
Salon article

R Kennedy

From: David Talbot
Date: April 6, 2015 at 10:23:09 AM MDT
To: R Kennedy
Subject: Salon article

Bobby --

Good talking with you yesterday. As I said on the phone, I was dismayed when I first heard that Salon had removed your article about the hazards of thimerosal from its web archives. As you know, I was no longer the editor of Salon when your article was published. And I am not an expert on the subject. But without taking a position on mercury preservatives in vaccines, I know enough about the debate -- and about the pharmaceutical industry's general track record on putting profits before people, as well as the compromised nature of regulatory oversight in this country when it comes to powerful industries -- to know that "disappearing" your article was not the proper decision.

I founded Salon to be a fearless and independent publication -- one that was open to a wide range of views, particularly those that were controversial or contested within the mainstream media. Removing your article from the Salon archives was a violation of that spirit and smacks of editorial cowardice. If I had been editor at the time, I would not have done so -- and I would have offered you the opportunity to debate your critics in Salon's pages.

In my day, Salon did not cave to pressure -- and we risked corporate media scorn, advertising boycotts, threats of FBI investigations by powerful members of Congress, and even bomb scares because of our rigorous independence. Throwing a writer to the wolves when the heat got too hot was never the Salon way. It pains me, now that I'm on the sidelines, to ever see Salon wilt in the face of such pressure.

Feel free to share my thoughts with anyone you wish.

David Talbot