

Shut Up, Roll Over and Go Back to Sleep:

**JFK's Assassination Has Been Solved
For You**

BY JOHN KIMSEY

Don't be fooled by Gerald Posner or any of the media powers—*US News and World Report*, the *Chicago Tribune*, CNN, CBS—hyping Posner's new book, *Case Closed: Lee Harvey Oswald and the Assassination of JFK*. Since the book's September publication, Posner and Oswald have been in the news almost as much as Burt and Loni. In most of the publicity shots, the two are pictured together, Posner looking pensive before a photo of Oswald, whose face has been blown up to roughly the size of King Kong's. This is appropriate, since the book goes beyond the time-honored lone nut characterization to cast Oswald as a monster of mythic proportions, one with a penchant for mischief in tall buildings.

According to Posner, everything happened just the way the Warren Commission said it did, only uh, moreso. Oswald, acting alone, killed the President and changed history, all in the name of—what? Nothing really, except personal resentment at his sorry fate (the book, short on history and politics, is long on dimestore psychology): Oswald was a confused, chronically abusive mediocrity, a clever psychopath, a "man with a deadly smirk" in the ad hominem phrase of *US News*; one who unfortunately was ready, skilled and (considering the condition of the weapon) extremely lucky with a rifle.

Remember all that stuff the Warren Commission and its apologists said that made you wince, chuckle or seethe in disbelief? Remember all those insults to intelligence, credibility and Newton's second law of motion? The aerial ballet of the magic bullet? The Rube Goldberg intricacies of the jet effect (the scenario that "proved" that when JFK's head goes back and to the left, it's not because he's been shot from the front right—your eyes, common sense and the laws of nature be damned)? Or the claim that the first lone nut was eliminated by a second lone nut, one with no connections to organized crime?

Remember those golden oldies? Well, if you

do then you don't have to fork over \$25 for Posner's book, because you have its essence. This book which establishment commentators find so incisive and devastating, contains nothing new other than a load of desperate attitude. It's a rehash of all the Oswald-did-it-alone arguments, dressed up in neo-conservative rhetoric and high tech drag.

The publishers make much of the fact that Posner used computer models to plot bullet trajectories, etc. This is supposed to dazzle all us techno-peasants and send us muttering, like so many Jethro Bodines, "Golllee, Uncle Jed—they's got computers!". They neglect to tell us that no other layperson, engineer or scientist has duplicated any of Posner's vaunted results, a fact that puts his scientific credibility goshdarn close to zero.

Nor do Posner and his proponents mention the rule of GIGO—garbage in, garbage out—which



every computer wonk knows. That is, before a computer can tell you anything, you have to feed it data, and the quality of the answers that come out corresponds precisely to the quality of the data that goes in. In setting up his model of the bullet's trajectory, the programmer (at the eerily named Failure Analysis Associates) has to give the computer information with which to work. So along with data about vehicles and buildings, heights and speeds, he tells it that there is an entrance wound in the back of JFK's neck, and an exit wound in the throat. Yet these are the precise points on which the controversy turns and about which there has for years been sober, educated debate. By telling the

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computer that "X is a wound of entrance," Posner and company prejudge what is perhaps the key question. What can such a computer possibly tell us? Only what Gerald Posner wants us to hear.

Random House, *US News*, Dan Rather and the others would have us believe that *Case Closed* is both the latest and last word on the crime of the century. This is because, thanks to one of those cute postmodern ironies, it really restates the first word on the case, the old Warren Report party line.

Actually, it's the Warren Report on steroids. Thus the Commission's portrait of Oswald as a crazed malcontent is inflated until we have a Psycho Killer the size of a Macy's Day Parade balloon. Schizoid tendencies; passive-aggressive behavior; sadomasochism; virtually every syndrome in the Psych 101 sink is flung at Oswald. It's as if the lone nut scenario is such a tough sell in the post-Stone 1990s that it must be staged on the scale of *Star Wars*.

