

Sheriff Says: Ted Kennedy's Chappaquiddick Incident Has Given Me Five Years of Hell

By WILLIAM DICK

It's been 5 years since Chappaquiddick. Five nightmarish years for the former deputy — now sheriff — who disputed Sen. Kennedy's version of events leading to Mary Jo Kopechne's death.

"A nightmare," Sheriff Christopher Look affirmed. "A 5-year nightmare for me — and worse yet — for my whole family.

"Ever since that car went off the bridge we haven't been left alone. Questions all the time. Phone calls. People stopping us on the street.

"I want it to end. Finish. Right now. I've had enough of it.

"Investigators were asking about me all over Edgartown," the sheriff continued, repeating his assertion that Kennedy tried to discredit him because of his (Look's) inquest testimony.

"Kennedy said he knew nothing about the questioning," Look noted. "But he has also said his aides may have been responsible.

"Whether he knew about it or not, they found nothing."

Look, the sheriff of Dukes County, Mass. — in which Edgartown is the county seat — ran a hand through his closely cropped gray hair and sighed. "I know what I saw that night. And I know I wasn't wrong," he said.

"One of us has lied — Ted Kennedy or me. I told the truth then, and I'm telling the truth now. There is no way I'll ever change my claim."

At a 1969 inquest hearing into Miss Kopechne's death, Look said that he saw Kennedy's car driving on Chappaquiddick island at 12:45 a.m. on July 19.

That time would have been about 1½ hours after Kennedy claimed his car went off the edge of a bridge while driving Miss Kopechne home from a Chappaquiddick house party.

"I just know I was right about the time," Look said. "Maybe his (Kennedy's) watch stopped. Or it may not

have been changed over from daylight saving time. Anything. But he must have been mistaken about the time. And if so, why not admit it?"

"Unless, of course, there's a deep mystery behind it."



CHRISTOPHER LOOK . . . a nightmare for me and my whole family.

Sheriff Look won't discuss any facet of a possible mystery.

"It comes down to a matter of credibility," he said simply. "You either believe Kennedy or you believe me. I just want to be left alone."

Look said he still receives scores of letters about the "accident" every time a story about it appears.

Chappaquiddick's conservation officer, Foster Silva, said the island's residents have lived for 5 years with unanswered questions such as:

"How could Kennedy have taken

that bridge road by accident? There's only one tar road on the island. Anybody suddenly hitting a dirt road must realize they are going the wrong way.

"And after the accident, why would he run past at least two well-lit houses while looking for help?"

"Most people, I'm sure, would go to the first place they could find . . . particularly if there was a chance of somebody still being alive in the submerged car (in which Miss Kopechne's drowned body was found).

"It seems," Silva summed up, "the only aid he wanted was legal help. That girl drowned while he ran past the houses that offered the type of help that may have saved the girl's life."

George Kent, a shellfish inspector at Edgartown, said: "People here still can't believe that Kennedy could take that dirt road and think it was leading to the (Martha's Vineyard) ferry."

*Daylight savings time takes effect in Mar or Apr; time difference is one hour.