



## American Son: A Portrait of John F. Kennedy, Jr.

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**American Son: A Portrait of John F. Kennedy, Jr.** Richard Blow , Richard Bradley  
The last defining years of John F. Kennedy, Jr.

At thirty-four, John F. Kennedy, Jr. was still a man in search of his destiny. In 1995, all that changed when Kennedy launched *George*, a bold and irreverent magazine about American politics. Over the next four years, Kennedy's passionate commitment to the magazine-- and to the ideals it stood for-- transformed him. One witness to this transformation was Richard Blow, an editor and writer who joined *George* several months before the release of its first issue. During their four years together, Blow observed his boss rise to enormous challenges-- starting a risky new business, managing the pressures that attend a high public profile, and beginning life as a married man.

In *American Son*, with Blow as our guide, we see the many sides of Kennedy's personality: the rebel who fearlessly takes on politicians and pundits; the gentleman who sends gracious thank-you notes to his colleagues for their wedding gifts; the vulnerable son struggling under the weight of a mythic family legacy. Simply and sympathetically, Richard Blow offers an affecting portrait of a complicated man at last coming into his own-- sometimes gracefully, sometimes under siege, never without the burden of great expectations.

#1 *New York Times* Bestseller; includes a new introduction

## American Son: A Portrait of John F. Kennedy, Jr. Details

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## **From Reader Review American Son: A Portrait of John F. Kennedy, Jr. for online ebook**

### **Patricia says**

Since this is the 50th anniversary of JFK's assassination, which I remember sadly as a senior in high school, there have been a lot of programs on tv about him. I wanted to read more about Jackie & their 2 children after his death, but my local library is very small, so this is the only title they had, about JFK Jr. who was tragically killed, along with his wife, in a small airplane crash in 1999. This book is about John starting up George magazine, his idea of a periodical about politics that would have some appeal to the general public. The author was an editor at the magazine & it's an interesting look at those 4 years- 1995 to 1999, when the magazine was published. A quick read & look at more of the tragedies in the Kennedy family.

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### **Ice says**

When Blow started at George magazine as one of the original staffers, he had to sign a confidentiality agreement not to write about his boss, John F. Kennedy Jr. Although some disagree, Blow obviously feels that the agreement he signed does not extend beyond death, hence this personal portrait. In fact, it's not really all that personal since Blow only knew Kennedy for four years and in a professional capacity. They seem to have never had a truly personal conversation.

So what remains is the story of a famous young man and his magazine, and since the man is John Kennedy, that's enough to attract plenty of readers. Blow, who employs an engaging writing style that makes the book seem more intimate than it is, describes the inner workings of George and follows Kennedy's evolution (and sometimes regression) as an editor. When he observes personal moments between Kennedy and his wife, Carolyn, he reports them, but those looking for serious dish will have to find it elsewhere. Still, readers will come away with a clear perception of Kennedy: a decent man struggling against a mythic legacy. And of a life with a beginning and a middle, but no real end.

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### **Adrienne says**

I really, really enjoyed this book. But I never lost the awareness that this book is a memoir, a first-person perspective, and not a biography. I appreciate that the author is so forward about this perspective. But it made me question the accuracy of conversations and the legitimacy of others' actions throughout the story.

That being said, he fleshed John Kennedy Jr. and Carolyn out in a way that felt truly human. This book only focused on the George years, but I felt as if I'd gotten a peek into John's goals, his hesitations and his love for life. I appreciated the human-to-human view of John instead of researcher-to-human view a biography could build.

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### **Frances says**

I really enjoyed reading this book. Unlike other books written about the Kennedy's, this book gives insight into the life of a public figure who went through struggles in order to establish a career of his own despite the incredibly high pedestal the world had put him on since his father's death. So much to live up to at such a young age, handling it as best he could.

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### **Melissa says**

Interesting portrait of John F. Kennedy Jr. as the editor-in-chief of George magazine. I enjoyed learning about JFK Jr. from this editorial perspective. The author was a co-worker/employee of JFK Jr.'s, and shared thoughtful anecdotes of their time working on George together. I also appreciated the author's honest portrayal of JFK Jr., as someone who definitely was fun-loving and charismatic but also imperfect.

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### **Carolyn Heinze says**

Better than a gossip rag, and hey, we all need a little mindless trash now and then...

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### **DAISY DISNEY says**

After reading this book, I have a professional view of JFK Jr. One of the things that I think really stood out about this book that I liked was that it wasn't your typical biography on him. This book was based on the professional side of him. It was an interesting concept to write a book on something that I think most people didn't think of or ask about JFK JR. How did he start his political magazine "George"? Most questions asked about JFK JR when he was alive was about his personal life and who he dated and how handsome he looked.

