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## 2 Parish Priests Advised Against Having Autopsy

WASHINGTON — Three days after the automobile accident that killed Mary Jo Kopechne, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy "was still sobbing, was still so broken up he still couldn't talk," her father said yesterday.

"Kennedy called again on Monday, and I still couldn't understand him," Joseph Kopechne said. "I could see he was trying to tell us about the accident.

It was the second time Kennedy had called the Kopechnes, the girl's father said. The first time was Saturday morning, 10 hours after the senator's car plunged into a pond on Martha's Vineyard, drowning Miss Kopechne.

"I GOT A CALL from him Saturday. I couldn't understand him. He was crying and sobbing," Kopechne said, adding that not until several hours later did a newspaper man supply the details of his daughter's death.

The absence of details on Mary Jo's death forced Kopechne and his wife, Gwen, to consider an autopsy, Mrs. Kopechne said.

"I felt Sen. Kennedy could have gone a little further (in his original statement to the police)," she said. "If he would really explain this problem—but if he didn't, if this was the only way I could do it—then I would do it (the autopsy request).

"HIS STATEMENT was

postponed. We heard it was going to be Thursday, then we heard it was going to be three months. I couldn't wait three months."

The intervention of two priests in Berkeley Heights, N.J., persuaded the Kopechnes not to seek an autopsy, she said.

"Two parish priests came to the house. They told us, 'Mary Jo is with God. She is at rest and don't disturb her.' We're following their advice."

AFTER THE week-long silence from Kennedy on the circumstances of the accident, Mrs. Kopechne said "I think he was getting poor advice, I really do. Why didn't he speak out on that relationship, that

relationship between the Kennedy family and their workers? That relationship included all the other girls. He explained the situation—not enough—but he explained it."

In an interview, the Kopechnes emphasized they do not hold the Massachusetts senator responsible for their daughter's death.