The problem with the psychological profile angle is that even if the profile is accurate, it doesn't make Oswald the killer of the President. Indeed, if the attitudes and outrages—truancy, tantrums, violent outbursts—scribed to Oswald are any indication, the country must be brimming with assassins. Moody, arrogant loners like Frank Sinatra, Douglas MacArthur and Dan Rather would have to be prime suspects.

Besides, it's exactly like character testimony in a trial. The prosecution produces doctors who diagnose a devil; the defense parades experts who find the accused to be an angel; and both sides can do this until hell acquires a ski patrol. But Posner, the ex-Wall Street lawyer, presents only the prosecutor's brief.

The Warren Report did much the same thing; but then *Case Closed* is a medley of old standards. (Even the computer modelling angle has been tried before, in a 1988 *Nova* show.) Thus jiggles in the Zapruder film are trotted out as if they were the latest discovery and an infallible guide. But the jig-

A Primer of Posnerthink

—Regarding Oswald's marksmanship, Posner relies on the Warren testimony of Sgt. James Zahm and Maj. Eugene Anderson. However, their testimony is so weak that it inspired scathing criticism, not from conspiracy theorists, but from the Commission's own staff. Wesley Liebeller, the young lawyer whom many agree was the most active and intellectually rigorous Warren staffer, referred to the testimony of Zahm and Anderson as part of a "fairy tale."

The Warren Report addresses Oswald's marksmanship in its fourth chapter. Reading the initial draft of this chapter before the Report's publication, Liebeller was mortified. He wrote a devastating 20 page memo attacking the chapter's onesided, cardstacking approach to the evidence. Misleading hypothetical questions were used to elicit statements from Zahm and Anderson to the effect that Oswald's shots had been "easy," contended Liebeller. He pointed out that both witnesses were asked questions which specified the distance and trajectory of the shots but which made no mention of the time factor. That is, the slight complication of pulling off this feat in 5.6 seconds was simply left out when Messrs. Zahm and Anderson gave their expert assessments.

And this was no slipup, suggested Liebeller; rather, it indicated a pattern of sleazy manipulation. The



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conclusion that Oswald was a "good shot" was based solely on the testimony of these two men, neither of whom had ever set eyes on Oswald. And they based their assessments not on any direct observation, but strictly on scores from two Marine Corps firing tests, each of which Oswald took in the late fifties.

Posner fudges this, referring to Zahm as the "NCO in charge of the marksmanship training unit," and quoting him as saying, "In the Marine Corps, he is a good shot." This makes it sound like Zahm had some familiarity with Oswald, as if he had been the NCO in charge of Oswald's military unit, whereas in fact Zahm was in charge of the overall program in marksmanship at the Marine Corps School, and had no particular familiarity with Oswald. When Zahm says "he is a good shot," he is speaking purely in the abstract, and his use of the present tense is the tipoff. He is saying, in effect, "Given these scores," he (i.e., anyone with such scores) would rate as a good shot.

Oddly, Posner emphasizes the second and lower of Oswald's two scores, his 1959 score of 191, which qualified him as a "marksman." Posner must like the sound of the term "marksman," because the reality of all this is rather embarrassing. "Marksman" is the lowest possible rating in the Marine Corps, and the minimum score for attaining it is 190. Even the Warren Report characterizes 191 as the score (quoting the Marine Corps Personnel Office) of a "poor shot." If Liebeller was worried by his own Commission's account, what would he say about Posner?

And returning to Liebeller: his memo also pointed out the Report's deliberate neglect of evidence that Oswald was an extremely poor shot. Some of this came from individuals like Nelson Delgado who had—apologies to the gods of abstraction—actually served with Oswald. And some came from Yuri Nosenko, the supposed Soviet defector, whose proffered KGB file put Oswald the rifleman in the same category, say, as Barney Fife. Much like his predecessors, Posner makes no mention of any of this, even though elsewhere—when the subject is Oswald-as-psycho—Nosenko is quoted verbatim and at length. Finally, Liebeller's memo (which had little effect on the final Report) pointed out that Zahm and Anderson had been called to testify in late July 1964, more than a month after the close of the investigation. Liebeller's conclusion, paraphrased by Edward Epstein: "The date these witnesses testified suggests that they were called for the express purpose of characterizing these shots as 'easy shots.' Well, that's one way to close a case."

