

# Flawed giants: how the Kennedys changed the political face of America

So it's over. The Kennedy era, in which the political consciousness of most of my generation was born, ends with a lingering illness and quiet mourning, so unlike the violent deaths of Ted Kennedy's elder – and greater – political brothers.

However much the youngest sibling may be lionised, it was John and Robert Kennedy whose lives electrified American politics and whose assassinations precipitated, as Norman Mailer claimed, a national nervous breakdown. It was that blow, Mailer argued, that gave rise to the youth culture of the Sixties, with its mixture of high idealism and narcissistic pleasure – which, as it happens, was an apt memorial (even if we didn't know it) for the Kennedy dream. Having lived through that time at Berkeley, where we more or less invented the global student revolution, this seems sound to me.

It is almost impossible to overestimate the impact that the presidential campaign, the victory and then the murder of President Kennedy had on an impressionable new cohort of Americans emerging from the Eisenhower years and a period of conformist stagnation. All that hope, all that promise: the Peace Corps, the first official recognition of the goals of the civil rights movement, the rhetoric of the Kennedy speeches extinguished in an unthinkable act.

The shock was staggering. I can to this day recall it in all its visceral intensity, as can, I am sure, most of my peers. When Bobby Kennedy, too, was struck down, there was an almost fatalistic sense of futility.

Perhaps it was at that moment that the Sixties movements moved well and truly

into their nihilistic phase. There was a belief, then, that these were quintessentially good men who embodied the best intentions of the United States to live up to its own definition of virtue. That was before we learnt about their private lives.

Ted Kennedy's misadventure at Chappaquiddick is remembered because it supposedly ended his presidential ambitions, rather than because a young woman drowned because she was trapped in a car Kennedy drove off a bridge (and from which he managed to extricate himself). That he was almost certainly technically drunk, which helped to account for his unforgivable delay in reporting the incident, and that the following hours were devoted to a scramble to cover it up, were too much even for a country inclined to give any Kennedy the benefit of the doubt.

At that stage, we did not know the half of it. Young Teddy was thought to be the weak link. Even after we learnt, in grotesque detail, of the discrepancy between the private and public morality of the senior Kennedy men – in John Kennedy's case, a compulsive sexual promiscuity that was close to pathological – and of the sordid arrangements to procure hundreds of women for JFK by members of the family, the legacy was not destroyed.

When the first rumours hit the streets, it was thought to be a politically motivated conspiracy. Some of the details seemed scarcely credible. Even allowing for the energising potential of election victory, could the new president really have had intercourse with nearly half a dozen women other than his wife on the day of his inauguration? Was Marilyn Monroe handed back and forth between

John and Robert Kennedy and did their cavalier treatment contribute to her death? Was the president, John Kennedy, sharing a mistress with a Mafia boss at the same time as the Attorney General, Robert Kennedy, was meant to be investigating the Mafia?

There was too much evidence to permit denial. America accepted that there could be a split between a person's public morality and his private life.

What John Kennedy engaged in was not discreet or sincere adulterous affairs, but what we now call sexual exploitation. Even allowing for the pre-feminist standards of American attitudes to women among his generation of war veterans, his habits showed exceptionally brutal cynicism. The sort of personality associated with such behaviour may be of clinical psychological interest, but combined with a capacity for belief in the highest standards of civic righteousness and aspiration towards the social good, it should constitute one of the great mysteries of the human condition.

Surprisingly, given the national tendency to analyse even quite innocuous things to destruction, America did not become overly preoccupied with the great contradiction at the heart of the Kennedy mythology.

Those who revered the late president still revere him "in spite of the women", deciding, after all, that it did not matter that much. Those who disliked him (and there were more of those than the outside world realised, mainly in the South, where they resented his endorsement of the civil rights campaign) loathe him still, taking all the dishonourable evi-

dence as corroboration of their view of him as a corrupting force.

The former tend to be liberal Democrats, who decided in the Sixties that your behaviour in sexual relationships wasn't a part of morality as properly understood.

The Kennedy-haters are both political and social conservatives who regard his debauchery as a vindication of their own instincts.

The acceptance won out and reached its apotheosis with the political survival of Bill Clinton. Once Monica Lewinsky had become the most famous White House intern, America's ability to live with the contradiction between public righteousness and private depravity was established.

It would have been unthinkable for the United States of the early Sixties to have been so insouciant about John Kennedy's proclivities. Had he been exposed while in office, he could not have remained in the White House.

But that was then and this is now. The disclosure of what went on in the Kennedy ménage made it possible for a later incarnation of that same phenomenon – the politician who wants to improve the world but thinks little of abusing the trust of those closest to him – to be tolerated.

I rather doubt that this would have been the legacy of choice for those whose political idealism was inspired by the young John Kennedy: that he would make the world safe for philanderers.

[*Janet Daley* in **THE TELEGRAPH**, Sep 2-8, 2009; 994 words; reprinted by permission; all rights reserved.]

**Annotations:**

- 4 **lingering** .....slow to end or disappear
- 12 **to precipitate**.....to make sth., especially sth. bad, happen suddenly or sooner than it should
- 17 **narcissistic**.....having the habit of admiring yourself too much, especially your appearance
- 28 **cohort** .....*here:* group of people of the same age
- 31/2 **the Peace Corps** .....a volunteer organization founded by President John F. Kennedy that sent young Americans overseas to work in Third World countries for peace and improved living conditions
- 36 **staggering**.....unbelievably great, shocking or surprising
- 37 **visceral** .....resulting from strong feelings rather careful thought, instinctive
- 41 **fatalistic**.....feeling that you cannot control events or stop them from happening
- 41 **futility**.....having no purpose because there is no chance of success
- 44 **nihilistic**.....believing that nothing (especially religion or moral values) has any value
- 46 **quintessentially** .....at the core of things, ultimately, essentially
- 58 **to extricate oneself from sth.**.....to escape from a difficult situation/trap.
- 63 **a scramble** .....*here:* a desperate attempt, a hard fight in order to achieve sth.
- 68 **to be the weak link** .....*here:* to be the least resilient and stable member of the family
- 73 **promiscuity** .....the practice of having many sexual partners
- 74 **sordid**.....immoral, dirty, unpleasant
- 75 **to procure**.....*here:* to provide a woman like a pimp would provide a prostitute
- 89 **cavalier** .....*here:* not caring enough about the feelings of other people
- 93 **the Attorney General** ...the Secretary of Justice of the U.S.
- 100 **adulterous** .....involving sex between a married person and sb. who is not their husband or wife; being unfaithful
- 106 **cynicism**.....*here:* putting oneself first and showing utter disrespect for the dignity and feelings of other people
- 111 **righteousness** .....the attempt at living up to high moral standards
- 117 **innocuous** .....harmless, not intended to offend or upset anyone
- 127 **endorsement** .....a public statement or action showing that you support sb. or sth.
- 128 **to loathe**.....to hate sb./sth. very intensely
- 130 **corroboration** .....information to support a statement/claim, proof
- 139 **debauchery** .....immoral behaviour involving sex, alcohol and/or drugs
- 139 **vindication** .....*here:* confirmation; proof that sth. is true, especially when someone originally had a different opinion
- 142 **apotheosis**.....*here:* the highest or most perfect development of sth., the climax of a development
- 151 **insouciant**.....not being worried about something, being nonchalant about sth.
- 152 **proclivities**.....propensity/inclination, i.e. the natural tendency to do sth. or to feel sth., often sth. bad
- 156 **disclosure** .....revealing sth. secret and private to the public
- 157 **ménage** .....the French word for “household”
- 158 **incarnation**.....a person who represents a particular quality in human form; embodiment, personification
- 167 **philanderers**..... a man who has sexual relationships with many different women



