

The Magazine Reader

The Kennedy Assassination: Last Word?

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And the answer is . . . Lee Harvey Oswald, alone.

It is the most prosaic of all explanations for the least prosaic of crimes: John F. Kennedy was killed by one pathetic loon with a rifle. Such a grand incongruity that somehow we didn't want to believe it could be so.

Believe it, says *U.S. News & World Report* this week, in a cover story on one of the many books about to be published for the approaching 30th anniversary of the assassination.

Gerald Posner's "Case Closed," due out next week from Random House, is "brilliant," "airtight" and "unshakable," the magazine says, arguing that it destroys all the conspiracy theories "with impressive finality."

The book excerpts published in the magazine are not themselves enough to make a true skeptic happy, but they are full of attractively confident assertions based on "computer enhancements" of the Zapruder film and other evidence.

The story comes with too many boxed sidebars, which should have been incorporated in the main text so we don't have to dart back and forth. But the graphics showing the scene of the crime, and illustrating Posner's contention that a single bullet passed through both Kennedy and John Connally, are extremely well executed and helpful.

"The high quotients of common sense, logic and scrupulous documentation found in 'Case Closed' are niceties not often found in the field of assassination studies," the magazine says.

If the book indeed displays those admirable qualities, it will be interesting to see if the public pays heed. For many Americans, the Kennedy killing has long since transcended the realm of common sense, converted into a mystical symbol for *The End of Our Innocence* and other fanciful notions. At this point, in other words, do we even care what really happened?