



Jack: A Life Like No Other

Geoffrey Perret

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Previous biographies of John F. Kennedy have been based almost entirely on newspaper files and personal recollections. Geoffrey Perret's **Jack** is both the first comprehensive one-volume biography of JFK and the first account of his life based on the extensive and important documentary record that has finally become available, including Kennedy's personal diaries, hundreds of hours of taped conversations from the White House, recently declassified government documents, extensive family correspondence, and crucial interviews sealed for nearly forty years. The result is a gripping, accurate, and ultimately moving portrait of America's most charismatic president.

Jack provides much-needed context and perspective on Kennedy's bewilderingly complex personality. It offers an even-handed account of the seamy side of his life - orgies and abortions, health and drug problems - along with valuable insights into JFK's truly idealistic and visionary character.

Jack presents a compelling account of the volatile relationship between Kennedy and his wife, including Jackie's attempt to divorce him, move to Hollywood, and become a film star. At the same time Perret explains how, together, they created the Kennedy style.

Jack reveals how the restless, innovative Kennedy was able to overturn more than a hundred years of political tradition, forge the modern political campaign, and, once in the White House, modernize the presidency. His success was so complete that all serious presidential candidates since 1960 have sought to compare themselves to JFK, not challenging his legacy but embracing it.

Jack is filled, too, with numerous revelations, such as the true story behind the lobotomy of JFK's sister Rosemary. And here, for the first time, is a comprehensive account of Kennedy's numerous and varied ailments from childhood on, including his back problems.

Perret describes how JFK got the two most important decisions of his administration right: his handling of the Cuban missile crisis and his stance on civil rights. As to Vietnam, Kennedy did not believe it was worth fighting for, and in the last months of his presidency he began formulating a secret plan for neutralization and withdrawal - if he won the 1964 election. But that, of course, was not to be: Convinced he would die young, Kennedy foresaw that a violent death would claim him. Throughout his brief time in the White House he was haunted by a vision of a man standing at a window, looking down at him, holding a rifle.

Jack: A Life Like No Other is a book like no other. Here, at last, John F. Kennedy seems to step off the page in all his vitality, charm, and originality.

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