

Durk. On the defensive were John F. Walsh, former First Deputy Police Commissioner, and Supreme Court Justice Arnold G. Fraiman, former Commissioner of Investigations.

It all began with the heavily bearded Mr. Serpico, who as long ago as 1966 charged almost total corruption in the Seventh Division in the Bronx.

Sergeant Durk tried to help Mr. Serpico get action. He introduced him to Capt. Philip Foran, who was then in charge of Commissioner Fraiman's investigators. Captain Foran, both men testified, told Mr. Serpico that if he did not want to be haled before a grand jury and perhaps wind up "floating face down in the river," the only thing to do was forget it. Later Sergeant Durk took Mr. Serpico to Commissioner Fraiman himself. They talked, but nothing happened.

Another approach was made through a trusted inspector to Commissioner Walsh, who had over-all supervision of security in the Police Department. Mr. Walsh was known as the Mr. Incorruptible of the department. He was the hardest of the hard on corrupt policemen. But Mr. Walsh did nothing.

On Thursday, the former First Deputy Commissioner had a hard time explaining. He insisted that he could not recall having been given any specifics in the first talks he had about Detective Serpico. In April or May, 1967, Inspector Cornelius Behan did give him more specific information, he said, and he told Mr. Behan he would be glad to talk to Mr. Serpico. Mr. Walsh said he "thought" Mr. Behan would arrange the meeting. When Inspector Behan did not, "the incident left my mind temporarily," the former commissioner added.

Sergeant Durk held the stand almost all day Friday. A graduate of Amherst, he described how he had become a close friend of another Amherst alumnus, Jay Kriegel, Mayor Lindsay's liaison man with police. Mr. Durk described many talks with Mr. Kriegel on the problems of police corruption.

Mr. Durk said he told Mr. Kriegel the entire Serpico story, including the visit to Mr. Foran and the lack of action by Mr. Walsh.

"Jay was rather shocked," he said, and wanted to meet Mr. Serpico. The meeting took place on a Sunday morning in May, 1967, in Mr. Kriegel's office in City Hall.

Still nothing happened. There were always excuses. First, Mr. Kriegel said, City Hall was fearful about the long hot summer of 1967 coming up and did not want to "disturb" the police. Later, the excuse was given that the Mayor had to run for re-election, and there must be no rocking of the boat until that objective had been achieved.

Justice Fraiman, called at the end of Friday's long session, had only a "very hazy" recollection of what Detective Serpico had told him.

He was asked whether he ever passed along to a District Attorney or other officials the information he had received from Mr. Serpico? No. It just had not occurred to him. "On hindsight that might have been fruitful," he conceded.

Sergeant Durk, asked at the end of more than five hours of testimony if he wanted to make a statement, launched into an emotional plea that had him near tears at the end. He charged that anyone in the department who said he did not know about the widespread corruption "had to be either blind or incompetent."

The system, he said, his voice breaking, ruined men and made the department "a home for drug dealers and thieves." He pleaded with the Knapp Commission to fix "responsibility inside and outside the department" all the way up and down the chain of police, political and judicial command. And he emphasized, Chairman Knapp agreeing with him, that corruption involved far more than just the police.

It was an evocative prelude to next week's concluding chapter when former Commissioner Leary and Mr. Kriegel are scheduled to testify.

—FRED J. COOK

Knapp Hearing:

A Plea Not to Keep One's Mouth Shut

The policemen who had gone knocking from door to door with their tales of corruption had their innings before the Knapp Commission last week in hearings that posed some inevitable questions. Is police corruption, shocking as it is, only a small part of over-all city corruption? And is this corruption so endemic and so pervasive that high officials hesitate to lift the lid for fear of the mess that may come bubbling forth?

The Knapp Commission, in its second round of public hearings that began Tuesday, placed the elements in stark juxtaposition: the clear, unequivocal testimony of the men in the ranks versus the hazy recollections of superiors trying to explain their years-long inaction. It was a performance that suggested, if the Knapp experience is any criterion, that broader systems of corruption may be attacked and genuine reforms achieved more from revulsion in the ranks, if the ranks are given a forum, than from initiatives inspired by conscience at the top.

The principal protagonists in this drama were evenly divided. The accusers were Detective Frank Serpico and his friend, Detective Sgt. David