the government" - which one can assume means PMO sources (plural, per the story) - who fed Ibbitson reliable information.

Except of course this morning, the same Conservative government has [come out and denied](#) that any such deal exists. It's false. A myth. No basis in reality. Or at least that's what the Prime Minister is now claiming.

I guess it's possible the PM changed his mind based on today's story. It's possible the PM didn't know the deal had been negotiated by his staff. It's possible the PM is now misleading the public. Or it's possible the sources weren't telling the truth - for whatever reason.

I have lost count of how many stories in Canada over just the last 12 months have been mirror images of this case. Writer puts forward juicy story based on unnamed sources, PMO denies any truth to the story, life goes on as if the story was never filed. It is certainly not confined to The Globe as pretty much every paper has been "burned" this way.

There are two solutions - and only two solutions - to this problem. Either papers should stop relying on unnamed sources and given the impossibility that this will happen, the other option is this: When a source burns a paper - when they put something out that turns out to be patently false - the affected paper should immediately refile the story with the names of the sources relied on included.

I have a feeling sources would stop making up nonexistent facts pretty quickly after a few of their colleagues get outed.