

Inquest Hears Kennedy--- 'I Answered Everything'

Probe of Mary Jo's Death

New York Times

Edgartown, Mass.

Senator Edward Kennedy answered questions yesterday about his movements before and after the drowning of Mary Jo Kopechne nearly six months ago.

The Massachusetts Democrat 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 Kennedy plunged from a narrow bridge on the night of July 18.

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 from September 3 until yesterday.

Emerging in midafternoon from the Dukes county courthouse, 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 relaxed, Kennedy 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 Dinis.

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

"I'd rather not characterize the testimony," he replied.

Under the strict security regulations imposed by Boyle and enforced by 22 state and island police, only six other persons were allowed in the courtroom while the Senator testified.

They were Boyle; Dinis, See Back Page

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two Kennedy lawyers, Edward Henify and Robert Clark Jr.; Thomas Teller, clerk of court, and Sidney Lipman, the court stenographer.

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

Before the proceedings began, a state police captain checked the second-floor courtroom with an electric device for any hidden bugs. He found none.

TRANSCRIPT

The Supreme Judicial Court has decreed that the transcript of the inquest will be released on order of a Superior Court judge only after the judge determines that no criminal trial is likely or after the completion of the trial of the person or persons named in the inquest report as responsible for Miss Kopechne's death.

It was a dazzling frosty morning and Edgartown, powdered a few days ago by a two-inch snowfall, looked postcard-pretty and cheerful.

Kennedy, however, was solemn as, bareheaded de-

spite the subfreezing cold, he strode into the courthouse with his blonde 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 built in 1829 and just 200 yards from the courthouse.

AIRPORT

At the local airport he had 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."

Only a few local residents were among the throng of reporters and cameramen. The locals are intensely interested in the case, it was explained, but they were concerned lest the inquest be marred by a circus atmosphere outside.

Meanwhile, Judge Boyle denied a request by Kennedy's chief attorney, Edward F. Hannify of Boston, that Hannify be allowed to remain in the courtroom for the duration of the inquest.

Boyle ruled earlier that attorneys for witnesses would be allowed in the courtroom only when their clients were on the stand.

Kennedy appeared before Boyle a week after the accident and pleaded guilty to a charge of leaving the scene of the accident. He was given a suspended two-month jail sentence.

By his own account, the accident occurred as Kennedy was taking Miss Kopechne to catch a ferry back to Edgartown on Martha's Vineyard Island.

COOKOUT

Kennedy, Miss Kopechne and 10 other persons had been attending a cookout on Chappaquiddick that fol-

lowed a sailing regatta.

Miss Kopechne and five of the other guests were members of the so-called "boiler room gang" in the 1968 presidential campaign of Kennedy's late brother, Robert. The rest were male associates and friends of Kennedy.

Kennedy said he took a wrong turn in the dark and wasn't able to rescue Miss Kopechne, then wandered in confusion back to the cottage where the cookout was held and returned with his cousin, Joseph Gargan, and long-time family friend, Paul Markham.

Together they tried again to rescue the 28-year-old Miss Kopechne, but to no avail.

MEN

Besides Kennedy, Markham and Gargan, the other men at the cookout were John Crimmins, a long-time Kennedy associate and campaign worker; Ray LaRosa, a Kennedy aide, and Charles Tretter, another former Kennedy campaign worker.

The girls were Rosemary Keough, 23; Susan Tannenbaum, 24; Esther Newberg, 26; Maryellen Lyons, 25, and her sister, Nance, 26.

All are expected to testify, along with most if not all of the local officials involved in the case.



UPI Telephoto

Ted Kennedy escorted his wife Joan to the Edgartown courthouse.