

## Anni's John F Kennedy Story

I was in fifth grade, 10 years old, Yarmouth, Maine Intermediate School. I remember everything about that day from the moment Mr. Winslow told us that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas. They closed school early and we all walked home in silence... first time EVER. There was a sheen of ice on the snow on the North Yarmouth Academy field that we walked across to get to my house on Portland Street... I still hear the sound of our boots crunching. I was trying hard not to cry until I got home... which I did, up in my room, all alone. I knew the tidy, safe little world I lived in had changed forever.

Two days later, I was still in shock when I witnessed the shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald on TV, LIVE. I went right up to my room and wrote on a piece of paper about what had happened to JFK on November 22, 1963 and how Oswald had been shot as well on November 24th. I wrote that JFK was a great president and that I would always treasure this piece of paper. I had it tacked up in my room for a long time, with a little yellow ribbon glued onto the top left corner.

The day after I wrote that, I asked my Dad "if I write a letter to Jackie Kennedy telling her I am keeping her and her children in my prayers, will you find the address to the White House?" He said he would, so I wrote my letter and took great pains to make it just right in my best 10 year old way. Unbeknownst to me, before my Dad mailed the letter, he copied it over in his own penmanship & tucked it away. I remember getting a reply from the White House, but didn't remember where it went.

In the winter of 2011, I went through what I call "my treasure box." It was a box of old report cards and blue ribbons and slides from hikes I had taken, some writing I had done in grade school... stuff like that. I almost stopped breathing when I found all three pieces of memorabilia in the box... the piece of paper I had written to honor and remember JFK, complete with tack holes, yellow ribbon, and faded a bit from sunlight... my Dad's copy of the letter I wrote to Jackie Kennedy, and the reply from the White House, complete with envelope and my address hand written without zip code, as we didn't have them back then. It was the first time I realized my Dad had made a copy of my condolence letter and this brought me to tears... still does when I see it. My Dad died in 1999. What a gift he left me!

I finally found some money to properly frame all three pieces in November 2012. I hung it in my living room, and in the weeks following, I realized I had to write a song in honor of the 50th Anniversary of JFK's assassination. In July 2013 I recorded the song at Bob Colwell's studio in Hallowell Maine... it's called "November 1963". It's been a labor of love, as I have tried to preserve the feelings of the 10 year old kid in retelling my memory of this event. I have now put up a YouTube link to a video I created to go with the song. My clever and talented nephew, Clark Shepard & I worked on this together. Here's the link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v7jnASUBnM8>.