— On p. 74, Posner mentions Spas T. Raikin, the representative of the Traveller's Aid Society whom the State Department dispatched to meet the Oswalds when they returned from Russia in July 1962. Researchers have wondered about the choice of an apparent layman like Raikin when cold war

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gle theory—the notion that perceptible jerks in the film are traceable to cameraman Abraham Zapruder, who shook involuntarily in reaction to each shot, this occurrence making the jiggles an index of the number of shots fired—has been around a long while. Furthermore, the jiggle phenomenon has been read in differing but persuasive ways. Robert Groden, working for the House Select Committee On Assassinations, used it to sync up the sounds of four shots with the film. Posner is enamored of the jiggle factor because a jiggle around frame 180 allows him to claim a shot is fired earlier than the Commission has Oswald firing. (This idea was first proposed by Commission critic Sylvia Meagher in the mid 60s.) This in turn allows Posner to expand the lone gunman's killing window from the near-impossible span of 6 seconds to the vast, commodious luxury of 8 or so seconds. This 8 second span is supposed to make Oswald's alleged feat—2 hits in an incredibly short period under the most strenuous conditions—more, well, possible.

Leaving aside the question of whether a 2 second difference makes shooting from the sixth floor a cakewalk, we should note that many things in this world—outhouses in orbit, for example—are possible. This, however, does not mean they're at all probable; and it certainly doesn't prove they happened.

This emphasis on the possible is another old saw. When it comes to issues like the magic bullet's trajectory, the rifle's recycling time, or Oswald's presence on the second floor 90 seconds after the shooting—i.e., any scenario that might support the Oswald-did-it-alone view—the apologists apply a standard of evaluation that is very generous. The magic bullet scenario is possible, say the computers; the shot could line up; the evidence does not

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disprove it; it can't be ruled out.

On the other hand, when the apologists deal with evidence that would support, say, a shot from the grassy knoll—i.e., evidence they don't like—they apply a very strenuous standard. There is *no evidence that conclusively proves* a grassy knoll shot. Well, neither is there any absolute evidence proving the single bullet theory. But the double standard, with its equivocal language, implicitly favors the official view.

Regarding the grassy knoll, Posner's strategy is to cast certain witnesses—typically those like Beverly Oliver or Ed Hoffman who can be most easily discredited—as de facto representatives of the very possibility of a grassy knoll shot. Thus, when he has cast doubt on the claims of, say, Beverly Oliver, Posner pretends he has devastated the whole second gunman hypothesis.

But the second gunman theory doesn't need Beverly Oliver. (I could have begun the preceding sentence with "needless to say"; but Posner's omnipresence in the mass media makes the saying, sadly, a necessity.) Photo records of the scene like the Nix film show a horde of people running immediately to the knoll. Among this crowd are sharp-eyed reporter types like PBS's Robert MacNeil as well as numerous police officers—professionals trained to comprehend gunfire and its reverberational properties. And of course there's the Zapruder film, back and to the left; the splattered outriders to the limousine's rear; the testimony from Parkland medical personnel about entrance wounds in the front; to say nothing of the House Committee's acoustics evidence.

But as you might guess, the acoustics evidence is dismissed out of hand by Posner. He uses the same lame rationale the National Academy of Sciences used, in 1982, to refute the Committee's evidence: a rock drummer from Ohio said it was wrong.

This debate concerns the police dictabelt recording which was found by the Committee's experts to have recorded at least four rifle shots in Dealey Plaza around 12:30 pm. Furthermore, said the scientists, there was a 95% probability that one of these shots, the fourth one, came from the grassy knoll.

