

# NATIONAL ENQUIRER

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The inquest into the death of Mary Jo Kopechne has presented Senator Edward Kennedy with an agonizing dilemma.

For most people, it would have required a simple moral decision. For Ted Kennedy, the Presidency of the United States could be hanging in the balance.

The question: Whether to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Some Kennedy advisers believe the hard truth, albeit belated, would serve the senator best. In the backs of many minds, they know, is the appalling suspicion that he left a helpless girl — perhaps still alive in an air bubble — in a sunken black Oldsmobile. They would like desperately to correct this impression.

Other advisers have warned that it's too late for Kennedy to change his story. He is chained, they say, to the statement he submitted to Police Chief Dominick Arena on Martha's Vineyard the morning after the accident. (See text of statement in box below, right.) Indeed, Kennedy would be liable for prosecution if he should now refute the statement.

This statement, he has confessed to intimates, was false. Actually, Kennedy had little to do with it. It was written by his friend, Paul Markham, and was submitted in Markham's handwriting.

Kennedy — his mind dazed, his thoughts scrambled — perfunctorily signed it. Now he is stuck in the mud of Markham's making.

Sources close to Ted Kennedy have revealed for the first time his private version of the events of that dark night in July, just as he related them. The ENQUIRER has carefully double checked their stories with every available witness.

In high spirits after a day of sailing, the senator invited Mary Jo to leave the party with him for a midnight drive. They headed for the secluded beach at the end of Dike Road.

Kennedy was fully familiar with Chappaquiddick Island. Mary Jo also knew where the road led. She had been swimming at the same beach earlier in the day.

That the senator wasn't simply driving Mary Jo to the ferry, as he stated, is apparent from the fact that her purse has never been found. No girl leaves for her room without her purse. Investigators searched the death car, dragged the pond and looked through the rented cottage for the missing purse. They believe someone at the cottage got rid of the purse in order to cover up a fallacy in Kennedy's story.

The midnight sojourn was interrupted, of course, by the plunge off Dike Bridge into Poucha Pond.

The window on the driver's side of the car was open. As the car settled on the bottom, water gushed up under Kennedy, and he easily escaped through the window.

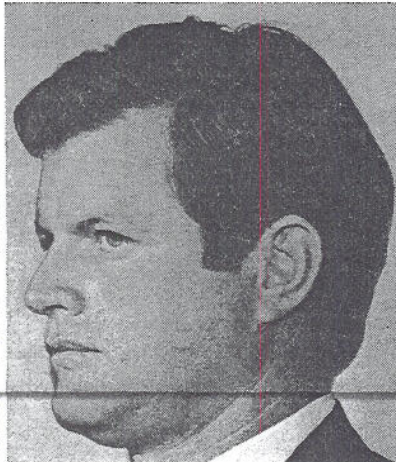
He then made several dives in an attempt to locate the girl. The dark night, murky water, and strong tide made a rescue extremely difficult. Kennedy groped around enough, however, to convince himself the girl was not in the car.

This part of Kennedy's story has received support from John Farrar, the diver who eventually retrieved the body.

Even in full daylight and with the aid of scuba gear, Farrar almost missed the body. After circling the car and poking inside, he eventually noticed a dangling foot.

Having failed to locate Mary Jo, the senator assumed she had escaped. He vainly searched the area. Still believing she had somehow survived, he stumbled back to the cottage and summoned his cousin, Joe Gargan, and friend, Paul Markham, to help in the search.

Rosemary Keough and Susan Tannenbaum were the only girls still awake and, presumably, will testify at the inquest that Kennedy was



TRAGIC PAIR: Mary Jo Kopechne drowned in car driven by Edward Kennedy.

disheveled and distraught. He did not tell them, however, what had happened.

The three men hurried to the scene of the accident and resumed the search for Mary Jo. Contrary to Kennedy's later statement on TV, they attempted no dives into the inky water for the simple reason that the senator had told them she had escaped from the car.

Finding no trace of the girl in the area, they assumed the tides had car-



TED'S FRIENDS: Paul Markham (left) and Joseph Gargan.

ried her downshore and she might now be wandering somewhere on the island.

As for the accident, it seemed to them strictly routine. So with no feeling of great sacrifice, Gargan readily agreed to take the rap to save the senator from bad publicity.

Gargan and Markham then hustled Kennedy across the Edgartown channel in a small boat. Once inside the Shiretown Inn, Kennedy changed clothes, then went downstairs to establish an alibi.

Under the pretense of complaining about some noise, he talked to Russell Peachey, a co-owner of the inn. The senator pointedly asked what time it was, then returned to his room.

Early the next morning, Kennedy and Markham started across the chan-

## Close Friends Reveal Ted's Story of What Really Happened on Night of the Accident

The full story of the events surrounding the death of Mary Jo Kopechne in Senator Ted Kennedy's car have never been published. Those who know the facts are reluctant to talk for publication for fear of endangering their close relationships with the Kennedy family. The ENQUIRER began an exhaustive investigation of the tragedy and got the story from many of the people involved, on the promise that we would not identify them. After months of investigation, here for the first time is the true story, according to these reliable sources, of what happened that tragic night on Chappaquiddick Island.

rather than confess he had given the police a false statement.

Kennedy took no part in the preparation of his television address. He was extremely depressed during the entire time it was being written.

Twice, he broke down and openly wept, once when he learned his stricken father had been told about the accident.

On other occasions, Kennedy played idly with the children in the compound.

Senator Kennedy's brother-in-law, Stephen Smith, and a confidante, Ted Sorensen, took charge and put together the TV speech.

Numb with grief after the third terrible tragedy to befall his family, Kennedy went along with what they wrote for him.

Now some advisers believe Kennedy should have corrected his original false statement at once.

### Statement to Police

Following is the text of Senator Kennedy's first statement to the Edgartown police made July 19:

On July 18, 1969, at approximately 11:15 p.m., on Chappaquiddick Island, Martha's Vineyard, I was driving my car on Main Street on my way to get the ferry back to Edgartown. I was unfamiliar with the road and turned right onto Dike Road instead of bearing hard left on Main Street.

After proceeding for approximately one-half mile on Dike Road I descended a hill and came upon a narrow bridge. The car went off the side of the bridge. There was one passenger with me, Miss Mary Jo Kopechne, a former secretary of my brother, Robert Kennedy.

The car turned over and sank into the water and landed with the roof resting on the bottom, I attempted to open the door and window of the car but have no recollection of how I got out of the car.

I came to the surface and then repeatedly dove down to the car in an attempt to see if the passenger was still in the car. I was unsuccessful in the attempt.

I was exhausted and in a state of shock. I recall walking back to where my friends were eating. There was a car parked in front of a cottage and I climbed into the back seat.

I then asked someone to bring me back to Edgartown. I remember walking around for a period of time and then going back to my hotel room. When I finally realized what had happened this morning, I immediately contacted the police.

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SEE JACK TANNENBAUM 26 SEP 69