

This was not supposed to happen. This was entirely gratuitous. The crown prince had been exempt from "the curse of the Kennedys"—a phrase coined by Uncle Teddy during the Chappaquiddick crisis. Had not Jackie Kennedy sequestered her children from the turbulence at the Kennedy compound in Hyannis Port, as Bobby Kennedy's fatherless sons wrestled with various demons? She took John and Caroline over the water to Martha's Vineyard.

John had not followed in his father's footsteps. He was his mother's son. She brought him up not to be a Kennedy, but to be himself. He shared her detachment about politics. When asked a while back how, in the light of his father's posthumously revealed promiscuity, Jack Kennedy would have tolerated today's fierce press scrutiny, John Kennedy said coolly he thought his father might have chosen to go into another line of work.

John Kennedy died like his father violently and too soon. His blond wife, Carolyn Bessette, and his sister-in-law Lauren Bessette died with him. At 38, he left more unfulfilled promise than performance. He was strikingly handsome and unexpectedly nice for one of his looks and station. He was courteous to all, even the paparazzi who dogged him from the age of 3 when he broke the nation's heart by saluting his father's coffin.

The tabs called him "The Hunk" and *People* magazine said he was "the sexiest man alive." If the grief seems disproportionate to his life, it is easily explained. He was measured by who he was, not what he did.

His mother vetoed his first choice of a career, the theater. He went into the law, but not for long. He founded a magazine he called "George." It was to be a glossy, trendy monthly that treated politics as entertainment.

He courted publicity for "George" by sometimes doing odd things: He posed nude for an illustration to accompany a critique of his Kennedy cousins' behavior. More recently, he visited Mike Tyson, the convicted rapist, in prison; he invited pornographer Larry Flynt to the White House correspondents' dinner. Like his mother, he never explained his actions. He was a free spirit. His father, despite his private excesses, was decorous in his public life, having a politician's perpetual concern about what the neighbors will think. Jack Kennedy was witty, sometimes in the mordant Irish way; his son was whimsical. Politics does not allow for whimsy.

John's love life was of aching, international interest. He courted a string of gorgeous girls and then married one. He married willowy Carolyn Bessette at a secret wedding on an island off Georgia. He was terribly proud of his coup against the press. He released one picture. It was of him kissing his bride's hand. It was drop-dead romantic.

The country spent the last weekend soaking up every detail, watching hour after hour of Jack's funeral, Bobby's funeral, touch football, prayers at Arlington. The context was pure, incredible Kennedy. The clan had gathered at Hyannis Port to celebrate the wedding of Rory Kennedy. A huge tent had been set up on Ethel's lawn. It was the one mercy of the grim weekend. The Kennedys, who derive such solace from each other, were together. The wedding was postponed. The family mourned.

Washington talked of nothing else. Arguments broke out over "the curse of the Kennedys"—was it really the rashness of its members? "Where was God in all this?" one man demanded to know at a subdued Saturday party.

All agreed on one point: It was a shame.

#### CALIFORNIA'S GUN CONTROL LAWS

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, earlier this week, California Governor Gray Davis signed into law two of the strictest gun control measures in the country. One of these laws is the nation's most comprehensive ban on assault weapons, and the other prohibits the purchase of more than one handgun a month.

California residents support these common sense safety measures designed to take lethal, semiautomatic weapons off the streets, and reduce illegal gun trafficking. Californians feel strongly about ending the easy accessibility of guns because of their history with gun violence over this last decade. In 1989, Americans were shocked when a madman walked into a schoolyard in Stockton, CA, with a rapid-firing AK-47 and shot off 50 rounds a minute for 2 minutes, killing 5 children and wounding 30. Californians were again struck by tragedy in a 1993 massacre at a San Francisco law firm in which 8 people died and 6 were wounded, and again in 1997, when a high profile armed bank robbery spilled out on to the streets of North Hollywood.

As always, NRA lobbyists were working to undermine the effort of the California state legislature. But because gun violence has held such a prominent and tragic place in the minds and hearts of Californians, the legislature was able to defy the NRA and pass these responsible gun control measures. So many families in California have been torn apart by gun violence, and so many people have been affected by the weak gun control laws in this nation, that the NRA failed in the California state legislature.

I hope that other states will follow the lead of the California state legislature and pass responsible gun control measures. I pray that they learn from the tragedies in California, rather than wait for a decade of tragedies to occur in their own states, before passing responsible safety measures. I also make an appeal to my Congressional colleagues to pass sensible gun control legislation now. Although in this case, the debate on gun violence has moved to the state legislature, Congress has not been absolved of its responsibility. We must end the plague of gun violence that claims so many innocent lives.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, July 21, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,630,350,182,425.20 (Five trillion, six hundred thirty billion, three hundred fifty million, one hundred eighty-two thousand, four hundred twenty-five dollars and twenty cents).

One year ago, July 21, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,535,209,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred thirty-five billion, two hundred nine million).

Five years ago, July 21, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,628,452,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred twenty-eight billion, four hundred fifty-two million).

Ten years ago, July 21, 1989, the Federal debt stood at \$2,802,628,000,000 (Two trillion, eight hundred two billion, six hundred twenty-eight million) which reflects a debt increase of almost \$3 trillion—\$2,827,722,182,425.20 (Two trillion, eight hundred twenty-seven billion, seven hundred twenty-two million, one hundred eighty-two thousand, four hundred twenty-five dollars and twenty cents) during the past 10 years.

#### OKLAHOMA CITY NATIONAL MEMORIAL INSTITUTE FOR THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I am pleased to rise today to lend my support for the inclusion of \$15,000,000 million for the Oklahoma City National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism. This important funding brings to completion the creation of the Oklahoma City National Memorial Trust as specified by PL. 104-58.

During the 104th Congress, we created the Oklahoma City National Memorial Trust to commemorate the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. The Oklahoma City National Memorial will consist of three components: the actual Memorial, an interactive learning museum, and the Memorial Institute now funded in this legislation.

Fundraising for the symbolic Memorial and the Memorial Center is nearly complete and construction for the symbolic Memorial is complete. With the funding provided in this legislation, the Memorial Institute is one step closer to a reality. Already, an implementation plan for the Memorial Institute is complete and work has begun to prepare for the construction.

In preparation, the Oklahoma City National Memorial Foundation and the Oklahoma City Memorial Trust have entered into a partnership with the Oklahoma Alliance for Public Policy Research to establish an operational relationship for the Memorial Institute. The Alliance consists of all of Oklahoma's research universities (Oklahoma State, University of Oklahoma, and Tulsa University), while the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center will perform the administrative and functional duties as directed by the Institute's management team.

The Alliance meets the joint public-private partnership arrangement provided for in the Oklahoma City National Memorial Trust Act. This joint