

SF Examiner  
**Phyllis Battelle**

MAY 19 1972

## Ted's Life With Fear

Since the outrageous shooting of Gov. George Wallace, the Secret Service at last has been sent in to guard Sen. Edward Kennedy — probably the most vulnerable politician in America.

It took a tragedy. After several weeks of debate, a Senate advisory committee had decided not to offer protection to Kennedy because, although he was a "possible candidate" for the presidency, he was not a "declared" one.

Kennedy's biographer, Lester David, is somewhat reassured by the arrival of Secret Service guards at the Senator's McLean, Va., home.

"Jesus, he was wide open to attack before," says David. "I was appalled when I first went to visit his home. It's only 15—20 minutes, at most — from the heart of Washington. You arrive along this main highway, and there's a break in the trees, and you walk in through it. And all there is between you and Kennedy, sitting on a terrace, is a Toyota station wagon and a little wooden fence that even I could vault over."

★ ★ ★

TED KENNEDY and his wife, Joan, live with the constant knowledge he is an easy target for violence. They know, too, that there is an unreasonable hatred of their family among large segments of the population. "his life is threatened weekly." One day, some visitors "got to talking about the ease with which the haters could get to Ted. The tears began coursing down Joan's cheeks. The conversation ended."

George Wallace's shooting, Lester David knows, must have been a direct smash to the solar plexus of all members of Ted's family and staff.

"Ted reacts viscerally to violence, or even the noises associated with violence," says the author. Understandable. Two years ago at a rally in a little town near Boston, a portable cannon suddenly exploded — to signal the start of a parade.

James Spada, a New York college student and Kennedy booster, described what happened: "Ted Kennedy gave a cry — 'Ho!' — and doubled up, both hands grab-

bing his stomach as though he had gotten a severe pain. He fell back inside the opened door of his car, on the seat. His face was white. It looked totally drained of expression. He was staring straight ahead."

Says David: "He always recovers promptly. But the thought that he is a child of tragedy is never far from Ted and his family and the people who work with him.

"There's like a real chill when you go into his office in the Senate. I guess his staff doesn't realize it. It's like if you work in a shoe factory, there's this terrible smell of leather but you don't notice it because you work there. Well, there's this terrible feeling of foreboding in Kennedy's office that an outsider with any sensitivity can feel in his bones. You ask people on his staff if they think Ted will run for the presidency and they go into shock and say things like 'Oh God, I hope not!'"

★ ★ ★

LESTER DAVID'S BOOK, "Ted Kennedy: Triumphs and Tragedies," has just been published. He's now working on a biography of Joan Kennedy. He's a vital reporter and writer, who refers to himself as "a very nosy guy."

David says Ted knows he may be killed. "He's supposed to have said, 'I know I'm going to get my ass shot off one day and I don't want to.' But he's a courageous man. In his youth, in fact, he was almost stupidly reckless. Now he can't afford to be, because he's the head of a family and there is fear in him that they will be left alone."

Lester David says that, although Senator Kennedy "talked endlessly" about the violence that constantly threatens controversial public servants, he may well run for the presidency in 1976. "Certainly he will not run now," says David. "But he feels that perhaps in four years, this hatred of the Kennedys may have abated somewhat."

If optimism could cure the ills of the country, Ted Kennedy would make a good doctor.

Dick Nolan is on vacation