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GUESTS: GERALD POSNER, Journalist (LIVE); BOB CALLAHAN, Journalist (LIVE);

BYLINE: LEON HARRIS

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HIGHLIGHT:

Oswald did it, and he acted alone, according to the author of a new book called "Case Closed". The author of another book "Who Shot JFK?" disputes the idea that the case is closed.

BODY:

LEON HARRIS, Anchor: Well, this year marks 30 years since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy - he was shot as his motorcade drove through Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963 and for three decades now we've heard talk of a Communist plot, a U.S. government conspiracy, multiple gunmen - well, two authors join us this morning to discuss the controversies over the Kennedy assassination and we begin our discussion this morning with Gerald Posner. He's the author of a book titled Case Closed - Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK. He claims to have the definitive answer to President Kennedy's death. Gerald Posner is a former Wall Street lawyer turned investigative journalist. Posner joins us now from our New York bureau. Thank you for coming in this morning.

GERALD POSNER, Journalist: Thank you for having me, Leon.

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HARRIS: Now tell me, why do you think this is a case closed?

Mr. POSNER: Well, what I did is I went far beyond the old government investigations, the Warren Commission and the House Select Committee. I have information in here from the KGB files - the first-ever interview with Oswald's KGB handler. I found lost files from attorney Jim Garrison's investigation in New Orleans and I've used the latest computer and scientific enhancements and animation to study the assassination film - the Zapruder film and answer the questions of what happened in Dealy Plaza in terms of the timing of the shots and resolve the issue of the single bullet - was the 'magic bullet' possible or

not? This has a lot of new information to reach the conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald killed Jack Kennedy acting alone.

HARRIS: So you think this new information, without a doubt, closes the case?

Mr. POSNER: As a matter of fact, I will tell you that even with what's coming out of the federal government right now - the files being released this last week, almost a million pages and 10,000 pages more to come. I've talked to investigators who are familiar with those files. They're going to add to our understand of what happened after the assassination. No question about that. They'll fill in the details of the response of the government agencies to who killed JFK, but the overwhelming evidence - and I say this both as an attorney  
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and as an investigative journalist - is clearly that it's Oswald. He did it and you can see the evidence if you take the time to go through the material carefully.

HARRIS: Well, I did take some time to go through your book over the weekend and I have to admit that I was - I did notice first off that it seemed as though you base most of your view upon the - your investigation of Oswald himself as a person. You spent a lot of time developing his character.

Mr. POSNER: Leon, I think you asked the key question. To me, although many people focus on a single bullet and what happened in terms of the shots, I think the answer to this assassination is found in Lee Harvey Oswald's life. There's no question.

HARRIS: Why is that?

Mr. POSNER: Because what we've never had in this country - the American public has never had a reason to understand why Oswald ended up on the sixth floor of the depository shooting at Kennedy. What I try to give you is such a psychological and detailed profile of Oswald's life that you as the reader finally understand why he killed Kennedy and I think you do see it in this book - a man so disturbed over a period of time - psychologically imbalanced,  
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very violent, someone who tried to kill an American Army general - that by the time November 22nd comes around and he goes up and takes his rifle to that corner window to shoot at Kennedy, you really understand why he's there.

HARRIS: Well, what is so compelling about the information you have now on this single bullet - this pristine bullet theory that has been so criticized.

Mr. POSNER: What is new for the first time is - there's a discovery made last year by a computer analyst out in California - at Faer [sp] Analysis - and what he noticed is he noticed Governor Connally's suit lapel - his right jacket flapping up the moment the bullet passed through the governor - that's very important, because now that we know when the governor was struck by a bullet we can place in computer animation the governor and the president in their exact locations on the Zapruder film - the home movie of the assassination and we can ask a computer two questions - is it possible for one bullet to have inflicted all those wounds on the two men and you'll see from this chart, they are in a straight line trajectory - the bullet enters Kennedy and it goes straight into Connally, into his wrist - that's based upon the Zapruder film and right into his thigh. There's no right turns, zigs or zags - the bullet doesn't hesitate for a second as we've been told in previous years by conspiracy theorists. This is the latest example of what can happen. Plus, we can ask the computer another question. This chart shows this. If you look at these cones

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from the cars, we've put in the information about the wounds and we asked the computer where does the assassin have to be for these men to have been wounded in the way they were and look at the cones that head back toward the Texas School Book Depository. Oswald's six-floor window is almost directly in the center of those cones. That is the only location for a shooter to be at in Dealy Plaza [sp] - not on the grassy knoll, not on the side, not in a sewer. Has to be in the Texas School Book Depository, right where Lee Harvey Oswald was.

