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**From:** Ed <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 1, 2012 2:26 PM  
**To:** Epstein, Jeff  
**Subject:** FYI: Nocera column on Power, Sex and Conspiracy (New York Times, may 1, editorial page)

Power, Sex and Conspiracy  
by Joe Nocera

"The 'C-word' in American journalism is Conspiracy," writes Edward Jay Epstein in his short, new e-book <http://mhpbooks.com/books/three-days-in-may/>, "Three Days in May," about l'affaire Dominique Strauss-Kahn. By the time we reach this sentence, toward the end, Epstein has taken us — practically moment by moment — through the series of events that culminated with D.S.K.'s arrest for allegedly forcing himself sexually on a hotel maid in Manhattan. The charges were later dropped when prosecutors concluded <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/19/dominique-strauss-kahn-prosecutor-reasons/print> that, even though the assault likely took place, the maid's credibility was a problem. Still, Strauss-Kahn was forced to resign as the managing director of the International Monetary Fund. And his political career — he was the favorite to challenge President Nicolas Sarkozy of France in the election that will be decided on Sunday <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/28/world/europe/hollande-and-sarkozy-tr-de-insults-as-runoff-nears.html> — was destroyed.

The day before the alleged assault, Epstein writes, Strauss-Kahn had participated in a sex party in Washington. He then flew to New York and took a room at the Sofitel, whose parent company employed an executive close to Sarkozy's intelligence coordinator, according to Epstein. After dinner, D.S.K. returned to the hotel with a woman who was seen exiting the ground-floor elevator at 3:56 a.m. Whenever he was visible on one of the hotel's security cameras, a certain hotel executive would also be seen. Coincidence? Or was Strauss-Kahn being followed? The actions of the 32-year-old maid, Nafissatou Diallo <http://abcnews.go.com/US/dominique-strauss-kahns-accuser-speaks/story?id=14150192>, the next day added to the mystery. Several times she went in and out of a certain room on D.S.K.'s floor. She entered his suite twice without her cleaning equipment. After the alleged assault, D.S.K. left the hotel to have lunch with his daughter — while Diallo inexplicably re-entered his suite.

It then took an hour for hotel security and Diallo to report the assault to the police. A few minutes after the call was made, two hotel officials were caught on camera doing a brief "victory dance." Epstein has included the hotel videos <http://mhpbooks.com/dsk/> as part of his e-book.) When D.S.K. later realized that one of his cellphones was missing — a phone, Epstein notes ominously, that has never been found and whose GPS was turned off 23 minutes after he lost it — he called the hotel to see if it had been retrieved. That call led to his arrest.

What does one make of all this? In the immediate aftermath of Strauss-Kahn's arrest, French journalists flocked to the idea that he had somehow been set up by his enemies. But that thinking has largely faded, especially after it was revealed that D.S.K. had been involved in sex parties that included prostitutes and that were paid for by wealthy businessmen friends of his. The Washington orgy he attended the night before his alleged assault was part of that ring; it has since morphed into a bona fide scandal, and D.S.K. is once again in trouble with the law thanks to his sexual appetite. Of course, Epstein can't really prove there was a conspiracy, either. But he does believe that conspiracies are more common than most journalists credit; for much of his career, he has reveled in the kind of tantalizing clues that could lead somewhere ... or nowhere. And so it is here: the text message D.S.K. supposedly received telling him that his e-mails were being monitored. The disappearance of his BlackBerry. The mysterious goings-on in the other room on D.S.K.'s hotel floor. And so on.

It all seems very grassy knoll. Except that, as Epstein points out chillingly, these days every one of us walks around with devices in our pockets that allow even a mildly competent intelligence service to track our movements and overhear our conversations: our smartphones. Whether someone was spying on D.S.K. or not, they certainly could have seen. It is hard to dismiss the notion out of hand. (Epstein told me that he does not believe that Diallo was involved in any plot against D.S.K.) Eliot Spitzer had enemies, too, who badly wanted to bring him down. Whether they helped instigate the

investigation into his prostitution =abit that forced him from the governor's office, we'll probably =ever know. Even so, one would be hard pressed to argue with the =esult. Spitzer's hubris allowed him to believe he could get away =ith it. He couldn't.

So it is with D.S.K. This weekend, the odds are high that Sarkozy will =ose to François Hollande, who became the Socialist Party =tandard-bearer after Strauss-Kahn's arrest. Hollande, who has never =een a government minister, will undoubtedly lack D.S.K.'s acumen =hen it comes to handling the European financial crisis.

But with Hollande as president, the French won't have to worry about =heir head of state being beholden to businessmen who supplied him with =rostitutes, or that his voracious sexual needs could someday lead to a =overnment crisis.

D.S.K. will no doubt go to his grave believing that his enemies did him =n — and Epstein might, too. But France is lucky he got caught when =e did

Keep me posted--an old expression that now has a very different =eaning.

as ever,

Ed Epstein

[www.edwardjayepstein.com](http://www.edwardjayepstein.com)

ebooks at <http://amzn.to/ndfiNf>

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