

WHAT HAPPENED AT CHAPPAQUIDDICK

Five years later, after an exhaustive new study of the original investigation and recent interviews with many of the participants, a clearer picture emerges of how Mary Jo Kopechne died and what Senator Edward Kennedy did—and did not do—that tragic weekend

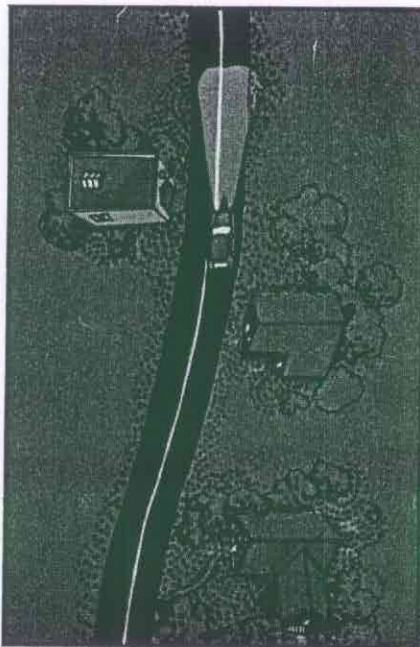
BY VIVIAN CADDEN

The weekend of July 18, 1969, should have been one of great rejoicing for Senator Edward Kennedy. Apollo 11 had been racing to the moon and on Sunday night Neil Armstrong took the "one small step for man" that was "one giant leap for mankind." It marked the realization of John F. Kennedy's dream and promise. For the same reason it should also have been a time of rejoicing for Mary Jo Kopechne, whose loyalty and devotion to the Kennedys, starting with JFK, had been the central fact of her adult life.

It was, instead, the weekend of grief and death on Chappaquiddick.

It is now five years since the Senator's car ran off the narrow wooden bridge, landing upside down in seven feet of water. The details of that night have faded from most people's memories but there remains the instantaneous, flash summary that the word "Chappaquiddick" evokes: a party in a cottage on a tiny island, Kennedy driving to the beach with a girl, the drowning, Kennedy's failure to notify the police until the next morning and a vague recollection of loose ends, contradictions, things unexplained. The matter might rest there, always just below the surface of our consciousness when we think about Teddy Kennedy, were it not for one fact: If he does decide to run for the Presidency, it is inevitable that we will once more relive the story in its every detail.

Five years after the tragedy Mary Jo's parents, living now in their retirement home in a wooded section of the Pocono Mountains in Pennsylvania, are convinced that Kennedy's version of it is substantially the true one and that the Senator's failure to summon help or report the accident



was due to his condition of shock.

"When he called that morning to tell us what happened he was so obviously distraught. His voice was breaking and then he was crying and he could hardly get the words out," Mr. Kopechne says.

In Edgartown, the chief village on the island of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, John Farrar, the diver who recovered Mary Jo's body and who runs the Turf and Tackle shop on Main Street, is still obsessed with the details of time and tide on that weekend, and Deputy Sheriff Christopher Look, Jr., now running for sheriff, is as certain as ever that he saw Kennedy's car minutes before the accident.

Two of the young women who attended the party have since become lawyers and the others hold important political posts.

Police Chief Dominick (Jim) Arena, whose handling of the case evoked

a storm of criticism, has departed Edgartown, following a dispute about salary, for a job in Essex Junction, Vermont.

E. Howard Hunt, who in his capacity as White House "plumber" went to Chappaquiddick and nosed around, still believes that Mary Jo was asleep in the back of the car, unbeknownst to Kennedy—and that Kennedy was in the front seat with another of the girls, Cricket Keough.

At this late date it is doubtful that an investigator will turn up many new hard facts about that incredible night, but time and reflection, a return to Chappaquiddick and talks with many of these people who were involved lend perspective to the facts that were always there. Suddenly some of the pieces fall into place. We know what went on at the party, why Kennedy and Mary Jo left together and where they were going. We know the time of the accident. We have a good idea of what the Senator did and, more important, what his thoughts were during those hours of nightmare until he walked into the Edgartown police station at 9:30 the next morning.

The occasion for the gathering on Martha's Vineyard was the 46th Edgartown Regatta. Edgartown's *Vineyard Gazette* of July 19th reported that "Senator Edward Kennedy will sail *Victura*, the Wianno Senior in which he and his famous brothers raced years ago in these same waters."

It was Joe Gargan's idea to use the occasion for another reunion of the "boiler-room girls," as they called themselves, the six young women who had worked so hard in Robert Kennedy's Presidential primary

campaign that had ended abruptly a year before with RFK's assassination.

Gargan, a first cousin of the Senator's (it was his unmarried sister, Ann, who was faithfully tending the stricken old Joe Kennedy), is a practicing lawyer, but for years he had always been tirelessly and immediately available to the Kennedys in any capacity in which they needed him. He is sometimes referred to as one of the Kennedy "tub drawers," from the fact that John Kennedy and Ted, both plagued by bad backs, were always surrounded by people who in addition to their other duties might be called upon at any moment to produce a hot tub bath, "a soak." But Gargan is more versatile than that. He would make an ideal social director for a summer vacation spot or "leisure village," he is an advance man *par excellence* and he had an instinctive gift for making Kennedy campaign workers feel noticed and appreciated. All during the spring of 1968 when they were lining up and keeping track of Robert Kennedy's delegates, Gargan would drop in on the girls to see if they were happy and had everything they needed. And it is not at all unlikely that in arranging this reunion, the fourth for the "boiler-room girls" since they had scattered to other jobs after Bobby's death, he was looking to 1972 when Ted Kennedy might need to reassemble them for his own primary campaign.

The young women themselves—Mary Jo, the two Lyons sisters, Nance and Maryellen, Esther Newberg, "Cricket" Keough and Susan Tannenbaum—can best be described as impressive. College-educated, frighteningly intelligent, politically astute, capable as all get-out, a little tough, perhaps.

