



The Men We Became: My Friendship with John F. Kennedy, Jr.

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For over twenty years Robert Littell was John F. Kennedy Jr.'s closest confidant. Now, in a beautiful and moving memoir, Littell introduces us to the private John. A story of laughter and sorrow, joy and heartbreak, *The Men We Became* is an unforgettable memoir.

Rob Littell was a freshman at Brown when he met the young JFK, Jr. during orientation week. Although Littell came from a privileged background, it was worlds apart from the glamorous life of the son of the late President and Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Eager to be accepted on his own terms, Kennedy admired Littell's irreverence toward his celebrity and they became close friends.

John opened up to Littell on a very personal level, revealing the complex and sometimes tense nature of his relationships with his sister and cousins, as well as his mother's extraordinary influence on John-and how they both worked to keep it from being overbearing. John's marriage had its ups and downs and Carolyn had made enemies of some of his friends, but she was in great shape mentally and physically and they were planning to have children.

Littell recounts wonderful dinners at Jacqueline Onassis's apartment where she surprised him with his favorite dinner of specially burned hamburgers and weekends at her retreat in Martha's Vineyard where she critiqued their touch football while lying on a chaise lounge, her face covered in cold cream and cucumber slices. As students, Littell and Kennedy bummed around Europe. They slept in Hyde Park, sampled the pleasures of Amsterdam, ran afoul of customs officers and almost got busted at the Ritz Hotel for smoking pot. They even shared apartments in New York City until Jackie summoned them to dinner one day and gently suggested it was time to grow up. The two went on to pursue their professional lives. John trained as a lawyer - and Littell speaks of his friend's anguish at repeatedly failing the bar - and then he founded his own political magazine, which seemed only fitting because Kennedy yearned to live up to the family name and accepted that politics would be his destiny. Later on, Littell was a part of JFK, Jr.'s secret wedding to Carolyn Bessette on Cumberland Island, Georgia, and three years later a pallbearer at his funeral.

From shared adventures, private moments and lasting memories, Robert Littell offers a unique look at John F. Kennedy Jr.'s life - one that has never been seen before.

The Men We Became: My Friendship with John F. Kennedy, Jr. Details

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From Reader Review The Men We Became: My Friendship with John F. Kennedy, Jr. for online ebook

Emi Bevacqua says

Robert Littell makes me feel like, well if this guy can write a book, I guess anybody can! So in that sense, it was inspirational. After prefacing this book with protestation about everybody profiting from Kennedy tell-alls, Littell comes off as a bit of an opportunistic goofball. While throwing JFK Jr. under the bus at every turn, (John made the mess that stunk up their frat room, the writer didn't; John had sex with the Amsterdam prostitute, the writer didn't; John left the porn in the VCR, the writer didn't) Littell tries to sound literary but basically just chronicles years of generosity received from his celebrity friend, and then ultimately he profits from a Kennedy tell-all.

Nancy Brophy says

Read this book in a day, could not put it down. Great story about friendship. Well done. I wonder what could have been, if John were still alive today. He would have made a difference....He died young, but his life was full of adventure, friendships, and family.

I enjoyed reading the book by his girlfriend, Christiana Haag. This book was a different perspective, from a best friend. They were lucky to have each other for twenty years. Made me reflect on and treasure even more my long term, sacred friendships.

As my favorite Chicago Bear, Walter Payton, said as he was battling illness, tomorrow is promised to no one. As a hospice nurse, I know how precious each day is.....to pass away young, in an accident is so very sad.

Thank you Robert, for sharing your friendship with John with us. He was lucky to have you in his life too. You maintained his privacy, and respect throughout the book. Loved it.

Ladyhawk says

What a fascinating read. A very personal glimps into America's Royals. So much priveledge along side so much tragedy. I fell in love with JFK Jr. all over again.

Tracy says

I absolutely loved this book. Have always been intrigued with Jackie O and her kids. This was truly a heartfelt book by John Jr.'s good friend. Could relate to so many things; I too have vacationed on the Vineyard for over 20 years with my closest friends ~ on Memorial Day Weekend, just like John! I can remember seeing him on the ferry & one time taking the last shuttle to our cars in the parking lots...there were only about 6 of us on the bus and John and his friends were winding down their weekend as we were. A

good feeling book ~ and sad, too. What a likable person John was...I am sad for the friends who lost him way too soon. Thank you, Rob Littell, for this wonderful story!

Terri Miles says

I really enjoyed this book. I am going through a Kennedy phase for some reason and decided to add this one to my list. I am so glad I did. I thought it was a refreshing story. It showed the human side of JFK jr. Not "America's Prince". Just the regular man, the good and bad, but not in any kind of degrading or gossipy way. I recommend this book to anyone who is into the Kennedy's.

Aileen says

Interesting biography of JFK Jr. told by one of his closest friends from college. It allows you to see him as an ordinary person, while at the same time depicting the difficulties he had to deal with his entire life simply by being the son of JFK and Jackie Kennedy Onassis. Great for those Kennedy fans out there.

Darcy says

When JFK Jr. died in 1999, I was 12 years old. To be entirely honest, I'm not sure I even knew that a JFK Jr. even EXISTED before he died. Needless to say, this book was not really on my radar... until my aunt handed it to me last week and said, "Here, take this. Let me know what you think!" Having no real choice in the matter, I started the book, which I was assured "reads just like a People magazine article."

Admittedly, Littell is not a Pulitzer prize type of author, but I almost think that's why this book works. I genuinely feel that the book was written, not as a way to exploit tragedy for personal gain, but instead as a means to overcome grief and pain, which Littell implies near the end of the book. Additionally, he seeks to convey the real story of JFK Jr, apart from the sensationalism of the tabloids leading up to, and especially after, his death.

