

**Merry-Go-Round**

**Wall of Silence  
In Kennedy Accident**



**Drew Pearson**

Today's column is by Drew Pearson's associate, Jack Anderson

**I**T NOW LOOKS as if it will take a grand jury investigation to find out what really happened the night that Senator Edward Kennedy and Mary Jo Kopechne plunged into Poucha Pond.

The tight little circle around Kennedy has shown no inclination, as of this writing, to cooperate with Massachusetts District Attorney Edmund Dinis. He may be unable to get all the answers he seeks, therefore, at the September 3 inquest.

If he is dissatisfied with the responses, he can call a grand jury which has broader powers to compel answers. Those who know Dinis say he won't rest until he has explored every lead and questioned every witness. This will include the Senator himself.

Dinis can subpoena the people, for instance, who received the controversial phone calls charged to Kennedy's credit card on the night of the accident and ask them to identify the caller under oath.

A Kennedy aide has branded the report of the 17 calls "preposterous," adding: "At least half a dozen people have access to the Senator's credit card . . . but I doubt that any of them made any calls that night." A number of newspapers have also been skeptical about the calls.

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**T**HIS COLUMN can report categorically, however, that calls were placed from Martha's Vineyard shortly after the accident and charged to Kennedy's credit card. Ex-White House aide Ted Sorensen

and attorney Burke Marshall were called, although Marshall wasn't reached until late the following morning.

A 21-minute call to the Kennedy compound at Hyannis Port was also completed. The mysterious call to an "unlisted-unpublished" Boston number, referred to in the newspapers, was actually a call from Martha's Vineyard to Kennedy's unlisted number in Boston.

These calls uphold my story that Kennedy wasn't stumbling around in confusion but was busy trying to extract himself after the tragedy.

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**E**X-SECRETARY of Defense Robert McNamara strongly advised that Kennedy go before the TV cameras at once with a full explanation. Other intimates, including Sorensen, were worried that the emotional strain might be too much for the Senator. The eventual statement was drafted by David Burke, the Senator's administrative assistant, and Milton Gwirtzman, a Washington attorney, under Sorensen's direction.

What is amazing is that such high-powered advisers would produce a statement so full of loopholes. If Kennedy had told the full truth no matter how painful, the public probably would have forgiven him. For they would have been asked to balance one terrible night against a seven-year record of dedicated public service.

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