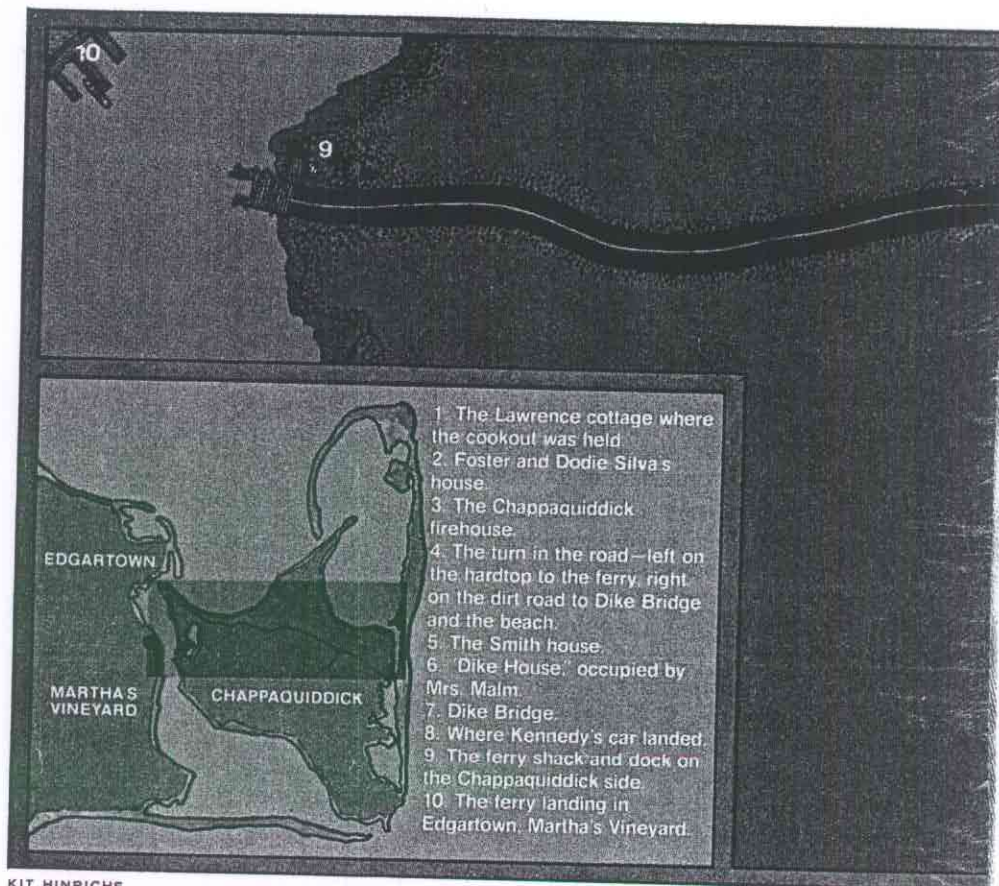
The men who assembled in Edgartown, with the exception of Charles Tretter who had worked in the Washington office of Bobby's campaign and who knew the boiler-room girls, were sailing buddies of Kennedy's or part of his usual Massachusetts entourage. John Crimmins, age 63, unmarried and on the surly side, who describes himself as a "legal aide and investigator," drives for the Senator when he is in the state. He came on down from Boston on Wednesday, bringing a supply of liquor, and engaged three rooms for the girls a mile out of town at a motel called

the Katama Shores. Paul Markham, a former U.S. District Attorney from Boston, 38 years old, hard working, successful, father of seven children, had been reluctantly enlisted by Gargan to crew, and the two men sailed the *Victura* from Hyannis Port to Edgartown on Thursday afternoon, together with a boy named Howie Hall. Ray LaRosa, a one-time fireman and sailing buddy of Kennedy's with a patronage-type job in Boston, came down from Boston on Thursday.

The possibility that *these* women and *these* men were being paired off for some type of swinging week-

widow's walks from the old whaling days and many of them dating back to the 1700s, runs down on its east end to a 500-foot channel that forms a harbor for the Edgartown Yacht Club. Across this channel is the island of Chappaquiddick. It is a place of magnificent beaches protected by acres of nature conservancy, sparsely settled by a few local residents, by one or two large estates but mostly by some summer cottages. It is a three-minute run from the Edgartown dock, on an old-fashioned two-car ferry that operates from 7:30 A.M. until midnight.

Crimmins drove the Senator to a



KIT HINRICHS

end is not only remote, it is inconceivable. Joseph Kopechne, Mary Jo's father, says emphatically, "With those girls? Forget it!"

On Friday Kennedy shuttled up from Washington to Boston and took a charter plane to the Vineyard, where Crimmins met him at about 1:30. Driving to Edgartown they stopped off to get some fried clams for lunch and then went on to Chappaquiddick to have a swim.

The beautiful town of Edgartown, with its spanking white- or gray-shingled houses, some of them with

cottage on Chappaquiddick that Gargan had rented, where he changed into his bathing trunks, and from there over Dike Road to Poucha Pond, crossing over Dike Bridge to the ocean beach where he had a swim. Back in the cottage Kennedy changed once more—to dry shorts—and Crimmins took him back to the ferry landing where the Senator waded into the channel to his boat. The girls, most of whom had arrived from Washington or Boston on Thursday, followed the race from a boat that Gargan had arranged for. The

Senator finished a disappointing ninth; his nephew Joseph Kennedy III, in another boat, finished 19th.

The cottage on Chappaquiddick where Kennedy changed his clothes, known locally as the Lawrence cottage, is a little more than two miles from the ferry landing. Small, pretty from the outside, with its weather-beaten shingles and yellow shutters, it is surely best described as a "summer cottage" of the kind one finds in beach areas the world over. Its "big" room, about 12 feet by 20 feet, is kitchen, dining room and living room all in one. An ample refrigerator and a pint-size stove and cup-

board make up one end of the room; a built-in counter with four high stools divides the kitchen area from the living-room space. Opposite the kitchen there is a fireplace and, at right angles to it, a daybed covered with faded cretonne. By the front-window wall there is a dinette table covered with a long cloth, with a couple of dinette chairs tucked in.

The cottage has two minuscule bedrooms, each with twin beds, and an adequate bathroom. All in all, it is a perfect vacation spot for a family of moderate means to rent for a

week's vacation with the children—and pray that it doesn't rain.

Mrs. Dodie Silva, a pleasant, ample woman whose youthful face belies her grandmotherhood, is the rental agent for the cottage. She and her husband, Foster Silva, and her family live next door to it. The cottage rents, Mrs. Silva says, for \$200 a week and at the height of the summer season, when guest houses in Edgartown are renting rooms for \$35 or \$40 a day, it certainly is a good buy.

