

# Ted Kennedy Role Could

*"Just as I went into politics because Joe died, if anything happened to me tomorrow Bobby would run for my seat in the Senate. And if Bobby died, our younger brother Ted would take over for him."*

—JOHN F. KENNEDY

By Walter Pincus  
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The bloodied leadership mantle of the Kennedys—with the political power, organization and emotion it controls—has passed to the family's youngest son, 36-year-old Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.).

The role he chooses to play in the coming weeks could well influence the Democratic Party's presidential choice at the convention in Chicago.

In the wake of the tragedy at Los Angeles, it is conceivable he will withdraw temporarily from all political activities—in effect remaining neutral between Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Sen. Eugene J. McCarthy.

In recent speeches around the country on behalf of his brother, Ted Kennedy has criticized "the politics of joy" position initially taken by Humphrey. And though he publicly applauded Mc-

Carthy's New Hampshire and Wisconsin campaigns, he privately did not hide his anger at the Minnesota Senator's personal jibes and his refusal to withdraw after defeat in Indiana and Nebraska.

Months before Robert Kennedy's assassination the Humphrey campaign organization leaked word that Ted Kennedy would make a good running mate for the Vice President. It was a useful argument in northern industrial states where politicians worried about not having the Kennedy name on the ticket.

Yesterday politicians—among them Virginia's Armistead Boothe and Rep. Clarence Long of Ind.—were talking about a Humphrey-Kennedy ticket.

If Ted Kennedy speaks out for Humphrey before the convention—or even remains neutral—McCarthy's already slim chance for the nomination would just about disappear.

However, if he were actively to support McCarthy, Kennedy would bring to the latter's campaign some sorely missing elements. He has developed lines into the professional party organization and gained experience in delegate hunting the past month in the important nonprimary states. His par-

ticipation could bring to the cerebral McCarthy movement, the frenetic emotion of the Kennedys along with part of the well-trained stall that creates it.

Ted Kennedy was one of those who last year recommended against Robert Kennedy's mounting on a nomination fight against President Johnson. The Massachusetts Senator did not believe the battle could be won in 1968.

At the time of Robert Kennedy's New Hampshire primary "reassessment," the younger Kennedy's advice to his brother was ambiguous—he saw arguments both for and against making the race.

Once the decision to run was made, however, Ted Kennedy set aside his wide-ranging, carefully-planned Senate projects (Vietnam refugee hearings, re-study of the Hill-Burton hospital construction act, Senior Citizen health care) to work full-time on the campaign.

For the first four weeks—until the arrival of former Postmaster General Lawrence O'Brien—Ted Kennedy and top assistant, David Burke, worked out of an Indianapolis hotel room laying out their Indiana organization. Other aides of the Massachusetts Senator occupied key positions in his brother's campaign—Dick Drayne served as as-

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sistant press secretary; K. Dunn Gifford worked to coordinate the campaign hunt.

Since the May 7 Indiana primary, Ted Kennedy has criss-crossed the country making speeches at those little-publicized state Democratic conventions where the bulk of the delegates are chosen. He combined short, rambling off-the-cuff appeals to the political pros, with John Kennedy-like public pep talks. In this way he helped prevent Humphrey forces from quickly locking up several states.

Where McCarthy's supporters generally fought against the regular Democratic organizations Ted Kennedy worked successfully with them to support his brother's candidacy.

Kennedy brought to these meetings humor, political common sense and idealism.

Inevitably, as the crowds pressed around him—whether it was Iowa or Michigan or Missouri or Vermont—one heard the same comment. "I wouldn't have any trouble voting for Ted," one Vermont Democrat said, "but trying to get votes for his brother . . ."

From the day in 1962, when he won the unexpired term of then-President

Kennedy, Ted Kennedy has worked at the job. He gathered around him an aggressive staff of contemporaries.

While his older brother Robert spoke out on major policy issues—Vietnam, the cities, the poor — Ted Kennedy moved in on old-fashioned, gut, political fights like draft revision, state reapportionment, immigration, refugees, health care, and gun-control legislation.

He lacks the intellectualism of the late President Kennedy and the intensity of his late brother Robert. But his easy, open way with people combines with Kennedy looks and bearing to create a cool excitement at his political appearances.

He also has found a way to co-exist easily with his older political colleagues. Aging Chairman Lister Hill (D-Ala.) of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare has given him special committee assignments.

Even relations with President Johnson have been open if not actually cordial. When Ted Kennedy returned from his publicized, critical trip to Vietnam earlier this year, the President called him to the White House for a briefing.

Since 1964, he has put the Kennedy

name to use by appearing at political fund-raising dinners around the country. He counts among his close political friends a number of Congressmen for whom he has campaigned.

These political labors eventually pay off—and Ted Kennedy will one day be around to collect.

"Eight years ago," he told an Iowa Democratic barbecue audience last month, "I was introduced as the brother of a President. Today I'm introduced as the brother of a presidential candidate. If about eight years from now you see me coming back to this picnic . . . well . . ."

The audience roared approval and Ted Kennedy grinned, then went on with his pitch for "Sen. Robert".

If that one brief hesitation suggested anything, it was that Ted Kennedy would be back in his own right. And it's possible that those Iowans may see him in four years rather than eight.

Meanwhile he soon will face the first of what will become a series of never-ending decisions. When the mourning period ends, he must decide for the Kennedy organization among McCarthy, Humphrey or neutrality. It won't be easy beginning.