



**JON & KATE
EXCLUSIVE**

LINDSAY LOHAN
**Secret Drug
to Get Thin**

CAUGHT WITH OTHER WOMAN



HEIDI & SPENCER
**WEDDING
ALBUM**

SHOCKING PICS!
The reality dad
of 8 takes off his
wedding band for
a naughty night



**Jon at 2 AM with
Mystery Woman**

**INSIDE THE
US STYLE
PARTY**

At 2 A.M., "he could barely walk" as he exited the bar, a clubgoer says of Jon (left, on April 18).



CAUGHT WITH ANOTHER WOMAN



After the camera flashed to take this first photo, Jon put his hands up to cover his face.



According to the clubgoer, the two were "panicking" as they sped off.

It was **Jon** minus **Kate** as TV's famed dad of eight partied without his wife amid trouble at home

BY ERICKA SÓUTER & NATALIE THOMAS

REGARDING COUPLE time, Kate Gosselin of TLC's flagship reality show, *Jon & Kate Plus 8*, has said that she and hubby Jon reconnect after their eight kids go to bed: "We watch TV together and make it fun." But on April 18, while she was in Bellevue,

Washington, promoting her book *Eight Little Faces*, he found another outlet for connecting. A clubgoer tells *Us* that at 11:20 P.M., Jon — the ring finger on his left hand naked — and a mystery brunette used the less-public back entrance of Legends Lounge, a nightclub attached to the

America's Best Value Inn in Reading, Pennsylvania. At 2 A.M., closing time, nearly three hours later, they left through separate exits. As they converged on Jon's new white Nissan Nismo, he yelled, "Hey, babe! Babe! Give me my jacket!" the clubgoer says. (She complied.) "He was swaying and stumbling. I was like, Whoa, I hope you're not driving." Suddenly, startled by the flash of a photographer's camera, Jon panicked, urging the woman, "Get in the car! Get in the car!" Fumbling for the keys, she jumped into the driver's

seat and the pair sped off — without even turning on the headlights.

Before that night, a source says, Jon showed up around 11 P.M. in the club's parking lot two weekends in a row: "He would sit on his hood, looking at the people go in. After 15 minutes, he would leave and show up again right around closing time, around 2."

Trouble? Sure seems so for Jon and Kate, who have allowed the world to watch as they bicker nonstop while raising 8-year-old twins Madelyn and Cara and 5-year-old sextuplets



While husband Jon spent April 18 partying, Kate did two book signings in Washington State.

Meanwhile, Kate Was Away....

ON THE COVER: MARK ARBE/ABC; INSETS: CLOCKWISE FROM LOWER RIGHT: OJC; THE GOSSELINS: JONATHAN WATSON; KATE GOSSELIN: JONATHAN WATSON; THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: N.C. (3); JONATHAN WATSON

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Aaden, Joel, Collin, Hannah, Leah and Alexis. Fans of their hit show are all too familiar with Kate's venomous snipes ("Are you really going to be that immature and sit there with your arms folded and act like a ding-dong?"), Jon's petulant responses ("I'm not listening to you anymore") and even Kate's so-called "love taps" (which look a lot like slaps).

Meanwhile, Pennsylvania neighbors — the many *Us* interviewed have little positive to say about their most famous residents — paint a picture of a 32-year-old who would rather go solo than face his demanding wife, 34, and copious family responsibilities. And while the two still appear together and shooting continues, whispers abound that they have actually separated.

One neighbor hears that Jon "is living in the apartment above their garage." (TLC had no comment.) Jon's former boss David Roethermel, owner of custom cabinet business Style-Craft Corp., tells *Us*, "I wouldn't be surprised at all if they were headed for divorce. None of us could understand why anyone would want to be with that woman. She was always yelling and bitching at him about one thing or another. She used to give him \$5 to spend and if he needed more money, she would give him hell."

As for the events of April 18, Jon insists he's guilty of nothing more than being social. He told *Us* in an e-mailed statement: "I went to Legends to speak to the owner. A friend of mine

The Gosselins renewed their vows for TV on Aug. 12, 2008, in Maui, HI. "I almost cried, but I didn't," Jon said.

