

The Kennedy Curse

By HAL EVANS

Despite an abundance of wealth and world-wide fame, the Kennedy family has been plagued by the dark hand of fate.

For they have been ravaged by 14 major strokes of bad luck — including 10 deaths, numerous freak accidents, and both physical and mental illness.

And although the most far-reaching tragedy was the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the "Kennedy curse" has touched many other family members — even in-laws who joined the family through marriage.



SICK: Rosemary Kennedy is in an institution for mentally retarded.

John F. Kennedy himself believed in such a curse, for according to his cousin in Ireland, Mrs. Mary Ryan, he told her in 1963 when he was President:

"With the Kennedy family, fate always seems to have a little bad luck to keep us in line.

"Always keep your fingers crossed for me."

Although few people believe in the power of a curse, the 14 major tragedies that have befallen the Kennedy family — including five plane crashes that resulted in five deaths and one crippling injury — defy all reason.

What are the odds against this amazing string of tragedies occurring in one family?

For the answer, this ENQUIRER reporter went to Bernard O. Koopman, Professor of Mathematics at Columbia University in New York City on June 20.

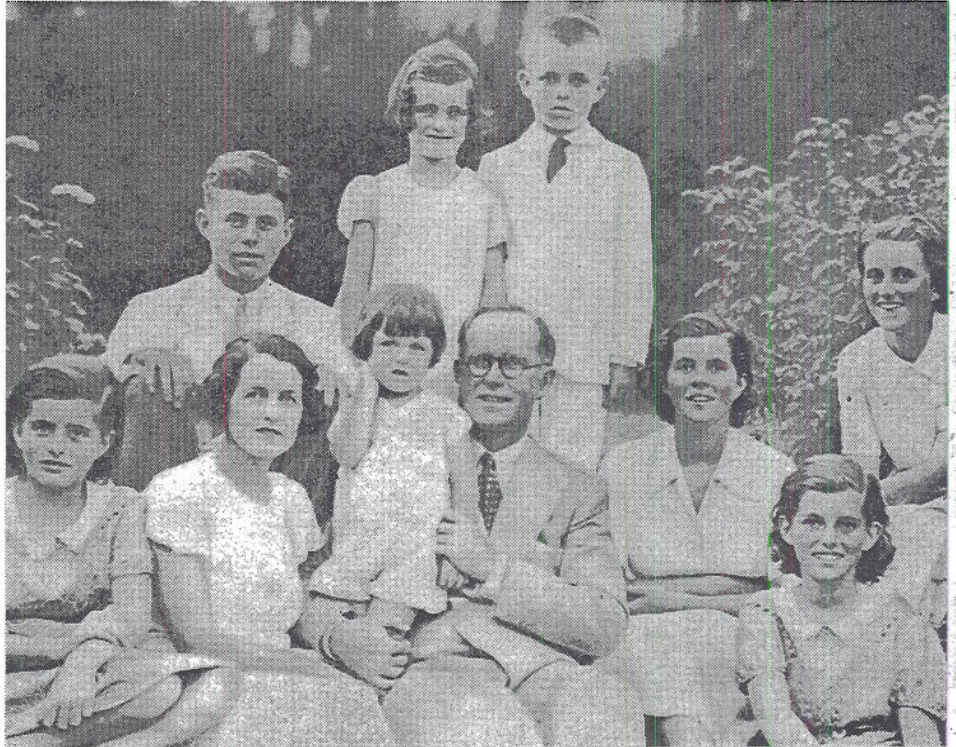


KILLED: Joseph Kennedy Jr. died in plane crash in World War II.

He told me: "The number of tragedies that have befallen the Kennedys is amazing.

"But it is impossible to determine exactly the odds against so much bad luck happening to one family, because the types of mishaps and their causes differ greatly.

