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LITERARY GUIDE

BETWEEN THE LINES Patricia Holt J.F. DeLoach Assassination Enigma Endures

But was quite an ad from Random House in a recent issue of the New York Times for Gerald Posner's "Case Closed" (see review on cover). About mug shots and selected questions (Jim Garrison: "The JFK assassination was a homosexual thrill killing") by five authors and a film maker (Glover Stoen), the book is announced. "GUILTY? Or Misleading the American Public?" The ad smacks of phony dirty and sounds a little lame. If Posner's book should be judged on its own merits, why group it to the "Most-Wanted" poster approach?

Of course, using selective information to prove one's case is common practice among JFK assassination authors. But Posner wants to distance himself from all others; he wants his book to be regarded as so fair and complete that after reading it, we'll all say, OK, that's the end of it — "case closed."

But take the case of Failure Analysis Associates, the Menlo Park firm that used computer enhancements to reconstruct the JFK assassination for a 1992 study. Posner refers to that study repeatedly but does not explain that Failure Analysis was commissioned by the American Bar Association to create the reconstruction for the ABA's mock trial of Lee Harvey Oswald in San Francisco last year. The trial ended with a hung jury.

According to Angela Meyer of Failure Analysis, "Our job for the ABA was to provide evidence and expert witnesses for both the defense and the prosecution." Posner appears to draw from testimony for the prosecution's case, not the defense's case.

Although Failure Analysis was not asked to provide its own opinion of Oswald's guilt or innocence, the company's CEO, Roger McCarthy (who testified for the defense at the mock trial) offered what host Brian Banniller called "a startling cogelusion" during the TV program "On the Money" on July 31.

Failure Analysis' announced Banniller, "made a compelling argument that Lee Harvey Oswald did not act alone." According to McCarthy, the gunman

"gave up some a wfully good shots to take some wfully bad shot" to "drive the quarry into a second shooting" by other assassins.

Banniller then remarked, "Few sharpshooters might less Oswald, could hit a moving target taking shots as rapidly as Oswald supposedly did." He asked McCarthy "Can it be done?" McCarthy responded, "I can't. I'm the best shot I know. I can't do that." Banniller concluded, "Thirty years later, no one, not even Failure Analysis, is ready to say conclusively who killed President Kennedy." Case open.

Patrick Hoak is book editor for The Chronicle.

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