"I am not always proud of what you see... Nor is Jon, [but] we are certainly not going to hide our imperfections."

KATE GOSSELIN

wanted to check out my car, so I let her drive it to her car. Yes, I have female friends — but that is all she is. I'm not going to end my friendships just because I'm on TV."

Jon Adrift

But Jon's recent behavior certainly doesn't jibe with that of a contentedly married man. In February, he was reported to be partying with Juniata College coeds (see box, next page) in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania — three

hours from the Gosselins' \$1.1 million Wernersville home. *Us* has since learned additional details, including Jon's roving eye. "I was told that he hit on a lot of girls. They were all upset by it; he is married!" one close pal of a partygoer tells *Us*. (In response, Jon called the claims "hurtful and untrue," though, curiously enough, he also said in May's *Ladies' Home Journal*, "I always thought I would be, like, 54 years old and marry a 19-year-old or something.")

Still, his choices since then have done little to rehab the image of a

crumbling marriage. By several accounts, Jon has become a regular at local bars as well, reportedly frequenting the Pike Cafe, Shorty's and 3rd & Spruce Cafe, among others. "He's always by himself," says a source. "He chooses these low-key, no-name, dark bars and always in different towns. He mixes it up, probably so he's not discovered."

Indeed. While Kate thrives in the spotlight — witness her nationwide book tour and paid public appearances — Jon seems to be seeking anonymity.

While he was out with pals one night, "everyone kept saying, 'Look, it's Jon from *Jon & Kate Plus 8*,'" recalls an onlooker. "He hated it. Poor guy. He can't just be Jon." An odd choice for his refuge? Solo trips to Reading's Berkshire Mall. "It seems as if he comes here to just get away," says a store employee, one of several who report seeing the dad roaming there alone. "He didn't appear to have any mission, just walking and not being recognized or talked to. If it seemed like people were looking, he'd put his head down."

Are the Kids OK?

While Jon and Kate's bickering makes good TV (who can forget the episode in which she chastised him for *breathing?*), it can affect the kids adversely. "They see the arguing as everything is not OK in their world and can become more anxious," says Cooper Lawrence, an NYC-based developmental and child psychotherapist. "But if they also see love and affection, they are learning what a real relationship is." A source who has worked with the family tells *Us* the younger six "are sweet and don't really get what's going on." As for the twins, Madelyn "is clearly the star" and may act out, while Cara is "an angel" in comparison. Another issue: Growing up on TV "takes them out of the realm of what's normal," says Lawrence (who has not treated the Gosselins), and may impact "the one place you have some solace: among family."



Mady Is a Mini-Mom!

Madelyn, 8 (right), likes to take center stage and thrives on attention, while sister Cara is quiet and caring.

JON'S COLLEGE INDISCRETION

Beer Pong! Dirty dancing! Partying! On February 6, the famous 32-year-old father nabbed headlines after a wild night at Pennsylvania's Juniata College. "He came to the bar where we were at [Mimi's], then followed a bunch of us back to the volleyball house for a party," a student tells *Us*. "He was telling us he was getting divorced, but he didn't hook up with anyone that I saw." Still, adds another student, "he attempted to kiss one of my best friends, who replied, 'OK, never do that again!' and was so creeped-out and upset that she left. He was acting ridiculous." Jon denied any wrongdoing.



Of his compatibility with the younger set, Jon (on Feb. 6) once said, "I can still hang with 15-year-olds!"

Life With Kate

Friends say Jon didn't always play the role of beleaguered dad. Before marrying Kate in June 1999, "he was the nicest, most chill guy and so much fun," a former high school classmate tells *Us*. "Once he got with her, that ended. No one talks to him anymore. It's sad."

