

JFK books onslaught

CASE CLOSED

By Gerald Posner
Penguin

\$21.95

THE KILLING OF A PRESIDENT

By Robert Groden
Hodder Headline

\$69.95

JFK, RECKLESS YOUTH

By Nigel Hamilton
Random

\$29.95

Reviewed by DAL MCGURK

THE 30th anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy saw the release of some 30 new titles in the United States.

These titles covered both the Dallas events and the subject of JFK.

Three of the most prominent from this new generation of JFK books are now in New Zealand bookshops.

Gerald Posner rightly decries commercialisation of the JFK assassination, but is wrong in nearly everything else.

His book sets out to do two things — justify the official United States Warren Commission's 1964 report that found a lone malcontent with left wing tendencies the assassin, and counter the criticism levelled at the commission since the 1960s.

To achieve these ends he adopts the partisan and adversarial role of a prosecutor.

On key questions however Posner is silent, such as over the encounter by three police officers, immediately after the assassination in areas where shots were reported, of men falsely claiming to be Secret Service agents.

Such evidence of conspiracy was not followed up by the FBI or the commission either.

Posner has been widely

colour) and diagrams connected with the assassination.

He falls down badly though in the main text and captions trying to tie the photos to a dizzying number of possible assassins and accomplices.

Both Posner and Groden fail to convince in pointing the finger at who they think killed JFK, mainly because of the dearth of conclusive evidence.

The crime was not properly investigated at the time, and there are no leads now to follow (hence no basis for theories to reveal who may have been behind the assassination).

Groden's book may well be worth buying just for the photos, but one would need to read other authors to begin to understand what the photos mean.

Nigel Hamilton's book is the first of a two-volume biography of JFK, covering the years from 1917 to 1946.

The "reckless" in the title comes from Hamilton's description of JFK's "reckless sexual licence," and it says much of what the book is about.

Among the sexual exploits recounted by Hamilton is JFK's torrid wartime affair with glamorous Danish journalist Inga Arvad, wrongly suspected by the FBI of being a Nazi agent.

Hamilton's book is rejected by the Kennedy family, especially in the way it shows JFK as an emotional cripple, deprived of love as a child by both parents. (The character of Joseph Kennedy sen is blackened throughout the book, with Hamilton likening him to Josef Stalin.)

Still, for all its deficiencies as a biography, it is a most readable story with its look at this hitherto hidden side to JFK's early years.

quoted and promoted worldwide since his book was released, and has received unprecedented support from the CIA.

However, as anybody with a little factual knowledge of the subject can see, Posner takes a most biased viewpoint while claiming to be neutral and objective.

Robert Groden, long-time critic of the Warren Commission, has put together 600 photos (mostly