## II. Language and Vocabulary

### 1. Underline the correct alternative of the words in bold print:

President Kennedy (1) **has been / had been / was assassinated** in Dallas, Texas at the end of November 1963. This was a shattering and extraordinary event in the (2) **lives / lives / livings** of most Americans (3) **who / which / , who** lived through it; “Where were you when Kennedy was shot?” was a (4) **frequent asked / frequently asked / frequently asked** question (5) **in course of / during / while** the years that followed, and could still be (6) **heared / heard / listened to** for many decades afterwards. Lee Harvey Oswald, apprehended for the crime, was himself fatally shot by Jack Ruby and could thus not be formally charged or (7) **taken / brung / brought** to trial. On March 14, 1967, Kennedy's body was moved to a permanent burial place and memorial (8) **on / in / at** Arlington National Cemetery.

Kennedy's death and the (9) **subsequent / sequential / pursuing** conspiracy theories surrounding his death (10) **were being / have been / are being** the inspiration for (11) **much / many / manifoldy** films. Kennedy was the (12) **recentest / most recent / most recentliest** Democratic president to push for income tax cuts to inspire (13) **economic / economical / ecological** growth. He was also the (14) **latest / last / latter** Northern Democrat to win the Presidency. In November 2002 long-secret (15) **medical / medicinal / doctoral** records were made public, revealing Kennedy's physical ailments were more severe (16) **then / as / than** previously thought. Kennedy received multiple injections (17) **in front of / prior / before** press conferences in order to appear (18) **healthy / healthily / healthily**. In many (19) **people's / peoples' / peoples** opinion JFK is still a hero and his portrait appears on the U.S. half-dollar coin. But there are also those who believe that he would not still be seen as an idol if the full scale of his moral flaws (20) **would have been / were / had been** disclosed to the public while still in office.

### 2. Explain these expressions from the text using your own words as far as possible:

- a. “the youth culture of the Sixties, with its mixture of high idealism and narcissistic pleasure” (15 ff.)
- b. “I can to this day recall it in all its visceral intensity” (36 ff.)
- c. “there was an almost fatalistic sense of futility” (40 f.)
- d. “a country inclined to give any Kennedy the benefit of the doubt” (64 f.)
- e. “Even allowing for the pre-feminist standards of American attitudes to women among his generation of war veterans, his habits showed exceptionally brutal cynicism.” (102 ff.)
- f. “the national tendency to analyse even quite innocuous things to destruction” (115 ff.)
- g. “they resented his endorsement of the civil rights campaign” (127 f.)

**3. Fill in the following words:** *icon – legacy – contradictions – promise – scrambled – mythology – mourning – reputation – opponents – achievement – lingered – flaws – debaucher – tributes – ambitions – adulterous – escaping – effective – assassinated – necessity – imperfections – redemption – shared – giant*

When Bobby Kennedy was \_\_\_\_\_ while running for president, his 37-year-old baby brother's knees buckled under the weight of it all. The \_\_\_\_\_, with three brothers now dead before their time, the family \_\_\_\_\_ of power, politics and service, now placed on his unsteady shoulders. So Edward M. Kennedy did what he knew and loved. He took to the sea. For six weeks, he drifted, cutting himself off from everything.

Then came the dark waters of Chappaquiddick, when Ted Kennedy drove off a bridge, \_\_\_\_\_ death while his passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne, did not. The incident, which the Kennedys desperately \_\_\_\_\_ to cover up, left a stain on the Kennedy family name and put an end to Ted Kennedy's \_\_\_\_\_ to become President of the United States.

Ironically, it was Chappaquiddick that allowed Kennedy to separate himself from the \_\_\_\_\_ shadow of his brothers. Chappaquiddick peeled away for a time the \_\_\_\_\_ of expending so much energy for saving the Kennedy family's \_\_\_\_\_, allowing him to redirect that energy toward making laws. He worked incredibly hard and became one of the most \_\_\_\_\_ lawmakers in the Senate. But his problems \_\_\_\_\_. In 1991, when Kennedy's nephew William Kennedy Smith was accused of rape after a night out drinking with his uncle and Patrick Kennedy, the senator asked Hatch for help in rescuing his \_\_\_\_\_. It may be that Kennedy's own \_\_\_\_\_ gave him a greater appreciation for the shades of gray between good and bad. He always kept open the possibility of forgiveness for his \_\_\_\_\_, perhaps because he so badly needed it himself.

The youngest Kennedy son was a man whose life was a patchwork of just such startling \_\_\_\_\_: the unwavering liberal \_\_\_\_\_ who forged alliances and warm friendships with Senate arch-Republicans such as Utah's Orrin Hatch, Wyoming's Mike Enzi and Arizona's John McCain. The reckless \_\_\_\_\_ prowling Georgetown bars at night while accumulating an unmatched record of \_\_\_\_\_ in the Senate during the day. The \_\_\_\_\_ husband, but devoted father and uncle.

At the end of a life as paradoxical as Ted Kennedy's, filled with both tragedy, high achievement and low melodrama, the central question that emerges when taking its measure is this: Is his a story of \_\_\_\_\_? Did he somehow make amends for all his \_\_\_\_\_? Did the last son of Camelot finally rise above it all and fulfill the \_\_\_\_\_ of the brothers who came before?

Many of the people among the crowds of thousands gathered along the procession route Thursday in Massachusetts \_\_\_\_\_ that view. Many in the crowd expressed an intimate appreciation for Ted the person rather than Ted the politician, or Ted the keeper of the Kennedy family flame. The \_\_\_\_\_ in Boston were for a single man, not a myth.

Melody Miller, a long-time aide for Kennedy, summed it up this way: "He wasn't perfect, he'd be the first to tell you that. But he worked harder and tried harder than any man I have ever seen."

### **III. Reading**

**A. Tick (✓) the correct answer(s).**

**1. The era of the Kennedys was characterized by**

- a. violence and frustration.
- b. conformist inactivity and standstill.
- c. optimism and great promises.
- d. virtue and integrity.

**2. Ted Kennedy**

- a. was of similar importance and influence as his two elder brothers.
- b. wanted to become President of the United States.
- c. was successful in avoiding punishment for accidentally killing a young woman.
- d. is still idolized and worshipped by a lot of Americans.

