



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

By Richard Blow

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**American Son: A Portrait of John F. Kennedy, Jr.** By Richard Blow

The last, defining years of the life of John F. Kennedy, Jr., as seen by an editor who worked for him at *George* magazine.

At thirty-four, better known for his social life than his work as an assistant district attorney, John F. Kennedy, Jr., was still a man in search of his destiny. All that changed in 1995, when Kennedy launched a bold new magazine about American politics, puckishly called *George*. 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. With Blow as our surrogate, 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 occasionally at odds with a mythic family legacy; the leader who stays true to his vision, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

Simply and sympathetically, Blow offers an affecting portrait of a complicated man at last coming into his own -- sometimes gracefully, sometimes under siege, but never without the burden of great expectations.

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## Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Blow, an editor at *George*, focuses on Kennedy's last years, arguing that he finally came into his own while working on the magazine.

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From [Booklist](#)

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.

*Ilene Cooper*

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## Review

"Blow...employs an engaging writing style...Readers will come away with a clear perception of Kennedy: a decent man struggling against a mythic legacy."--*Booklist*

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