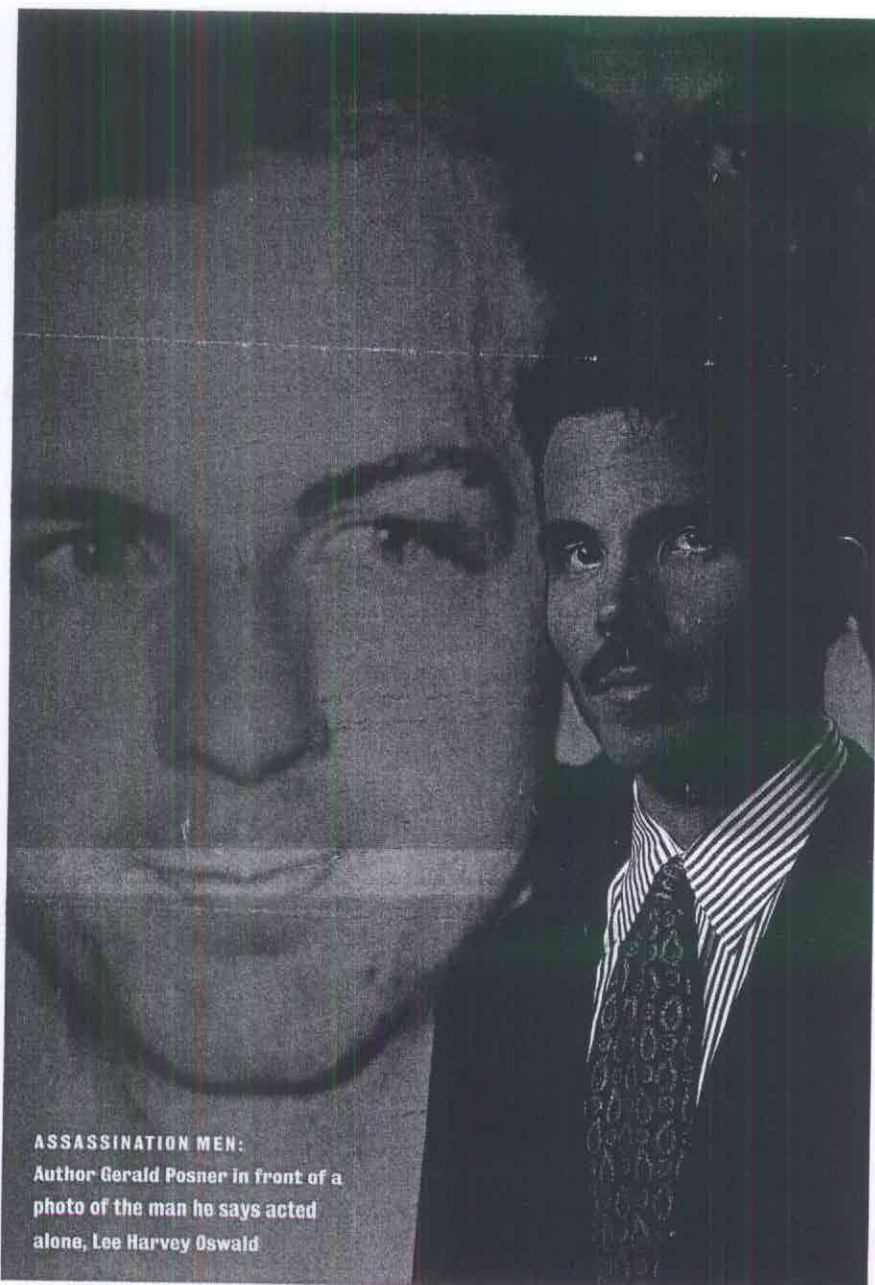


# Conspiracy Killer

*With overwhelming evidence and logic, 'Case Closed' proves that Oswald was JFK's lone assassin.* BY GENE LYONS



**ASSASSINATION MEN:**  
Author Gerald Posner in front of a photo of the man he says acted alone, Lee Harvey Oswald

**H**ISTORICALLY, Americans have long congratulated themselves for their dedication to plain facts and their commonsense suspicion of abstract theories. The reality, of course, is far less flattering to national self-esteem. We have always been suckers for a good conspiracy theory. Such all-American figures as William Jennings Bryan, Henry Ford, and J. Edgar Hoover rarely failed to find organized subversion wherever they looked, nor lacked for cheering throngs to support them.

