

Chaos in Camelot

JFK Jr. & Carolyn Bessette: Was Their Marriage Really Over?

Four years after the couple's death, a new book claims that drugs, jealousy and bitter feuds had torn them apart

BY CAROLINE SCHAEFER

HE WAS A POSSESSIVE, jealous husband fixated on his career. She was a hotheaded cocaine user still hot for her ex-lover, a hunky model. Could this really be the same revered Kennedy couple whose plane crashed into the ocean near Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, on July 16, 1999? It is, says Edward Klein, author of *The Kennedy Curse: Why Tragedy Has Haunted America's First Family for 150 Years*, a new tell-all that is excerpted in *Verity Fair's* August issue and includes dozens of interviews Klein did with unnamed friends of the pair, as well as Bessette's ex-boyfriend.

According to Klein, who was not available to comment until his book's release July 8 (after press time), Kennedy Jr. and Bessette — 38 and 33, respectively, when they died — had separated days before they died, after a marital-therapy session gone sour. Kennedy, reportedly upset by his wife's drug use and her uninterest in having kids, checked into New York City's Stanhope hotel while Bessette, depressed about the public scrutiny of her life, remained at the pair's Tribeca loft in New York City. It was "a doomed

fairy tale," writes Klein, author of two other Kennedy tomes.

Not everyone agrees. "This book is grave robbery," John Perry Barlow, a longtime Kennedy pal, tells *Us*. "John and Carolyn were completely nuts about each other."

So it seemed on September 21, 1996, when the lawyer turned editor wed Bessette, a former Calvin Klein publicist, on Georgia's Cumberland Island. Breakup rumors plagued their nearly three-year union, and now, with Klein's book, come the harshest allegations, most of which are refuted by those close



On his 1996 wedding day, Kennedy claimed to be "the happiest man in the world."

to the deceased pair. Of Carolyn's lust for ex Michael Bergin? "She was flirtatious, but she was fixated on John," says Barlow, who also mixes the notion that Bessette used cocaine. "I would have known," he adds.

Whether or not Klein has the facts straight, no doubt, is up for debate. Still, as Barlow notes:

"Every marriage has some weather to it. They were human." **US**

What Their Body Language Told Us



February 1996

"They're arguing but facing each other. They are committed," says body-language expert Patti Wood.



October 1998

"He's using his powerful right hand to drive a point home; she's more submissive."



November 1998

"He's leaning in while she's taking the kiss. He's more of the giver in the relationship."