Scrutinizing a published copy of the recording, drummer Steve Barber was surprised to hear what sounded like a voice underneath the gunfire saying, "Secure the area." This was a police command that is documented as going out around 12:31 or 32, *after* the shots had ceased. Lone lay-

police mandated that anyone returning from the Soviet Union be debriefed by government officials. Some researchers have found an apparent answer in Raikin's connections to political organizations not mentioned in the Warren Report. In a note, Posner comments that Jim Garrison characterizes Raikin as Secretary-General of the friends of Anti-Bolshevik Nations, a group hooked into both US intelligence and the extreme right wing of European politics. But, says Posner, Garrison supplies no citation for this claim. Maybe not, but numerous other writers do cite the source, a fact that puts in question Posner's supposed mastery of his subject. The claim was originally advanced by Peter Dale Scott in his Nov. 1973 *Ramparts* article, "From Dallas To Watergate." Aside from being one of the most clear-headed, formidable and respected assassination researchers, Scott is also a university professor, his work marked by the most rigorous research protocols. It would be interesting to see Posner challenge Scott, but one gets the sense that Posner is less interested in the issues than in picking on the easiest targets.

Posner prints the photograph of Gen. Walker's backyard which Oswald allegedly took while casing the joint and which was found among Oswald's effects. The photo shows a '57 Chevy in the driveway; in the Warren version of the photo, there is a hole, cut precisely where the auto's license plate should be. This seems a bit odd, but things get curiously when one examines Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry's *JFK Assassination File*. In this book Curry displays a Dallas Police photo of various of Oswald's possessions, strewn across a desktop. Clearly visible among Oswald's effects is the aforementioned photo. Though the Walker photo is small, one thing is perfectly clear: the license plate has not been excised. This peculiar difference has given rise to questions, as indeed it should. This is no problem for Posner though, who simply asserts, like Lewis Carroll's Humpty Dumpty, that this isn't so, that the license plate, even in the Oswald desk shot, was already cut out. As I write this, I am looking at the two photos (they are reprinted in Robert Groden's *The Killing of A President*). In one there is a crater where a license plate should be; in one there is not. My wife and neighbor verify this. I guess we need some of those newfangled Posner glasses.

More brazenly even than the Warren Report, Posner parades Howard Brennan as the key witness in Dealey Plaza, this despite Brennan's inability to identify Oswald in a police lineup and Warren staffer Ball's criticism, internal to the Commission, of Brennan's testimony. Posner tries to refute criticism that has pointed to Brennan's poor eyesight: he was *farsighted*, says Posner, an asset in eyeballing the sniper's nest. More pertinent though is the fact that in a March 1964 reconstruction of the assassination, Brennan had trouble seeing any sort of figure in the sixth floor window. Posner makes no mention of this, but then as we have seen, he has vision problems of

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his own. — In discussing Garrison's case, Posner brings up Gordon Novel, whom Garrison fingered as a CIA electronics expert with knowledge of a plot. With the gall that is his calling-card, Posner says nope, sorry, wrong: Novel was never a CIA agent. This however flies in the face of statements attributed to Novel and his lawyer, and it definitely contradicts the New Orleans States-Item of April 25, 1967, which reported that Novel "told a number of friends and intimates that he was a CIA operative and will use this role to battle Garrison's charges." Then there is the tricky matter, omitted by Posner but reported by columnist Jack Anderson on August 15, 1974, of Watergate: Novel allegedly conspired with Nixon hatchetman Charles Colson to erase the incriminating White House tapes using a high tech gizmo. Finally, there is Novel's appearance on a January 1993 *Frontline* detailing J. Edgar Hoover's secret life. Here, Novel describes, on camera, being given blackmail material on Hoover by CIA superspy James Angleton. Clearly Gordon Novel is the most regular of guys. What could Jim Garrison have been thinking?

