

KENNEDY PLEADS GUILTY



TED KENNEDY ON WAY TO COURT
 Senator pleaded guilty to leaving scene of accident
 —UPI Photo

2-Month Sentence Is Suspended

EDGARTOWN (Mass.) — (AP) — Sen. Edward Kennedy, "adamant" in his desire to accept punishment, pleaded guilty today to a charge of leaving the scene of a fatal accident and was given a two-month jail sentence, suspended on probation.

Kennedy's arraignment and disposition of the case took only about 10 minutes in district court.

When Judge James Boyle opened the session, Clerk Thomas Teller called the Kennedy case first.

Kennedy stood at the rail as the clerk read the words of the complaint, the state's charge that "Edward M. Kennedy of Boston did go away after causing injury to Miss Mary Jo Kopechne without making known your name and registration number.

"How do you plead, guilty or not guilty?"

With his head bowed, Kennedy replied in a low but

steady voice, "Guilty."

Judge Boyle asked to hear some of the evidence and prosecutor Walter Steele called Edgartown Police Chief

Dominick Arena.

'After 11:15 P.M.'

Arena described how he had gone to the scene, recovered the body and that when he returned to the station, Kennedy "advised me that he was the driver of the car, and that the accident happened sometime after 11:15 p.m. (Friday).

"It was not reported to me until after 9 a.m. the next day," Arena testified.

Defense counsel Robert Clark Jr. and Richard McCarron said they had no questions.

"Well, I have," said the judge.

"Was there any deliberate effort to conceal the identity of the defendant?"

"Not to my knowledge, your honor," Arena replied.

McCarron spoke up.

"Your honor, the defense attorneys have advised Mr. Kennedy there are legal defenses he could bring . . ."

"Just a minute," the judge broke in. "Do you now want to plead not guilty?"

"No, your honor. The defendant is adamant in that he wishes to plead guilty to this offense of operating a motor vehicle and going away from the scene of the accident and to leave the disposition to this court.

SUSPENSION

"It is the attitude of both prosecution and defense counsel that confinement to jail is not necessary or prop-

er in this case and asks suspension."

Steele then told the court the state asked for a sentence of two months—the minimum in the two-month to two-year penalty provided by law.

Steele also recommended suspension. He said:

"Having in mind the character and the reputation of the defendant the ends of justice would not be served by a jail term."

"Considering the unblemished record of this defendant," the judge said, "he has already been and will continue to be punished far beyond anything this court can impose.

"I will impose the minimum and suspend if the defendant accepts the suspension."

The clerk then read out the sentence:

"This court has found you guilty of leaving the scene of an accident and orders you to be confined for a period of

—Turn to Page 4, Col. 1

—From Page 1

two months in the Barnstable House of Correction, sentence suspended."

Rear Door

Kennedy left the courtroom by his brother-in-law Stephen was his wife Joan, followed by his brother in law Stephen Smith and a friend, John Driscoll, whose summer home is near that of the Kennedys.

Kennedy paused at the top step for a brief announcement.

"I have made my plea. I have asked for time on the television networks tonight to explain to the people of Massachusetts."

His Washington office said the report, on both radio and television, would be made at 4:30 p.m. (PDT).

The accident occurred about midnight on Chappaquiddick Island, adjacent to Martha's Vineyard, the larger island on which Edgartown is situated.

Kennedy's car went off a narrow, rickety bridge and landed wheels-up in a tidal pond. The senator escaped, but Miss Kopechne, a pretty 28 year old blonde from Washington, D.C., drowned.

Kennedy originally was to have appeared Monday at a show-cause hearing. The purpose of such a hearing would be to determine whether the state had sufficient evidence to issue a summons and bring the senator to trial.

But Clark said last night that Kennedy had waived his right to this hearing.

The surprise switch followed a day of conferences between Kennedy and several of his closest friends and political advisers at the Massachusetts Democrat's home on Squaw Island, near the Kennedy family compound in Hyannis Port on Cape Cod.

Those who conferred with Kennedy included Robert McNamara, secretary of Defense under Presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson and now president of the World Bank; Theodore Sorensen, long-time aide to the late President Kennedy and friend of the family, and Burke Marshall, former assistant U.S. attorney general and another close friend of the senator.

Others reported at Squaw Island Thursday were Richard Goodwin, another key aide to the late President Kennedy and friend of the family; Paul Markham, former U.S. attorney for Massachusetts who accompanied Kennedy when he reported the accident to police; Joseph Gargan, first cousin to the senator and one of his closest friends, and David Burke, a staff member.

Kennedy said in a police statement the day after the accident that he dived repeatedly in attempts to locate Miss Kopechne, but was unsuccessful.