

BURTON TURKUS PAPERS

Finding Aid

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updated: October 2011

The Burton Turkus Papers in the Lloyd Sealy Library Special Collections Room document the professional life of Burton Turkus (1902-1982). The bulk of our portion of his papers focus on his work as Assistant District Attorney and Chief of the Homicide Division in the Office of the District Attorney, Kings County (Brooklyn) 1940-1945. During this time he investigated and prosecuted key members of the organized crime syndicate based in Brownsville, Brooklyn that came to be known as "Murder Inc."

This collection is available to researchers upon appointment in the Special Collections Room, Lloyd Sealy Library, John Jay College of Criminal Justice/CUNY. Please note that the contents of box 2 are [digitally available](#).

For more on Burton Turkus, Murder, Inc., and his role in their eventual demise please see the following book and film:

Burton Turkus with Sid Feder (first published in 1951)
Murder, inc.: The story of "the syndicate." New York: Da Capo Press, 1992.
Stacks - HV 6446 .T87 1992

Burt Balaban and Stuart Rosenberg, directors (1960)
Murder inc. 20th Century Fox
Media Collection, Reserve - DVD-176

This collection was donated to the library by Mrs. Ann Turkus in 2000 and 2007. Other portions of Turkus' papers were donated to the [Kheel Center at Cornell University](#) and the [Brooklyn Collection of the Brooklyn Public Library](#), which has recently digitized the [Brooklyn Daily Eagle Photograph Collection \(1900-1950\)](#), including many images related to the investigation and prosecution of Murder Inc. There is also a "Murder Inc." collection at the [Municipal Archives of NYC](#).

Box Listing

Box 1: Papers, Correspondence, unpublished manuscripts and notes.
Personal Information

- Resume

Correspondence:

- 1941 general correspondence
- 1942, October 28, Fiorello LaGuardia to Burton Turkus endorsing his candidacy for judge in Kings County

- 1945, November related to Election of O'Dwyer, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and Murder Inc.
- 1950-54 related to United States Senate Special Committee to Investigate Crime in Interstate Commerce (Kefauver Committee)
- 1952 related to *Crime Does not Pay*
- 1952 related to *Mr. Arsenic*
- 1952-1968 General Correspondence
- 1954 re: *The Tenth Commandment* with Steve Allen
- 1957 related to *You are the Jury*
- 1963 related to John Torrio
- 1965 correspondence with Dean Jennings
- 1969 related to *This was New York!*

DA Files

- 1930s reports, profiles and notes on various homicides and suspects
- 1930-1942 lists of open and closed homicide investigations
- 1939-1945 inter-office memoranda, trial transcript excerpts and reports related to homicide cases
- 1941 People of the State of New York vs. Louis (Lepke) Buchalter
- 1951 re death of Abe Reles

Research files

- Casa Nostra

Writings and Appearances

- *5 Clues to the Crime* Radio Show (3 folders)
- *Crime Does Not Pay* WMGM Radio Show (2 folders)
- *Mr. Arsenic* TV Show (10 folders) correspondence, and scripts for shows 1-8 and one VHS
- *Racket Smashers* WOR Radio Show (2 folders)
- *Unsolved (countdown for "M")*

Miscellaneous documents

Box 1A: Materials donated in 2007

- Burton Turkus portrait and press release for "Crime Does Not Pay"
- Typescript of Script: *Unsolved (Countdown for "M")* by Bill S. Ballinger Prod #9507 March 16, 1960
- Speeches (Newspaper Clippings, correspondence, typescripts of articles, Including correspondence re: *Murder Inc* book and film and other matters
- Press Clippings mainly from 1950s, 1960s
- Press Clippings related to Wendel Case (Turkus resigned as defense attorney)
- "*Murder Inc* Book and Movie Correspondence" Includes correspondence re: Mr. Arsenic and other matters and newsclippings
- News-clipping, re Scanga death
- Notes on Kings County DA stationary unsigned notes of investigation

Photographs (these photographs are not yet digitally available)

- Crime Scene Photograph Body of Susan Scanga Huron and Provost Street

- Crime Scene Photograph Body of Hymen Yuran 4/15.40
- Crime Scene Photograph Body of Irv Ashkenz 1936
- Crime Scene Photograph Bodies of Joeeph Dagnese and Frank Napolitano
- NYPD Mugshot Louis Capone
- NYPD Mugshot Louis Buchalter, alias Louis Lepke
- NYPD Mugshot Harry Strauss, alias Pittsburgh Phil
- NYPD Mugshot Emanuel Weiss, alias Mendy
- NYPD Mugshot Harry Maione, alias Happy
- NYPD Mugshot Frank Abbandando, alias The Dasher
- NYPD Mugshot Martin Goldstein, alias Bugsy
- NYPD Mugshot Charles Workman, alias Charlie the Bug
- NYPD Mugshot Abraham Wells, alias Kid Twist
- NYPD Mugshot Albert Tannenbaum, alias Allie
- NYPD Mugshot Irving Feinstein, alias Puggy
- NYPD Mugshot Sol Bernstein
- NYPD Mugshots Albert Anastasia
- NYPD Mugshot Charles Luciano, alias Lucky
- NYPD Mugshot Arthur Flegenheimer A.K.A. Dutch Schultz

Box 2: Photographs and related materials, formerly in scrapbooks.

note: These photographs and other materials can now be accessed [online](#)

Box 3: Rolled group photographs, very fragile

Boxes 4-5: Scrapbooks of News clippings 1930s-1940s

Box 6: Scrapbooks of News clippings 1940s-1950s

Box 7: Loose News clippings 1930s-1940s

Box 8: Loose News clippings 1940s-1950s

Box 9: Loose News clippings 1930s-1990s

Boxes 10-11: Miscellaneous Magazines (with articles related to Burton Turkus)

Boxes 12-13: Framed Photographs

Box 14: Framed Photographs and News clippings- Oversized

Boxes 15-18: Framed Certificates, Diplomas and Plaques

Oversized Box 19: Two oversized News clippings