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David Talbot

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From Dallas to Baghdad

I'm off and running on my national book tour, heading for my fourth city in four days, with eight more to go after that. Everywhere I go, there seems to be a new willingness to explore the crime that -- more than four decades later -- still haunts America. After Bush, the public -- and even the media -- is prepared to believe that the government is capable of any kind of treachery and deception. Of course, the idea that some elements of the U.S. government might have orchestrated the assassination of President Kennedy, in league with organized crime bosses, is still a mind-boggling notion to many people. But as I write in my book, the Washington elite -- including Robert Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon -- immediately suspected a foul conspiracy in Dallas. And although these political leaders chose, for different reasons, to keep their suspicions from the public, the American people, in their wisdom, soon reached the same conclusion. It was only the media elite who clung year after year to the increasingly tattered Warren Report. But, as I stumble from one TV and radio station to another, it's clear that even the old media ramparts have been breached.

On the **Fox 25 Morning News Show**, a bright-eyed, blond host blurted out, "So Bobby Kennedy thought the CIA killed his brother -- why did he think that?" (Or something to that effect; it's all a blur when the TV lights hit you.) There was no snarky rolling of the eyes, just a tacit assumption that we all know the real story of Dallas has long been suppressed. On the rambunctious **Howie Carr** call-in show, later that day on WRKO in Boston, there were more surprises. As Bostonians know, Howie is no fan of the Kennedys. Before I went on the air, I was told that every time the host mentions the name Ted Kennedy, a Carr sidekick in the control booth rolls the tape of someone pouring a stiff drink. But Carr is a well-read guy when it

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A note from the author: "I was a 16-year-old campaign volunteer for Robert Kennedy the night he was shot down in Los Angeles. It struck me then that his murder, following those of his brother and Martin Luther King Jr., had

irreparably wounded America. And this feeling has never left me in all the years that have followed. For me, aggressively pursuing the hidden history of the Kennedy years was an attempt to find out where my country had lost its way, and perhaps to restore the hope and faith that I myself had lost as a young American growing up in the 1960s."

In Salon: The exclusive story of Robert F. Kennedy's secret search for the truth about John F. Kennedy's assassination
By David Talbot

Book excerpt

comes to the Kennedy literature, as is much of his audience. Again, the assumption on the show seemed to be that whatever you thought of the Kennedys, something dark happened to JFK in Dallas -- and we're still being lied to about it.

As I've been saying on my book tour, it's time for the American people to demand the truth. We deserve to know our own history. But the CIA continues to stonewall, in blatant defiance of the 1992 JFK Act, which compelled government agencies to release all documents related to the crime. This summer the CIA will go to court, once again, to block the efforts by Washington Post reporter Jefferson Morley (a friend) to learn more about the apparent role that Lee Harvey Oswald played in the agency's secret war on Castro. The CIA has stubbornly refused to release documents about long-deceased agents like David Phillips and George Joannides who associated with Oswald, or were at least aware of his murky activities, in the months before the assassination.

What is the CIA still hiding?

-- David Talbot

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