That summer Joe Gargan rented it, sometime in June, for eight days. He was going to bring Mrs. Gargan and their children down for the week

few minutes on the deck of the winning sailboat congratulating the winner, Ross Richards. Afterward he checked into his room at the Shiretown, and then Crimmins drove him over to the Lawrence cottage where he had a "soak"—a facility that the extremely modest Shiretown Inn does not provide.

We are indebted to Joe Gargan for the one unintentional bit of comic relief in that weekend of tragedy in his doggedly detailed description of the onset of the cookout at the cottage on Chappaquiddick.

"I would say that I arrived at the house somewhere between eight-



"It is virtually impossible to turn off the only hardtop road on Chappaquiddick onto unpaved Dike Road without being immediately aware of the mistake..."

boards make up one end of the room; a built-in counter with four high stools divides the kitchen area from the living-room space. Opposite the kitchen there is a fireplace and, at right angles to it, a daybed covered with faded cretonne. By the front-window wall there is a dinette table covered with a long cloth, with a couple of dinette chairs tucked in.

that would include the regatta weekend. But Mrs. Gargan's mother, suffering from cancer, was taken to the hospital that weekend for what proved to be unsuccessful surgery, and Mrs. Gargan and the children had stayed close to home. Since the group had been unable to get more than two rooms for the men at the Shiretown Inn, Gargan decided to put up Crimmins and Markham at the cottage and to use it as a kind of bathhouse for the weekend and site for a Friday-night cookout.

After the races Kennedy spent a

fifteen—eight-thirty, probably close to eight-thirty. At that time I immediately went outside, took what is known as a cookout and moved it away from the house. It was close to the house. I moved it approximately, oh, I will say twenty to twenty-five feet from the house and placed it in front of the window that faced the kitchen so that while I was in the kitchen area I could see it outside. I then put charcoal into the cookout and poured a substantial amount of charcoal lighter onto the charcoal. It flamed up, then/turn to page 120

WHAT HAPPENED AT CHAPPAQUIDDICK

continued from page 81

began—at least the stuff I poured on the charcoal began to burn.

"I turned on the oven. At that time I took out of the refrigerator what you would call frozen hors d'oeuvres, some of those cheese-type things, some which have sausage and some which have cheese. I turned the oven to about four hundred fifty degrees. They take about twelve minutes to cook and I put in some of these hors d'oeuvres at that time. After they were ready, I took them out and started to pass them around to some of the people. Some I passed to some of the girls and suggested they pass them."

The cookout was late and slow in getting started. After the races the girls had gone back to their motel to shower and nap and change, and didn't arrive until close to nine o'clock. The pesky charcoal wouldn't catch on. When Tretter and Cricket Keough went back to the Shiretown Inn to see if they could borrow a radio for some music, nobody had had anything but those "cheese-type things" to eat. There were potatoes to bake, the salad to be fixed, and it was discovered, once the fire did get going, that the "cook-out" (barbecue grill) was too small

and could only do a few steaks at a time.

On the basis of what any of the participants said five months later at the inquest, it is impossible to tell what time it was that the group more or less finished eating. Time is altogether fuzzy in the accounts of that evening except for Kennedy's statement that he and Mary Jo left the party at about 11:15, a statement that all other participants fell in with, although many of the rest of their statements of time are wildly divergent.

But the time of 11:15 was not so much an answer to the question, "What time did the Senator and Mary Jo leave the party?" as it was to the implied question, "What was the Senator doing in the car with Mary Jo?" With the inevitability of innuendo on that latter question, Kennedy chose to say that they were on the way to catch the ferry when he made a wrong turn. Everybody knew that the ferry closed down at midnight and so the time had to be *before* midnight.

It was an unfortunate explanation of their being in the car together. It did nothing at all to prevent the innuendos. And since it is virtually impossible to turn off the only hardtop road on Chappaquiddick onto unpaved Dike Road without being immediately aware of

the mistake, the "wrong turn" was a matter of unanimous disbelief. It was evident that they were not on their way to the ferry. And the time, therefore, did not *need* to be before midnight.

We know for a fact that it was *not* before midnight, because of Deputy Sheriff Christopher ("Huck") Look, Jr. A lifelong resident of Chappaquiddick, whose ancestors there go back about 300 years, Look operates a small oil business, will run for sheriff this fall, is a lay reader in the Episcopal Church, a highly respected man in Edgartown and, he says, "always a Kennedy fan."

That Friday night Look was on duty at the yacht club, which is on the Edgartown side of the channel, until about half past 12. Then, thankful that regatta weekend had so far been relatively benign—it has on occasions got pretty wild—he remarked on the fact to the manager of the club, said good-night and was taken by the yacht-club launch to the Chappaquiddick side where he had left his car.

It was about 15 minutes before one when he came to the sharp turn on the hardtop where Main Street becomes Schoolhouse Road. A black car was coming out of Schoolhouse Road but, instead of making the turn, it went straight for a few feet onto a dirt lane

and then stopped. Huck Look, believing that the people—a man driving and a woman beside him, Look thought, and possibly someone or something making a shadow on the rear window—might need some help, stopped too and began to get out of his car. At that point the black car backed up and then shot down Dike Road toward the beach. Huck Look thought momentarily of following it but since they obviously were doing no wrong and didn't seem to want to talk to him, he got back into his car. He did note that the car had Massachusetts plates and a license with an L and a 7 at the beginning and a 7 at the end.

Minutes later, just before reaching the Lawrence cottage, he came upon two girls and a man (it was LaRosa and the Lyons sisters) walking single file down the white line of the road toward the bend in the road and he stopped again, to ask if they needed a ride. One of the women said, "Shove off, buddy. We're not pickups," or something to that effect, and then the man, seeing Huck's uniform, apologized and said they were fine and right close to where they were going. Look, a bit crestfallen at being twice rebuffed, continued past the cottage to his own house, where he arrived at five minutes before one—probably almost exactly the time at which Senator Kennedy and Mary Jo were going off the bridge.

There is no reason to doubt Huck Look's word. "What did I have to gain?" he asks. He had been summoned to the bridge the next morning with other police officers, had been there when John Farrar brought up Mary Jo's body. When shortly thereafter the black Olds sedan with the license plate L78-207 was hauled out of Poucha Pond, he went immediately to another of the officers and said, "Gee, that is the same car I saw last night."

