



# Anderson Cooper **BLIND PANIC!**

Newsman fears he's damaged eyes forever **AFTER LOSING SIGHT FOR 36 HOURS**



**A**FTER his eyeballs were scorched on the job, Anderson Cooper is terrified he'll go blind, sources say.

"Anderson is trying to remain calm – and even joking about it on TV – but despite the bravado, he's really freaked out," said an insider close to the silver-haired newscaster.

"He's been exposed to the sun for extended periods of time covering news stories in the field over the years. Now he's wondering what the long-term effects of that exposure could be.

"Anderson's convinced he could lose his eyesight for good."

Cooper, 45, was blinded for 36 hours after he filmed a "60 Minutes" segment in a coastal area of Portugal a few weeks ago.

Describing the incident on his syndicated talk show "Anderson Live," Cooper – the son of socialite Gloria Vanderbilt – explained he'd spent two hours on the water during an overcast day, but the glare still had a devastating effect.

"I wake up in the middle of the night and it feels like my eyes are on fire," he recalled.

"It turns out I have sunburned my eyeballs...and I went blind for 36 hours."

He posted a photo on himself on the Internet with a gauze patch over one eye, and experts who

have not treated Cooper say he could be at risk for eye problems and even skin cancer.

"Long-term exposure to UV rays does increase one's risk of developing cataracts and macular degeneration, the leading cause of blindness in the U.S.," Dr. Cary Silverman, a board-certified ophthalmologist in East Hanover, N.J., told The ENQUIRER.

"Cooper's light-colored eyes and skin also put him at greater risk for skin cancer around the eye."

Dr. Lawrence Hopp, an ophthalmologist in Beverly Hills, Calif., added: "The type of radiation injury he incurred can be poisonous to his cornea, and repeated exposure to UV radiation can also lead to skin cancer around the eye,

along with the formation of cataracts and scar tissue."

**DOCTORS SAY IT'S CRUCIAL TO WEAR** sunglasses or goggles, or at least a wide-brimmed hat, to protect the eyes in bright sunlight.

"Because he's on camera, Anderson

doesn't do any of that," said the source. "But now he's convinced that as a result he's at greater risk for permanent eye damage. Even his mother is worried sick."

by **MICHAEL GLYNN**  
mglynn@nationalenquirer.com  
and **LYNN ALLISON**

**The type of injury he incurred can be poisonous to his cornea**



The TV journalist's mom, Gloria Vanderbilt