"It would be safe to say, however, that the odds



THE KENNEDY FAMILY: Photographed in 1934 are (front row, from left) Patricia, Mrs. Rose Kennedy, Ted, Joseph Kennedy Sr., Rosemary, Eunice and Kathleen and (rear, from left) John, Jeanne and Bobby. Missing from the family photo is the eldest son, Joseph Jr.

against all 14 mishaps happening to one family are greater than 15,000 to one.

"As to the five plane crashes alone, the odds would appear to be greater than 10,000 to one."

The "Kennedy curse" attacked the mind as well as the body. For Rosemary Kennedy, now 48, the third of nine Kennedy children, was born mentally deficient.

According to her mother, Mrs. Rose Kennedy, for years her sisters and brothers gave her all the love in their hearts and tried to include her in their activities.

But as she grew older and failed to develop an



PROFESSOR KOOPMAN

adult mentality, it was necessary to place her in an institution.

John F. Kennedy became a victim of the curse during World War II, when as commander of the PT-109 he was rammed by a Japanese destroyer in Blackett Strait in the Solomon Islands on Aug. 2, 1943.

As a result of his injuries, he suffered permanent back trouble for the rest of his life.

The first family member to become the victim of an air disaster was JFK's older brother, Joseph Jr., who was killed during World War II as a bomber pilot when his B-24 "Liberator" bomber exploded in midair over Europe on Aug. 12, 1944.

Less than a month later, Kathleen Kennedy, JFK's eldest sister, who had married a British nobleman, the Duke of Devonshire, on May 6, 1944,

President Kennedy visited his cousin, Mrs. Mary Ryan, in Ireland, and spoke to her about the Kennedys' bad luck. In photo at right, JFK's sister, Kathleen, shown after her wedding to the Duke of Devonshire as her brother Joseph Jr. (right) looks on. Within four years, Kathleen, her husband and Joseph Jr. all died violent deaths.





HOBBLING on crutches, JFK arrives at a hospital in 1954 for a back operation as Jackie carries X-rays.



WRECKED PLANE in which Kathleen Kennedy was killed on May 15, 1948. Aircraft plunged into France's Rhône Valley. She was the second of the Kennedy children to die in plane crash.

lost her husband. He was killed in action in Belgium as a member of the British Army on Sept. 10, 1944, just four months after their marriage.

And Kathleen became the second Kennedy to die in a plane crash when a small aircraft in which she was a passenger plunged into France's Rhône Valley on May 15, 1948.

A third fatal plane crash claimed the life of Ethel (Mrs. Bobby) Kennedy's parents, Mr. and Mrs. George Skakel, who were in their private plane when it crashed to the ground on Oct. 3, 1955.

John F. and Jacqueline Kennedy were dealt a severe blow when Jacqueline gave birth to an unnamed, stillborn female infant on Aug. 23, 1956.

And trouble struck five years later when Joseph Kennedy Sr. suffered a stroke on Dec. 19, 1961, and became permanently disabled.

John F. and Jacqueline were heartbroken by
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LOST PARENTS: Ethel Kennedy (photo left) was bereaved after her father and mother, Mr. and Mrs. George Skakel, were killed when their private plane crashed in 1955 (photo right).



STRICKEN: Joseph Kennedy in wheelchair, after he suffered stroke in 1961.



PILOT DIED and so did a Kennedy aide in this 1964 plane crash in which Ted Kennedy suffered severe back injuries. The Senator spent six months in the hospital recuperating.

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the loss of another infant on Aug. 9, 1963. This time it was a son, named Patrick Bouvier. The infant died just two days after his birth.

The tragedy that shocked the entire world took place three months later, on Nov. 22, 1963, when President Kennedy was assassinated by Lee Harvey Oswald.

But even that cruel blow did not seem to satisfy the Kennedy curse.

For during the next four years, four more mishaps were dealt to the Kennedy family.



MRS. ROSE KENNEDY
Tragedy plagues her family.

Senator Ted Kennedy of Massachusetts became the fourth airplane-accident victim and was severely injured when a light plane in which he was riding crashed into an apple orchard in Southampton, Mass., on June 19, 1964, killing the pilot and an aide.

