

DENNIS SHANAHAN

Kill-Bill campaign wounds Shorten



Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull during Question Time in the House of Representatives at Parliament House yesterday.

Dennis Shanahan, The Australian, 12:00AM May 25, 2018

Malcolm Turnbull and the Coalition have gone full circle in their attitude to Bill Shorten: no matter how heinous an action the Labor leader committed previously, he was left untouched; now the most tenuous link to misdemeanour is pursued ruthlessly.

Any suggestion of fabrication, dishonesty, shiftiness, lack of credibility or “un-believaBill” is repeated and amplified in the media and parliament. The time of “un-touchaBill” when the Prime Minister didn’t want to soil his hands or appear negative and reined in ministers wanting to tear at the Opposition Leader have gone.

An entire royal commission’s worth of dirt and allegations over Shorten’s time as a union leader were neglected during the 2016 election campaign. His personal weakness in the polls compared with Turnbull was not exploited.

Yet a slight recovery in the Newspoll survey for the government and a big lift for Turnbull as preferred prime minister after Shorten’s disastrous defence of ineligible Labor MPs has transformed Coalition tactics.

There isn't a sniff of the always stupid idea that Shorten should be left alone as Opposition Leader because he is weak. The hard-edged Peter Dutton and - Mathias Cormann are running rampant.
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Turnbull has learned not to take his foot off Shorten's throat for even one parliamentary sitting day.



Leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull during Question Time in the House of Representatives yesterday.

Yesterday, the Home Affairs Minister led the way on the kill-Bill strategy over a “fabricated” and “lying” transcript of remarks from frontbencher Linda Burney that included omission of comments about the offshore processing of asylum-seekers on Nauru and Manus Island. In full flight Dutton took every chance to demand an explanation for the “fabrication” and “significant fraud” from Shorten, whom he said was “discredited” on border protection policy.

There will be more of the same every day the Coalition can find a pretext for attacking Shorten — as it should have been for months.