

Bovo's Fate Now Up To Berrien Jury

Bondsman Accused Of Police Bribery

Berrien circuit court jurors faced with conflicting testimony by key prosecution and defense witnesses are expected to begin deliberating today on a charge of bribery against a twin cities bondsman.

Presentation of witnesses and evidence in the trial of bondsman Frank R. Bovo, 38, of Benton township, ended at 2 p.m. Tuesday and jurors are expected to begin deliberating today after final arguments by both sides and judicial instructions.

Also expected to be ruled on today by Judge Chester J. Byrns is a defense motion for a directed verdict of innocent on grounds the alleged bribe recipient — Berrien Sheriff's Det. Ronald Immoos — was not a deputy at the time of the alleged offense Dec. 4, 1969. Immoos, a policeman eight years, has testified he received payments totaling \$800 from Bovo on four dates including that Dec. 4 in return for gambling favors.

LOAN CLAIMED

Bovo, a longtime area resident and for several years virtually the sole bondsman in the twin cities, has testified he made no bribes but loaned Immoos a total of \$800 on two dates including Dec. 4 so Immoos could hire an attorney to arrange the adoption of his wife's daughter by a former marriage.

Total portion of the case ended midafternoon Tuesday — the fourth day of trial. After the close of Bovo's testimony, there were several rebuttal witnesses for the prosecution, and prosecution allegations that a defense exhibit had been tampered with.

Also Tuesday, Defense Atty. Ivan Barris moved for a court-directed verdict of innocent on grounds that Det. Immoos was not a public employe on Dec. 4, 1969, as specified in the charge against Bovo, because of alleged irregularities in the dating of Immoos' appointment by the county sheriff, oath of office and bond.

Judge Byrns reserved ruling on the motion but indicated he may rule today following a review of briefs by both sides on the question.

Bovo, last on the witness stand Friday, continued Tuesday with details of various meetings with Det. Immoos. Bovo testified he gave the officer \$200 loans each on Dec. 4, 1969, and Jan. 4, 1970 in response to the officer's request for money to pay St. Joseph Atty. Creaser, a prosecution adoption.

Det. Immoos has denied receiving loans and has testified sums he received on those two dates and two others were payments for gambling favors to Bovo, including stalling competition for a gambling operation involving the bondsman.

The loans were not made openly, Bovo testified, to avoid a possible reprimand to Immoos from his superiors.

Atty. Creaser, a prosecution rebuttal witness, testified that the Immoos paid him \$20 on Nov. 7, 1969, and \$100 in March and still owe \$182.50. Further, he testified, Bovo asked Creaser a fee of \$1,000 if he charged the detective \$100.

The prosecutor, Atty. Eugene Friedman, also alleged a defense exhibit — a notebook Bovo has testified contains a listing of some loans — was tampered with since Friday.

CROSSED OUT
Atty. Friedman called Det. Leo Healey a state policeman who testified the name of David Hamer followed by a sum of money in the notebook bore no marks Friday but Thursday was crossed out.

Bovo testified the book was in his possession 1 1/2 to Friday, Saturday and Sunday and that he made no changes.

There is a list of rebuttal witnesses. Deputy James Coburn, former Berrien Police Sgt. and Benton Twp. Police Sgt. James Lester, testified Tuesday that Bovo offered to reward them for information damaged to Immoos.

Bovo testified he asked them for the truth and offered to pay expenses of 1 1/2 from all 10 gatherings and help Coburn find a job elsewhere if he felt this one. He denied under oath to offering to "take care" of three if they provided information against Immoos.

Deputy Coburn testified Bovo told him money was no problem

and that Coburn could live in Detroit or Chicago, drive a car and wear clothes of his own choosing.

Mitchell, now a state commerce department employe, testified Bovo said he would make it worth Mitchell's while for information against Immoos in court.

A patrolman Lester testified Bovo asked him to obtain information on a stolen color television complain investigated by Immoos and at one point asked Lester if his home was paid for.

OFFER DENIED

Bovo under oath denied offering to pay for such information and said he was seeking to corroborate if Immoos received the television set.

Also called Tuesday by the prosecution was Rudolph Kohn, who testified he is a Benton Harbor fireman and his mother is Erastine Kohn of Benton Harbor. His testimony apparently was intended to corroborate earlier testimony by Immoos about a woman with a fireman son mentioned in a note from Bovo. Bovo has denied writing or passing the note.



ROBERT J. TOUSSANT

President Vows Big Changes

New president of Tri-City Toastmasters club, No. 340 of Benton Harbor is Robert J. Toussant who pledged at his installation last night at Mr. Gonczarski's, St. Joseph, to improve on interest and variety of programs and increase membership.

Toussant, 38, of 1278 South Honey Bruce drive, Stevensville, is a financial analysis manager at Whippool Corp. He succeeds Fred Brundage.

Other officers are Bob Crawford, educational vice president; Dave Culver, administrative vice president; Ray Radde, treasurer and Ashok Dink, secretary-at-large.

Toussant has been a resident of the area 2 1/2 years. He joined the Benton Harbor Toastmasters club shortly after moving to the Twin Cities area from Canton, Ohio.

He and his wife, the former Eleanor Schott of Canton, have two children. Toussant is a graduate of Tri-State college, Angola, Ind. and is a member of the Ohio Certified Public Accountants association.

Soldier Killed In War Zone

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon has announced that Mr. Dennis L. Butler, son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl W. Butler, Mendon, Mich., died in Southeast Asia recently as a result of hostile action.