HARRIS: I think this is a good time to bring in our second guest. Bob Callahan, author of a book, Who Shot JFK? is in our San Francisco Bureau this morning and I'm sure he's watching all of this with great interest. Mr. Callahan, what say you?

BOB CALLAHAN, Journalist: I don't buy it. I don't think we're hearing anything that much different than we heard from the Warren Commission, frankly. I had the opportunity to read the book this weekend and it's very well written and it's a good read but there's not a lot new here and I kept looking for something because of all the hype that has gone with this book about case closed. I wonder who closed it. Random House? I have a feeling this case is going to be open for some time to come.

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HARRIS: Well, as I understand, after reading through that book myself I did notice it didn't seem as though Mr. Posner was actually confirming- or actually, I guess, he didn't necessarily be endorsing [sic] all of the moves of the Warren Commission. Is that true, Mr. Posner?

Mr. CALLAHAN: No, I know-

Mr. POSNER: Absolutely, I will tell you. I disagree with the Warren Commission on substantial areas. They are wrong on Jack Ruby. They underplayed his mob connections. They're wrong about Dealy Plaza and the timing of the shots and there are a whole series of errors. The FBI and the CIA withheld information from the Warren Commission. I blast them just as I blast the conspiracy theorists and I'm somewhat surprised to hear Mr. Callahan say he read the book over the weekend. I almost had the feeling he may have read the wrong book, because the book is chock-a-block with new information. Certainly the KGB revelations have to be new to him; nobody has spoken to Yuri Nosinko [sp?], Oswald's handler, about this. Mr. Callahan has, in his own book, key relationships that Lee Harvey Oswald supposedly had with adventurers like David Farey [sp?] in New Orleans or Guy Bannister [sp?], an ex-FBI agent. I show you in the book those never even took place.

Mr. CALLAHAN: Yeah, but I don't think you show anyone that convincingly that  
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they never took place. First of all, my role in my book is as a historian. I don't necessarily advocate any one particular view. I've tried to look at them all - there's about 20 or 30 - actually there's 37 different points of view in my book and I've tried to be fair to all of them. As for David Farey, actually I think that's one of the rare- I actually found an error in your book. A flat-out error. You say that this man Volbul [sp], Edward Volbul, who was a cadet of David Farey's, didn't get around to identifying a relationship between Farey and Lee Harvey Oswald until, I think, '78, but I went back and looked at the Warren Commission and, in fact, he testified to that and so did another man, Sullivan, so you're flatly in error on that particular point, but I wouldn't

want to get lost in the minutiae of the thing. I think the overall point of view is whether or not it's probable that Lee Harvey Oswald, acting alone, shot the president, and I think the same major improbabilities that have been with the case from the very beginning are still there and I don't think you've removed any of them and I also think- and I don't mean to hog the time, but I also think that this new shot of yours doesn't work. You don't have real evidence of- you're trying to change the clock in Dealey Plaza but you don't have the evidence to support that.

HARRIS: Well, Mr. Callahan, I'd like to know specifically what are your disagreements with Mr. Posner's - now- theory about the single bullet.

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Mr. CALLAHAN: Well, I don't know- I don't necessarily- I'd like to see his computer enhancement before I judge whether or not he's actually reduced time between the time the president was wounded and the time Governor Connolly. I'm not prepared to comment on that. Where I think he's wrong is that he is now establishing- he's trying to establish a bullet that was fired much earlier than the critics and the commission previously thought it had and he's trying to establish it on some very flimsy pieces of evidence as far as I can see.

