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10/13/93

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Dear Hal:

I'm enclosing a recent article in the S.F. Chronicle on Posner written by Jerry Carroll, a columnist who has a daily feature in the paper. It is quite apparent that Posner gave Carroll the "snow job" during the interview and from the article you can see that Carroll really has nothing but a superficial knowledge of the whole case. Carroll makes references to straw men that Posner was only too happy to provide. He knew what he was doing.

Since I don't know Carroll it is very possible that the interview was conducted on 9/29/93 at the Green Apple book store in S.F. I was present as were both Paul Hoch and Dr. Gary Aguilar and we heard him (Posner) discuss his book. Channel 4 TV and their top newscaster, Pete Wilson, showed up and must've interviewed him but I never got the chance to see what they put on the news that night.

During the question period all three of us got to ask Posner a question or two. Aguilar faulted Posner for misusing Dr. Hartogs "clinical" evaluation of Oswald when he was a truant and erring child. I then asked Posner about Oswald's possible government connections and why he so easily dismissed this in his book. I pointed to the Oswald "slip" when he was on WDSU in August, 1963 and I asked him why he ignored mention of the "crypto" revelation both discussed in your book, "Oswald in New Orleans". I then asked him how come that when he put his bibliography together after mentioning that you had written 6 books on the JFK case he only included 5 books and left out "Oswald in N.O." To the latter question he replied that he only put in his bibliography those books he actually used or referred to. I answered him that I was extremely puzzled by his response because I noted that he (Posner) had made negative comments ~~about~~ Oswald's transposition of numbers as addresses when Oswald was in New Orleans and that you had discussed this in your book, "Oswald in N.O." I had caught him, in my opinion, off guard and he never really answered the question.

When I pressed Posner on Oswald's possible links to a gov't agency I asked him if he were familiar with some reports that Oswald could have ties with ONI or another agency (I did not specify CIA). He said he was familiar with this and ~~that~~ I asked why, then, hadn't he at least contacted the ONI to find out if there were any merit to these allegations. To establish a record is how I put it. His answer to this was that it would not do any good - that that agency most likely would not give him any answers and that, in any event, the record would most likely be "destroyed". To which I promptly retorted, that is

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## JFK author dares to claim there was no conspiracy

By David Mehegan  
GLOBE STAFF

**T**wo picketers paced back and forth in front of the Copley Plaza Hotel one recent Saturday, handing out leaflets and carrying signs bearing the message, "Case Still Open." It was not a labor dispute — they were protesting the appearance inside of Gerald Posner, author of a new book called "Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK."

Posner's unforgivable offense: His book concludes that there was no con-

spiracy in the murder of President John F. Kennedy 30 years ago this month. Oswald killed Kennedy, the book concludes, Jack Ruby killed Oswald, and both acted alone for their own demented motives. In other words, Posner maintains, the Warren Commission basically had it right all along.

"It's ironic that this opinion is the most controversial after 30 years," Posner says during an interview in the lobby, while the protesters march back and forth. "People look at me and say, 'Are you kidding? Oswald acted alone?'"

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# 'Cased Closed': Warren was right

■ POSNER

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You really believe that?" as if I were a naive fool or a dupe. I did not realize the extent to which this view is denigrated in the public mind."

Since his book appeared, Posner has been vilified and abused, harassed at his home and elsewhere. A leaflet passed out by the protesters at the Copley snarled, "Someone who wants the 'case closed' is backing this upstart. . . . It is a shame that amateurs like Posner can possibly discredit all serious dedicated veteran assassiniologist researchers."

Such a discrediting could discomfit a lot of people. In the 30 years since bullets flew in Dealey Plaza, more than 2,000 books have been written about the assassination. There are bookstores that specialize in assassination books, an annual conspiracy convention in Dallas where one can buy assassination board games, T-shirts and bumper stickers. But it's no longer just the lunatic fringe.

Last year there was Oliver Stone's movie "JFK," which implicates the CIA and treats New Orleans DA Jim Garrison as a crusading hero. Redefining the lower limits of taste, the usually-respectable Viking Press is about to publish a full-color coffee-table book, "The Killing of a President," with foreword by Oliver Stone, promising "the complete photographic record of the assassination, the conspiracy and the coverup."

Gerald Posner, 39, was never an assassination hobbyist. A natty, wiry former Wall Street lawyer, he has written books about Nazi doctor Joseph Mengele, New York's Chinese mafia and the adult children of Nazi war criminals. He is a shrewd, skeptical investigative reporter who set out to debunk myths and boil the questions surrounding the assassination down to the "four or five issues that still need investigation." In the end, he decided there were none.

"I never thought it was the government," Posner says. "My view of government was one of inefficient bungling. I didn't think the CIA could pull off an assassination and keep it a secret for 30 minutes, let alone 30 years." He did think a small "kitchen conspiracy" was possible: "a few of Oswald's friends, who knew his violent tendencies, egging him on, then keeping quiet for 30 years." But that too he abandoned.

