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POLICE CHIEF ARENA
'Chief, you're talking too much.'

Kennedy Agrees To Face Charge

Edgartown, Mass.

Senator Edward M. Kennedy decided with dramatic suddenness last night to face motor vehicle charges of leaving the scene of an accident that killed a pretty blonde secretary.

One of his lawyers announced that Kennedy will withdraw his request for a hearing scheduled for Monday, when the state would have had to establish enough of a case to issue a formal complaint.

The reasoning behind the change in tactics by the 37-year-old Massachusetts Democrat was not known and the lawyer declined to answer questions. But Kennedy could go on trial as early as this morning.

He could plead guilty, innocent or no contest — which would be up to the judge to accept — to the misdemeanor charge.

A plea of guilty would result in quick disposition of the case and would spare the Senator and others who attended a party before the accident questioning in open court, observers noted.

FRIENDS

The decision was reached after a day of consultations among close friends at the family compound in Hyannis Port, across Nantucket sound, including former Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara.

Kennedy will appear in district court here this morning to accept the formal motor vehicle complaint and will appear for arraignment at 9 a.m., Attorney Robert G. Clark Jr. of Brockton told a hastily called news conference.

Clark and his son, Robert III, were retained by Kennedy on Wednesday to assist an

Edgartown lawyer, Richard J. McCarron.

It was McCarron who, on Kennedy's behalf, on Monday, requested a hearing to determine if there was probable cause for the issuance of a formal complaint on a charge of leaving the scene of an accident in which Miss Mary Jo Kopechne, 28, a Washington secretary, drowned.

REPORT

The accident was not reported for about nine hours.

The arraignment will be held before Judge James A. Boyle. The proceedings will be open.

If, according to Police Chief Dominick J. Arena, Kennedy pleads guilty at the arraignment, the state is prepared to present its case and sentencing could come shortly afterward.

The chief said if Kennedy pleads innocent it would be possible in theory for the case to go directly to trial.

QUIET

Earlier in the day, Arena had said "high state officials, including the Attorney General" had warned him to keep quiet in order not to prejudice the upcoming court case.

A news conference had been scheduled for 4 p.m. but moments before that time Patrolman Robert Bruguire told newsmen, "There will be no further press conferences until further notice on the advisement of the county prosecutor."

Arena told United Press International that Attorney General Robert H. Quinn had called him earlier in the day and said, "Chief, you're talking too much."

"I would not want to lose the case on a technicality," Arena said.

United Press