**3. John F. Kennedy**

- a. never let his private life affect his official conduct as President of the U.S.
- b. was thought to be a man of honour and morality before his assassination.
- c. was a sexual predator.
- d. was the “black sheep” of the Kennedy family.

**4. American public opinion on John F. Kennedy**

- a. has basically remained unchanged.
- b. has been analysed to destruction over and over again.
- c. has worsened after the contradictions of the Kennedy myth had been discovered.
- d. differs considerably depending on what political party people support.

**5. Former American President Bill Clinton**

- a. and John F. Kennedy are personifications of the same type of politician.
- b. and John F. Kennedy were both exposed as adulterers by the press while still in office.
- c. could not have survived the exposure of the Lewinsky-affair as a politician had it happened in the 1960s.
- d. and the outcome of the Lewinsky-affair prove that the American citizens’ attitude towards a politician’s public and private conduct has changed considerably.

## B. Matching Exercise

*This interview with Senator Edward M. Kennedy about the making of his autobiography TRUE COMPASS was conducted via e-mail, shortly before his death, in July 2009.*

**Match the most appropriate questions to the answers below. There are two more questions than there are answers.**

**Q1:** \_\_\_\_\_

For as long as I can remember, I had planned to write my memoirs. I wanted to tell the story of my life and describe some of the history I've witnessed and been part of. I'm a student of history, a lifelong reader, so I've always thought it would be the right thing to do at the right time. In 2004, I began an extensive series of interviews at the *Miller Center of Public Affairs* at the University of Virginia. As I prepared for the interviews, I looked at more than 50 years of contemporaneous personal notes that I'd kept along the way. And as the process of the interviews evolved, I reflected more and more deeply on aspects of my life and my experiences. I felt it was time to begin writing my memoirs.

**Q2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Well, I'm not the best judge of that, but I talk about my feelings and I always complete my sentences – two things I'm told I haven't always done that well in the past. I've never discussed Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson, and my brothers Jack and Bobby in this much depth. I think people may be intrigued about what I have to say about my 1980 presidential campaign – about all that led up to it and the long battle that had to be waged afterwards for progressive principles.

**Q3:** \_\_\_\_\_

I mentioned that I've been taking notes for 50 years, but I thought I'd lost some of them, and I was amazed by what I found – a detailed account of campaigning for Jack across the country in 1960. It brought back such wonderful memories. We were dealing with the challenge of electing the first Catholic president, and my notes reminded me just how tough it was to find the right way to talk about that issue with people.

**Q4:** \_\_\_\_\_

It's hard to relive painful memories, the losses and the tragedies. But they're an essential part of my life. And I wanted to tell the full story, candidly, so it's all there: What happened. What I've learned. The people I've known. What I believe, what I've seen, and what I feel. I've never dug this deep. My generation wasn't brought up to talk this personally, and my wife really helped me figure out how to do it in a way that was true to my values and to who I am, and I hope, interesting to readers.

**Q5:** \_\_\_\_\_

Sailing has always been part of my life. I have so many happy memories of times at sea, with family and friends. And the phrase is a good metaphor for how I've tried to live, with perseverance and trying to stand up for what I believed, and always looking forward with hope.



**Interview Questions:**

- A. Can you tell us about the process of writing this book?**
- B. What do you think people will find surprising and new about the book?**
- C. Why did you decide to call your autobiography *True Compass*?**
- D. Is there anything you've left out?**
- E. Tell us about some of the discoveries you made in the course of this project?**
- F. Why did you write this book?**
- G. What was the most difficult part of writing the book?**

**IV. Text comprehension**

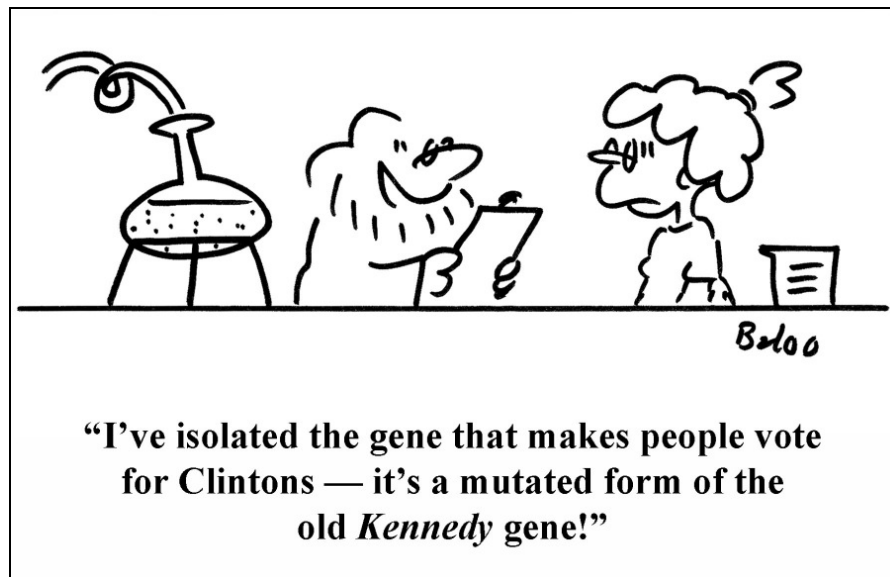
1. Outline what the author sees as major differences between the three Kennedy brothers.
2. Point out the effects John and Robert Kennedy's assassinations had on young Americans in the 1960s.
3. Explain and evaluate the phrase "Ted Kennedy's misadventure at Chappaquiddick" (51 f.) and point out how this event affected the youngest Kennedy brother.
4. State what the author means by "the great contradiction at the heart of the Kennedy mythology" (119 f.).
5. Outline what similarities and differences the author sees between former American presidents John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton. What does this say about Americans' attitudes towards the relationship between public and private morality now and then?

**V. Text analysis**

1. Analyse and evaluate the title of the article.
2. Reading the initial and the final paragraphs (1-23 and 155-167) again, point out what you think the author's intentions are.
3. Make a list of both positive and negative things the author says about John, Robert and Edward Kennedy and the type of politician they stand for, and use this survey to point out and explain the author's attitude towards the Kennedy myth.

## VI. Interpretation of cartoons

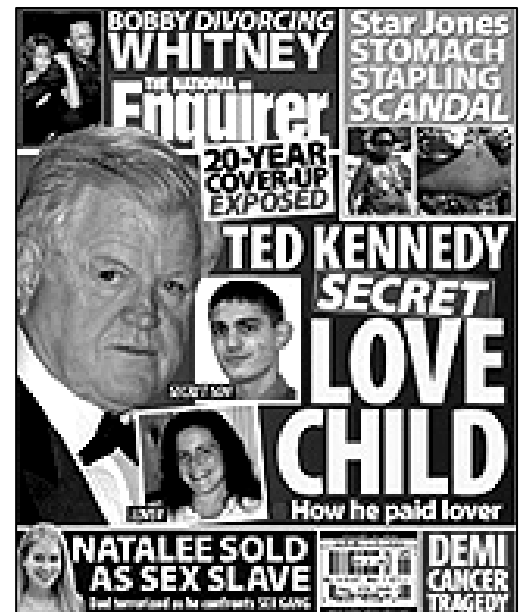
Describe and interpret the following cartoon in about 200-250 words.



