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How Kennedys Practice Privacy

IN RECENT WEEKS the world has been inundated by an ocean of impassioned prose, especially from the Kennedy literary Mafia, about the right of the Kennedy clan—particularly Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy and her two children—to Privacy with a capital P.

Both Mrs. Kennedy and her brother-in-law, Robert, have been extremely vocal on the subject, too. But the average reader must be forgiven his skepticism over the Kennedy practice of privacy and the Kennedy performance in that field.

On the day I read John Kenneth Galbraith's patronizing attack on William Manchester's book ("Nor have I read the book,") and his unctuous defense of Kennedy privacy, I picked up two magazines that highlight the Kennedy performance.

The principal articles in both the current McCall's and The Ladies' Home Journal are about Kennedys, with the consent and active cooperation of assorted Kennedys. Neither the articles nor the numerous Kennedy pictures that accompany the stories would have been possible otherwise.

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ASTONISHING as it may seem, after the recent pleas for privacy for Caroline and John-John Kennedy, the cover of McCall's features a color picture of Caroline. Also on the cover are smaller color photographs of Caroline's cousins, Courtney, Michael and Matthew, children of Sen. and Mrs. Robert F. Kennedy; and of Edward Jr. and Kara, children of Sen. and Mrs. Edward Kennedy.

"The Kennedy Children: Six Pages of New Pictures" reads the banner across the cover of McCall's. And, sure enough, inside McCall's are six full pages of posed color photographs of more Kennedy offspring. Most of the posed pictures were taken at Hickory Hill, the McLean, Va., home of Sen. Robert F. Kennedy, and could not have been obtained without Kennedy consent.

Ironically enough, the caption accompanying the color pictures of John-John and Caroline in McCall's center

spread reads: "As the nation's most famous and beloved children, the son and daughter of the late President are carefully shielded from publicity and photographed only on rare public occasions."

In the past four years McCall's has published nine articles on various Kennedys, including "Christmas Paintings of Jacqueline Kennedy" in December, 1963, and, amazingly enough in view of the insistence on privacy, "Letters of Sympathy to Mrs. John F. Kennedy" in the issue of June, 1964. Obviously, such articles are impossible to print without the consent of the principal.

A writer and photographer were welcome adjuncts to the Robert F. Kennedy excursion through the Utah and Colorado wilderness 18 months ago, all duly recorded in McCall's.

A writer and photographer for The Ladies' Home Journal were equally welcome weekend guests at the Robert F. Kennedy estate in McLean when they recorded for posterity—and The Journal—a strenuous Kennedy live-in in the country.

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HOWEVER, the real literary coup for The Journal, which puts it one up in the trade, is the writer it captured to do the introduction to its current article, "What It Takes to Be a Kennedy." The Journal is dancing on the newsstands because it enticed Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy herself to write the foreword, titled, "The Real Robert F. Kennedy."

That affectionate portrait may not be immediately recognizable to others, but Mrs. Kennedy is entitled to her point of view. And it can only do her brother-in-law good politically.

"People of private nature are often misunderstood because they are too shy and too proud to explain themselves," Mrs. Kennedy records in the foreword.

Perhaps the general public would be more willing to accept the "private nature" of the Kennedys if its members would practice as strenuously as they preach the doctrine of privacy.