

Car Sighting

Contradiction to Kennedy Story

Edgartown, Mass.

Apparent contradictions on the time of Senator Edward Kennedy's auto accident have been reinforced by a Massachusetts' county official's report to police.

The contradictions center on a car Dukes county deputy sheriff Christopher Look Jr. says he saw on the night of Kennedy's accident.

Look has told police that he is certain the car he saw the night Mary Jo Koepchne drowned was black, it was reliably learned yesterday.

Look, who has refused to repeat to the press his version of what he saw, told police July 19, the morning after the accident, that he was virtually certain that he had seen the senator's 1966 black Oldsmobile at an intersection on Chappaquiddick Road about 12:45 a.m. — almost two hours after Kennedy said the accident occurred.

Two days later, Edgartown's police chief, Dominick J. Arena, questioned Look closely and discovered that the witness was unshakable in his belief that there had been an L in the license plate he had seen.

PLATE

The license plate of the Oldsmobile, registered in Kennedy's name, was L78-207.

The report of Look's version came the same day it was learned that the senator's cousin, Joseph F. Gargan, rented a 1969 white Valiant automobile Friday, July 18.

The license plate of Gargan's rented car was Y98-476.

In addition to his certainty that the car was black, the deputy said the other car had stopped at the intersection without having begun either a left or a right turn, the sources said.

Look told the authorities, it was learned, that he pulled his car around the bend and over to the side of the road, then got out and started to walk back toward the black sedan. Previously it was understood that he had shot an offer of help, but this apparently was not the case.

BACKUP

The other car, Look told the police, started to back up toward his, and he assumed that its driver wanted to ask him for information. He said that he had seen the license plate in the car's backup lights, and that he believes its driver must have seen him and recognized his uniform as the lights glared off the badge and whistle on his shirt.

In both his statement to the police and in his televised accounting Friday night to the voters of Massachusetts, Kennedy said that the accident occurred soon after 11 o'clock on the night of July 18.

In his televised talk, Kennedy said for the first time that he and two companions, Gargan and Paul Markham, had returned to the scene of the accident, at what would have been roughly the time mentioned by Look, in a vain effort to rescue Miss Koepchne.

NUMBER

Look was unsure as to whether there had been two or three persons in the car he had seen. Kennedy's account of the return trip appeared at the time of the telecast to raise the possibility that the witness had seen the senator and his friends on their way to the scene rather than the car that went off the bridge as the authorities here had initially assumed.

Following Kennedy's televised statement, his office was asked to identify the second car. No reply was forthcoming.

Look, it was understood, was not persuaded by the senator's accounting Friday night and still believes he saw Kennedy's car.

The car he saw turned down the dirt road to the bridge, heading the opposite direction from the ferry.

Meantime, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., the historian and former aid to President Kennedy, denied a report in the New York Times on Sunday that he had flown to Hyannis Port last week to advise the senator. Schlesinger said that he had not been there at all since the accident.

New York Times