



Special Collections
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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

Related Collections and Resources

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 JJay users as an ebook](#)].

(2009) *Oral history interview with Michael F. Armstrong*. Freely available [from our Digital Collections](#)

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

(1973) *Target blue; an insider's view of the N.Y.P.D.* New York: Delacorte Press. **Stacks - HV8148.N5 D3** Daly served as deputy commissioner of the NYPD.

Droge, Edward

(1973) *The patrolman: a cop's story*. New York: New American Library. This young cop worked undercover and testified at the Knapp Commission's hearing

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)

(1973) *The Knapp Commission report on police corruption*. New York: G. Braziller **Stacks - HV8148 .N52 A46**

(1972) *Commission report: (with summary and principal recommendations, issued August 3, 1972)* **Stacks - HV8148 .N52 A46 1972**

(1972) *Summary and principal recommendations*. New York: Bar Press, 1972. **Stacks - HV8148 .N52 A47**

Lardner, James

(1996) *Crusader; the Hell Raising Police Career of Detective David Durk*. New York: Random House. **Stacks - HV7911 .D923 L37 1996** Durk testified in front of the Knapp commission.

Maas, Peter

(1973) *Serpico*. New York: Viking. (reprinted 1997 by Harper Books) **Stacks- HV 7911 .S4 M3** His revelations lead to the formation of the Knapp Commission.

Murphy, Patrick V.

(1977) *Commissioner: A View from the Top of American Law Enforcement*. New York: Simon and Schuster. **Stacks HV 7911 .M89 A32** Murphy's view of the time, events and aftermath of the Knapp commission. (see also the Commissioner Patrick V. Murphy Papers in John Jay Library's Special Collections)

Seedman, Albert and Peter Hellman

(1974) *Chief!* New York, N.Y.: Arthur Fields Books, Inc. **Stacks - HV 7911 .S38 A33 1974b** Seedman was chief of detectives of the NYPD.

Shecter, Leonard

(1973) *On the pad: the underworld and its corrupt police; confessions of a cop on the take*. New York: Putnam. **Stacks - HV 7911 .P473 S33 1973** Story of Bill Phillips a veteran officer that worked undercover and testified for the Knapp Commission.

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
 Kiernan 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
Comission 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:

New York (N.Y.). Knapp Commission.

Summary and principal recommendations. [New York: Bar Press], August 3, 1972.

Commission report :(with summary and principal recommendations, issued August 3, 1972). [New York]: The Commission, 1972.

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.