It seems clear, then, that the cookout had gone on much longer than had been expected and that nobody was going to make the midnight ferry back to Edgartown. There had been some talk, encouraged by Crimmins who surely wished that the whole lot of them would leave and let him get some sleep, about sending someone down to the ferry to see if a \$20 bill might not induce the operator to make a later trip, but since nobody was ready yet to set a time for the end of the party, nothing came of that idea. Midnight passed with coffee drinking and more talk and some cleaning up and some dancing. People went in and out, stood in the yard and then came back in to escape the mosquitoes.

It must have been somewhere around 12:45 that the Senator, who had been talking with Mary Jo, stood up abruptly, asked Crimmins for the key to his car and went out the front door, with Mary Jo following.

All that year after Bobby's death newsmen had noticed these abrupt departures of Kennedy's. It was as if suddenly there were too many people, too

Doctors' Tests Show How You Can Actually Help Shrink Painful Swelling of Hemorrhoidal Tissues

... Due to Infection. Also Get Prompt, Temporary Relief in Many Cases from Pain, Itch in Such Tissues.

Doctors have found a most effective medication that actually helps shrink painful swelling of hemorrhoidal tissues caused by infection. In many cases, the first applications give prompt relief for hours from such pain and burning itching.

Tests by doctors on hundreds upon hundreds of patients showed this to be true in many cases. The medication the doctors used was *Preparation H*®—the same Preparation H you can get without a prescription. Ointment or suppositories.

much talk of Bobby, too much pressure and he wanted out, fast.

Mary Jo's parents still cling to the belief that Kennedy and Mary Jo were on their way to the ferry though they don't understand why, if Mary Jo was going back to the motel, she left her pocketbook under the table in the cottage. "That upset us terribly," Mr. Kopechne says. "We don't know the answer." It would not be like Mary Jo, they feel, to forget her purse.

"But it would be just like the Senator," Mrs. Kopechne says, "to say suddenly, 'I'm leaving.' Bingo! And for Mary Jo to say, 'Me, too. Can I have a ride? I don't feel well and I can't keep my eyes open any more!'"

It would have been very much like them both. *But given the fact that it was already past midnight, it is highly probable that what Kennedy said was, 'I'm beat and I have to race tomorrow. I'm going down to the beach and try to grab a couple of hours' sleep,' and that what Mary Jo said was, 'Me, too. I don't feel very well and I can't keep my eyes open any more.'*

Was there something else in the Senator's head beyond getting out of that close, crowded room and catching a breath of fresh air, a few hours' sleep? Probably not even the Senator knows that. Seductions are rarely explicitly planned and Mary Jo would seem an unlikely candidate for a premeditated seduction. Pretty in a kind of conventional way, unflirtatious to a fault, she was described by one of her friends as "almost prim." Be that as it may, what is seldom noted is the fact that Mary Jo was not an innocent little girl straight out of a convent but a 28-year-old woman who had, ever since her graduation, been living away from home and working in the midst of a fast-moving, high-pressure, sophisticated political atmosphere dominated by men. The question is not what was in the Senator's head about Mary Jo. The fact is that Mary Jo was a grown woman who could take care of herself.

But no matter what the Senator's conscious or subconscious intentions were, when he reached the turn to the beach, overshot it by a few feet and saw, in his rear-view window, an officer who would surely recognize him getting out of his car and approaching, he

CAN'T SLEEP?

Try This Different Sleeping Method That Lets You Fall Asleep More Naturally.

Does it work? Judge for yourself. Try the simple Compoz method. Take two Compoz tablets one hour before you get ready for bed. Then let Compoz help you unwind—quiet you down. By the time you climb into bed Compoz is working at its peak to help you relax to sleep more naturally. Compoz is not a sleeping pill. Not a barbiturate. Not habit forming. Compoz is so gentle we think of it as throwing the sleep switch.

Compōz®

GENTLY THROWS THE SLEEP SWITCH

could only have thought that for a Senator from Massachusetts to be caught in a car with a young woman, late at night on a lonely island, could be taken as nothing but scandal. His instinct was to get away, rattling down that bumpy dirt road at, he says, 20 miles an hour.

It's easy enough to run off Dike Bridge. It's always been said that someday somebody would do it. And you don't have to be drunk or as poor a driver as Kennedy is reputed to be in order to do it—although either or both of those factors would make it easier. If you're barreling down that road at

continued

continued

night and see the bridge a split second too late, failing to note that it goes off at an oblique angle from the road, you will do just what Kennedy did. Local people, if they are going over it, come to a dead halt in front of it, then turn their wheels to the left and negotiate it. Not very many people go over it anyway except for fishermen who want to take their jeeps down to another part of the beach or Foster Silva who guards the reservation area. You can park in the sand just before the bridge and you must park in the sand just after it unless you have a four-wheel drive—because then there are the dunes and the ocean.

Kennedy has always said that he doesn't know how he got out of the car. He says he can "remember the last sensation of being completely out of air and inhaling what must have been a half a lung of water and assuming that I was going to drown and the full realization that no one was going to be looking for us that night until the next morning and that I wasn't going to get out of that car alive, and then somehow I can remember coming up to the last energy of just pushing, pressing and coming up to the surface."

Kennedy says he was swept by the tide that was rushing through the narrow cut that is spanned by the bridge and landed on the far bank some 30 feet, he estimates, down from the car. The car headlights were on and he could make out the position of the car. For a period of about 15 or 20 minutes, he said at the inquest, he dove down to the car, clung to the undercarriage and tried to get to a window or door. He would come up for air, be swept down again by the current and try again. He was to repeat this, he says, seven or eight times, each time more weakly until the last time, he says, "I just couldn't hold my breath any longer. I didn't have the strength even to come down even close to the window or the door." After the last dive he let himself float over to the near shore and lay spent and exhausted on the grass.

It would be about 20 minutes before two now, when Kennedy started back down the dirt road, "walking, trotting, jogging, stumbling" as fast as he could. It was extremely dark. The crescent moon of that evening had dropped shortly after ten o'clock, and Kennedy says he could make out no shapes and that the only way he could stick to the road was to follow the silhouettes of the trees. Eyes glued on the road, it was possible, as he claims, that he saw no lights on the way back.