[Source: <http://www.cartoonstock.com/newscartoons/cartoonists/rma/lowres/rman8461.jpg>]

## VII. The Media: Different Types of Newspapers

1. What type of newspaper is the front-page on the right taken from? Give evidence for your answer.
2. What type of newspaper is the article above taken from? Looking at the article's language and style, give evidence for your answer. Describe briefly what you would expect the layout of the newspaper-page to look like.



[[http://bostonist.com/attachments/boston\\_caroline/112807-kennedy-enquirer.jpg](http://bostonist.com/attachments/boston_caroline/112807-kennedy-enquirer.jpg)]

## VIII. Composition

Is the way a politician leads his private life none of the public's business or an essential clue to whether somebody can be responsible and trustworthy as a politician? Discuss!

Write some 250-300 words.

## IX. Translation

**Translate the following text into idiomatic German.**

The Kennedys and the Fitzgeralds were among the hundreds of thousands of Irish who made the arduous journey to the United States in the nineteenth century. They hoped to find a better life there. This aspiration led the families, who were soon to be united, to an impressive status in just a few generations. The Kennedys' financial ascent was above all the work of Joseph P. Kennedy, who made the family one of the richest in the United States. The social recognition of Catholic achievers in Protestant America had long been resisted. By 1960 at the latest, however, with the election of John F. Kennedy as the thirty-fifth President of the United States, the Kennedys had become the nation's "First Family".

Jackie Kennedy later mythologized the Thousand Days John F. Kennedy spent in the White House as "Camelot", borrowing from the legendary court of King Arthur. The "Democratic Prince" in the White House was probably the first pop star of politics, and he also fascinated artists and intellectuals. His violent death in November 1963 saddened people around the world, as if a close personal friend had died. With Robert F. Kennedy being murdered five years later, another standard bearer of hope for a better world was gone.

The rise of the Kennedy family and its international effect can hardly be understood without taking its special relationship to the media into account. The family had always recognized the effect of photos and later also television images. To their supporters, these pictures are still icons of the Kennedys' triumphs and tragedies, their social commitment, and their liberal politics. To their opponents, however, they serve as vivid proof of all the vanity and evil the Kennedys are the incarnation of in their opinion. [290 words]

[<http://www.thekennedys.de/english/begruessung/gruss1.html> (adapted)]



## X. Mediation

An American friend of yours is going to visit you in Germany with his parents, who grew up in the 1960s and are immensely interested in the Kennedy myth. They have heard that there is a permanent exhibition about the Kennedys in Berlin. Before deciding whether and when to go there, they write you an e-mail and ask you to sum up the text of the exhibition-flyer for them in English, since they are not all that fluent in German themselves.

**Write about 150-200 words.**

Das von der Berliner Galerie Camera Work eingerichtete Museum am Pariser Platz erinnert an den 1963 ermordeten Präsidenten der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Neben zahlreichen Fotos und persönlichen Gegenständen zeigt es auch das Goldene Buch der Stadt Berlin mit Kennedys Eintragung bei seinem Berlin-Besuch am 26. Juni 1963 und den Notizzettel, mit dem sich der US-Präsident auf die später legendär gewordene Rede vor dem Schöneberger Rathaus vorbereitete ("Ich bin ein Berliner"). Es sind Leihgaben der Berliner Senatskanzlei. Die anderen Objekte wie Briefe, Dokumente und persönliche Gegenstände stammen teilweise aus dem Besitz der Familie Kennedy.

Die Kennedy-Sammlung der Galerie Camera Work ist sicher eine der weltweit umfassendsten Zusammenführungen aus Fotoarbeiten, offiziellen Dokumenten, privaten Papieren und Memorabilien der Kennedy Familie.

Die Ausstellung, die durch mediale und didaktische Komponenten ergänzt wurde, soll Jung und Alt das Leben der Kennedys, ihren Glauben an Demokratie und Menschenrechte, an Frieden durch Prosperität und an den Fortschritt und ihren Willen zur Verbesserung der Lebensumstände aller näher bringen und zugleich das Schicksal sowie die herausragende Stellung der bis in die heutige Zeit hinein einflussreichen Familie der amerikanischen Geschichte und deren Weg dorthin näher bringen und zum Nachdenken anstoßen.

<b>Adresse:</b>	Museum The Kennedys Pariser Platz 4a 10117 Berlin
<b>Telefon:</b>	030 20 65 35 70
<b>Internet:</b>	<a href="http://www.thekennedys.de">www.thekennedys.de</a>
<b>Öffnungszeiten:</b>	täglich 10-18 Uhr
<b>Eintrittspreise:</b>	7,- Euro, ermäßigt 3,50 Euro
<b>Führungen:</b>	fremdsprachige Führungen möglich (bitte im Museum erfragen)
<b>Nahverkehr:</b>	S-Bahn: <a href="#">S Unter den Linden</a> : S1, S2, S25
	U-Bahn: <a href="#">U Mohrenstr.</a> : U2
	Bus: <a href="#">S Unter den Linden</a> : TXL
	<a href="#">Behrenstr./Wilhelmstr.</a> : 200
	<a href="#">Reichstag/Bundestag</a> : 100
	<a href="#">S Unter den Linden/Glinkastr.</a> : 147, 200
	<a href="#">Marschallbrücke</a> : TXL

[256 words]

[<http://www.berlin.de/orte/museum/kennedy-museum/>]

## **XI. Listening Comprehension**

**Read all the statements first.** Then listen and tick (✓) the correct statement(s).

**1. GLOBAL COMPREHENSION: The most suitable headline for the text would be:**

- a. "The end of the Kennedy era"
- b. "The Kennedys and their ideals"
- c. "The lasting impact of the late U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy"
- d. "Edward Kennedy's political style"

**2. Edward Kennedy**

- a. was less important and influential than his two elder brothers.
- b. was one of the longest-serving politicians in the U.S. Senate.
- c. played a role in the making of hundreds of laws during his years in office.
- d. was a senator for more than 50 years.

**3. As a politician, Edward Kennedy**

- a. fought for the ideals his brothers had been fighting for before their assassinations.
- b. fought against brain cancer because he himself had that disease.
- c. fought against the discrimination of handicapped people because his son was disabled due to bone-cancer.
- d. was fighting for equal rights for all American citizens all his life.

**4. As far as his political style is compared, Edward Kennedy**

- a. tried to build an international consensus for his initiatives.
- b. tried to reach compromises with political opponents to reach his goals.
- c. forced his initiatives through no matter how much others disagreed.
- d. could convince his political opponents because even they liked and respected him.

