Records of the Knapp Commission  
(The Commission to Investigate Alleged Police Corruption) 1970-1973  
Finding Aid

Ellen Belcher  
Special Collections Librarian  
June 22, 2009  
Updated June, 2018 update with digitized tapes noted

Introduction:
The Knapp Commission was officially known as The Commission to Investigate Alleged Police Corruption and was appointed in 1970 by NYC Mayor Lindsay, in response to media articles on rampant corruption in the NYPD. The commission held televised public hearings and handed down indictments of several NYPD personnel. Their final report, containing recommendations and findings of their investigations was published in 1972. However, correspondence and memoranda in this collection document that work of the commission continuing through 1973.

Scope and Contents:
These records were collected by Michael F. Armstrong during his work as chief counsel for the Knapp Commission. These records include transcripts of Executive and Public Hearings, audio tapes, correspondence and memoranda internal and external to the commission, notes and transcripts of interviews, and drafts of the final reports produced by the commission. The bulk of the materials date to 1970-72 but a few documents are dated to 1973 and later.

Provenience:
These records were donated to the Lloyd Sealy Library in April 2009 by Michael F. Armstrong Esq. During the acquisition of the records, the boxes were preliminarily numbered to assist with the packing and delivery. During subsequent preliminary processing many of the materials were re-ordered and the boxes were re-numbered. The preliminary box numbering is noted here in case certain documents might relate to others to which they were originally adjacent.

Size: 22 Linear Feet
Availability: Available to researchers by appointment. Please contact libspcoll@jjay.cuny.edu
Additional materials created and acquired as part of the Commission’s work were deposited with the New York State Attorney General and NYPD as noted in a memo filed in this collection, box 5. This is presumably the same collection now held by the New York State Archives: N.Y. [State] Office of Special Prosecutor, Background and investigation files of the New York City Commission to Investigate Allegations of Police Corruption and the City’s Anti-Corruption Procedures, Archives record series 16012

See also: Whitman Knapp Papers, Lloyd Sealy Library Special Collections

Secondary Literature – Suggested readings (courtesy of Michael Armstrong): The following are suggested as background reading on the Knapp Commission. See also this research guide: http://guides.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/nypd/oversight

Armstrong, Michael F.
(2012) They wished they were honest: the Knapp Commission and New York City police corruption. New York: Columbia University Press, Stacks HV8148 .N52 A76 2012 [also available to Jay users as an ebook].
Michael Armstrong’s account of his experience as chief counsel of the Knapp Commission, based in part on the collection at John Jay College.

Daley, Robert

Droge, Edward

Hollander, Xaviera
(1973) Xaviera!: her continuing adventures. New York: Warner. Famously known as the ‘Happy Hooker’ she unwittingly led the Knapp Commission to their star witness.

Knapp Commission (The Commission to Investigate Alleged Police Corruption)

Lardner, James

Maas, Peter
Murphy, Patrick V.

Seedman, Albert and Peter Hellman

Shecter, Leonard

Whittemore, L. H.
(1973) The super cops; the true story of the cops called Batman and Robin. Stacks - HV 7911 .A1 W5 1973 ‘Batman and Robin’ were targets of the Knapp Commission as well as some District Attorneys.
Box and folder listing

Box 1
Executive Hearings, Transcripts
- June 30, 1971 2:40pm from box 5
- July 14, 1971 10:45am from box 5
- July 17, 1971 10:35am from box 5

Public Hearings final transcripts:
- 10/20/71 10:00am
- 10/26/71 10:15am
- 10/27/71 10:45am
- 10/28/71 10:20am
- 12/14/71 12:50pm
- 12/15/71 10:05am
- 12/16/71 10:25am
- 12/17/71 10:20am
- 12/20/71 10:20am

Box 2A
Excerpts of testimony from (preliminary drafts?) of transcripts of KC public hearings (1971)
- Connections – Public Hearings I (and exhibits)
- Tapes – Public Hearings (P.H.) Oct 1971 (excerpts of transcripts)
- Public hearings transcripts re: Hollander 10/18/71
- Dups 10/18
- P.H. 10/21
- P.H. 10/22
- P.H. 10/27
- P.H. 10/28
- Public Hearing Transcripts 10/21/71 10/22/71 10/27/71 10/28/71 (missing 10/20/71)
- 10/29/71-hotels (2 folders)

Box 2B [Everything in this box has been digitized June 2018]
Reel to reel (audio?) tapes: Miscellaneous
Tape 1: “Phone test D” (5 inch reel) – Digitized June 2018
- Clandestine taping of telephone call from Michael Armstrong to Edward Droge in California discussing becoming an informant and testifying to the commission.
Tape 2: 11/14/70m ‘Side 1: Mike Armstrong, Barry Gray Show (Knapp commission) 11:05, Ralph Salerno, Matthew Troy, Fred Rohn, Barry A. Gray Side 2: same’(5 inch open reel) Digitized June 2018
Tape 3: 11/30/71” Channel 13 2030-2130 hrs Program re: D.A. Hogan” (7 inch open reel) Digitized June 2018
Tape 4: (7 inch open reel time: 1:24:50) Digitized June 2018
- “Free Time” 10/12/1971 episode on Channel 13
Host: Jeff Greenfield,
Subject: NYPD
Guests: William H. T. Smith (first Deputy Commissioner),
Sergeant David Durk,
Paul Chevigny (NY Civil Liberties Union, Police Practices Project)
A Queens College professor