Yet there were some lights. The Malm cottage sits about 500 feet from the near side of the bridge and although Mrs. Malm and her college-age daughter are extremely vague about time, they say they had left a night-light on—of what strength or in what direction was not clear. A few feet farther on, on the other side of the road, at the Smith cottage set back

farther from the road, there was a night-light of some kind in the children's room facing the road. Around the bend on the hardtop road, the Foster Silvas had gone to bed at about 1:30 but a small light burned night and day at the fire station almost directly across from their house.

Kennedy was not seeking help. Stunned, incredulous, certain that unless by some miracle Mary Jo had got out of the car, too, and was somewhere out in that darkness, help would be unavailing; he was heading back to his friends.

At two o'clock, LaRosa, having returned from one of the innumerable walks by which everybody was trying to keep awake after the party wound down, was leaning against the tree outside the cottage, reluctant still to stake out an uncomfortable berth on the living-room floor, when he heard the Senator's voice saying, "Get me Joe," and then, "Better get Paul, too."

Gargan and Markham found Kennedy slumped in the backseat of the rented white Valiant that was parked in front of the house and Kennedy's

PROCRASTINATION SAVES TIME

*Each mother's faced with
A basket of mending—
A tedious, tiresome task
That's unending.*

*So follow my system:
Before I have sewn them,
I'm free of the bother,
Because they've outgrown
them!*

—ANNIE KOMORNY

first words were, "The car's gone over the bridge and Mary Jo is in it." His next words were, "Get me back to Edgartown."

What else was said on that ride to the ferry landing we will probably never know. Kennedy described his feelings in his television address a week later as "a jumble of emotions—grief, fear, doubt, exhaustion, panic, confusion and shock."

He revealed them more vividly at the inquest, without a script. Driving toward the ferry with Gargan and Markham, he says, "A lot of different thoughts came into my mind—about how I was going to really be able to call Mrs. Kopechne at some time in the middle of the night to tell her that her daughter was drowned, to be able to call my own mother and my own father, relate to them, my wife, and I even—even though I knew that Mary Jo Kopechne was dead and believed firmly that she was in the back of that car—I willed that she remain alive. As we drove down that road I was almost looking out the front window and

windows and trying to see her walking down that road. . . . I just wondered how all of this could possibly have happened. I also had sort of a thought and the wish and desire and the hope that suddenly this whole accident would disappear. . . ."

It seems very probable—it would be highly in character—that Gargan would have offered to say that *he* was the driver of the car. Kennedy's actions—or inactions the rest of the night and extending as late as 9:30 the next morning—can be seen as consistent with the theory that he intended to let Gargan take the rap—a theory advanced by columnist Jack Anderson. Much as they dislike Gargan, the Kopechnes believe his loyalty to Kennedy would have prompted him to make such an offer. And a week later, at the hearing before Judge Boyle on charges of "leaving the scene of an accident," the Judge raised the suspicious question, "Was there a deliberate effort to conceal the identity of the defendant?" But if Kennedy's actions that night and early the next morning could be interpreted as an effort to deny that he was the driver of the car, Gargan's surely were not consistent with such a plan. For if indeed that had been agreed upon, there was nothing that needed to be done but get Kennedy back to Edgartown and see to it that he was noticed there bone-dry and to have Gargan plunge into the channel and then make for a phone to report the accident.

It was more than likely that Gargan's offer was one of a host of possibilities and fantasies that swirled through the Senator's head in his "sort of a hope that suddenly this whole accident would disappear." Certainly, when the three men parted, there was no agreement about what to do other than not to tell the people in the cottage about the accident.

Gargan and Markham returned to the cottage and eked out a place to stretch out among the eight sleeping or half-sleeping occupants of the cottage.

Of this Mr. Kopechne says, eyes blazing, "I will never excuse those two men." And his wife adds, "I can forgive a lot but I can never forgive them for leaving Mary Jo in the water for nine hours. And Gargan was supposed to be her friend!"

Whether Kennedy swam the 500-foot channel to Edgartown or found a boat to paddle over in is still uncertain. His first statement to the police the next morning makes no mention of a swim—it is an addition in his later television statement, which tends to make it suspect. John Farrar, the diver, says that he can swim it in five minutes but he believes it was "virtually impossible" for Kennedy with his back brace and weakened state to do it. An aide of Kennedy's believes that he did do it because the Senator told him about it before the television speech was drafted.

It would have been a foolhardy thing to do—and even more foolhardy for Gargan and Markham to stand

continued on page 128

continued from page 122

there and watch the Senator disappear into the dark waters as they said they did. On regatta weekend the harbor is full of dinghies, and it would have been easy enough to "borrow" one and have Gargan or Markham row him across and then return the dinghy to the Chappaquiddick side.

By whatever means, then, Kennedy was in Edgartown shortly after two that morning and probably made his way up Daggett Street to the Shiretown Inn and his upstairs room unnoticed. Although at that hour there were still some festivities going on at the Harborside Inn on Main Street down by the yacht club, the back street near the Shiretown must have been relatively deserted.

Kennedy got out of his wet clothes and into a dry pair of pants and a suit jacket (apparently he had no dry pull-over), and at 2:25 came out on the deck outside his room and started down the outside stairway that leads to a court formed by the assortment of frame buildings that comprise the inn. Russell Peachey, co-owner of the Shiretown, was, at that moment, giving the place a last-minute inspection when Kennedy (Peachey was not sure it was he) asked him what time it was and complained of noise from a party in one of the other buildings that he said had awakened him.

It was a strange thing to do. Kennedy spoke of it in his television address in the context of his general daze and confusion that night: "I remember going out at one point and saying something to the room clerk." Still, it had all the appearance of wishing to establish an alibi and it may have been a part of his groping for a way to make the whole thing go away.

There may have been still another element in his appearance on the stairs. There are no phones in any of the rooms in the Shiretown. Two pay telephones hang nakedly on the wall of one of the frame buildings around the courtyard to which Kennedy was descending. If Russell Peachey had not appeared when he did—he was not in evidence, after all, when the Senator slipped unnoticed into his room—would Kennedy have sought out somebody else to make his presence in Edgartown known? Or would he have summoned the courage to make one of the phone calls he needed to make—at least the phone call to Burke Marshall, the trusted friend and lawyer of the Kennedy family? In any event, having been told it was 2:25 he returned to his room.

