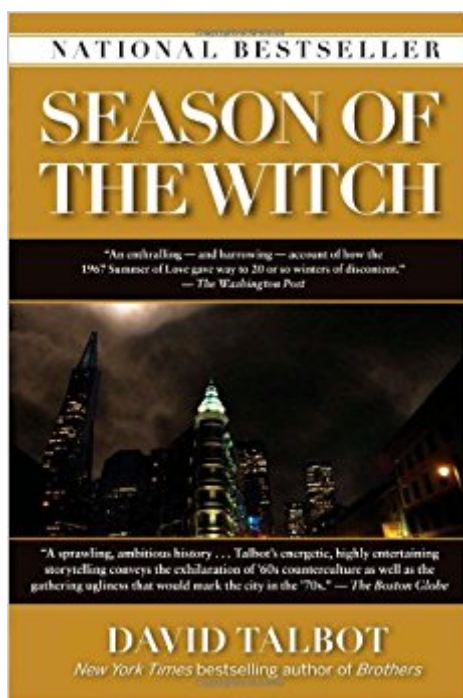


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# Season Of The Witch: Enchantment, Terror, And Deliverance In The City Of Love



## Synopsis

The critically acclaimed, San Francisco Chronicle bestseller *City on Fire* is a gripping story of the strife and tragedy that led to San Francisco's ultimate rebirth and triumph. Salon founder David Talbot chronicles the cultural history of San Francisco and from the late 1960s to the early 1980s when figures such as Harvey Milk, Janis Joplin, Jim Jones, and Bill Walsh helped usher from backwater city to thriving metropolis.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The liberation of San Francisco came with a price. Talbot presents the tempestuous years, from 1967 to 1982, as a new-versus-old battle for the city's soul. In an extensive history bursting with details and larger-than-life personalities, Talbot champions the outsiders, a human carnival from hippies to drag queens to activists, against the authorities representing the old, mainly Catholic, establishment. The extensive cast of characters includes Janis Joplin, Patty Hearst, Jim Jones, Harvey Milk, and Bill Walsh. Talbot, who started the San Francisco-based web magazine Salon and previously wrote the bestseller *Brothers: The Hidden History of the Kennedy Years* (2007), presents gripping accounts of both crime sprees and football showdowns. Even people who were there might take away something new, and for others, the book offers a comprehensive introduction to the era. Talbot believes modern San Francisco values have changed the world, and he explores the crucible of the transformation, in all its hope, violence, and glory.

--Bridget Thoreson --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Exhaustive research yields penetrating character studies” Talbot incisively relates the atmosphere of service in the Haight In a surprising ending, Talbot convincingly suggests that imperfect new mayor Dianne Feinstein resurrected the city’s heart as it rallied around the 49ers. In exhilarating fashion, Talbot clears the rainbow mist and brings San Francisco into sharp focus. Publishers Weekly (starred review) “Talbot presents gripping accounts of both crime sprees and football showdowns. Even people who were there might take away something new, and for others, the book offers a comprehensive introduction to the era.” Booklist “A gritty corrective to our rosy memories” |enthralling, news-driven history...smart and briskly paced tale... I found it hard to put down Season of the Witch.” San Francisco Chronicle “An ambitious, labor-of-love illumination of a city’s soul, celebrating the uniqueness of San Francisco without minimizing the price paid for the city’s free-spiritedness” | the author encompasses the city’s essence | Talbot loves his city deeply and knows it well, making the pieces of the puzzle fit together, letting the reader understand Talbot takes the reader much deeper than cliché, exploring a San Francisco that tourists never discover. Kirkus Reviews, starred review

My daughter moved to San Francisco 18 months ago, and while visiting her there I picked this book up in the City Lights book store. Browsing the cover, it seemed like it might offer some insight into my kid’s new home base. Boy, did it deliver! Mr. Talbot clearly loves San Francisco. His extremely well-researched book made me love it too, and also feel better about my East Coast baby’s move to the West. Also, his writing style is what I’d describe as extremely readable. His use of words and the flow of the words are a joy for the reader. As a baby boomer I particularly enjoyed reading details I didn’t know about the so-called Summer of Love, the Patty Hearst case, and the horrific story of Jim Jones and the Peoples Temple, all enriched by the author’s insights. Highly recommend,

I have lived in the San Francisco Bay Area all my life and remember the people and events in this book but many of details were new to me. This book is a history book but is very well reading and keeps you interested. I have recommended it to several of my friends. It helps the reader understand why "The City" is the way it is.