The friendships between men have always fascinated me, mainly because they look so different than the friendships that we forge as women. They seem so much easier, so much more relaxed, lacking the jealousies, misunderstandings, and hurt feelings that so often characterize female friendships. I love the honesty with which Littell communicates the details of his friendship with John - the competitiveness, the good-natured (but still merciless) teasing, and the frank discussions they have about almost everything.

I also appreciate that Littell stays away from topics he admits he knows little about. Very few references are made to the assassination of JFK. Why? Because it's something the author and John talked very little about. Caroline Kennedy is discussed minimally, simply because Littell was not close with her. Even though "Mrs. O," who is more well-known by the author, is talked about often, I never felt that he crossed the boundaries of taste and privacy. Robert Littell shows through this book why he was such a trusted friend to JFK Jr: to him, it's not about the celebrity or the "inside scoop"... it's about getting to know people as they really were, in spite of all the hoopla surrounding them.

Lynn says

I haven't quite finished this book but I can already tell you that I love it. It is a lovely tribute to a man's dear friend who passed away and also happened to be one of the most famous men in America. As a lover of all things Kennedy but also someone who has felt oddly protective of their name and legacy at the same time this book was a real treat. Mr. Littell was honest, even handed, funny and true to his friendship and you really can't ask for more than that.

Krysten Hager says

Sad to read about this couple who was so full of life. This book gives a more honest look at the life of JFK Jr. from the author getting snubbed by JFK Jr.'s aunt, to the fact someone at Lauren Bessette's funeral was upset enough to lash out to the author, "Your friend killed my friend," after the tragic plane crash. This is a must read for anyone interested in the Kennedy family. So much lost potential.

Carol says

I will read anything Kennedy. This was a wonderful memoir about two young men and their friendship of 20 years. It gave insight into how difficult it was to be John F. Kennedy Jr. and the way he dealt with it all. Makes you wonder what about what could have been.

Ann Baker says

A sad story since you know the ending when you start. But a valiant try by the other to capture the pure friendship you can have with someone with such privilege. The friendship and could have been just two school boys from an unknown school and unknown families.

Lennie says

In this memoir, Robert Littell describes his friendship with JFK jr., whom he met while they were students at Brown University. I felt the author did a good job in writing this book because you get to know what John-John was really like as well as some of his family members. John-John seemed to have a love for life and he was very adventurous--too bad he died so young!

Dale Stonehouse says

Despite JFK Jr. being one of the most popular personalities of the 20th Century, not many true insiders have

come forth detailing their lives with him. Littell does so emotionally but not intrusively and dispels a few myths in the process. Of particular value is his assessment of Carolyn Bessette, whose intensity may have been vastly misunderstood. He also has some wonderful insights on Jackie Kennedy, Teddy Kennedy and others of the Kennedy clan.

Steve says

I don't consider myself a fan of the Kennedy's. I'm not even sure I know much about them, except that there are a lot of them and it seems that every few years one of them dies. I recall JFK Jr.'s plane crash in 1999. It was fairly significant - stuck around the news in NY for a couple of days. But beyond that, I have little affiliation for the family/myth and little information about the man himself. So, about a month ago, my mother loaned me this one advising it was a quick read and that she thought I'd like it. Took me a few pages to realize the connection. John-John was a member (sort of) of the same fraternity I was involved with in college. I saw sort of because the organization at Brown was disconnected from the national group and essentially just an eating club at that point.

Okay, so there's the connection that my Mom saw. Beyond that, however, there's a lot to like here. The story is quick and light. I blew through it in three commutes - albeit weather induced long commutes, but still. It paints JFK Jr. in a very positive light - which is to be expected from a friend. It is also beyond respectful toward Jackie O, referring to her as Mrs. Onassis the entire time. I don't think the JFK Jr. had a negative public persona, so I'm not inclined to think this is a "setting the record straight" type of account, but just another view into him from a different perspective. Or it's a money-grab by the author. In any event, it's full of anecdotes that only those close to him would know and is a good coloring of his struggles with life in the lime-light.

From a style standpoint, this is the book I would write. It's full of stories, tales and pop-culture references. Reminds me of my old Weekend Updates from the LBI days. Now...if only one of my stupid friends would get famous I could write a best-seller and get out of this confounded office. But seriously, the book is well written from a readability standpoint, not a literature view. To some degree it reads like a chapter of history, which may describe why I liked it. With some exceptions it didn't get too heavy into reasoning, psychology, etc. Instead, it just told stories to describe Littell's experiences with JFK Jr.

The funny part, while I liked the JFK aspect and the manner he's presented here - I've actually been minorly obsessed the last few days - I found that I didn't like Littell (the author). He seemed overly concerned with partying and making himself appear cool. I'm not sure how to describe it, but about 3/4 of the way through this, I realized I didn't like him. This may be a psychological thing on my part. As I enter my mid-30s, the same age he was at that time, the "partying" thing doesn't seem as important or fun any more. There's a twisted logic there, because when describing college or the European trip, it's perfectly all right and enjoyable, but by the time he reaches thirty, I'm more inclined to hear about what they are doing sans alcohol. The dinner conversation at Red Gate is more compelling. I think Mr. Littell would recognize this himself. In describing bachelor parties after 30 he indicated a level of dread. I would concur with this. Not because they aren't fun, but because I'm wiped out for a week afterward.

But I digress, with a few warts, this is a good one. After my forays into 19th century Russian Lit recently, it's nice to pare that down and read about good-old late-20th Century American hooliganism. If you like Biographies, the Kennedy's, American Culture, this is probably a good one for you, regardless of your politics.

Evett DiBianco says

JFK Jr. has always been a man that I have been drawn to. His family has drawn so much attention and he continued his huge name and did so much with it. It's a great story of who he was and tragic that the world lost him so soon.