This book gives the reader a hands on first look at the inside scoop of how "George" came to be and all of the obstacles that JFK JR faced as the Editor in Chief. Who better to tell this story than the author who actually worked with JFK JR and was a part of "George" from day 1. I would have thought that having the famous Kennedy name, the doors to create this magazine would have been opened to JFK JR and journalists would embrace him with open arms. However, it wasn't that easy. Due to his famous last name people second guessed him and at times I think some of the journalists were even cruel because of who he was and the fact that he didn't have any journalism jobs under his belt. Many mean articles were written about the magazine and many questioned what business JFK JR had in even stepping on their turf. He had many internal conflicts with decisions on which stories to run and which people to interview for the magazine. I never had put thought into how much work goes into a magazine. Sadly towards the end of John John's life, his ad sales were declining which had a huge impact on the future of "George". It wasn't until 2 years after he passed away that the magazine had its final publication. I think that was probably for the better because if he would have been alive to see that happen I think he would have gone into a depression. He had put his whole heart and effort into making "George" a successful political magazine and he knew everything that was riding for this to work out in the long run.

A fact about JFK that I learned in this book that I didn't know about him before was that he worked as a lawyer for the District Attorney's office and he actually tried trials. John John also had a temper on him which is a fact I didn't know about him as well. I found myself searching online for more references and stories on events that were stated in this book. John John also had a very down to earth friendly side as well.

He would give his expensive ties to his employees and also give them designed suits and shoes that designers would send him but were not his size. He also rode his bicycle throughout Manhattan. He walked the streets at night after having dinner with colleagues. One of the things that I really loved that he did as a boss was allow his employees to bring their dogs to work because he would bring his dog Friday in as well. What a great work environment! I would love to bring my Pumba Bear with me at work! This shows what kind of a down to earth boss he was!

Many will speculate on JFK JR's role in the Kennedy family curse (If that even exists), many will wonder how much longer "George" would have remained in publication had he lived, many will wonder if he would have ran for the presidency one day? Would he have won? What would his children look like? Sadly, these questions will forever be unanswered. This was a very well written book by a man who was loyal to John John and I think it couldn't have been better told by anyone else because Blow new John professionally. It was enjoyable to read about JFK JR's professional side and not read about gossip or personal things. I think the Kennedy family can read this book and feel like the author gave them their privacy and didn't write about dirt. A very sad ending to a life cut too short. What a perfect title too. JFK JR will always be America's Son.....

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### **Beesley says**

More trash about the Kennedys, and yet another book about John Kennedy in which the author spends as much time on himself as on the subject, making for a tedious read. The most interesting parts of this book are those that look at the way in which John Kennedy played out psycho drama about himself and his family in the choices he made for his magazine. The rest of it is boring inside baseball about the day to day operations at "George," which just wasn't that interesting of a magazine, and did not have an interesting cast of characters staffing it.

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### **Carole says**

Although everyone (myself included) wants to know a little more about America's Son, this book is about the author's working relationship with JFK Jr on what would be JFK Jr.'s final endeavor, GEORGE magazine. There are touching moments, but too few. I was hoping for a more personal glimpse. It is well written, but disappointing.

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### **Oswald says**

Sexy

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### **Paul Falk says**

This was a stirring account of JFK's son, John. He had been constantly hounded by the Press even as a young boy. His mother Jacqueline did everything in her power to protect him. Growing up the son of an

assassinated President of modern times has been a challenge to his privacy as well as future. He found his own unique ways of hiding in plain sight.

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### **Dominick Borrelli says**

This book is an interesting book to me because it focused on a man named John F Kennedy who was a very politically connected and decided to create a magazine called "George" which focused on American politics. This book focuses on John f Kennedy's family life family problems and his marriage life. John f Kennedy felt that being in such a prestigious family he was easily scrutinized and always in the lime light. After marriage and starting his magazine johns personalities began to change towards people and his wife. The pressure became to much for him to handle. John was very dedicated to his magazine. After johns death the magazine had stopped and the office had shutt down.

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### **Quinn says**

This was a emotionally sensitive book. Near the end, Richard Blow gets very sad and emotional when JFK Jr. 's plane is gone. Blow knew John very well and was the only member of George that stayed on the whole time.

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### **Priscilla says**

A memoir by a journalist who was on the "George" staff since its creation...provides an inside look to JFK, Jr. and the workings of the magazine. I had a hard time putting the book down -- I burned through it last night. I found that it's not so much a biography of JFK, Jr.'s life, but a story of the author's relationship with him while working on George for 4 years together. It left me wanting to read another more comprehensive book about his life.

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### **Anne says**

This poignant story highlights the way people: from complete strangers to acquaintances (waiters, doormen, etc.) to coworkers felt such a strong familiarity & kindship with Kennedy; his life, his family, his experiences, but ultimately we didn't know him and that feels like the biggest tragedy of all. A thoughtful account of a brief time in JFK Jr's life told by a publishing coworker. It's tough to read when you know what's coming, the writing become more detailed and time slows down just before his death. Still worth the read for the glimpse into Kennedy's world.

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