— Again like the Warren Commission, Posner relies heavily on the testimony of Marina Oswald, particularly when making the case for Oswald as lone nut. But both Warren and House Committee staffers expressed the gravest doubts about her testimony, which seemed to change with the weather. In the words of Commission staffer Norman Redlich, "Marina Oswald has lied to the Secret Service; the FBI and this Commission repeatedly on matters which are of vital concern to the people of this country and the world." Moreover, there is Marina's 1988 interview with *Ladies' Home Journal*, wherein she repudiates her earlier testimony, says she was intimidated and coerced and asserts her belief that Oswald was a patsy. But the way Posner treats Marina's testimony, you'd think no one had ever raised an eyebrow about it.

— And when Posner isn't relying on Marina, he's quoting her mouthpiece Patricia McMillan. McMillan's book *Marina and Lee* purports to accurately recreate intimate details of the Oswalds' married life, as well as the mental states and conversations of Marina and Lee. However, other than the supposed word of the problematic Marina, the book, to use a phrase beloved by Posner, provides no corroboration. Then there is McMillan herself, whose unusual history has been noted by more scrupulous researchers. She just happened to turn up a tourist in early sixties Russia, coincidentally meeting and interviewing a young American defector named Lee Oswald. Later fate anointed her spokesperson for Marina. All this and a CIA groupie too. In the words of Anthony Summers: "McMillan has testified that she never worked for the CIA. However, she applied for work at the CIA in 1952, was debriefed by the Agency in 1962 after a Soviet trip, and has provided

man Barber presented his find to the NAS, who had been assigned by the Reagan Justice Department to review the acoustics evidence. Common sense, said the NAS, tells us that if the voice command of 12:31 is simultaneous, on the tape, with the sound of the shots, those sounds must not be shots. (Interestingly, the same people who here tell us common sense is the key have for years been telling us that, when looking at the Zapruder film, common sense doesn't count.)

There are, however, other ways to account for this mix of sounds (needle skippage or tape print-through, for example) that don't rule out what the experts said was undoubtedly the sound of rifle fire on the tape. But the NAS and the Justice Department, obligated to review the HSCA evidence, did not do the scientific thing, i.e., conduct further tests; they simply embraced Barber's assertion and used it to dismiss the acoustics evidence as invalid. It was a convenient way for Ed Meese's Justice Department to get off the hook: no acoustics evidence; no conspiracy; no need to do a damn thing.

But the House Committee findings were based on elaborate scientific tests, just the sort of thing Posner is bowled over by. Furthermore, the Committee's tests were not confined to some plush-lined computer lab; they involved painstaking reenactments in Dealey Plaza. And, unlike Posner's computer results, the acoustics findings were verified by two independent studies and two sets of experts and criteria. If Posner or the NAS were serious about evaluating such evidence, they would conduct some serious tests. But these ministers of science march to a different drummer, one in step with their preconceived agenda.

And the doublethink doesn't stop there. Posner—like all Warren apologists today with the possible exception of Gerald Ford—admits what critics long have known, that the CIA and FBI lied to the Warren Commission, manipulating and derailing its investigation. One might think that simple arithmetic would apply here. Let's see: the Warren Report, minus the tainted evidence of the FBI and CIA, leaves—what? Answer: not much. But Posner, the apostle of science, is undeterred by such a calculus. No, despite a CIA/FBI coverup (which was, of course, innocuous and benign), the Commission somehow stumbled onto the truth—Oswald did it alone—in this matter. They were that honorable, these honorable men.

This touching faith in official bodies extends, in *Case Closed*, beyond the Warren Commission,

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the FBI and the CIA to include even the KGB. Posner relies heavily on the word of Yuri Nosenko, a KGB agent who turned himself over to the CIA in 1964, 2 months after the assassination. Nosenko claimed to be a defector, dissatisfied with life in the Soviet Union. He also claimed to have handled Oswald's file while Oswald was in Russia. The KGB, claimed Nosenko, had no contact with and indeed no interest in Lee Harvey Oswald.