**5. After Edward Kennedy's death,**

- a. everything the Kennedys stand for has come to an end.
- b. there is no Kennedy to continue Edward Kennedy's work.
- c. he himself would have wanted Barack Obama to continue his work.
- d. his work can be continued by everyone sharing the same ideals.



John F., Robert, Edward Kennedy



- (6) **“Marilyn”**: Marilyn Monroe (originally Norma-Jeane Baker), American actress and sex-symbol; was widely-known to have had affairs at least with JFK himself and possibly also with his brother Robert; committed suicide in 1962.
- (7) **“Bill”**: William J. Clinton, 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States (1993-2001); a Democrat who became known for having many adulterous affairs while in office, the most widely-known of which is the affair with then White-House trainee Monica Lewinsky and the subsequent media-coverage; the “Lewinsky-affair” brought Bill Clinton near to impeachment, i.e. to being forced to resign because he was accused of lying under oath when asked about his relationship to Ms Lewinsky.

b. **Suggested solution**: Apart from the personal names, some of the most important words from the text are obviously **“Sixties”**, **“President”**, **“political”**, **“private”**, **“public”**, **“women”**, **“sexual”**, **“morality”**, **“contradiction”** and **“idealism”**: Evidently, the text is primarily about politicians from the Kennedy family with a focus on the 1960s, i.e. President John F. Kennedy. Since the names of Bill Clinton and Marilyn Monroe are featured in the “wordle”, it is safe to assume that the text is most importantly about politicians who have adulterous affairs, just as JFK did – amongst other women – with the American actress Marilyn Monroe, and just as Bill Clinton did with Monica Lewinsky. Thus, the text will mainly be concerned with the role of morality among politicians, and – just as with JFK and Bill Clinton – there might be a contradiction between their private sexual lives and their publicly displayed idealism.

2. a. **Suggested solution**: The assumptions made in the text from task 1. b. are, for the most part, correct. However, the word “idealism” in the “wordle” did not stand for politicians’ publicly displayed idealism, but for the betrayed idealism of people whose “political conscience” has been inspired by these supposedly honourable men. One surprising thing was, in my opinion, that the authors immediate reason for writing this text was Edward Kennedy’s death in August 2009, but that most of the text is then ultimately not really about Ted Kennedy but mostly about the moral flaws of his two elder brothers and the change in American public opinion that has come to tolerate this type of politician and even accepts their political survival as in the case of Bill Clinton. Thus, the text does not seem fully coherent but even a bit strange if not somewhat contradictory in its line of argument.

b.

	Janet Daley explains why the Kennedy clan is either loved or loathed by Americans still today.
	Janet Daley wants to give a detailed account on the past, present and future of the Kennedy family’s political power.
✓	Janet Daley explains the way in which the three Kennedy brothers inspired people’s idealism in the 1960s, but helped to destroy this idealism by their immoral private lives.
	Janet Daley shows the changes in the importance of morality in politics from the Kennedys until today.

- II. 1. President Kennedy (1) has been / had been / **was assassinated** in Dallas, Texas at the end of November 1963. This was a shattering and extraordinary event in the (2) lives / **lives** / livings of most Americans (3) **who** / which / ,who lived through it; “Where were you when Kennedy was shot?” was a (4) frequent asked / **frequently asked** / frequentatively asked question (5) in course of / **during** / while the years that followed, and could still be (6) heard / **heard** / listened to for many decades afterwards. Lee Harvey Oswald, apprehended for the crime, was himself fatally shot by Jack Ruby and could thus not be formally charged or (7) taken / brung / **brought** to trial. On March 14, 1967, Kennedy's body was moved to a permanent burial place and memorial (8) on / in / **at** Arlington National Cemetery. Kennedy's death and the (9) **subsequent** / sequential / pursuing conspiracy theories surrounding his death (10) were being / **have been** / are being the inspiration for (11) much / **many** / manifoldly films. Kennedy was the (12) recentest / **most recent** / most recentliest Democratic president to push for income tax cuts to inspire (13) **economic** / economical / ecological growth. He was also the (14) latest / **last** / latter Northern Democrat to win the Presidency. In November 2002 long-secret (15) **medical** / medicinal / doctoral records were made public, revealing Kennedy's physical ailments were more severe (16) then / as / **than** previously thought. Kennedy received multiple injections (17) in front of/ prior / **before** press conferences in order to appear (18) **healthy** / healthily / healthily. In many (19) **people's** / peoples' / peoples opinion, JFK is still a hero and his portrait appears on the U.S. half-dollar coin. But there are also those who believe that he would not still be seen as an idol if the full scale of his moral flaws (20) would have been / were / **had been** disclosed to the public while still in office.
- [Source: <http://www.usa-presidents.info/kennedy.htm> (slightly modified)]

2. a. The author sees it as a characteristic trait of the 1960s that, back then, young people were torn between two conflicting sets of beliefs and motives: on the one hand, they followed highly ambitious and selfless goals and were convinced that they alone could save earth and mankind. On the other hand, however, they were also quite selfish, seeking pleasure without thinking much about the consequences for others, thereby overstating and overestimating their own importance and placing their well-being over that of anyone else.
- b. The author can still vividly remember this day as a highly unpleasant and unsettling, even painful experience in her life.
- c. After the assassination of the second Kennedy brother, upon whom the hopes of millions of young Americans had rested, there was a numbing feeling that nothing didn't matter anymore anyway.
- d. Americans were willing to give any Kennedy considerable moral credit only due to his descent, and to believe in his good character and intentions in principle until proven wrong.
- e. Even considering the fact that women's rights had not been fully acknowledged in the male-dominated society of the post-war era, yet, John F. Kennedy's way of dealing with women was unusually cruel and lacking any consideration for women's dignity.
- f. Here, the author is talking about an alleged inclination of Americans to talk about trivial things over and over again until no-one can stand to hear about them anymore.
- g. Southern Republicans strongly disagreed with John F. Kennedy's decision to actively support civil-rights activists, i.e. people who fought hard to achieve equal rights for all Americans no matter what ethnic background they may have, especially also for African Americans.



3. When Bobby Kennedy was **assassinated** while running for president, his 37-year-old baby brother's knees buckled under the weight of it all. The **mourning**, with three brothers now dead before their time, the family **legacy** of power, politics and service, now placed on his unsteady shoulders. So Edward M. Kennedy did what he knew and loved. He took to the sea. For six weeks, he drifted, cutting himself off from everything.

Then came the dark waters of Chappaquiddick, when Ted Kennedy drove off a bridge, **escaping** death while his passenger, Mary Jo Kopechne, did not. The incident, which the Kennedys desperately **scrambled** to cover up, left a stain on the Kennedy family name and put an end to Ted Kennedy's **ambitions** to become President of the United States.

