



President Johnson's Speech

March 31, 1968: A Gallup Poll reports that President Johnson has a 36 percent approval rating on the conduct of his office and 26 percent approval of his handling of the war.

March 31, 1968: President Johnson states in a nationwide television broadcast that the US is willing to enter peace negotiations. He stuns the nation announcing he will not seek reelection in 1968.

“**J**une 15, your wedding is June 15th? You won't be there.” That's what the old bat at the Jasper County draft board told John when he called first thing the morning of April 1, 1968.

“I won't be there?”

“You say you're graduating the week before?”

“Yes. Graduation is on the 7th.”

“You'll lose your student deferment on graduation day.”

“And I could be drafted that fast . . . in just eight days?”

“Son, I wouldn't recommend a lot of fancy wedding plans for June 15th.” John just hung up. He gulped for air.

That call confirming that he would be drafted, could become cannon fodder in Vietnam, ended our childhood and began our loss of innocence. Our parents' sheltered nurturing could not reach far enough to protect us now.