In the CIA of the cold war 60s, Nosenko's claims were dynamite. In ways too complex to explain here, they played into existing agendas and phobias within the Agency. Suffice it to say virtually no one believed Nosenko. A hardline faction, led by CIA Counterintelligence Chief James Angleton, held that Nosenko was a plant sent to disguise KGB involvement in the assassination. But even a moderate faction found most of Nosenko's claims—both about Oswald and other matters—dubious; the moderates simply ascribed nothing sinister to this fact. In the moderates' view Nosenko was mendacious and desperate but basically well-meaning, a boozy bureaucrat willing to say anything if it might get him out of the evil empire.

The war over Nosenko went on for 10 years and tore the Agency apart. It involved isolation and interrogation techniques that seem right out of *The Prisoner* and yet it was only an interlude in the larger and weirder story of Angleton's Ahab-like hunt for a Soviet mole within the Agency. The Nosenko case was, to coin a phrase, closed in the mid 70s. This had little to do with any certainty about Nosenko's claims and much to do with exasperation about Angleton's. When it was all over, Angleton had been fired, the moderates had won and Nosenko was declared a genuine defector and made an officer in the CIA.

Nosenko's word on Oswald, which even his friends in the CIA doubted, is accepted by Posner as gospel. The same goes for retired KGB Colonel Maxim Nechiporenko, who was stationed at the embassy in Mexico City when Oswald allegedly visited there in September 1963. Like Nosenko, Nechiporenko says the KGB viewed Oswald as a possible provocateur and a definite nutcase and steered clear.

Fine, but what is the word of someone like Nechiporenko worth? He was renowned in Mexico as a master of intrigue and deception. Back in the not-too-distant days of the Cold War, establishment types like Posner would have regarded such a Soviet as the evil empire incarnate. Now, in the post-Cold War thaw, he has an American literary agent and

cultural and literary information to the CIA (HSCA Report p. 213-). It's such a small world.

—By the end of *Case Closed*, it seems like *Wayne's World*. The Appendix "Non-Mysterious Mystery Deaths," finds Posner drained of debating tricks and reduced to shouting "Conspiracy...Not!" in heavy metal tones. Certainly some of these deaths are easily explained. Moreover, one could erase them all from the record and still have enough strangeness for a hundred reasonable doubts. But it is the height of chutzpah—or hysteria—to assert (with virtually no contextual background) that the deaths of Sam Giancana, Johnny Roselli, George deMoreschildt, Eladio del Valle and David Ferrie are not at least suspicious and worthy of a pause. Here again, Posner's instinct for obfuscation comes to the fore. Regarding Giancana, Roselli and deMoreschildt, Posner makes no mention of the fact that all three were shot precisely at the time when they were either testifying or preparing to testify before Congressional committees. About what? Oh, nothing much, just certain early sixties assassination plots. This does not of course prove anything, but at the very least the timing is, well, interesting. But I repeat: Posner does not even allude to this fact; he does not even attempt one of his strained refutations. Oh well. Whatever closes your case.

admits close ties with CBS News, an outfit that has a history of patriotic cooperation with the CIA.

The bottom line? Simple: Agents Nosenko and Nechiporenko, like their counterparts in the FBI and CIA, should not be taken at face value. To do so is the height of naivete, or something worse. Of course if you do take them at face value, then you have further corroboration for Oswald's lonesome nuttiness. Anyone or anything that provides that is a friend of *Case Closed*.

Conclusion Foregone might be a better title for such a story than *Case Closed*, but no matter. Posner's real appeal with this bizarre argument is the neoconservative one: Aren't you tired of it all—the conspiracies, the weirdness, the wondering? Tired of the uncertainty and the horror, the horror? Well, guess what, shoppers. You don't have to worry anymore, because that's no longer the fashionable attitude. In interviews, Posner strikes a *Bob Roberts* pose, positioning himself as the lone outsider questioning an oppressive "establishment" of conspiracy theorists. Change "conspiracy theorists" to "liberals" and you have the same argument Rush Limbaugh is fond of using, and we all know what a Young Soul Rebel he is. It's been a stock right-wing strategy since the days of Reagan: it's hip to be square. It's even hip to believe the Warren Report.