Ironically, it was Chappaquiddick that allowed Kennedy to separate himself from the **giant** shadow of his brothers. Chappaquiddick peeled away for a time the **necessity** of expending so much energy for saving the Kennedy family's **mythology**, allowing him to redirect that energy toward making laws. He worked incredibly hard and became one of the most **effective** law-makers in the Senate. But his problems **lingered**. In 1991, when Kennedy's nephew William Kennedy Smith was accused of rape after a night out drinking with his uncle and Patrick Kennedy, the senator asked Hatch for help in rescuing his **reputation**. It may be that Kennedy's own **imperfections** gave him a greater appreciation for the shades of gray between good and bad. He always kept open the possibility of forgiveness for his **opponents**, perhaps because he so badly needed it himself.

The youngest Kennedy son was a man whose life was a patchwork of just such startling **contradictions**: the unwavering liberal **icon** who forged alliances and warm friendships with Senate arch-Republicans such as Utah's Orrin Hatch, Wyoming's Mike Enzi and Arizona's John McCain. The reckless **debaucher** prowling Georgetown bars at night while accumulating an unmatched record of **achievement** in the Senate during the day. The **adulterous** husband but devoted father and uncle.

At the end of a life as paradoxical as Ted Kennedy's, filled with both tragedy, high achievement and low melodrama, the central question that emerges when taking its measure is this: Is his a story of **redemption**? Did he somehow make amends for all his **flaws**? Did the last son of Camelot finally rise above it all and fulfill the **promise** of the brothers who came before? Many of the people among the crowds of thousands gathered along the procession route Thursday in Massachusetts **shared** that view. Many in the crowd expressed an intimate appreciation for Ted the person rather than Ted the politician, or Ted the keeper of the Kennedy family flame. The **tributes** in Boston were for a single man, not a myth.

Melody Miller, a long-time aide for Kennedy, summed it up this way: "He wasn't perfect, he'd be the first to tell you that. But he worked harder and tried harder than any man I have ever seen."

[Source: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/28/AR2009082803835\\_pf.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/08/28/AR2009082803835_pf.html) (slightly altered and abridged)]

**III. A. 1. The era of the Kennedys was characterized by**

c. optimism and great promises.

**2. Ted Kennedy**

b. wanted to become President of the United States.

c. was successful in avoiding punishment for accidentally killing a young woman.

d. is still idolized and worshipped by a lot of Americans.

**3. John F. Kennedy**

b. was thought to be a man of honour and morality before his assassination.

c. was a sexual predator.

**4. American public opinion on John F. Kennedy**

a. has basically remained unchanged.

d. differs considerably depending on what political party people support.

**5. Former American President Bill Clinton**

a. and John F. Kennedy are personifications of the same type of politician.

c. could not have survived the exposure of the Lewinsky-affair as a politician had it happened in the 1960s.

d. and the outcome of the Lewinsky-affair prove that the American citizens' attitude towards a politician's public and private conduct has changed considerably.

**B. Q1 → F**

**Q2 → B**

**Q3 → E**

**Q4 → G**

**Q5 → C**

**Übrig: A, D**

[Source of the interview:

[http://www.twelvebooks.com/books/true\\_compass.asp? page=behind](http://www.twelvebooks.com/books/true_compass.asp? page=behind) (adapted)]

**IV. 1.** First of all, the most apparent difference between the three Kennedy brothers is that John and Robert were both assassinated, which was an almost paralyzing shock to people (cf. II. 24-44), whereas Edward Kennedy died from a long and severe illness (II. 4/5). Thus, the people could prepare for this loss and grieve adequately. Secondly, the author sees John as the most important and influential of the three brothers, since he reached the presidency; in her opinion, Robert comes second-in-line, because he was well on his way on the road to the White House. Ted Kennedy, however, was ultimately seen as "the weak link" (II. 66/67) of the Kennedy family, although he used to be "lionised" (I. 9) in his later years due to his long years in the Senate. His presidential ambitions were not ended by any outer circumstances, but due to his own mistakes (51-65).

2. The assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963 was a great shock, especially for young intellectuals who had seen all their dreams of a rejuvenated, reformed America after the Eisenhower years, which were seen as “a period of conformist stagnation”, fulfilled in this inspiring and charismatic figure. This was all ended “in an unthinkable act” (35), i.e. brought to an abrupt end by the assassination of the two brothers. When his younger brother, Robert, was killed several years later, “the Sixties movement moved well and truly into their nihilistic phase” (42 ff.), i.e. young people believed that everything was out of control and that none of the values and ideals they used to believe in and work for mattered anymore.
  3. The term “misadventure” for Ted Kennedy’s “Chappaquiddick incident” is rather euphemistic: What it really stands for, is a fatal accident that happened near the Kennedys’ Boston home, when the then young Ted Kennedy drove home from a party under the influence of alcohol. His car skidded off the road into the sea and sunk almost immediately. Kennedy was able to free himself, but his young aide, Jo Kopechne, was not so lucky and drowned in the wreck. Since Ted Kennedy had ambitions to run for president at that time he did not help Kopechne, but left the scene of the accident, which the powerful Kennedy clan tried to cover up. Ted Kennedy was only given a light punishment, but it is safe to say that the incident at Chappaquiddick ended his high political hopes (cf. 51-65).
  4. The “great contradiction at the heart of Kennedy mythology” (ll. 117/18) is that the Kennedys always held high great ideals and fought for them in their *public* functions; so they were originally seen as “quintessentially good men, who embodied the best intentions of the United States to live up to its own definition of virtue” (ll. 45-48). But this perception of the Kennedy politicians as “men of honour” turned out to be nothing but a myth, since the Kennedy men were not only obviously not able to meet their own moral standards in their *private* lives, but displayed a cynical attitude to women that bordered to the pathological and even criminal (cf. 99-114).
  5. Bill Clinton represents the same type of politician as JFK, because both of them showed a deep split between their public and private moral codes when it came to their relationships with women (141-148). The most important difference between these two politicians is that John F. Kennedy’s affairs were never really reported by the media, because, back then, the press wanted to protect the office of President of the United States (149-154). This has obviously changed, as can be seen from the torrent of reports on Clinton’s “Lewinsky affair”. However, although JFK could not have survived politically if his private life had been exposed by the media, Clinton managed to do exactly that (141-148). His impeachment failed last but not least, because the disclosure of the Kennedy’s moral conduct after his death also changed Americans’ attitude towards that sort of politicians, which is now tolerated by most, if not sometimes even accepted (155-162).
- V. 1. The Kennedys were indeed political giants, because – as the text shows – they considerably changed America’s politics and the American people in many respects by the high ideals they fought for and by the source of inspiration they thus were to many Americans, especially to the American youth of their time. Therefore, the title is well-chosen, especially since there was a myth created around the Kennedys, and giants are creatures belonging to the realm of mythology. The disclosures after John and Robert Kennedy’s deaths revealed another, hitherto unknown side of those Kennedy men, namely that they were not perfect, but deeply flawed, since they were not able to live up to the moral ideals they publicly fought for when it came to their private lives.