Certainly Kate's temperament does not excuse Jon's carousing, but perhaps it serves to help explain his behavior. Sources tell *Us* conflict began well before the cameras started rolling in 2007. Ex-boss Rothermel recalls one example of a pregnant-with-sextuplets Kate on the warpath: "When she was supposed to be on bed rest, she came into the office, raising hell because Jon's father was late bringing her lunch," Rothermel says. Kate's former coworkers at Reading Hospital and Medical Center, where she was a labor and delivery nurse, found her intolerable. "My niece was there having a baby," a local who only wants to go by her first name, Tammy, says. "We turned on the show, and a nurse came in and said, 'You have to take

"It's hard. . . . I can't be Jon. I have to be Jon & Kate Plus 8 and I still haven't come to grips with it."
JON GOSSELIN

that off!' They said she's a bitch." (Kate is even on the outs with her own family.) Another source who worked with the family called Kate "a complete disaster," adding, "There is no love there, no emotion, no interaction. Jon is the sweetest, nicest guy around . . . and is being trampled on by this woman."

That short fuse may be why, says Rothermel, Jon may not have told his wife the reason he was fired two months before the sextuplets arrived. While Kate has stated that Jon was terminated because StyleCraft did not want to pay medical insurance for the kids, Rothermel has documentation showing Jon was let go



Private time? "[We] have maybe 10 minutes together while we're cleaning up the kitchen," said Jon (with Kate April 2 in NYC).

THEIR MEANEST SNIPES

JON	KATE
"Hey, Kate, when are you going to pull the stick out? Because it's getting really annoying."	"This is Jon at his finest — stubborn as he possibly can be just to annoy me."
"You're a party pooper. Just enjoy it. You're going to be kicking yourself when you're older."	"It's so irritating that you talk over top of me. Still. How long have we done these interviews? It's like you would learn by now."
"Your mother has gotten you [kids] brain-warped thinking you have to be clean all the time."	"'OK' is what you say every time I confront you. . . . 'OK' is not an acceptable answer anymore."

because he used company time for a personal project. Afterward, "Jon was more concerned with her killing him than anything else," adds Rothermel. (Another of Jon's secrets? He drives through at Wendy's, even though Kate is virtually all organic!)

Despite the seeming dysfunction, though, this is no marriage of convenience. A source close to the family tells *Us*, "What's funny is that I think Jon genuinely loves her. I don't pretend to understand why, but there is something about Kate that Jon obviously thrives on." And as much as she appears hostile, it's often in response to behavior of his that would frustrate anyone, from simply interrupting to slacking off on daddy duty.

Pressure at Home

Adding to the stress: having such an enormous family — though, according to a neighbor, much of Kate's supermom act is reserved for the cameras. "Care for the kids was definitely 90 percent Jon and the helpers, and there are always helpers, so it was never just Kate and the kids," the neighbor tells *Us*.

And when the kids misbehave, Kate goes on the offensive. "She has more of an Army mentality," the neighbor adds. "When the kids needed discipline, Jon or the babysitters would take the time to reason with them and explain the situation. Kate is not that compassionate or sensitive."

Still, there would be complete chaos without Kate's firm hand. Asked whether she had nannies, "Nope,"

WORKING FROM HOME!



Jon and a camera crew at his Pennsylvania home April 23. Nearly 5 million fans watched the March finale.



The Gosselins' gated home (with a separate farmhouse) sits on 36 acres in Wernersville, PA, in a secluded area.

she told *Us* in July. "We have a very part-time family helper. Other than that, our commitment is to our kids, and we work really hard to be the ones raising them." Not that she thinks she's perfect: "You can only do your best, and tomorrow's a whole new day."

Keeping Up Appearances?

With season five of *Jon & Kate* premiering May 25, the couple are presenting a united front. On March 24, they shared an intimate dinner at Mr. Chow in Beverly Hills, kept close during a daylong press event

in New York City on April 2 and picked out matching clothes for the kids (no cameras!) at their local Gymboree on April 20. As to whether this current drama will affect ratings, fans have come to expect a warts-and-all look at this couple and their struggles to raise a huge family. The strain of the show "has definitely put some tension on our marriage," Jon told *Ladies' Home Journal*. "But Kate and I are together." For how long? "I'm not always patient," Kate has said. "I try and I'm having a lot of fun. It's moment by moment."

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