

## KENNEDY VERSION OF DEATH DENIED

Book Says He Left His Car  
Before Crash Off Bridge

BOSTON, Jan. 2 (AP)—Only three days before the inquest into the death of Mary Jo Kopechne, a book has been published theorizing that Senator Edward M. Kennedy was not with her when she died in his car last summer on Chappaquiddick Island.

The book, called "The Bridge at Chappaquiddick," was written by Jack Olsen, a senior writer with Time Inc. and published today by Little Brown & Co. It contends that Miss Kopechne was alone, driving Mr. Kennedy's car, when she died.

Mr. Olsen discounted the Senator's version of the mishap, saying "no normal motorist could commit such a grievous error."

The Senator, on a skiing trip to Vail, Colo., was not available for comment. But in Washington, a spokesman said Mr. Kennedy "is aware of this latest theory and, as before, does not feel it appropriate to discuss each new theory that is developed."

Mr. Kennedy, in an earlier statement televised nationally, asserted he had been driving Miss Kopechne to the ferry and had lost his way and that his car had gone off the bridge into a pond. He said he had gotten free but had been unable to rescue Miss Kopechne.

### Possible Fears Described

Mr. Olsen contends that when a deputy sheriff approached the car, the Massachusetts Democrat got out and told Miss Kopechne to drive, fearing that his presence with her would be misunderstood.

"She might not have taken time to readjust the seat so that her feet could reach the pedals comfortably," Mr. Olsen wrote. "At five feet two, she was exactly one foot shorter than Kennedy; her own car was a Volkswagen, about half the size of an Oldsmobile 88, and most of her driving had been done on city streets."

Mr. Olsen theorized that Miss Kopechne had barely been able to see over the dashboard and, unaware that the bridge veered to the left, had driven straight—toppling into the water.

Deputy Sheriff Christopher Look Jr. has said that he saw what he thinks was Mr. Kennedy's car at about 12:45 A.M. with at least two persons inside. He said it moved down the road toward the bridge as he stepped toward it.

Miss Kopechne was a Washington secretary who had been a campaign worker for Mr. Kennedy's brother, the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy, Democrat of New York.

She and five other women campaign workers had gone to Chappaquiddick for a cookout at a rented cottage, attended also by Edward Kennedy and several of his colleagues and friends.

### Late Police Report

Miss Kopechne's body was found in Mr. Kennedy's car the morning of July 19, about the same time the Senator went to the Edgartown police station to report the mishap—some 10 hours after he said it occurred.

He later pleaded guilty to a charge of leaving the scene of an accident and was sentenced in District Court at Edgartown to two months in jail. The sentence was suspended for a year.

The inquest into Miss Kopechne's death, which begins in Edgartown Monday, was delayed four months by a legal challenge of the ground rules for the proceeding, and an unsuccessful bid for an autopsy on her body, which is buried in Pennsylvania.

Mr. Olsen asserted that Mr. Kennedy gave his version of the accident in part because he "had a public image to consider" and because his wife was pregnant, had already had two miscarriages and would be "upset by public insinuations" should a full disclosure be made.