As for conspiracy theories, they are dismissed with the usual psychological explanation of

their appeal: They answer our need to find meaning in events. In fact, says Posner, there is no such meaning in events, and conspiracy thinking is analogous to the religious thought of primitives. In this view, conspiracy is the opium of the people; it's a balm for those not tough-minded enough to face a world where shit just happens and political leaders just up and die.

However, the appeal of a theory is not an index of its truth or falsity. And the no-conspiracy view has its own dubious appeal, to the American myth of the individual and his supreme importance. In this Great Man view, history is the function of personality and its mysteries. Such a view ignores the workings of institutions, classes and interest groups, and downplays context. At its best, it's an oversimplification; at its worst, it's history as *People* magazine.

Besides, the Oswald-alone view is itself opium for the people. It is very comforting, since it absolves us of any responsibility, including the need to question power and its workings.

But cutting off questions is Posner's real purpose in *Case Closed*. He pretends to be a disinterested party, calmly evaluating the facts, but start at the top and consider the title. It bespeaks the sort of shrill certainty about complex issues normally reserved for bad undergraduate papers. Other books in the assassination literature—*Inquest*, *Reasonable Doubt*, *Coincidence Or Conspiracy?*, *Who Killed JFK?*, to name a few—have titles that suggest openness and the spirit of inquiry. But *Case Closed* is about closure, of the most malign sort. It wants to shut the door, shut off discussion and shut you up. Rest easy, America, it says. Our computers have figured it out. There is no problem, and certainly no politics here. You can all roll over and go back to sleep.

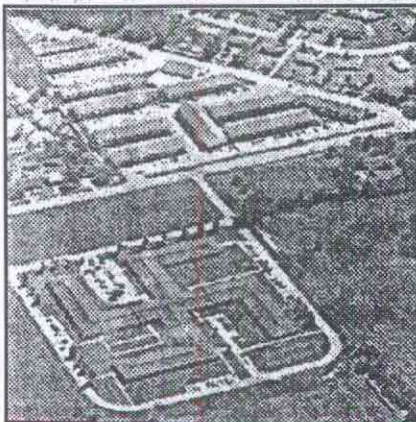
Case Closed is a work in an emerging genre, one focused on revisionist right-wing propaganda.

Its nearest cousins are *The Real Anita Hill* and the works of D'Souza, Medved, Roiphe and company. We might call this genre "The Empire Strikes Back," most of its stars having been seduced by the dark side of the force. Many are the rewards awaiting the young writer willing to sell out truth to shore up conservative hegemony. And this is why Posner's picture is everywhere, even though his book is so slight.

Compare the Posner media blitz to the coverage, thirteen years ago, of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. At that time, the Committee released its finding of a "probable conspiracy" in the murder of the President. The Committee's report fingered Oswald, but said he was part of a larger plot. The report implied that this larger plot involved mobsters, probably anti-Castro Cubans and possibly individuals connected to U.S. intelligence. However, it said, the identification of these other conspirators would require more time and funding, as the Committee had run out of both.

This astonishing conclusion came at the end of the longest and most in-depth investigation to date. Yet the play it got in the mainstream media—in journals like *US News* and the *Trib*—was virtually nil. To this day, few Americans know what the House Committee found. I suppose a hype of Posner proportions might have been out of the question, but the conclusions of the House Committee were hardly covered at all. But then, the House Committee's verdict was: case open.

John Kimsey is a writer, musician and teacher living in Chicago.



Budget cuts blamed for swastika building

Associated Press Staff
DECATUR — Wesley Place, a 150-apartment apartment complex in north Atlanta because of the swastika-shaped exterior.
 The swastika-shaped building was built during construction over 10 years ago, said the Rev. Wray Tamm, executive director of Methodist Homes for the Aged.
 An originally conceived, he said the building had another shape.
 The home was built in 1980-81 with a \$2.5 million loan from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
 "We'll have nothing back on it because of our construction, and that's what it turned out to be," Tamm says. "We weren't really aware of it being there."

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