

## DEPUTY'S STATEMENTS ASSAILED

# Bovo Testifies; Denies Bribe Offer

A Twin City bondsman accused of bribery testified Friday in Berrien circuit court that he never propositioned Berrien Sheriff's Det. Ronald Immoos with a bribe for any purpose.

Bondsman Frank R. Bovo answered "No, sir," to a question from his counsel, Detroit Atty. Ivan Barris, if Bovo propositioned Det. Immoos on Aug. 13, 1969, or any other date.

That was the date, Det. Immoos testified earlier, that Bovo made a proposition leading to \$800 in payoffs a year ago from Bovo to Immoos in return for gambling protection.

**RESUMES TUESDAY**

Bovo's half-hour of testimony ended at a 4:30 p.m. court recess Friday, but trial is scheduled to resume next Tuesday and possibly Wednesday. It opened last Wednesday before Judge Chester J. Byrns and a jury of 14, from which 12 will deliberate.

Atty. Barris also called witnesses Friday whose testimony apparently was aimed at undermining the credibility of Det. Immoos' earlier testimony. Also called by Barris were witnesses testifying to Bovo's reputation for honesty.

In response to a motion won by Atty. Barris, court was convened for about 20 minutes shortly before noon Friday inside Babe's Lounge in Benton Harbor so jurors could see where Det. Immoos testified he sat while deciphering telephone numbers as Bovo dialed a pay telephone on the wall at the rear of the tavern on Jan. 4, 1970. Immoos said the call related to the alleged bribery.

Det. Immoos testified he could not recreate the Jan. 4 setting because the telephone on Friday was located farther away, behind a shuffleboard machine, and what was a doorway by the machine was a wall on Friday.

**DISPUTE CLAIM**

Lounge owner James "Babe" Couvella, with corroboration from other witnesses, testified in the Berrien circuit courtroom later Friday that the locations of the telephone and shuffleboard were unchanged since Jan. 4, 1970, and that there were no alterations to walls near the telephone.

In testimony Thursday, Det. Immoos estimated the distance from his seat to Bovo at the telephone on Jan. 4 was 10 feet or so. In a courtroom demonstration Thursday, with Det. Immoos estimating distance, a measurement produced 13½ feet. A measurement Friday in Babe's Lounge produced 25 feet 8 inches. (The lounge is the same place where Bovo was arrested Jan. 30, 1970.)

Bovo testified, in part with corroboration from other witnesses, that over a period of years he has loaned money to scores, perhaps hundreds of people including two loans of \$10 and \$20 to Det. Immoos made before Aug. 13, 1969.

The two loans are mentioned. Bovo testified, in a notebook received as a defense exhibit Friday.

Bovo testified there was nothing unusual about the loans and that Immoos paid them back.

Earlier Det. Immoos under oath denied receiving loans from Bovo.

Shortly before court recessed Friday afternoon, Bovo under oath denied a number of meetings and conversations with Det. Immoos that the officer testified occurred in September and October, 1969. The denials included a Sept. 29 meeting where, according to the officer's earlier testimony, Bovo passed Immoos the first of four \$200 payoffs that ended Jan. 4, 1970.

**TELL OF LOANS**

On the topic of loans by Bovo, former Berrien Deputy David Hamner of Benton Harbor testified Friday he borrowed \$100 from Bovo in 1966 without a promissory note. Former Benton Harbor Policeman William Althouse of St. Joseph testified he borrowed \$100 from Bovo about Aug. 8, 1968, without a promissory note. Former Berrien Deputy Thomas M. Kimbro of Coloma testified he borrowed \$150 from Bovo in 1964 without a promissory note.

Under cross examination by Atty. Eugene Friedman, a state executing the trial, Kimbro testified he instigated Immoos' becoming a deputy, termed him an "honest policeman" and said he would believe Immoos' word under oath.

Called as character witnesses for Bovo Friday were real estate and insurance agent Philip L. Nadeau of Coloma, former Benton Township Clerk Ralph Dahm of Benton township, and Van Buren county District Judge Donald Goodwillie, Jr., a former Van Buren prosecutor.

All testified that Bovo has a reputation for honesty.

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