

# Political comrades...

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Miss Jensen's newspaper, the *Stamford Advocate*, has implicitly set its distance between itself and her. Despite her denials, it reports that she has known Miss Boudin for "seven or eight years."

All the journalistic profession needs right now is another scandal. We have already had a pair of scandals involving false reporting: The Janet Cooke case and the Jimmy Carter "bugging" farce. Rita Jensen's story may exemplify a subtler scandal: that of the watchdog that didn't bark.

The story was right under Miss Jensen's nose. At the very least, it is fair to surmise that she passed up some interesting leads. Can you live with an active revolutionary and not suspect a thing?

There is plenty of evidence that this sort of thing is not at all unique. A new book by Robert Caro confirms old rumors about the monumental crookedness of Lyndon Johnson. A new book by David J. Garrow confirms old rumors about Martin Luther King's Communist associates.

In both cases it is hard to believe that subjects of the books could have carried on as they did without at least exciting suspicions along the way. Why did it take so long for the truth to emerge? Where were the investigative journalists?

One answer can be found in Benjamin Bradlee's book *Conversations With Kennedy*. Bradlee, now editor of the *Washington Post*, was a pal of Kennedy's. He admits he had reason to believe the 1960 election was stolen from Kennedy by Richard Daley in Illinois; he admits he discussed with Kennedy the possibility of illegally leaking confidential IRS data for political purposes.

When Richard Nixon was president, Ben Bradlee became the champion of investigative journalism; but when John Kennedy was president, he practiced the opposite: discretionary journalism.

Ideally, as Dan Rather puts it, journalists are "honest brokers of information." But journalism in practice is far

from impersonal. Reporters often cover for people with whom they are socially involved or politically allied. Bradlee's book is not the only candid revelation on this subject: the best is perhaps Jack Anderson's excellent *Confessions of a Muckraker*.

For years now, the press has been remarkably uncritical of the Left. Most of the exposes have been directed against liberalism's enemies. We even have different vocabularies for different kinds of exposes. To expose the Right is "investigative journalism." To expose the Left is "McCarthyism."

As a result, the Left has gotten off easy. The Izzy Stones are allowed to pass themselves off as "liberals," sometimes with the co-operation of liberals themselves. And weird old cronies who fly around on brooms are the first to denounce "witch hunts."

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