The next morning Kennedy emerged at 7:30 and was walking out toward the street when he ran into Ross Richards, the winner of Friday's race, whose room shared the porch with Kennedy's. They chatted for a few minutes and then strolled back to the Shiretown. At eight o'clock, when the breakfast bell rang, Richards invited Kennedy to breakfast and Kennedy said, "Thanks, maybe later."

At that point, Gargan and Markham arrived and closeted themselves with Kennedy in his room. Shortly thereafter, Tretter arrived with Cricket and Susan, ruffled, exhausted and still unaware of what had happened. Tretter asked them whether they wanted to go right to their motel or use his room at the Shiretown. The women said they would like to wash up and plunk down on a bed. Tretter poked his nose into Kennedy's room and got waved out by the three consultants.

At about nine o'clock Kennedy and Gargan and Markham walked the block to the ferry and crossed to the Chappaquiddick side. Dick Hewitt, who was operating the ferry that morning, says they kind of hung around the landing and the little house there that is filled with tackle and gear. There is a pay telephone inside the shack and apparently the men were using it. They were in and out of the shack—during which time Kennedy changed his shirt. (Was it still damp from the night before? Was there some thought of the three men's "discovering" the accident? Were they still clinging to the faint hope that Mary Jo would turn up?)

They were still there standing around the ferry slip at 9:30 when Hewitt again docked the ferry and walked over to the group, saying, "There's been an accident, have you heard?" Markham said, "We just heard about it."

Kennedy and Markham returned to Edgartown with Hewitt and went to the police station, which lies behind the pillared Dukes County Court House, while Gargan went back to the Lawrence cottage to bring the remaining girls back to Edgartown. He met the bedraggled group walking toward the ferry, having decided that was the only way to get there, and brought them back to the cottage to tell them about the accident. But even at that late moment he apparently was not sure of what Kennedy was going to say. For all he told them was, "There's been a terrible accident and Mary Jo is missing."

One can only sum up that night of Kennedy's as one of horrendous indecision. Surely there were, as he said later, "grief, fear, doubt, exhaustion, panic, confusion and shock." There is no reason not to believe Kennedy had suffered a "slight concussion," as his doctor testified. It is very likely, too, that in times of lucidity there were reasoned explorations about how it might all "go away"—wild scenarios with Gargan driving or Mary Jo driving herself.

The fact is that when he walked into the police station he had finally summoned up his resolve and except for the "wrong-turn" excuse, which dictated the false time, he told it pretty straight:

"On July eighteenth, nineteen hundred sixty-nine, at approximately eleven fifteen P.M., in Chappaquiddick, Martha's Vineyard, I was driving my car on Main Street on my way to get

the ferry back to Edgartown. I was unfamiliar with the road and turned right onto Dike Road instead of bearing hard left on Main Street.

"After proceeding for approximately one-half mile on Dike Road I descended a hill and came upon a narrow bridge. The car went off the side of the bridge. There was one passenger with me, one Mary Jo [there was a blank here because the Senator did not know how to spell her last name], a former secretary of my brother Robert Kennedy.

"The car turned over and sank into the water and landed with the roof resting on the bottom. I attempted to open the door and window of the car but have no recollection of how I got out of the car. I was unsuccessful in the attempt. I came to the surface and then repeatedly dove down to the car in an attempt to see if the passenger was still in the car. I was exhausted and in a state of shock. I recall walking back to where my friends were eating. There was a car parked in front of the cottage and I climbed into the backseat. I then asked for someone to bring me back to Edgartown. I remember walking around for a period of time and then going back to my hotel room. When I fully realized what happened this morning, I immediately contacted the police."

The statement remains a closer approximation of what happened than anything said subsequently. It is sketchy to say the least. And if "when I fully realized what happened . . ." would have been more accurately put by, "When I fully realized it had happened and I must take the responsibility for it . . ." the statement still yields the basic outlines of the tragedy. If some details had been filled in quickly and some steps taken to verify the account immediately, the damage to Kennedy's reputation would have been much less grave. But at the police station and then with the gathering of the Kennedy family and top-level advisers there began a chain of events that simply compounded his predicament.

Edgartown's Police Chief Jim Arena had been summoned to the scene of the accident at 8:30 that morning by Mrs. Malm. Two fishermen out fishing off the bridge had spotted the wheel of the car sticking up in the pond and reported it to her. After the body had been recovered and the Senator's registration found in the glove compartment, Arena sent out an alarm for Kennedy, only to be told that Kennedy had just arrived at the police station and wished to talk with him there. Still in the bathing trunks that he had borrowed from the Malms in order to try to see if anyone was in the car before Farrar arrived and took over with his diving equipment, Arena had been stunned to learn from Kennedy that he himself had been the driver of the car. One can appreciate the dilemma of a small-town police chief faced with a case involving the best-known name in the state of Massachusetts. Arena was speechless.

Kennedy said: "What would you like me to do? We must do what is right or we will both be criticized for it." Indeed they were.

Kennedy, clearly in the leadership here as he would be in most situations, proposed that he write a statement, which he did, and gave it to Arena, who typed it. Kennedy asked that it not be released until Arena heard from him—presumably because he wished to consult his lawyers about it. With this, Kennedy departed.

Arena never questioned Markham about the accident—or Gargan, who showed up at the police station after having delivered the women to their rooms at the Katama Inn.

He never thought of or summoned the courage to ask the Senator if he would be willing to have a test to determine whether he had been drinking.

He never asked where Kennedy's friends "were eating" or who they were or whether he might question them.

Arena says, "My gosh—you had to accord the Senator some credibility. . . ."

Dr. Donald Mills, a gentle, unassuming general practitioner who is the Associate Medical Examiner of Dukes County, was similarly bowled over by the fact that the body he was expected to examine and issue a death certificate for was in some way connected to the Kennedys.

Frankly awed and out of his depth, certain that it was a simple case of death by drowning but aware that when Kennedys are involved things are not so simple, he called the office of District Attorney Dinis in New Bedford to see if they wanted him to do an autopsy. Dinis' office passed the buck directly back, relaying the message that if Mills was satisfied that it was death by drowning there was no need for an autopsy.

