

'Case' leads pack of JFK books

Now that the 30th anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination has come and gone, and with it the endless retrospectives, magazine and newspaper articles and television specials, it's worth asking: How did the several dozen JFK books published to coincide with the occasion fare in the country's bookstores?

The answer is that some did better than others, and many seemed to cancel each other out, as is often the case when so many similar books emerge at once.

It will take months before final figures are in, of course. But so far, in a field that runs the gamut from coffee-table picture books to meticulously researched biographies to outre accounts of new conspiracy theories, the most successful has been Gerald Posner's "Case Closed" (Random House), which takes the radically unradical view that there was no conspiracy surrounding Kennedy's assassination.

The book, which came out sev-

SARAH LYALL

Book Industry

eral months earlier than the rest and was boosted by a steady stream of publicity orchestrated by the indefatigable Harold M. Evans, publisher of the Random House adult trade group, now has gone through five printings, with a total of 135,000 in print. It spent five weeks on The New York Times best-seller list, reaching No. 8 before falling off.

Richard Reeves' "President Kennedy: Profile of Power" (Simon and Schuster), a comprehensive portrait of the president, which was helped by good reviews and the almost universal impression that it was a serious bio in a pack of lighter ones, also is selling well, with 85,000 copies in print.

At Ingram, the country's largest independent book distributor, Susie Russenberger, the director of

trade books, said that about 6,000 copies of the Reeves book had been sold, many of them in the last few weeks.

Some stores and some chains took the opportunity to devote special sections to the JFK crop, displaying them all at once.

Among myriad others are Robert J. Groden's "Killing of the President" (Viking), a \$30 coffee-table book; Bill Sloan and Jean Hill's "JFK: The Last Dissenting Witness" (Pelican Publishing); Gaeton Fonzi's "The Last Investigation" (Thunder's Mouth); Harrison Edward Livingstone's "Killing the Truth" (Carroll & Graf); Oleg M. Nechiporenko's "Passport to Assassination" (Birch Lane/Carol Publishing); a compilation of letters to Dear Abby called "The Day JFK Died" (Andrews & McMeel); and the Kennedy-satellite books, like Wendy Leigh's "Prince Charming" (Dutton), a book about JFK Jr.

Sarah Lyall is a columnist for The New York Times.