Mr. POSNER: Leon, if I can just say something. This is key- what Mr. Callahan just said is very interesting when he says something like 'I'd like to see his computer enhancements to make up my mind,' they haven't reviewed the evidence and yet still they're condemning it.

HARRIS: All right, if you could give us just a second. We're going to have to break away for just a quick moment for an update on the hurricane situation and we'll continue this discussion in just a few minutes.

[Commercial break and hurricane update]

HARRIS: And we continue our discussion now with Gerald Posner and with Bob Callahan, two journalists who have written books about the assassination of JFK. Now, Mr. Posner, I'd like to give you a moment now to continue your  
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thought before we broke quickly for that hurricane update.

Mr. POSNER: Thank you, Leon. Interesting thing Mr. Callahan just said a moment ago. When you asked him what his problem was, why he disagreed with my version of the single bullet, he said 'Well, I'd like to see more of his information, his underlying data.' Everything that I have I put into the book. Not only do I have 100 pages of sources, but I have an entire chapter on this.

Mr. CALLAHAN: Well, you sure need a lot more on that-

Mr. POSNER: But bear with me. Just allow me to say this-

Mr. CALLAHAN: Sure, of course-

Mr. POSNER: So what is happening is- this book has hit a nerve and with conspiracy theorists, they are trying to respond, has Mr. Callahan has on this show, to say 'By the way, this is just a rehash, this is old information. don't worry about it. This is the Warren Commission.' It's absolutely now because they are really afraid that if people start to pay attention to this book and if they see what's new and they see the new technologies and understand that Oswald did it, books like his, Who Killed JFK, that talk about 37 conspiracy theories, movies like Oliver Stone's JFK and this whole cottage industry that has grown

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up about the Kennedy assassination will be closed up. This has become a business. They are afraid of the fact that this business could be closed up but the public believes Oswald did it-

Mr. CALLAHAN: Could I possibly get a word in now?

Mr. POSNER: -as he did.

HARRIS: Mr. Callahan?

Mr. CALLAHAN: Well, we find out that Mr. Posner's not only a lawyer and a journalist; he's also a psychiatrist. He's reading my mind and talking about my deepest thoughts and desires. I am not a conspiracy theorist, sir. I'm a historian, and I don't- when you quoted the passage before you quoted, you were quoting me quoting someone else, but you ascribe the remarks to me, but forget that. I want to know why- well, I don't know if we have time to ask you about some versions in your own book. One example, and I wish I had time to develop about 20 of them - you will quote one of Mr. Oswald's Marine Corps buddies- or, sergeant, saying that he was, by civilian standards, a good shot, but at the same time you don't quote the adjoining testimony of one of his closest friends who went out on the rifle range every day with him and said he was a terrible shot and he often missed the target all together. My point, sir, is that it's

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lawyers again - lawyers come in and they want to divide all of the evidence one side or the other and the problem with a Kennedy case and the problem we've had for 30 years is the evidence is inconclusive. We cannot conclude with any certainty the kind of gospel that you're preaching this morning. We don't know these things yet.

HARRIS: I'd like to just ask one final question as we only have a few moments here and I'd like to begin with Mr. Posner. Why are we even having this discussion now, 30 years later. What is it about the American public that will not let this issue die?

Mr. POSNER: I think what it is, Leon, is we did have legitimate questions left over from the Warren Commission. They made enough errors. We don't believe in blue ribbon commissions in this country any more. Watergate showed us that there's a general distrust in government and there are enough questions left over from the Kennedy assassination that I think that we do have - we've been bombarded 30 years with conspiracy theories.

HARRIS: Mr. Callahan, your view?

Mr. POSNER: I don't disagree with that. I also think that we cared an awful lot about this president and I also think again the evidence is maddeningly

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inconclusive, so we can never quite get it right.

HARRIS: All right, well thank you very much Bob Callahan and Gerald Posner for joining this morning. Mr. Posner, I'm sorry for mispronouncing your name earlier. Thank you for joining us.

Mr. POSNER: Thank you, Leon.

The preceding text has been professionally transcribed. However, although

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