For Hugh McDonald, the Answer Is 'Yes'

McDonald says he tracked down, met and talked with Kennedy's killer. He says the assassin was a "mercenary and a pro" who pulled off the murder for some group which might have been "a rogue element of the CIA." Further, he says that "Saul," the name he has given the hit man, confessed his role to him in a London hotel room in 1972.

But McDonald, 62 and a former chief of detectives for the Los Angeles County sheriff's office, didn't take this information to an official government body "because it would have been classified and buried," he said in a recent Bulletin interview.

Instead he wrote a book, "Appointment in Dallas: The Final Solutions to the Assassination of JFK." In the book he gives Saul's story—the confession, McDonald says, of the man who shot Kennedy and within two hours after the shooting was out of the country.

"Taking it to the CIA," he said, "would be like carrying coals to Newcastle. I think the CIA is involved either officially or through a rogue element. I would lean toward some sort of runaway situation within the agency. ... I would hope that, when that time comes, someone will take the trouble to think about the situation within the CIA." He notes elsewhere in the book that the CIA has been involved in assassinations and that the agency has "trained people to be involved in assassinations." He suggests that although the U.S. might "set up" assassinations, it would hire foreign killers.

"I had no intention of classifying and putting this in a book," he said. "I just wanted to get it all down."