

## THE GIFT OF POWER--JOHN KENNEDY

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Normally if one were to ask about an event in the past, I would shrug my shoulders and answer with an "I don't remember." What is it that makes the death of John F. Kennedy stand out as if it had happened yesterday? Why is it when you ask anyone about that tragic November afternoon they will be able to recall their exact actions, thoughts, and whereabouts? The responses to these questions point only to the tremendous impact of this one individual today, upon a society bestowed with the most corrupt regime since President Grant's.

As a nation, we long for the intelligence, charisma, and decisiveness in our leadership today, that Mr. Kennedy offered ten years ago. From his cultured and dignified presence to his political astuteness, John Kennedy represented this country with pride and fortitude. Certainly he had flaws; for he was mortal. Possibly it was his decision which initially involved this country in Vietnam; surely it was his gamble which motivated the Bay of Pigs invasion, but his integrity was never challenged.

Ten years ago I was a ten year old sixth-grader who as yet hadn't related to statel affairs. Why then had his death stunned me and other children of the time? Like all other kids I looked forward to this day off from school, but the funeral on television rocked me as if someone in my own family had met this ill fate. Perhaps the unity with the leader, perhaps the familiarization with his family, makes his death as hard to grasp today as it did ten years ago. Americans are still searching for the strong leadership that John Kennedy provided. He overcame all obstacles: PT 109,

personal family disasters, bias against a Catholic in the White House, the publicity advantage of incumbent Vice President Nixon. He challenged adversity and came out the victor.

Kennedy was a man all could identify with, the Supermen, or the James Bonds. This is why his death still remains a controversial subject. Theories relating to conspiracy, foreign plot, or even a political mandate permeate any conversation of the President and his fatal ending. Many still feel that Lee Harvey Oswald is only part of the answer in explaining the death of Kennedy.

Today leadership is clandestine at best and criminal at worst. We look toward Nixon as we looked toward Kennedy but the reflection is not the same. Nixon's countenance is cold and austere, Kennedy's was warm and trusting. Unlike other leaders who seem to feel power is a dictatorial mandate bestowed upon them at inauguration, Kennedy knew power as the ability to pull people together and get things done. For this we are grateful.