

DAMIAN WILLIAMS
United States Attorney for
the Southern District of New York
By: BENJAMIN A. GIANFORTI
Assistant United States Attorney
26 Federal Plaza – 38th Floor
New York, New York 10278
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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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IN RE: THE CHAMISA HUMSHE)	STIPULATION AND ORDER
TORRAH (FIVE BOOKS OF MOSES),)	
VENICE, GIOVANNI DI GARA, 1588,)	24 Misc. <u>453</u>
AND HAFTAROT, 1589, MINIATURE,)	
162+60 LEAVES, SEIZED ON OR)	
ABOUT APRIL 6, 2023)	
)	
)	
)	
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WHEREAS, this Stipulation and Order is entered into by and among the United State of America (“United States”) and Meir Turner (together, the “Parties”);

WHEREAS, the subject of this Stipulation and Order is the *Chamisa Humshe Torrah (Five Books of Moses), Venice, Giovanni di Gara, 1588, and Haftarat, 1589, Miniature, 162+60 Leaves*, a single, conjoined, miniature bound volume containing two works from the Jewish faith: (i) the *Chamisa Humshe Torrah (Five Books of Moses)*, the Jewish Torrah in book form, and (ii) the *Haftarat*, a series of selections from the Hebrew Bible (collectively, the “Subject Property”);

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Homeland Security, Homeland Security Investigations (“HSI”) has determined that the Subject Property was illegally stolen from

the Jewish Theological Seminary of the University of Jewish Studies in Budapest, Hungary (the “Budapest Rabbinical Seminary”) during looting by forces of the German Reich in or about 1944 and was subsequently illegally transported into the United States;

WHEREAS, the Subject Property is the cultural property of the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary;

WHEREAS, in or about March 2023, Meir Turner, who resides in the Southern District of New York, advertised the Subject Property for sale for approximately \$19,000 on AbeBooks.com, an online marketplace used by independent vendors to sell, among other things, rare books;

WHEREAS, on or about April 6, 2023, United States Magistrate Judge Barbara Moses of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York issued a seizure warrant authorizing the seizure of the Subject Property pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 981(b) and 19 U.S.C. § 1603(a). 23 Mag. 2797. That same day, HSI personnel seized the Subject Property from Meir Turner in the Southern District of New York, pursuant to the aforementioned seizure warrant;

WHEREAS, Meir Turner represents that he purchased the Subject Property in or about the 1980s with no knowledge, at the time of purchase, that the Subject Property was stolen from the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary and wishes to return the Subject Property to the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary;

WHEREAS, the United States has determined that the Subject Property should be returned to the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary, pursuant to the 1947 Paris Peace Treaty; the 1970 Paris Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property; and the 2009 Terzin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets and Related Issues; and

WHEREAS, the Parties wish to resolve this matter by providing for the return of the Subject Property to the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary without the need for administrative or judicial forfeiture or other legal process;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED AND AGREED, by and between the United States, by and through Benjamin A. Gianforti, Assistant United States Attorney, and Meir Turner, by and through his counsel, Sarah Krissoff, Esq., that:

1. Meir Turner agrees to relinquish all right, title, and interest in the Subject Property and further consents to the seizure of the Subject Property by the United States for the purpose of returning the Subject Property to the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary.

2. The United States agrees not to commence forfeiture proceedings against the Subject Property so that it may be returned to the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary.

3. Meir Turner represents that he was the sole owner of the Subject Property when it was seized by HSI.

4. Meir Turner is hereby barred from asserting any claim against the United States of America (“USA”), the Department of Justice (“DOJ”), the United States Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York (the “USAO”), HSI, or any and all employees, officers, and agents of the United States, the DOJ, the USAO, and HSI, past and present, in connection with or arising out of the seizure and/or possession of the Subject Property, or the transfer of the Subject Property to the Budapest Rabbinical Seminary, including but not limited to any claim that there was no probable cause to seize and/or forfeit the Subject Property..

5. This Stipulation shall in no way be deemed an admission of culpability, liability, or guilt on behalf of Meir Turner or any of his agents, past or present.

6. This Court shall retain jurisdiction to hear and determine all matters arising from implementation of this Stipulation and Order.

7. Each party shall bear its own attorneys' fees and costs.

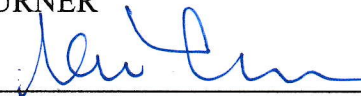
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8. The signature page of this Stipulation and Order may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which will be deemed an original but all of which together will constitute one and the same instrument. The signature page may be transmitted by fax or by electric file in PDF format, and such signatures shall be deemed equivalent to valid originals.

AGREED AND CONSENTED TO:
DAMIAN WILLIAMS
United States Attorney for the
Southern District of New York

By: _____
BENJAMIN A. GIANFORTI
Assistant United States Attorney
26 Federal Plaza – 38th Floor
New York, New York 10278
Telephone: (212) 637-2490
benjamin.gianforti@usdoj.gov

DATE

MEIR TURNER
By: 

Meir Turner

OCT. 1. 2024
DATE

By: _____
Sarah Krissoff, Esq.
Attorney for Meir Turner
Cozen O'Connor
3 World Trade Center
175 Greenwich Street, 55th Fl.
New York, New York 10007

DATE

SO ORDERED:

HONORABLE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

DATE

8. The signature page of this Stipulation and Order may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which will be deemed an original but all of which together will constitute one and the same instrument. The signature page may be transmitted by fax or by electric file in PDF format, and such signatures shall be deemed equivalent to valid originals.


AGREED AND CONSENTED TO:

DAMIAN WILLIAMS
United States Attorney for the
Southern District of New York

By:  10/2/2024
BENJAMIN A. GIANFORTI DATE
Assistant United States Attorney
26 Federal Plaza – 38th Floor
New York, New York 10278
Telephone: (212) 637-2490
benjamin.gianforti@usdoj.gov

MEIR TURNER

By: _____
Meir Turner DATE

By:  October 1, 2024
Sarah Krissoff, Esq. DATE
Attorney for Meir Turner
Cozen O'Connor
3 World Trade Center
175 Greenwich Street, 55th Fl.
New York, New York 10007

SO ORDERED:

HONORABLE DATE
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE