

The Dr. Phil show
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Show "Pressures of the President"



Life Under the Microscope

Carl Anthony, author and historian for the National First Ladies' Library, shares some of the pressures that former presidents and their children faced while living at the White House. Find out why Obama's daughters, Sasha and Malia, might have it even harder.

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"Looking at Sasha and Malia Obama at 7 and 11, this is the last moment of absolute innocence. It's a real hothouse existence," says Carl Anthony. "People made fun of Amy Carter's glasses. People made fun of Chelsea Clinton having braces."

When John F. Kennedy was president, Carl says, "Jacqueline Kennedy put down an iron law that these kids were not to be photographed, but President Kennedy knew that there was great P.R. in having these cute kids appear in magazines, and so those very famous pictures were all done when Jackie Kennedy was away.

"Now, you have this extraordinary technology of the Internet. I think it might end up being the public who exploits Sasha and Malia by photographing them."

Dr. Phil says to Carl, "We have an information explosion right now with the Internet, and these tabloids and paparazzi at a frenzy that nobody has ever seen before. What impact is that going to have on these kids and this family?"

"On the one hand, they also are of the generation where they're used to seeing that sort of exploitation, if you will," Carl explains. "On the other hand, they're going to have something that I think is going to be an important factor that a lot of other presidential kids didn't have, and that's their grandmother. And they also have a mother who is very hands on and very conscious about protecting them and what kind of damage the media exposure can cause." He adds that the Kennedy children had a nanny and their mother traveled often, and that Amy Carter had a governess who looked after her. "I think there's going to be a very conscious and cautious protection," from Barack, Michelle and Mrs. Robinson, Michelle's mother.

Arianna believes that having the girls' grandmother in the White House sets a good example for Americans. "I'm Greek, and my mother lived with my two daughters and me until she died, and I know this was an incredible blessing for my family," she says. "[She] brought the kind of patience, the kind of single-minded devotion to the children that a mother today, who is either working or has other responsibilities, finds very, very difficult to bring to her children." She explains that it's a teachable moment for America because of the number of grandparents there are living alone in nursing homes while their children are trying to find care for their grandchildren. "Let's bring supply and demand together the way they are about to do at the White House."