## Hundreds interviewed

He started from scratch, interviewing hundreds of witnesses, including the doctors who worked on Kennedy at Parkland Hospital, the Dallas police, Marina Oswald Porter, people who knew Oswald in his youth and in the Marines, his friends and employers, the KGB agent assigned to keep an eye on him during his 1959-1962 sojourn in the Soviet Union, and many others. The book follows Oswald's tormented life (and secondarily that of Jack Ruby) from his birth in New Orleans to a Dallas sniper's nest, then to his death in a dim police station basement.

The result is a gripping chronicle of neglect, rage, hatred, mental imbalance and obsession. We see Os-



GLOBE STAFF PHOTO / PAM BERRY

Gerald Posner: "I never thought it was the government."

wald sleeping with his mother until age 11; bullying smaller children in school; scorned and taunted by fellow Marines; chasing his sister-in-law with a knife; beating his wife mercilessly; attempting to assassinate right-wing Gen. Edwin Walker (with the same rifle he later used to kill the president) but missing Walker's head by a hair; sitting in his apartment in his underwear, practicing opening and closing the bolt on his Mannlicher-Carcano rifle; racing down the stairs of the Texas school-book depository building after the shooting and bumping into a policeman, who lets him pass when he learns that Oswald works in the building; blowing away a Dallas policeman in front of witnesses. We see Oswald emotionally stunted and socially isolated, enraged that his brilliance and greatness are not appreciated.

Posner believes that once you know Oswald's story, you cannot conceive of anyone else being involved. "If I had cut the book off in the first half," he says, "right at Dealey Plaza, you still would have a good idea what happened and why. By the time Oswald gets to the sixth-floor window, you believe he did it because you know this fellow."

## Admiration for first lady

Posner used new ballistic studies and computer enhancements of the famous Zapruder film. Combining these with forensic evidence, Posner concludes that Oswald fired three bullets from the sixth floor of the Texas school-book depository building: The first missed, the second passed through Kennedy and Texas Gov. John Connolly and the third killed the president. Posner's investigations gave him powerful feelings, particularly an enormous admiration for the courage and character of Jacqueline Kennedy.

"It was such an emotional experience for me," Posner recalls, "to hear the doctors [at Parkland Hospital] go through that scene. The blank stare on Jackie's face. . . . Mrs. Johnson coming around the corner [in the hospital corridor] and seeing her standing there alone, and putting her arms around her." Ladybird Johnson later recalled that moment: "You always think of her . . . as being insulated, protected; she was quite alone. I don't think I ever saw anyone so much alone in my life."

"What she went through," Posner says, "is astonishing. To have your spouse killed in front of you

and then to hold yourself together in front of the whole country and the world, to march in that funeral parade, to be stoic for your children. She knew she had this responsibility to the public and she carried it out."

Despite Oswald's neglected early life, Posner developed no sympathy for him: "I felt only anger that he, for his own personal motivation, would think he could take the life of another human being and alter the course of history. But I do have sympathy for Jack Ruby: in Yiddish vernacular, a schnook out of his league, clapping you on the back and hoping you will like him, with no idea how he is going to ruin history by killing this fellow on Sunday; thinking he's doing us a favor and instead doing the worst disservice he could possibly do."

## Denouncing Stone's 'JFK'

Posner disdains what he calls "the assassination cottage industry. I have no problem with someone writing a book - I wrote a book - but I would hope good journalistic, scholarly standards would be followed, instead of coming up with some concocted story and running it because you think it will sell, instead of having a symposium and collecting \$150 from everyone, instead of selling bumper stickers and magic-bullet paperweights - this whole degeneration into entertainment."

The entertainment peak or nadir was Oliver Stone's "JFK," which Posner execrates. "Today Stone says the movie is simply one minority view," Posner says. "But if he made a \$50 million movie that said the Holocaust was a hoax, and then said, 'Well, this is just one possible view,' the ADL and everyone else including me would be in front of the theater saying 'Close it down, this is an abomination of history, it affects people's minds,' but we tolerate it in this case because it has moved into the entertainment field."

Part of the disbelief that Oswald could have killed Kennedy on his own, Posner thinks, comes from a sense of imbalance between the criminal and the crime. "This was Camelot," he says, "and all that it represented. It's like William Manchester says [in "Death of a President"]: Look at the Holocaust, 6 million Jewish victims on one side, the Nazis on the other. There's some parity there: greatest crime, greatest criminals. But in this case, you have a young, charismatic president with so much promise, and on the other side you have this psychopathic loser with a \$12 rifle, in Manchester's words, 'this wretched waf.' It doesn't balance. You want to put something heavier on the Oswald side of the scale."

Gerald Posner will write other books, but the pickets on St. James Avenue may be a sign that he can't put this one behind him. "Jim Phelan," he says, "who wrote the piece in the Saturday Evening Post in the mid-'60s that tore Garrison apart, told me, 'The conspiracy buffs will never leave you alone. They're still calling me 25 years later. You have opened Pandora's Box. You may go on to something else, but they will still be out there.'"