

# CLASSIC DRIVER

## [Snapshot, 1962: Christmas at the White House with John F. and Jackie Kennedy](#)

### **Lead**

It's 12 December, 1962: President John F. Kennedy and First Lady Jackie Kennedy admire the Christmas tree in the White House. For a moment, time stands still...

It's often only in retrospect that the importance of a photograph becomes apparent. So it is with this snapshot of the President and his wife in December 1962, during a Christmas party for employees of the White House. JFK seems almost carefree as he enjoys the sight of the beautifully decorated Christmas tree, despite the nerve-racking time he'd recently had as President: the Cuban missile crisis, less than two months before, had seen the threat of nuclear war become terrifyingly real. It wasn't until the end of October that the crisis was averted.

### **The desire for peace**

In his [Christmas address](#) on 17 December, President Kennedy once again made direct reference to the crisis of the past few months: "It is the day when we remind ourselves that man can and must live in peace with his neighbors and that it is the peacemakers who are truly blessed. In this year of 1962 we greet each other at Christmas with some special sense of the blessings of peace. This has been a year of peril when the peace has been sorely threatened. But it has been a year when peril was faced and when reason ruled. As a result, we may talk, at this Christmas, just a little bit more confidently of peace on earth, good will to men."

The President then spent Christmas with the First Lady, surrounded by their children and families in the White House. It was to be JFK's last Christmas.

### **Gallery**

**Includes video**

Has video

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