



Chappaquiddick Speaks

Bill Pinney

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Chappaquiddick Speaks is the definitive book on the case, marked by impeccable research and analysis.

Bill Pinney's exhaustive *Chappaquiddick Speaks* is an authoritative work on the tragic death of Mary Jo Kopechne in the summer of 1969. The case not only involved Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy, but also forever changed the perception of the sleepy island on the eastern end of Martha's Vineyard.

The book is divided into several highly specific chapters, each of which details certain aspects of the case. In the first two chapters, Pinney addresses and dispels inflammatory theories that have been put forth: the death of Kopechne was not an orchestrated hit, nor was it part of a wider right-wing smear campaign.

In the book's third chapter, Pinney goes into minute detail about the condition of the wrecked Oldsmobile, the impossible physics behind Kennedy's original story, and the various inconsistencies associated with the examination of Kopechne's body. This chapter reveals fascinating information, but it also drags.

The explosive exposé asserts that a thoroughly botched trial and corrupt state politics helped a guilty man walk free. While Pinney does not accuse Kennedy of outright murder, he does accuse him and others of engineering a false scenario to exonerate him of any serious wrongdoing.

A preface recognizes that many people may be angered by this book. After all, Ted Kennedy was the "liberal lion" of the senate; he championed progressive causes right up until his death in 2009. But the book reveals that Kennedy was also a terrible driver, a possible sociopath, a drunk, and a notorious philanderer.

In Pinney's telling, Kennedy was a deeply flawed human being who thought so much about his political ambitions that basic morality abandoned him when he believed that Kopechne was dead. He may even have been driving back from a tryst with Kopechne when he crashed the Oldsmobile the first time—explaining not only the dents and scratches on the passenger side of the car, but also the fact that Kopechne was not wearing underwear at the time of her death. Not helping matters, the Kennedy family and their supporters did everything in their power to keep a fair investigation from going forward ... and they succeeded.

Chappaquiddick Speaks is the definitive book on the case. While other authors have resorted to far-out theories and bad interpretations of science, Pinney's research is impeccable and his analysis is very credible. This is not a riveting true-crime book so much as it is a laborious study of facts, eyewitness accounts, and interpretations of the available evidence.

BENJAMIN WELTON (November 27, 2017)

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