Meanwhile, the kind of smooth, incredible staff work that most successful politicians have—presumably engineered in this instance by Gargan—saw to it that cars and planes showed up instantaneously at the right places and times (as

continued

SUMMER SPECIAL

Baby's First Shoes Bronze-Plated in Solid Metal . . .

\$3.99
Only
A PAIR



Limited time only! Baby's precious shoes gorgeously bronze-plated in SOLID METAL for only \$3.99 a pair. Don't confuse this offer of genuine life-time BRONZE-PLATING with painted imitations. 100% Money-Back Guarantee. Also Portrait Stands (shown above), ashtrays, bookends, TV Lamps at great savings. Perfect gift for Dad or Grandparents. Send No Money! Rush the coupon with your name and address today for full details, money-saving certificate and handy mailing sack. Mail the coupon today!

AMERICAN BRONZING CO.

Box 6533-H1, Bexley, Ohio 43209

FREE and without obligation—rush complete details of your genuine bronzing of baby shoes, money-saving certificate, and handy mailing sack.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

107 GLOBAL STAMPS only 10¢



RUSH REPLY for this spectacular collection from every corner of the globe. King Tut commemorative, Mongolia triangle, other colorful stamps shown plus pictorials, topicals, new issues and old—Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America, Australia, Antarctica. 107 different stamps: also stamp selections to examine. Buy any or none, return balance. Cancel service anytime. Send 10¢—get your valuable collection by return mail.

WILLIAMS STAMP CO., MM85, St. Stephen, N.B., Canada

U.S. STAMPS!



3 SENSATIONAL OFFERS IN ONE
ONLY 10¢

1. Genuine centennial postage stamp as illustrated picturing the first U.S.A. stamp ever issued — 1847!
2. Big collection of 19 all-different U.S. Stamps: 19th Century, \$5.00 stamp, etc.
3. Collection of prized Commemoratives, Civil War, a Mississippi Riverboat, many others. Also, other exciting stamps to examine free. Buy any or none, return balance, cancel service anytime — but all 3 offers (plus Wonderful Illustrated Catalog) are yours to keep! Send 10¢ — TODAY!

H.E. Harris, Dept. C-907, Boston, Mass. 02117

BEST BY MAIL

Rates: Write Box 5, Sarasota Fl. 33578

"NO TAXES" Cayman Islands, B.W.I. — Send \$2. for 144 pages colour holiday guide: maps, facts, fax benefits. Cayman Publishers: Suite 249, 4471 N.W. 36th St., Miami Springs, Fla. 33166

MONEY! MONEY! All the homework you want addressing, mailing. Guaranteed. Free details. Golden Quill, Drawer 428, Venice, Fla. 33595

FLAG Specialists Catalog 25¢. Box 147, Scranton, Ia. 51462

\$300 WEEKLY possible stuffing envelopes. Start immediately! Details \$1. (refundable) Royal-Mc3, Box 36643, Los Angeles, Ca. 90036

"LIBERATED Women Are Better" bumper stickers, 50 cents each Ms.. Box 337 Northboro, Ma. 01532

HOW to make money addressing, mailing envelopes. Offer details 10¢ Lindbloom House, 3636 Peterson, Chicago 60659

FREE list of Metaphysical, Self-Help, Occult, inspirational books on request. DeVorss & Co., 1641 Lincoln Blvd., Santa Monica, Ca. 90404

REV. MOTHER Lucy, Spiritualist. Do you have problems? Worried? Troubled? Health? Enemies? Money? Call (713) 647-4629 or write Box 143, Old Ocean, Tx. 77463

UNIQUE Bicentennials! Beautiful brochure! "Silvermint", 701-M Investment Bldg. Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222

Reflect-A-Pet.. PET REFLECTOR TAG

IS YOUR PET'S LIFE WORTH ONE DOLLAR?

Every night many family pets are run over on the streets because even safe drivers are often unable to see them before it is too late. REFLECT-A-PET™ Pet Reflector Tag will give any dog or cat that added protection that could save it's life! REFLECT-A-PET is available in two sizes for large and small pets (Specify when ordering, size required).

• HIGHLY REFLECTIVE PRISMATIC PLASTIC • NON TOXIC
• ATTACHES TO ANY COLLAR • ATTRACTIVE • DURABLE
• YOUR SATISFACTION GUARANTEED

Send Check or Money Order for \$1.00 plus 25¢ for handling today to: THE CREATIVE MAILBOX, RIDGELAND, MS 39157

BASEMENT TOILET

FLUSHES UP

to sewer or septic tank
no digging up floors.

Write . . McPHERSON, INC.

BOX 15133 TAMPA, FLA. 33614



"When we found out
what AARP did
for people over 55,
my wife didn't mind
telling her age."

What's AARP?

AARP is the American Association of Retired Persons. A non-profit association of more than 6 million people. Rich people. Poor people. People on the go. People who like to stay put.

What does it give?

Primarily it gives you the opportunity for a new kind of life. A way to explore new interests. To save money on medicines, travel, auto* and health insurance. To meet new people. But, most of all, it's a way to maintain your individuality, and your dignity.

How does AARP work?

To become enrolled in AARP all you have to do is clip and mail this coupon. Your membership costs you \$2 a year. That's it.

Join AARP

The new social security
for people 55 and over.



Irma and Peter McNulty

And it includes subscriptions to Modern Maturity Magazine and the AARP news letter.

*Auto Insurance available in all states except Massachusetts. Only statutory coverage available in North Carolina and Texas.

American Association of Retired Persons

1909 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Gentlemen: I am 55 or over.

Please enroll me as a member of AARP. I understand that it makes me eligible for all AARP benefits and privileges.

Enclosed find: \$2 (one year dues)
 \$5 (3 year dues) Bill me later.

Name (Please Print) _____ DCRB

Address _____

City _____ Birthdate _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

One membership entitles both member and spouse to all AARP benefits and privileges. (Only one member may vote.)

continued

they had the day before), and within hours the entire party had departed the island—the Senator to the family compound at Hyannis Port (the line boy at the Hyannis airport where Kennedy arrived in a small chartered plane says, “His face was sweating . . . he looked in a semi-state of shock”), the girls and most of the men back to their homes and Mary Jo’s body to Plymouth, Pennsylvania, to be buried.