2. The author's intention is to show just how much damage the Kennedys have done to the political consciousness of her generation by deeply disappointing and, therefore, disillusioning them. Although she concedes that the Kennedys seemed to be great men at first and thus inspired others to great deeds, she blames them of being ultimately responsible for a change in public morality and the moral standards for politicians that led to Bill Clinton's political survival, which finally made most Americans tolerate if not even accept this type of politician that is not in the least troubled by the contradiction between wanting to improve the world on the one hand, and abusing the trust of people close to them on the other hand.

By the last paragraphs, Janet Daley wants to say that John Kennedy's political legacy might have been "to make the world safe for philanderers" (167), but that those whose own political idealism was inspired by the Kennedys cannot be at ease with that legacy. Thus, ultimately, Janet Daley calls for a renewal of sound moral standards for politicians in both their public and private conduct, by which she reveals herself as a Republican at heart.

3.

positive aspects	negative aspects
"lionised" (9) "high idealism" (16 f.) "hope", "promise" (31) "virtue" (49) "aspiration towards the social good" (111) "public righteousness" (146 f.)	"narcissistic pleasure" (17) "weak link" (68) "compulsive" (72) "pathological" (74) "sordid" (74) "cavalier treatment" (89) "adulterous" (100) "sexual exploitation" (101 f.) "brutal cynicism" (106) "dishonourable" (129) "corrupting force" (131) "debauchery" (139) "private depravity" (147) "philanderers" (167)

Most of the "qualities" attributed to the Kennedys and to the type of politician they embody belong to the semantic field of "morality vs. immorality".

As can be seen from the fact that there are nearly twice as many negative expressions attributed to the Kennedys and the type of politician they stand for, Janet Daley is highly critical of them and wants to show by using this – sometimes quite drastic – vocabulary that nobody should be tolerating or even accepting politicians like these, as Americans seem to do, at least after Bill Clinton's presidency.

Sometimes there is also a hint of personal bitterness about these politicians and their "legacy" in Daley's article. This is probably due to the fact that she herself had been a student at Berkeley back then and had obviously set high hopes on the Kennedys at the time, but was deeply and personally disappointed once she learnt about their private lives and thus saw her idols shattered.

Thus, paradoxically enough, Daley's political conscience and political idealism seem to have mainly been shaped and inspired by "the Kennedys", but she later discovered (just as many people of her generation did) that this was rather due to a myth created around people who actually did not deserve her trust nor her admiration.

- VI.** In the cartoon, there is a bearded man next to a woman. Both of them wear glasses and are standing in some kind of laboratory, which can be seen from the tripod and the glass vessel containing a mildly-bubbling liquid from which something is obviously being distilled. The man, who is evidently some sort of scientist, is holding a notepad in his hand and seems to be proudly presenting his findings to the woman, who might well be an assistant or student of his.

What these findings actually are becomes clear once you look at the caption at the bottom of the cartoon: the scientist claims to have found a genetic disposition to “force” voters to elect people like Bill Clinton into high office and identifies it as a slight mutation of the “gene” that made people vote for the same type of politician as embodied by John, Robert and Edward Kennedy over and over again.

By means of this cartoon, the author pokes fun at those who still vote for politicians who he finds despicable since they have proven on countless occasions to be utterly immoral and therefore not trustworthy. The author’s highly ironic explanation for people’s voting record is, therefore, that there must be some kind of genetic defect that forces people to vote in discord with their better judgement and experience. [224 words]

- VII. 1.** The front-page on the right is taken from a tabloid newspaper. This can easily be seen from the layout, the sort of news reported, and the way in that the news is reported.

As far as its layout is concerned, there are many pictures and – apart from the big headlines – hardly any text on this front-page. This is mainly, because this type of newspaper is usually not subscribed by a regular readership, but bought “in the streets” and, thus, the front-page of a tabloid has to serve as an “eye-catcher” to arouse people’s curiosity by addressing their voyeuristic instincts.

Also the type of news reported serves this end: there are mainly articles dealing with celebrities and their private (and, in particular, sexual) lives. These newspapers claim to be objective in disclosing real and alleged scandals and tragedies of any sort, which can also be seen from the name *The National Enquirer*.

Thus, the stories reported on the front-page on the right, like the one about an alleged “secret love child of Ted Kennedy” are characteristic of this genre. The way in which these newspapers report their news is typical as well: their headlines are highly sensationalist and their articles are short and written in very easy language.

- 2.** The article above is taken from the quality daily newspaper *The Telegraph*. This can easily be seen from its language and style, which is quite elaborate and not always easy to understand, since it contains many words and phrases that are not necessarily part of an average citizen’s every-day lexicon, e.g. “visceral” (37), “nihilistic” (44), “debauchery” (139), “insouciant” (151), “proclivities” (152), or learned words of foreign origin, like “ménage” (157). The style of the article by Janet Daley is also much more sober and much less sensationalist than a typical tabloid article, not to mention that it is also considerably longer.

Speculating about the possible layout of this newspaper’s front-page, it is safe to assume that there will be considerably fewer pictures, which will also be used for strictly illustrative rather than sensationalist purposes.

**VIII.** John F. Kennedy and – more recently – Bill Clinton are probably the most famous of a long line of leading politicians who seem to find it nearly impossible to resist their proclivities. Looking back in history, ultimate power always seems to have been one of the most powerful aphrodisiacs, but it is a very recent phenomenon that politicians' adulterous affairs are widely-publicized by an ever-vigilant press. Whenever reports like these hit the headlines, many people start to wonder whether politicians who display such a huge difference between their private and public moral codes can be "good" politicians at all. Is their private moral conduct a parameter that can show whether they can be trusted with a considerable amount of power over our lives?

Interestingly enough, when history judges whether somebody was a great statesman in his time, the question whether he had extra-marital affairs while still in office or was married a couple of times plays a very minor role. Instead, politicians' achievements and their ultimate impact on posterity have a far greater weight. Therefore, the presidencies of John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton are judged rather positively by many people "in spite of the women" due to the national and international changes these politicians managed to bring about themselves or inspire in others. Those who loathe JFK and Clinton do it, among other things, because "of the women", because their affairs serve these people as further proof for these politicians' evil and utterly immoral nature. However, by far more ordinary people feel a good deal of voyeuristic curiosity and even "*schadenfreude*" when another of these scandals goes public, because this emphasizes that even these political giants are only men after all, and in the eyes of many, this makes them less intimidating and sometimes even more likeable. The political survival of Bill Clinton might also have partly been due to this fact.

However, if a politician like John F. Kennedy, who would have been able to set off a nuclear holocaust, is reported to have left the "nuclear briefcase" at a whorehouse in Washington, D.C. and that it took the Secret Service more than an hour to recover it and an even longer scramble to cover it up, that is an entirely different matter: If a politician's job and the duty to the people who voted for him are compromised due to the fact that he cannot keep his trousers up, then such a person is unsuitable for his job because he abuses the trust of his "employers", i.e. the people, and everybody who does so should be fired.

