

# KENNEDY ANSWERS INQUEST QUERIES

Says He Also Volunteered  
'Useful' Information on  
Miss Kopechne's Death

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The text of judge's statement  
is printed on Page 28.

By HOMER BIGART

Special to The New York Times

EDGARTOWN, Mass., Jan. 5

— For the first time under oath, Senator Edward M. Kennedy answered questions today about his movements before and after the drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne nearly six months ago.

He was on the stand for nearly two hours at the start of a long-delayed inquest into the death of the young Washington secretary.

Miss Kopechne drowned in a tidal inlet on Chappaquiddick Island when a car driven by Senator Kennedy plunged from a narrow bridge on the night of July 18. Senator Kennedy did not report the accident until nine hours later.

The inquest was closed to the public and the press. The Senator's lawyers had obtained from the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts an order for a secret inquest and a postponement in the hearings from Sept. 3 until today.

Emerging in midafternoon from the Dukes County Courthouse, Senator Kennedy said: "I am satisfied I responded in the most complete way possible to all questions put to me by the District Attorney and the court."

Smiling and seemingly re-

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laxed, the Massachusetts Democrat said he had volunteered some additional "useful" information after he had replied to questions of District Court Judge James A. Boyle and District Attorney Edmund S. Dinis.

He was asked if his statement of today generally paralleled the previous statements he had made to the Edgartown police July 19 and on national television July 25.

"I'd rather not characterize the testimony," he replied. He added it was "substantially" the same.

Under the strict security regulations imposed by Judge Boyle and enforced by 22 state and local policemen, only six other persons were allowed in the courtroom while the Senator testified. They were Judge Boyle; District Attorney Dinis; two Kennedy lawyers, Edward B. Henify and Robert G. Clark Jr.; Thomas A. Teller, clerk of court; and Sidney R. Lipman, the court stenographer.

Judge Boyle had warned against any leakage of testimony. About 200 newsmen, barred from the 111-year-old, red brick, two-story courthouse milled behind the police barricades outside.

### Check on Eavesdropping

Before the proceedings began, a state police captain checked the second floor courtroom with electric equipment for any hidden eavesdropping devices. He found none.

Eventually — in a matter of weeks or months — the transcript of the inquest will be made public. The Supreme Judicial Court has decreed that it will be released on order of a Superior Court judge only under two possibilities. One would be if it were determined that no criminal trial was likely. The other would be after completion of any trial of any person named in the inquest report as responsible for Miss Kopechne's death.

It was a dazzling frosty morning. Edgartown, on Martha's Vineyard, an island off Cape Cod, was powdered a few days ago by a two-inch snowfall, and looked postcard-pretty and contagiously cheerful. Senator Kennedy, however, was solemn as, bareheaded despite the subfreezing cold, he strode into the courthouse with his wife, Joan.

He had flown in from Hyannis and conferred briefly with his lawyers in their temporary headquarters at the Brown House, a white clapboard residence with green shutters, built in 1829 and just 200 yards from the courthouse on School Street.

At the local airport he told newsmen: "I'm hopeful the record will be complete and I can get to the business of devoting myself to the Senate. I'm hopeful we can reach an end to what has become an extraordinary length of time."

"Good luck to you, by golly," cried a stout, middle-aged woman from the courthouse lawn as the Senator mounted the steps. "I just hope he makes it," the woman said. "Most people here are anti-Kennedy, they sure are."

Only a few local residents reinforced the throng of reporters and cameramen. The

locals were intensely interested, it was explained, but concerned lest the inquest be marred by a circus atmosphere outside. So they stayed away. Some were out scalloping, for the bay scallops, a local delicacy, are bountiful this season, with some scallopers earning up to 100 a day.

A probate court was in session on the ground floor of the courthouse, and from it a short, portly woman burst out shouting, "Free at last! I've waited since August for this divorce!"

Upstairs, Judge Boyle briefed the lawyers on the ground rules for the inquest and then called the first witness, Senator Kennedy.

At luncheon recess, Senator Kennedy was deluged with questions as he walked swiftly back to the Brown House.

Yes, he said, he had testified. For how long? "About an hour." And he said he would return to the stand during the afternoon.

At the afternoon session, Judge Boyle and District Attorney Dinis resumed their questioning of Senator Kennedy. The Senator was followed on the stand by two of his sailing companions, Raymond LaRosa and Charles Tretter.

Both Mr. LaRosa and Mr. Tretter were present at the cookout on Chappaquiddick Island that Senator Kennedy and Miss Kopechne attended before the fatal accident.

In his previous accounts, Senator Kennedy made no men-

tion of seeing these men or speaking to them when, according to his television broadcast, he stumbled in a state of shock back to the cookout cottage after his car had plunged from Dyke Bridge into Pocha Pond.

According to that account, he enlisted the help of two other friends at the party, his cousin Joseph F. Gargan, and Paul Markham, a former United States Attorney. The three returned to Dyke Bridge and made an unsuccessful effort to rescue Miss Kopechne, the Senator contended.

Later, the Senator said on television, he leaped into the narrow channel separating Chappaquiddick and Martha's Vineyard and swam back to Edgartown, to spend the night at the Shiretown Inn.

The Senator later told the police that the accident had occurred while he was driving Miss Kopechne to the Edgartown ferry shortly after 11 P.M. The ferry usually makes its last run about midnight.

Mr. Gargan and Mr. Markham will probably testify tomorrow.

Others at the cookout who will testify include the Kennedy

chauffeur, John B. Crimmins, 63, of Boston; and five women companions of Miss Kopechne: Nance Lyons, of Washington, and her sister, Maryellen Lyons, of Milton, Mass.; and Esther Newberg; Rosemary Keough and Susan Tannenbaum, all of Washington.

All five women were acquainted with Senator Kennedy through their labors in the campaign of the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy in his 1968 Presidential campaign.

The miniskirted women were present in the courthouse today but were excused until tomorrow.

At the end of the day, Judge Boyle said he hoped the hearing would be concluded by Friday, "but I just don't know."

He declined to list further witnesses, saying "You'll just have to speculate as you see them come in and out."

Senator Kennedy said he would wait in Hyannis Port until the inquest was over, just in case he was recalled.

Asked whether the outcome of the inquest would affect his decision to run again for the

Senate this year, he replied "no."

What about the Presidency in 1972? He had ruled this out in a recent statement.

"No, I haven't changed my mind," he said, "I look forward to serving the people of this state in the Senate for six years if they re-elect me."



ARRIVE AT DUKES COUNTY COURTHOUSE: Senator and Mrs. Edward M. Kennedy before the start of the inquest The New York Times (by Lee Romero)

THE NEW YORK TIMES, TUESDAY, JANUARY 6, 1970



ON FIRST DAY OF INQUEST: Five young women, who were at the party on Chappaquiddick Island with Senator Edward M. Kennedy and Mary Jo Kopechne, at courthouse

The New York Times (by Lee Romero) in Edgartown, Mass., for inquiry into Miss Kopechne's death. From left: Rosemary Keough, Nance Lyons, Susan Tannenbaum, Maryellen Lyons and Esther R. Newberg.