

## Kennedy Not in Car, Writer Says

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New York

A book published yesterday contends that Senator Edward M. Kennedy (Dem-Mass.) was not with Mary Jo Kopechne in his car when the auto plunged into the water off Chappaquiddick Island and the secretary died.

An inquest into Miss Kopechne's death is set to open on Monday.

Jack Olsen, a senior writer with Time Inc., made the claim in a book called "The Bridge at Chappaquiddick," published by Little Brown & Company.

Kennedy was not available for comment.

Olsen discounted Kennedy's version of the accident

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last July, saying, "No normal motorist could commit such a grievous error."

Kennedy, in a statement televised nationally, had said he was driving Miss Kopechne to the ferry to Edgartown, Mass., and lost his way. He said his car went off the bridge into a pond. He said he got free but could not rescue Mary Jo.

Olsen's book contends that when a deputy sheriff approached the car shortly after midnight, Kennedy got out of the vehicle and told Mary Jo to drive, fearing his presence with the girl would be misunderstood.

"She might not have taken time to readjust the seat so that her feet could reach the

pedals comfortably," Olsen wrote.

"At 5 feet 2, 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."

Olsen theorized the girl was barely able to see over the dashboard and, unaware that the bridge veered to the left, drove straight — toppling into the water.

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

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