



SUZY

A new Kennedy book—by a cousin

JOHAN H. DAVIS' landmark saga of the Kennedy family, "The Kennedys: Dynasty and Disaster," due to appear any minute, is one hot Irish potato and a lot of hands will be scalded by the time all the nickels are pulled out of the fire. As a member of Jackie Kennedy Onassis' family, the Bouviers, the author claims he has acquired, through his mother the former Maude R. Bouvier, all the Bouvier family papers, including many relating to Jackie and her father, and many of Jackie's father's papers, through the author's father who shared office space with Jackie's father.

But that's only the beginning, Davis—whose two previous best sellers include "The Bouviers: Portrait of an American Family" and "The Guggenheims: An American Epic"—is so anxious that his book, published by McGraw-Hill, not be considered just another rehash of the same old Kennedy sensationalism—although he is quick to add the book contains a lot of sensational revelations, many brand new, new or "almost new"—that he delineates his moves step by step. "We must beware," says he, "of giving the impression it is a non-serious book by a scandal-mongering cousin of Jackie O." It is said McGraw-Hill lawyers spent four months poring over this tome. I'll bet.

THE AUTHOR. In addition to the informal conversations with members of the Bouvier and Kennedy families reported in the book, also interviewed Richard Helms, former director of the CIA, John McCone, former director of the CIA, George Ball, former undersecretary

of state, Nicholas Katzenbach, former Attorney General of the U.S., Harris Wofford, former White House aide to President Kennedy (Wofford was interviewed five times and read the book in manuscript to guarantee its accuracy in everything pertaining to the JFK administration), Thomas Hughes, former chief of intelligence, G. Robert Blakey, former attorney in RFK's Justice Department, and former chief counsel and staff director of the House Select Committee on Assassinations (Blakey guaranteed the book's accuracy in regard to RFK's Justice Department, Kennedy's war on organized crime, JFK's assassination, etc.).

Dwelling on his connections and contacts with Bouviers and Kennedys, Davis emphasizes that he grew up with Jackie and other Bouviers and spent every summer with them at "Grandfather Bouvier's East Hampton estate, Lasata."

HE WAS WITH the family at the White House when JFK was inaugurated and later after the funeral and burial of the President. (He acknowledges he has not talked to Jackie or Ted since the summer of 1980 at the height of the campaign.)

Davis says his book is an interpretation of the Kennedy saga along with a narration of facts. He believes the book explains the central question in the Kennedy drama: Why the Kennedy brothers were killed.

In gathering his material, Davis visited the old Kennedy farm in Ireland, digging up the Irish roots, the only Kennedy writer to have done so. He is the first one to render portraits



A gathering of the Kennedy clan at Hyannisport in November, 1960

of the original Kennedy immigrants to America, namely Patrick and Bridget. All other writers begin with Patrick and Bridget's son, P. J., the saloonkeeper. Once their history is out of the way, he delves into the Bouviers with new revelations about Jackie's father, including his illegitimate twins and the never-before-published testimony of bootlegging during Prohibition is aired along with Mafia intrigue, Cuban affairs, Castro murder plots and what the author says is new information based on interviews with O'Jed Demaris, co-author with Judith Campbell Exner of "My Story," an account of her relationship with JFK, Sara Glancana and John Roselli) and Robert Blakey (JFK was aware of Exner's relationship with Glancana, says the author.)

Davis thinks he knows what caused Jo Kennedy's stroke, insists his accounts of what went on behind the scenes at the White House after JFK's

burial are absolutely new, says that favors from the mob compromised the Kennedy administration, delineates Kennedy's war against the Mafia, handles Ted Kennedy and Chappaquiddick, and on and on.

Davis believes he is the first writer on the Kennedy family who has made full use of all documents of the Senate Intelligence Committee and the House Assassinations Committee, some never before published. The book also contains information drawn from FBI reports never before made public.

His own overview of the saga he has written is the hope that by the time the reader finishes, he or she will have a better understanding of why so many disasters befell the Kennedys, whose ambition, extraordinary luck, incredible successes developed into an arrogance that led to their downfall and how the ethos of winning at all costs led to Toddsieger—winning oneself to death.