

## INSIDE PEOPLE

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### POPULAR CULTURE

## INSIDE PEOPLE

*The Stories Behind the Stories.*

*By Judy Kessler.*

*Villard, \$19.95.*

In this paean to *People*, one of the most successful and widely read magazines in the country, Judy Kessler, the author of "Inside 'Today': The Battle for the Morning," dishes up the dirt on such issues as the campaigns to secure wedding photographs of Charles and Diana, Liz and Larry, and Julia and Lyle; the real story of Donna Rice; the photographing of John Lennon's killer, and the punishing blow to the ego suffered by *People's* managing editor at the hands of a brusque Bill Clinton. Scant pieces of "Inside *People*" are truly engaging: the coverage of Ryan White's last days and a *People* reporter's relationship with the young AIDS victim and his family; the short, sad life of the child born with severe combined immune deficiency who came to be known as the Boy in the Bubble. But 20 years of *People* should be enough to give us more than what amounts to the padded minutes of an editorial meeting. Bird-dogging the 1991 wedding of Elizabeth Taylor and Larry Fortensky, one reporter asked: "Why do we care? Why do we have to care? Why should these stars be such a big deal?" Why indeed?

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