

Those Victims of Rumor

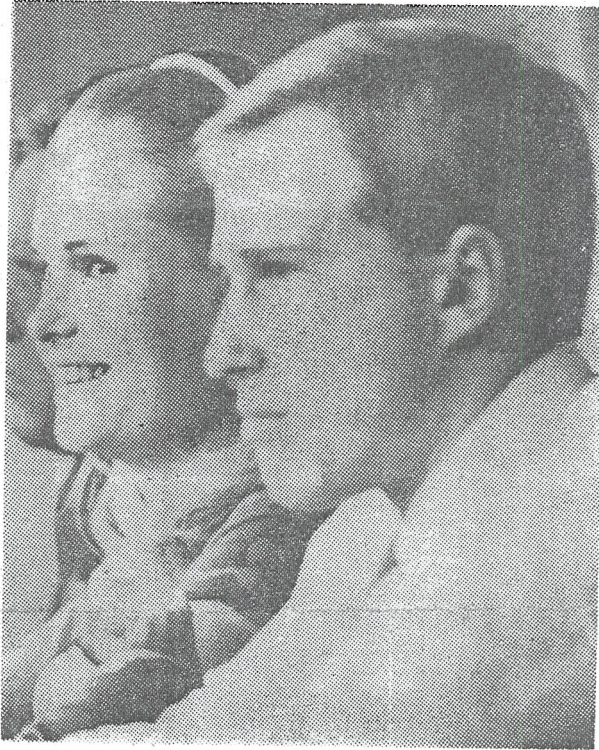
By Tom Donnelly
Washington Post

That "we deny all the rumors" interview Tricia and Edward Cox gave the new weekly, *People*, was just a warmup for a much richer revelation: "Tricia and Eddie Talk About Their Life Together," in the April *Ladies' Home Journal*.

Eddie "laughs incredulously" as he inventories the gossip: "Since Tricia and I've been married (in 1971) we've supposedly had three children, our marriage has fallen apart, she's had Hodgkin's Disease and we've cheated on our income tax."

Apparently neither of the young Coxes could think of anything sufficiently scathing to say about the latest Tricia story, the one that "had her in a hospital with two black eyes and a broken rib."

The Coxes say they believe the President when he tells them he neither planned nor took part in the Watergate cover-up because he has never told a lie, "not even a white lie."



Tricia and Ed Cox: Always denying rumors

As for those White House staffers who have already entered guilty pleas for their

part in Watergate, Tricia says, "if indeed these things were really going on, my father certainly did not know it, or the people who committed them would have been out . . . my father is in the same positions as us: he doesn't know what happened. He is mystified."

Tricia seems to believe that the people who are spreading rumors about the Coxes and the people who want to impeach her father are members of the same gang. Their motivation? "These people want to be rid once and for all of Richard Nixon, to satisfy their own jealousy of a man who by his accomplishments reminded them of their own ineptitude and failure."

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If Tricia and Ed turn to a journal article titled "Joan — the Tormented Kennedy,"



London society is talking about Tony and Margaret's royal hatred



they will learn that they aren't the only targets of the gossips. Far from it.

In this, Lester David reports on some hijinks allegedly indulged in by Ted Kennedy. ("Of all the Kennedy men, Ted apparently has been the least restrained and restrainable.") However — surprise! — David says, "we are not concerned here with Ted Kennedy's morality." No, we are concerned with "the impact of such rumors upon Joan."

The impact was "devastating." Her best friends agreed, says David, that Joan "looked terrible. Her eyes had lost their luster, she seemed careless of her appearance and grooming. She bit her nails. Once her hands shook so much her manicurist had to give up."

Stories of "her reputed drinking spread rapidly." There were rumors of separation. There was that picture of Joan in Venice, dancing with Giorgio Pavone, "a Roman publicist," while Teddy was (Joan said) "back in Hyannisport, babysitting."

David's account of "the tormented Kennedy" ends on an upbeat note: "No longer intimidated by the Kennedy name and dazzle, Joan is learning to be her own woman now . . ."

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McCall's reminds the world that there is at least some serenity on the capital's marital front, with a piece titled "The Most Surprising Happy Marriage in Washington." The subjects are Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas and his 4-year-younger wife, Cathy Jeffernan Douglas.

Did it bother her, being his fourth wife? "Yes it did.

One doesn't like to be compared, and you can't help but feel you are. You think all the bad things during the bad times. But during the good times you don't worry about it at all," Mrs. Douglas added, with a grin. "After all, I didn't expect to marry a 67-year-old virgin!"

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For a sour view of the wedded state McCall's turns to royalty. The marriage of Princess Margaret and the former Anthony Armstrong-Jones has been becoming "curiouser and curiouser," says Stephen Birmingham, who went to London and got many an intimate story — at second or third hand, of course — of the unhappy couple.

"Not since the abdication crisis of 1936 have royal private lives been so openly discussed and speculated about," says Birmingham. "Everyone in London society knows about the odd and not-so-odd goings-on."

According to Birmingham's sources, the Princess is a royal pill. If she and Tony come to dinner, she doesn't talk, doesn't eat and "stands the whole time," both before and after the meal, thus preventing anybody else from sitting down.

"They were both wearing too much make-up," said the host of one such occasion. Birmingham doesn't enlarge on Tony's make-up habits, he merely says the stuff Margaret puts on her face doesn't hide "the hard and bitter lines" around her mouth.

When the princess demanded that he dance with her (at a party some time ago), Tony said, "Oh, go away, you bore me."

"The hate between them



Sharman Hay has been dumped by her old friend, Princess Margaret

is almost tangible," said one London hostess. "The cold, insulting looks and the little knife-edged innuendos. A lot of married people don't go on, but at least they have the good taste to stay apart from each other at parties, on opposite sides of the room. But Margaret follows him around like a jealous cat."

Margaret hasn't spoken to her old friend, Sharman Douglas Hay for six years and the reason, as relayed by Birmingham, seems curious indeed. It seems Sharman persuaded Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon to attend a charity dance in New York. The Snowdons demanded \$30,000 for putting in an appearance; but since the dance was a flop, the royal fee was not forthcoming.

Sharman says, "I still think I'll be able to get her friendship back some day. After all, \$30,000 shouldn't be too hard to raise . . ."

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The "tormented" Kennedys are tabloid favorites

How can
a public
person have
a private
life?



Cathy and Bill Douglas disappointed the gossips.