

KENNEDY'S HOME IS KEPT SECLUDED

Rumors and Air of Carnival
Arise at Hyannis Port

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Special to The New York Times

HYANNIS PORT, Mass., July 20 — Secrecy, rumors and touches of carnival arose here today in the wake of tragedy as Senator Edward M. Kennedy secluded himself in his summer home and refused to amplify on his role in a fatal auto accident yesterday.

Reporters were not allowed within a mile of his two-story cottage on a bluff on Squaw Island. In midafternoon the police relayed word that he would not have anything further to say today about the death of Mary Jo Kopechne. She was a passenger in a car he was driving that went off a bridge and into a pond at Chappaquiddick Island, off the island of Martha's Vineyard.

The secrecy stirred curiosity and multiplied rumors. As early as 8 A.M., motorists and pedestrians in this summer resort were seeking to pass the checkpoints manned by the local police.

Every time a car went down Scudder Avenue in the direction of the enclave of Kennedy homes there was speculation that the occupants might be someone such as Burke Marshall, former Assistant Attorney General, summoned to help the Senator explain in greater detail the accident that led to the wall of secrecy today.

Drivers Turned Away

Frequently, the occupants of these cars were just going to services at St. Andrew's-by-the-Sea, an Episcopal church. Others were going to the Hyannis Port Golf Club.

Mostly, the motorists who were turned away at checkpoints were good-natured, but sometimes they seemed bewildered.

"Things were getting quiet," said one of the policemen. "Now this has to come along and start everything up again."

Down the road, past a checkpoint, could be seen the wooden fence around the late President Kennedy's home. Beyond that, but out of sight, was the home of the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy. Also out of sight, and well beyond this, was the home of Senator Edward Kennedy.

One long-time resident, looking down this road, recalled ruefully that some years ago a resident of this community had written a song they all used to enjoy singing. It was called, "Nothing Ever Happens In Hyannis Port."

Many motorists approached the checkpoint under the locust, elm and maple trees with wide grins as though they expected to enjoy some spectacle.

At times cars were backed up 10 deep, along both avenues, with motorists and passengers craning in all directions as though expecting Senator Kennedy or a relative to make an appearance.

In contrast to the atmosphere of secrecy and carnival was the occasional outcropping of sympathy, mostly for Senator Kennedy's mother, Mrs. Joseph P. Kennedy.

This became most apparent at St. Francis Xavier Roman Catholic Church in Hyannis, where she customarily attends mass as early as 7 A.M.

Object to Photographers

This morning she did not appear. But as other worshipers approached the cross-shaped, clapboard church and saw photographers, there were such remarks as: "Hasn't she had enough?" or "Why don't you let them alone?" Many just shook their heads sadly as they entered the church.

But among residents who have spent many summers in the vicinity of the Kennedy homes, there was some irritation with the behavior of Senator Kennedy.

To some extent the anti-Kennedy feeling was a reflection of the fact that their fame and their tragedies had disturbed the serenity that residents have always prized here.

"These tourists come here all the time and throw their beer cans and their litter all over the place," said one woman.

But other residents, while sad about the influx of tourists, were more understanding. One woman said: "Most people who come here think President Kennedy's home is a shrine. That's what they want to see. They don't know it's still owned by his widow and is a private home."

Indicative of the mood of sightseers brought here by Senator Kennedy's accident was the reaction of bystanders and reporters when, shortly before 11 A.M., three children of the Senator were driven along Scudder Avenue by a woman said to be their governess.

There was speculation that the children were being taken away to be spared the latest flood of publicity. But about half an hour later the car and the children reappeared, headed in the direction of their parents' home.

The stream of the curious was probably increased by the gray skies that made the beaches less attractive today. And by mid-afternoon, when it began to rain, driving past the checkpoint became an excuse to relieve boredom.

A sense of proportion was restored briefly when a youngster ran across the road and called to a cluster of curious:

"They've landed on the moon."

NUT 7/21/69