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JFK and LBJ: The Influence of Personality Upon Politics

Tom Wicker

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In *JFK and LBJ* one of our most astute political observers examines two important events of the 1960s: why John F. Kennedy, the popular president, failed to push his legislative program through Congress, and why Lyndon B. Johnson, the consummate domestic politician, squandered his great consensus in an unpopular war in Vietnam. Tom Wicker's theme is that personality and circumstance dominate political life–that government consists chiefly of "not measures but men." Mr. Wicker's detailed and absorbing account, much of it going behind the scenes, shows how Kennedy's brilliant campaign of 1960 made all but certain his deadlock with Congress, and how Johnson came to his most fateful decision within forty-eight hours of assuming the presidency.
"It is difficult in short space to do justice to the subtlety, the human and political insight, of this double portrait in presidential frustration.... Wicker has found in these two presidents who longed to acquit themselves well before history embodiments of the limits of the presidency."?Edwin M. Yoder, *Book World*.
"Steadily persuasive ... wonderfully astute and incomparably lucid."?*Newsweek*.

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