Tape 5: 6/20/73 10:30-10:55am “Return tape to Pyatt, WNYC” (7 inch open reel) Digitized
June 2018

Criminal Justice in New York – produced by the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council on WNYC. Subject is newly enacted NY State drug laws.
Guest – Michael Armstrong (Queens District Attorney)

Box 2C
Reel to reel (audio) tapes of Knapp Commission public hearings
Tape 6: 10/21/71 ‘fourth day and fifth day’ (7 inch open reel – 1hr 20min) Digitized June 2018
Tape 7: 10/21/71 ‘fifth day’ (7 inch open reel)
Tape 8: 10/26/71 ‘2nd week 1st Part’ (7 inch open reel)
Tape 9: 10/26/71 - 10/27/71 ‘Tuesday and Wednesday’ (7 inch open reel)
Tape 10: 10/27/71 ‘Wednesday and Thursday 2nd week’ (7 inch open reel)
Tape 11: 10/28/71 ‘Thursday and Friday of 2nd week’ (7 inch open reel)
Tape 12: 10/29/71 ‘Friday 2nd week’ (7 inch open reel)

Box 3
Exhibit 1 – Allegation 1
Exhibit 2 – Allegations 4-6
Allegations 6-7-8
Allegations 9-10-11-12
Exhibit 3 – Allegation 15
Exhibit 4 – Allegation 17
Notes and General Outline of hearings Oct 18-29
Hearing Notes 10/22/71 (Ed Droge)
IAD auto theft ring cases

Box 4
Whitman Knapp “Folder G” vol I
“ vol II
Armstrong Affidavit (draft) 6/2/72
Barrett 7/25/72
Kriegle – Serpico – Durk Misc
Schwartzberg 10/30/72
Walsh Testimony
Captain Philipp Foran Testimony 6/21/72
Serpico Statement (undated)
Serpico Background
Serpico chronology and interview 12/6/71
“Serpico the Story of an Honest Cop” unpublished book manuscript excerpts 12/12/72
List of officers in the 7th Public Morals District 1967-68
Dunk notes
Hilton Hotel Receipts-payouts to officers 12/18/70
P.V. Murphy Statement 12/24/70
Leary Phone interview 6/29/71
Seedman 10/15/71
Roberts-extension of the Commission 12/22/70
Leuci (meeting with Dan) undated
Kernan et. al. V Knapp et. al. 7/8/70
Memo re: Disposition of Knapp Commission files 12/9/72
Ford notes for Questioning Fraiman
Jannotta File
Notes on Jannotta
Recommendations
General 1972
General undated
Dictate MFA
Leads
Ideas for report
Plug ins
Corruption Hazards
Misc File 1970-72
Misc Notes, undated (3 files)
Index to hearings
Public hearings 1
Hearing outline 10/18/71
Indictments arising out of the KC hearings
Indictments
Recommendations
Report Outline 5/24/72
Preface Outline 6/26/72
Correspondence and Memos
Ratnoff Correspondence
Release 1970
Commission Memoranda 1971
Misc Correspondence 1972
Commission memoranda 1972 (2 folders)
Press release on recommendations 08/28/72
Commission Activity report 1970
Progress Report 1971
Progress Reports on Investigation Areas
Box 5

Leahy-Kreuzer Project 1972
Howard Leary
David Burnham
Givens
Sue Johnson
Community Attitude Survey
Commission Report recipients
‘to do’ file 1973
Requests for final report
Police commissioner Murphy (Patrick V.)
Kriegel Oath
Silverman
Peter Maas file
Radio-TV-Editorials-transcripts
ACLU ‘entrapment’ Hentoff
ACLU (2 folders)
  Executive Hearings final transcripts:
  June 30, 1971 2:40pm (moved to box 2)
  July 14, 1971 10:45 (moved to box 2)
  July 17, 1971 10:35 (moved to box 2)
  Note: the above folders were removed from here and placed in box 2- but may be
  related to the adjacent files
Commission Correspondence
Personal-Knapp Commission
  (includes 1973 correspondence on disposition of commission files with the DA,
  AG and NYPD)
Copies of Knapp Commission Correspondence
Correspondence

Box 6

Press Clippings
  Auto/Traffic (2 folders)
Construction
Gun control
Knapp commission activities
Rangel, Charles, congressman
SIC (State Investigation commission)
Serpico
Tow Trucks, Burkent
Dec 1-15 1971
Dec 16-31 1971
Jan Feb 1972
May June 1972
July August 1972
Post Jan 1, 1973
Miscellaneous clippings (and press releases)
   (5 folders)

Box 7
Telephone calls received by M.E. Armstrong from 1/19/72 –
Indianapolis Police Corruption
Report drafts? (Unlabeled)
Justy (Phillips) re: 1982 prison visit to Phillips
Lindsay corruption memo, 1969
Lindsay
LAPD (visit)
LAPD publications and press kits
Informants – general
Ted Ratnoff
Final Draft of report – changes

Box 8: Files TB typed

Box 9: Report drafts, and printer’s proofs typed, hand edited and filed by date.

Box 10: Report drafts, typed, hand edited, unsorted

Box 11: Report Drafts, typed and hand edited, mostly unsorted but some filed by subject in folders.

Box 12: Published reports, (also available at the Lloyd Sealy Library)
Multiple copies of:

Box 13-23: Newspapers and other publications
Presumably containing articles on the work of the Knapp Commission dating to the first half of the 1970s.