Ted spent six months in the hospital and at home recuperating from severe back injuries before returning to the Senate.

Ethel Kennedy, who had lost her parents in an earlier plane crash, was dealt another severe emotional blow when her brother, George Skakel Jr., 44, was killed in the fifth plane crash involving the family on Sept. 24, 1966.

Tragedy next touched the Kennedys in the form of an auto accident last Thanksgiving. Kathleen Skakel, 17-year-old niece of Ethel and Bobby Kennedy, was driving a rented convertible car with 7-year-old Hope O'Brien as a passenger.

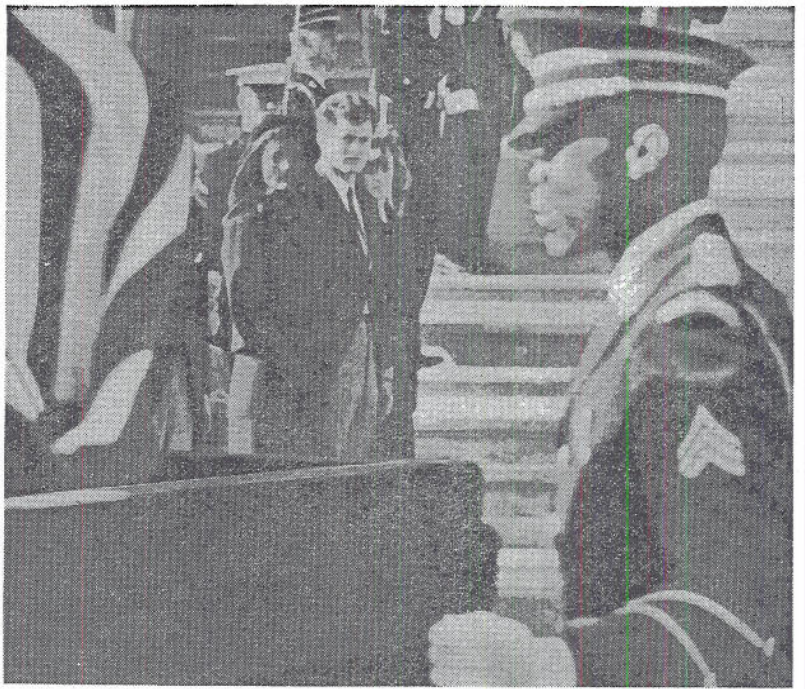
When the auto struck a bump on the road, the child flew out of the car. She suffered serious injuries and the youngster died on December 1.

The most recent stroke of fate against the Kennedy family took place last May 19 in Greenwich, Conn. Mrs. Patricia Skakel, the widow of Ethel Kennedy's brother, George, who was killed in a plane crash seven months before, died in a freak accident when a piece of meat caught in her throat during dinner and she choked to death before medical help arrived.



CHOKED: Mrs. Patricia Skakel died in freak accident.

Mrs. Patricia Skakel, the widow of Ethel Kennedy's brother, George, who was killed in a plane crash seven months before, died in a freak accident when a piece of meat caught in her throat during dinner and she choked to death before medical help arrived.



PRESIDENT'S FUNERAL: As JFK's coffin leaves capitol for requiem mass at St. Matthew's Cathedral, Jacqueline (left), Ted and sister Jean look on.



George Skakel Jr. was killed in plane crash. At funeral (photo left), brother-in-law Robert Kennedy (second from the right) stands behind pallbearers.



SEVERELY INJURED: Ted Kennedy manages to smile and wave his hand as he is transferred by ambulance from a hospital in Northampton, Mass., to one in Boston. The Massachusetts Senator suffered severe back injuries in a plane crash.



DEATH came to 2-day-old Patrick Bouvier Kennedy from a respiratory ailment. He's being taken out of ambulance here upon arrival at a Boston hospital.