In the very short run, it may have been extremely helpful to Kennedy to have the entire entourage whisked off the island, no questions asked. By the end of the week it was clear that it was a grave mistake.

News spreads fast. By three o’clock the pressure on Police Chief Arena from the ever-increasing assemblage of reporters was so great that he released the statement—minutes before a call from Hyannis Port, presumably to make some changes.

The dispatch with which everything was done—and Kennedy’s retirement to Hyannis Port, where he was to remain unavailable to the press, only emerging at Mary Jo’s funeral, but in absolute silence for more than a week—served to further a host of rumors, theories, speculations and revelations.

The fact that Cricket Keough’s lunch-box-type pocketbook was found in the black sedan led everybody to believe, initially, that it was she who was the victim, and it formed, too, the basis of the thesis of “Plumber” E. Howard Hunt, among others, that it was Cricket and the Senator who were on their way to a tryst at the ocean and that Mary Jo had been asleep in the backseat of the car. Even the Kopechnes believed this at first, again because it was “so like Mary Jo.” Her mother recalls that “we always had letters from her saying how tired she was, that she was always needing to go to bed early.” Since no one was talking, it was not known then that Cricket had left her pocketbook in the Olds after she and Tretter had gone to Edgartown earlier in the evening to fetch the radio for some music.

Cricket, who has since become a lawyer and is married to Paul Redmond, one of the attorneys who represented the young women at the inquest, says today that she is “notoriously delinquent” about her pocketbook. “I don’t smoke and hardly use any makeup and I’m just apt to leave it around.” She left it, she says, on the front seat.

If any more evidence were needed to prove that Mary Jo was not on her way back to her motel, it is this. For if, contrary to all characteristic behavior, she had forgotten her pocketbook, when Kennedy opened the car door for her and she saw Cricket’s pocketbook there, she would have immediately been reminded that she had forgotten her own. Instead, what undoubtedly happened was that Kennedy, coming around to the other side of the car, put Cricket’s pocketbook on the backseat shelf—where it became the shadow that Huck Look saw.

The third-girl-in-the-car theory was not the only wild rumor that was given credence by Kennedy’s silence during that first week.

The quick departure of the group—the existence of which only gradually was pieced together by reporters during that week—and the fact of its gathering at Lawrence Cottage, “six married men and six unmarried women” as some of the stories put it, served to heat up rumors of an “orgy.”

The failure of Dinis to order and Dr. Mills to perform an autopsy gave rise to ugly hints of foul play that still persist in some John Birch-type circles and that led to the whole hassle about an autopsy three months later when District Attorney Dinis, stung by criticism, fought to have the body exhumed and belatedly autopsied against the Kopechnes’ wishes.

Among the flock of advisers who flew to the Kennedy compound immediately following the accident—Ethel Kennedy, the Stephen Smiths, the Sargent Shriver, former Defense Secretary McNamara, Theodore Sorensen, Burke Marshall, the whole familiar group that had been close to JFK and

FIVE O’CLOCK

*Heartwarming as a blessing is
A summer afternoon,
A pile of clothes, fresh-ironed
and
A husband coming soon,
And a small girl singing in
The very next room
Just a little out of tune.*

—MAUREEN CANNON

then Bobby—there were some, apparently including Kennedy himself, who felt that there must be a fuller statement immediately—and early reports from the compound, around which the press stood vigil, had it that Kennedy was indeed drafting such a statement. But there developed a struggle between the public-relations types, led by McNamara, who were aware of the damage that each passing day of silence was doing, and the lawyers whose sole concern was the hearing, set for the following week. Judge James A. Boyle, Justice of the District Court for Dukes County, was to preside at the hearing on the charge that Chief Arena had filed: “leaving the scene of an accident.” Judge Boyle, the lawyers felt, was a tough judge and, since he was shortly to retire, in no need of Kennedy favors. Never mind public relations. The main thing was to keep Kennedy out of jail.

And so it was not until after Kennedy pleaded guilty to the charge and received the usual sentence for that offense—a two-month suspended sentence—that he went on television with a fuller statement, drafted apparently

by Theodore Sorensen. It was a fuller explanation and it did give us some glimpse of Kennedy’s state of mind during that night—but by including the channel swim and Gargan’s and Markham’s return to the scene of the accident, unmentioned in the first statement, it raised as many new questions as it answered.

The aura of rumor and gossip generated during that first week survives today in the widely held impression that the Kopechnes built what is usually described as a \$75,000 house with money given to them by the Kennedys to insure their support or at least their benign acceptance of the story as Kennedy told it.

The Kopechnes, through their lawyer, Joseph Flannagan, did present a claim to the insurance company for “wrongful death and survival” and negotiated a settlement, Mr. Flannagan says, for a “substantial amount.” The amount would be based, among other things, on the fact that Mary Jo was making \$15,000 a year at the time of her death and could be expected to make more and that since she was only 28, she had many years of life expectancy. Any good negligence lawyer will tell you that the settlement in such a case might be as high as a million dollars (of which the lawyer might get one third).

Talking to the Kopechnes, looking at Mary Jo’s memorabilia—a wedding picture of JFK and Jacqueline Kennedy in the small bedroom that holds her books and childhood stuffed animals, a picture of John F. Kennedy inscribed to Mary Jo and one of Robert Kennedy given to her one Christmas by Ethel, in the den of the ranch-style house—one knows that the Kennedys would never need to buy their support. For to be anything less than enthusiastic about the Senator and, if it comes, his candidacy for President, would be to renounce the entire meaning of their daughter’s life.

Five years after Chappaquiddick there are no longer any doubts about the basic facts of the tragedy. Most people believe, as Judge Boyle did, that the Senator and Mary Jo were on their way to the beach, and many persons close to Kennedy no longer even try to deny it. The question is if, and when, and under what circumstances, the Senator himself may wish to acknowledge it. Whether or not he seeks the Presidency in 1976, a public and a press that have always doubted the “wrong turn” would welcome his candor if even at this late date he affirms that, yes, it was after midnight and he and Mary Jo were headed for the beach; that their going there was entirely innocent, but that the appearance of immorality was so inevitable that, in his grief and remorse about the accident itself, he despaired of answering that question straightforwardly at the time with any chance of being believed.

If that were to happen, then perhaps the subject of Chappaquiddick could finally be closed. ■