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Kennedy Tragedies 450, 2 takes 650

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WASHINGTON AP - Once more a Kennedy has been struck by violence. Once more, a child of Joseph P. and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy lies in a hospital room—the latest victim of misfortune in a family that had everything going for it: wealth, power and unmatched achievement.

John, the Kennedy who became president, was assassinated. Joe Jr., the oldest, died in the explosion of his bomber on a dangerous mission in World War I. Kathleen, the third of the nine children and a wartime widow, was killed in a plane crash.

Edward M. Ted Kennedy, a senator like brothers John and Robert, lay painfully immobilized for a year after suffering a back injury in a plane crash. Rosemary, the second oldest Kennedy, has spent much of her life in an institution for the mentally retarded.

Now Robert, at 42, celebrating a major victory in his drive for the presidency, lay critically wounded from bullets fired at close range.

His wife Ethel, expecting her 11th child, was on the campaign trail with him.

A few years ago, while the family gathered in affliction around Edward's bedside, Robert had enough humor left to remark:

"I guess the only reason we've survived is that there are too many of us. There are more of us than there is trouble."

But trouble has never quit stalking the Kennedys.

Joseph, the 80-year-old patriarch who was ambassador to England, has been paralyzed for years from a stroke. He was with his wife at the family compound at Hyannisport, Mass. when Robert was shot in Los Angeles. The Kennedys were not told about the shooting immediately.

The son of John and Jacqueline Kennedy, Patrick Bouvier Kennedy, died of lung disease when two days old. A daughter had been stillborn to them earlier and both are buried beside their father in Arlington National Cemetery.

The Kennedys' days of heartbreak began in 1941 when Ambassador Kennedy and his family returned from London.

"Rosemary was not making progress but seemed instead to be going backward," Eunice Kennedy said. "At 22 she was becoming increasingly irritable and difficult . . . her memory and concentration and her judgment were declining."

The family made the agonizing decision to put her into an institution and later launched a drive to aid persons similarly afflicted.

Lt. Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., was just 29 when he was killed Aug. 12, 1944.

He had entered the Navy in 1941, graduated first in his class at pilot training school, and by May 1944 had flown enough combat missions to qualify for a trip home.

Instead he volunteered for a mission that involved loading up a Liberator bomber with 10 tons of high explosive and aiming at a German V-2 rocket site. The pilot was to eject before radio guided the bomber to its target. The plane exploded in flight.

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