
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/](http://mhpbooks.com/books/three-days-in-may/), "Three Days in =ay," about l'affaire Dominique Strauss-Kahn. By the time we reach this sentence, toward the end, Epstein has taken =s — practically moment by moment — through the series of events =hat culminated with D.S.K.'s arrest for allegedly forcing himself =exually on a hotel maid in Manhattan. The charges were later dropped =hen prosecutors concluded [=http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/19/dominique-schiff-ecutor-reasons/print](http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jan/19/dominique-schiff-ecutor-reasons/print) that, even though the assault likely took place, =he maid's credibility was a problem. Still, Strauss-Kahn was forced =o resign as the managing director of the International Monetary Fund. =nd his political career — he was the favorite to challenge President =icolas Sarkozy of France in the election that will be decided on =unday [=http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/28/world/europe/hollande-and-sarkozy-tr-de-insults-as-runoff-nears.html](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 =articipated in a sex party in Washington. He then flew to New York and =ot a room at the Sofitel, whose parent company employed an executive =lose to Sarkozy's intelligence coordinator, according to Epstein. =fter dinner, D.S.K. returned to the hotel with a woman who was seen =xiting the ground-floor elevator at 3:56 a.m. Whenever he was visible =n one of the hotel's security cameras, a certain hotel executive =ould 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-schiff-ecuser-speaks/story?d=14150192](http://abcnews.go.com/US/dominique-schiff-ecuser-speaks/story?d=14150192), the next day added to the mystery. Several times she =ent in and out of a certain room on D.S.K.'s floor. She entered his =uite twice without her cleaning equipment. After the alleged assault, =.S.K. left the hotel to have lunch with his daughter — while Diallo =nexplicably re-entered his suite.

It then took an hour for hotel security and Diallo to report the =ssault to the police. A few minutes after the call was made, two hotel =fficials were caught on camera doing a brief "victory dance." =Epstein has included the hotel videos [=http://mhpbooks.com/dsk/](http://mhpbooks.com/dsk/) as =art of his e-book.) When D.S.K. later realized that one of his =ellphones was missing — a phone, Epstein notes ominously, that has =ever been found and whose GPS was turned off 23 minutes after he lost = — he called the hotel to see if it had been retrieved. That call =ed to his arrest.

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

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

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

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