To put it into a nutshell, John F. Kennedy was immensely lucky that he was living at a time when the press still refrained from reporting the full truth about their cavalier behaviour to protect the dignity of the office. Otherwise, he might have been impeached and it would have served him just right under these circumstances.

[486 w]

- IX.** Die Kennedys und die Fitzgeralds zählten zu den hunderttausenden Iren, die im 19. Jahrhundert den beschwerlichen Weg in die USA antraten. Sie hofften, dort ein besseres Leben zu finden. Durch diese Hoffnung brachten es die beiden alsbald vereinten Familien (*wörtlich: diese Sehnsucht/Bestrebung führte die beiden Familien*) innerhalb nur weniger Generationen zu einem beeindruckenden Status. Der finanzielle Aufstieg der Kennedys war vor allem das Werk von Joseph P. Kennedy, der die Familie zu einer der reichsten der USA machte. Die soziale Anerkennung hatte man katholischen Aufsteigern (*auch: Erfolgsmenschen*) im protestantischen Amerika lange verweigert. Doch spätestens im Jahre 1960, mit der Wahl von John F. Kennedy zum 35. Präsidenten der Vereinigten Staaten, wurden die Kennedys zur „First Family“, also zur ersten Familie des Landes. Die 1000 Tage, die John F. Kennedy im Weißen Haus verbrachte, verklärte (*auch: mystifizierte*) Jackie Kennedy später in Anlehnung an den legendären Hof von König Artus als „Camelot“ (*wörtlich: wobei sie sich des legendären Hofes von König Artus bediente*). Der „demokratische Prinz“ im Weißen Haus war wohl der erste Popstar der Politik, und er faszinierte auch Künstler und Intellektuelle. Sein gewaltsamer Tod im November 1963 betrückte Menschen weltweit so, als sei ein enger persönlicher Freund gestorben. Mit Robert F. Kennedy wurde fünf Jahre später ein weiterer Hoffnungsträger (*wörtlich: Standartenträger, Bannerträger*) einer besseren Welt ermordet. Der Aufstieg der Kennedy Familie und ihre internationale Wirkung sind kaum zu verstehen, ohne dass man ihr besonderes Verhältnis zu den Medien in Betracht zieht. Die Familie hatte schon immer die Wirkung von Fotos und später auch von Fernsehbildern erkannt. Für ihre Fans sind diese Bilder noch immer Ikonen der Triumphe und Tragödien der Kennedys, ihres sozialen Engagements und ihrer liberalen Politik. Ihren Gegner dienen sie hingegen als lebhafter Beweis für all die Eitelkeit und das Schlechte, dessen Verkörperung die Kennedys ihrer Meinung nach sind.
- X.** The Berlin *Kennedy Museum* is one of the most comprehensive collections of photos, official documents, private papers and rare memorabilia pertaining to the Kennedys, and especially to John F. Kennedy and his visit to Berlin in 1963, when he encouraged the city's inhabitants by saying the legendary words "*Ich bin ein Berliner*". For example, there is the original of JFK's handwritten notes for this speech on display. Thus, this permanent exhibition is worth visiting and is directed at both old and young people. It wants to serve as a monument for both the Kennedys' way of thinking and their ideals – like their continued fight for freedom, welfare, democracy and progress for everyone – but also for the tragic fate of many Kennedys. The museum is open daily from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and charges seven Euros (at the present exchange rate that equals roughly 10 dollars). Concessions are available. Guided tours in English can be booked at the museum. Since the museum is right in the center of Berlin, it can easily be reached by public transport.
- [177 words]

**XI. 1. GLOBAL COMPREHENSION: The most suitable headline for the text would be:**

**c.** “The lasting impact of the late U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy”

**2. Edward Kennedy**

**b.** was one of the longest-serving politicians in the U.S. Senate.

**c.** played a role in the making of hundreds of laws during his years in office.

**3. As a politician, Edward Kennedy**

**a.** fought for the ideals his brothers had been fighting for before their assassinations.

**c.** fought against the discrimination of handicapped people because his son was disabled due to bone-cancer.

**d.** was fighting for equal rights for all American citizens all his life.

**4. As far as his political style is concerned, Edward Kennedy**

**a.** tried to build an international consensus for his initiatives.

**d.** could convince his political opponents because even they liked and respected him.

**5. After Edward Kennedy’s death,**

**b.** there is no Kennedy to continue his work.

**c.** he himself would have wanted Barack Obama to continue his work.

**d.** his work can be continued by everyone sharing the same ideals.



**Full transcript:**

Whether helping provide children with health insurance or lifting families out of poverty, the late Senator Edward Kennedy made it his life work to aid the disadvantaged. Friends and colleagues of the Massachusetts lawmaker, who died of brain cancer Wednesday at the age of 77, say he had an impact that went beyond that of his famous brothers, John and Robert.

"It is the glory and greatness of our tradition to speak for those who have no voice," said Kennedy. As the third-longest serving senator in U.S. history, Edward Kennedy often stood up for the disadvantaged, sponsoring hundreds of pieces of legislation in his nearly half century in office, all with the hope of bettering people's lives. Kennedy biographer Adam Clymer notes his impact.

"If the parents of someone you know gets benefits from meals on wheels, that is Kennedy," he said. "They go to a neighborhood health center – that is Kennedy. He played a leading role in ending the [US military] draft. There has been no civil rights bill since he got to the Senate that he has not played a significant role." Following the assassination of his brother, President John F. Kennedy, Ted Kennedy picked up the torch, helping to push forward the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made discrimination in public and at work illegal.

He went on to champion a number of other causes, including access to affordable health care, fair housing, and voting rights. Kennedy, whose son lost a leg to bone cancer, also worked to end discrimination against those with mental and physical handicaps, with the enactment of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act. As president of the *American Association of People with Disabilities*, Andrew Imparato worked with Kennedy and his son.

"I think Senator Kennedy understood the idea that disability is a natural part of the human experience and that just because somebody has a disability, it does not mean they should not have the opportunities that other people have, so if you are talking about a child, they should have the opportunity to go to school with their peers," he said.

Senate associate historian Donald Ritchie says it was not just the number of issues Kennedy fought for, but how he fought for them. Ritchie says the senator was well-liked and able to build alliances with adversaries to push legislation forward.

"He figured out that okay, we can agree to disagree, but where is the one point where we do agree, where is the common ground, and that is what an effective legislators has to do, is look for the places where he can create national consensus around the issue," said Ritchie.

With Edward Kennedy's death late Tuesday from brain cancer, America's most famous political dynasty is left without an obvious heir. But longtime Kennedy friend Ted Sorensen says while Ted Kennedy's passing marks an end of an era, the family legacy will move forward.

Ted Kennedy himself would have told you that the fulfillment of those Kennedy ideals is not dependent on one person, it is not even dependent on a Kennedy, it is dependent on all those who believe in that standard of opportunity and justice," said Sorensen.

In backing Barack Obama's presidential bid, Edward Kennedy looked to pass his message of hope to a new generation wanting change.

[<http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-08-27-voa39-68755477.html>]