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Assignment: 1

A Man Touches the Sky

Do you know anyone who has performed an extraordinary act, an act so dangerous that it gained the respect and appreciation of the public? There is a story that occurred on August 7th, 1974 in then-recently built buildings located on West Street, Manhattan called the World Trade Center. In 2006, James Marsh, a British film director directed a film called "Man on Wire." The film chronicles the story of Philippe Petit, born in 1949 in France. He is famous for walking on wire from the rooftops of one tall building to another. Philippe Petit holds a unique resume. He became known worldwide when in 1974 he illegally walked between the twin towers of the World Trade Center. Even though he took an enormous and extremely dangerous risk, Philippe Petit gave a beautiful gift to the people of Manhattan and an inspirational story to the entire world.

First of all, it is very important to understand that Petit's idea to walk between the twin towers was an outrageous idea; he knew it was very dangerous and it had many risks. On a misty, windless day in 1974, the people of Manhattan witnessed perform an act that nobody had ever performed. At 7:15am, Petit walked for 45 minutes, crossed the twin towers 8 times, walked 250 meters long across, 450 meters above the ground. Petit's biggest risk was that he could have been killed. The best case scenario as Donald said was that they could have been arrested.

Furthermore, even though it was a very risky act, the people of Manhattan believed that Phillippe Petit had given them a "beautiful gift." Annie, Petit's childhood friend, described the moment as "extraordinary," she said it was so "beautiful that it looked like if he was walking on

a cloud.” She also described the moment when he was lying down as “amazing” and she said that it was very “thrilling” when he knelt down and “powerful” when he saluted. On the other hand, Jim described the moment as “magical, profound, and beyond anything that you could ever imagined.” Even Sgt. Daniels, who arrested him, mentioned that he was watching something that he “would never see again in the world” and he thought it was “a once in lifetime event.” This magnum opus had numerous reactions; they all believed it was a beautiful gift.

In addition, this act inspired many people around the world. It is almost impossible to predict an outcome when something is being planned, but as Petit proved nothing is impossible. Petit planned to walk on the Twin Towers for about 6 years and there were times when he just wanted to give up but he was hungry for success and never gave up. Petit had to do several dangerous and illegal acts in order to achieve his goal for instance, he used Berry Greenhouse’s ID to make a copy in order to enter the World Trade Center and pass the security guards. Petit also pretended to be a reporter from *Metropolis*, France’s number one journal on urban planning, in order to go to the top of the towers and take pictures of specific spots he could use to tie the wire. It became an inspirational story when people later found out that it was dream that he had since he was young. Many people believed that it was impossible to achieve that goal some people thought that he was insane, but due to Petit’s commitment, many people appreciated his story and he gained respect and admiration from the public. Having people such as Philippe Petit is an advantage socially because in most cases children have not heard of Petit, and when some adults try to teach that anything is possible, it becomes easier when there is a story of a man who walked on wire.

In conclusion, great inspirational stories are not easy to find without obstacles, danger, risks and the commitment to achieve a goal. Petit’s careful planning made him surpass all the

obstacles he faced while accomplishing a very dangerous goal. In the end, his goal inspired many people and his story made him an icon in peoples' lives. Petit has received many awards such as the *James Park Morton Interfaith Award*, and the *NewYork Historical Society Award* but the biggest award is the beautiful gift he gave the world on August 7th, 1974.