



The Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty

By Kitty Kelley

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The Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty By Kitty Kelley

They have wielded enormous financial power and dominated world politics for more than half a century. They have been appointed to positions of great power and have been elected as governors, congressmen, senators and presidents. They have shaped our past and, with our country at war under the leadership of their number one son, they are, more critically than ever, shaping our future.

As the Bush family has risen to dominance, so too they have been master orchestrators of their own public image, acting and operating under the shield of privacy their money and status have always afforded them. Until now.

Number One bestselling author and investigative biographer Kitty Kelley has closely examined the lives of Jacqueline Onassis, Nancy Reagan, Frank Sinatra, and the British Royal family. Now the First Lady of unauthorized biography reckons with the first family of the United States—and the result is at once a rich and shocking history and a very human portrait of the world's most powerful dynasty.

An important work on wealth, power, and class in America, *The Family* is rich in texture, probing in its psychological insight, revealing in its political and financial detail, and stunning in the patterns that emerge and expose the Bush dynasty as it has never before been exposed. Ms. Kelley takes us back to the origins of the family fortune in the Ohio steel industry at the turn of the last century, through the oil deals and international business associations that have maintained and increased their wealth over the past hundred years. The book leads us through Prescott Bush's first entrée into government at the state level in 1950s' Connecticut, to George Herbert Walker Bush's long and winding road to the White House, to his son's quick sweep into the same office. Along the way, we see the complex relationships the Bushes have had with the giants of the century—Eisenhower, Nixon, Joseph McCarthy, Kissinger, Reagan, Clinton—as well as the often ruthless methods used to realize their goals.

Perhaps most impressive—and surprising—is the way the book delves behind the obsessively protected public image into the family's intimate private lives: the matriarchs, the mistresses, the marriages, the divorces, the jealousies, the

hypocrisies, the golden children, and the black sheep.

At a crucial point in American history, Kitty Kelley is the one person to finally tell all about the family that has, perhaps more than any other, defined our role in the modern world. This is the book the Bushes don't want you to read. This is *The Family*.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Kitty Kelley, author of exhaustive and highly unflattering biographies of Frank Sinatra, Jackie Onassis, and the British royal family, among others, has never received much cooperation from her subjects. Likewise, none was given for *The First Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty*, and it's not hard to understand why. In the book, the family that has produced two presidents as well as an assortment of other politicians, businesspeople, and a number of lesser-known black sheep is portrayed as a powerful empire that leverages wealth and influence to grow ever stronger while stringently covering up numerous instances of drug abuse, infidelity, poor judgment, and scandal. While charges about George W. Bush, including that he snorted cocaine at Camp David while his father was president, garnered the most attention upon the book's release, Kelley's history goes back several generations, detailing the rise to power of Senator Prescott Bush and his son, the first President Bush. Those seeking a salacious peek at the inner sanctum of a wealthy and powerful family will not be disappointed by *The First Family*--Kelley always delivers on that count--and will likely devour allegations of Barbara Bush's sour temperament, George H.W. Bush's long-standing affair with aide Jennifer Fitzgerald, and George W. Bush's obnoxious drunken frat boy days that stretched, according to Kelley, well into adulthood. Those seeking a rock-solid and airtight indictment of the Bushes, however, will be disappointed, since Kelley leans on anonymous sources and rumors for some of the juicier bits.

Interestingly, although it tells the stories of a family built on politics, *The First Family* mostly avoids the subject, clearing the decks of all political substance in order to put the style on wider display. --John Moe

From Publishers Weekly

Although hardly the most authoritative or the most carefully written, Kelley's history of the Bush family nonetheless ranks among the most important books of the 2004 political season. A large part of Kelley's influence comes, of course, from the success of her previous celebrity biographies, among them *Jackie Oh!*, *The Royals* and *Elizabeth Taylor*. But another part comes from her willingness to commit rumors to paper--in other words, to share DC cocktail-party gossip with the masses. Her book will come under a lot of fire for this practice, and with some reason. Many of her most incendiary comments--that Laura Bush was once a "go-to girl for dime bags," that George W. Bush snorted cocaine at Camp David--do appear to be poorly sourced. And as the book progresses from the 1860s to the 2000s, her moderate tone often rises with vividly expressed disgust and indignation. But readers who take Kelley's dishy allegations with a grain of salt will still find plenty of hard evidence to support her portrayal of the Bush family's political opportunism, economic privilege and shrewd flip-flopping. Case in point: when George H.W. Bush was chosen as Reagan's running mate in 1980, he suddenly "dropped his support of the Equal Rights Amendment and vehemently changed his position on abortion." Kelley also takes shots at Democrats Edward Kennedy, Lloyd Bentsen and Lyndon Johnson, and generally laments what she sees as the Republican Party's turn to the far right. But, overall, her real issues appear to be the same as in her previous books: the abuse of power, the adoption of a false public image, the secreting away of sexual and pharmaceutical peccadilloes. With its focus on these juicy issues, and its occasional nuggets of serious political history, Kelley's book is sure to gratify her many fans.

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From *The New Yorker*

Kelley's reputation as an "unauthorized biographer" precedes her--how many authors feel the need to mention that they've "never lost a lawsuit"?--and she is best appreciated less as an investigative journalist than as a folklorist, amassing a compendium of gossip (much of it denied by her subjects). Generations of Bushes have given her plenty of material. She presents Prescott, the alcoholic senator who beat his children;

George H.W., the tightfisted husband with a mink-clad mistress; and a supporting cast of uncles and brothers embroiled with dictators and Japanese Mafiosi. There is Barbara's grudge-bearing (a streak so mean one feels almost sorry for Nancy Reagan), Laura's reputation as a college drug source, and ex-daughter-in-law Sharon's tales (since recanted) of cocaine at Camp David. Capping it all is George W., who—from financial shadiness and substance abuse to a suspect military record and a blithe confidence that he deserves all he has been given and more—is portrayed not as the family's black sheep but as the epitome of its values.

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Users Review

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