Even so, it is still remarkable that it has taken 30 years since the assassination of President John F. Kennedy for a book like Gerald Posner's **CASE CLOSED: LEE HARVEY OSWALD AND THE ASSASSINATION OF JFK** (Random House, \$25) to be written and published. Every conscientious citizen who has ever sat up half the night mauling over the elaborate speculations of conspiracy mavens like Mark Lane, Edward Jay Epstein, David S. Lifton, Robert Sam Anson, Anthony Summers, and Jim Marrs (those are only the most prominent), not to mention the millions who lined up to watch Oliver Stone's brilliant 1991 propaganda film *JFK*, owes it to himself to give Posner's book a careful reading. The result, safe to say, will come as a revelation.

And, yes, as something of a relief. As thorough and incisive a job of reporting and critical thinking as you will ever read, *Case Closed* does more than buttress the much beleaguered Warren Commission's conclusion that Lee Harvey Oswald—pitiful, grandiose lone demento and would-be Communist defector—bore full and solitary responsibility for the murder of President Kennedy. It also indicts and pretty much convicts the entire JFK-conspiracy industry of sloppy research, shoddy thinking, special pleading, hysterical speculation, and downright dishonesty. More than that, Posner's book is written in a penetrating, lucid style that makes it a joy to read. Even the footnotes, often briskly debunking one or another fanciful or imaginary scenario put forth by the conspiracy theorists, rarely fail to enthrall.

How and why the Kennedy assassination has become such a happy hunting

# ALL KENNEDYS, ALL THE TIME

THE KENNEDY MOMENT in American history survives in myth and magic—and in a long shelf of books, serious and sleazy, about the epic time. There are semiofficial histories by administration admirers, critical works by historians and journalists, and the inevitable gossip glut by camp followers. Here's our guide to the most notable titles. —*Andrew Kopkind*

TITLE	CLAIM TO FAME	AGENDA	PROBLEM	JUDGMENT OF POSTERITY
 <p><b>A THOUSAND DAYS</b> Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.</p>	Liberal academic star gets to play inside the White House	First out of the starting gate to establish the basic elements of the Kennedy myth: courage, brilliance, vision, culture	Author confuses Kennedy's virtues with those he would like to be his own	Blinded by the light of Camelot
 <p><b>KENNEDY</b> Theodore C. Sorensen</p>	Kennedy alter ego devised the classy but essentially meaningless antitheses and inversions of JFK's speeches	Set in stone description of JFK as "pragmatic liberal," kill idea that Democratic Presidents were soft on communism	Author created one straw man, destroyed another	Too close for comfort, or objectivity
 <p><b>THE DEATH of a PRESIDENT</b> William Manchester</p>	Jackie suggested the author write this work, turned against him when the finished product offended her finer sensibilities	Mythologizing the assassination as a tragic act in the tradition of the great English regicides and Greek tyrannicides	Author is no Shakespeare or Sophocles	More than we wanted to know about Nov. 22, 1963
 <p><b>THE KENNEDYS: AN AMERICAN DRAMA</b> Peter Collier and David Horowitz</p>	Authors are famous political changelings, switching from red-hot radicals in the '60s to glare-ice conservatives in the '90s	The Family, warts and all	Despite their tough love, the authors treat the Kennedy saga like an epic romance novel. <i>Omnia vincit amor.</i>	All unhappy families are the same
 <p><b>THE KENNEDY IMPRISONMENT: A MEDITATION ON POWER</b> Garry Wills</p>	Author mixes classics, American culture, public policy, and history; sounds like liberal and conservative at the same time	Create an existentialist, Aesopian, vaguely poststructuralist, Catholic moralist context for JFK (wow!)	Gets a bit stuck on the Kennedy libido	The best existentialist, Aesopian, vaguely poststructuralist...
 <p><b>A QUESTION OF CHARACTER: A LIFE OF JOHN F. KENNEDY</b> Thomas C. Reeves</p>	Author is a leading American scholar of the life of Chester A. Arthur (Chester who?)	John F. Kennedy as dirty bird	No follow-up—e.g., the author states that JFK was circumcised at the age of 21, but he doesn't say why, or how	Shallow clip job; the first cut is the deepest
 <p><b>A WOMAN NAMED JACKIE</b> C. David Heymann</p>	Author dedicates this book to two lawyers	A buck	No problem	Worth a buck