

## Case #10

Ardent R. Porter is an investigatory journalist with a respected Washington-area newspaper, *Capitol News Briefly*. As a reporter working in and around the D.C. area, Mr. Porter often relies on his long list of contacts in order to glean information that might be useful for the various articles he publishes on corruption within politics and government. By establishing relationships with individuals at all levels of government, Ardent has provided himself with valuable human sources that are often capable of providing him with names, tips, or other information that he could not extract from other channels. Furthermore, a few of Mr. Porter's key contacts are able to pass along hard-to-come-by information about questionable or downright illegal actions taken by government employees or agencies.

One such contact is Ian Stalwart, a mid-level agency administrator who works with individuals who do government "groundwork" as well as with high-level government bureaucrats. As a middleman of sorts, Ian is in a position uniquely suited to evaluating the actions of those who work both below and above him. One of Mr. Stalwart's responsibilities is to watch for and report any illegal activity that he might encounter. Mr. Stalwart takes this role very seriously and his responsibilities as a watchdog were what originally led him to seek out Ardent, a like-minded opponent of corruption and illegality within public service.

It so happened that Mr. Stalwart discovered that many individuals within his agency were working to cover up illegally-awarded, over-billed, or otherwise fraudulent government contracts awarded during the early months of the Iraq War, actions which were in violation of several federal laws, in addition to many agency standards. Upon presenting his discovery to his superiors, Mr. Stalwart was told to disregard his findings and to refrain from further discussing the subject. After pressing for a more sophisticated explanation, he was informed that the contracts in question had been deemed classified through appropriate agency and congressional channels and that because the contracts had been deemed to serve a compelling national security interest, it would be against agency policy (as well as illegal) to discuss them, regardless of any questionable procedural or substantive aspects.

Fully knowing that he was in violation of laws regarding the disclosure of classified information, Mr. Stalwart approached Mr. Porter and revealed everything he knew about the dubious contracts. He also provided Mr. Porter with the names of the individuals implicated in the cover-ups and the names of the administrators who had ordered him to remain silent.

After composing a lengthy and revealing story, Mr. Porter approached his editor about publishing the story, explaining the dilemma presented by the fact that much, if not all, of the story's core material was classified. Following a discussion about publishing the article by the paper's editorial board it was decided that the story would run in the paper's next issue.