Instead of another neck tie or other passe present, my daughter in law in SF gave me this incredible book, "Season of the Witch," David Talbot who recounts the gripping story of San Francisco during

the turbulent phase between 1967 and 1982. As a SF resident during much of the period he depicts, I felt woefully ignorant of the cast of characters he describes during the 15-year period the book covers. People like attorney Vincent Hallinan, and his incredibly audacious wife, Vivian. Together they confronted the police, City Hall, the Catholic Church and ultimately took on the US government as they helped change the conservative grip on SF. There are so many other heroes and villains he fingers including Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead and rock promoter Bill Graham, and the bizarre doings in Haight Asbury and elsewhere. However, to me the savage tale of Jim Jones' influence on that political transition was one I never understood before his telling, which as everyone knows ended with Jones' mad leadership of the mass deaths of his flock and himself in South America! The famous SF Chronicle columnist, the late Herb Caen described San Francisco as "Bagdad by the Bay" a most apt label as while tourists always say SF is one of their favorite cities, they really don't see its tough, daunting underbelly which Talbot captures so well. A must read for anyone who has or may visit there. That should advice should sell millions of copies!

One of the most interesting accounts of San Francisco history during the tumultuous period from 1967 to 1982. I came of age in 1966 in the SF Bay Area, and I was there through much of that period. I can remember the horror of Jonestown and the assassinations at city hall that followed a few days later. Talbot's book cleared up a lot of unanswered questions still on my mind about certain events during that time, especially in his harrowing narrative about the disastrous Rolling Stones concert in Altamont. I should caution readers that parts of the book are not exactly pleasant to read about and it exposes much of the dark side of that era.

This told me lots more about many events I remember and some I was right on the spot for. The Terror part is hard reading, only because there were some terrible things that went on in San Francisco in that period. The Enchantment was the part I was privileged to be part of -- as one of the originators of the Trips Festival which rang in the entire era of Bay Area Countercultural wonder. The Deliverance was an interesting twist, and while I don't personally pay any attention to sports and baseball, it still made good reading. He might have written about the Chinatown Tong Wars in the terror part, and I'm wondering if Talbot possibly hadn't run into that stuff. If you love San Francisco, this will give you a much deeper appreciation for the very special city that it is.

Anyone who lived through the "dawn of Aquarius" and its impact on the culture of San Francisco will inevitably have been affected in a very personal way; politically, psychologically and emotionally.

Personally? I was a young woman, 'coming of age', the daughter of an Irish catholic San Francisco cop. For me Talbot's reflections are spot on. An extraordinary and exhilarating time for me but clearly, not everyone will agree. How could it-with all that transpired-the love, the music, the revolution of race and gender, the War and the volatile political climate, the fueled anger and violence of those impacted horribly and it's aftermath, as well as the infusion of a huge immigrant population that was transforming the City again as it had been transformed in generations past-NOT leave it's indelible and deeply personal impact on it's citizens. It was a spectacular, wondrous and tragic time in our history. God, I'm glad I was there to experience it.

David Talbot's *The Season of the Witch* is a narrative journey through the turbulent and iconic 1960s and 1970s in San Francisco where love, drugs, violent crime, misogyny, and odd politics stamp an indelible personality onto the City. As a former San Francisco resident, I was quite familiar with the Summer of Love, the Jonestown murders, the Harvey Milk and George Moscone assassinations, the Black Panthers' rise and fall, gentrification, homelessness, etc. But Talbot's clear, engaging language illuminated facts lost to memory and reawakened the horror and tension of those experiencing these incidents as they unfolded. Almost akin to a genre pulp novel, this nonfiction work is hard to put down.

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