

## **\$1.2-million theft suspect in Phila.**

**By THOMAS J. GIBBONS, JR.**

Of The Bulletin Staff

The two men who were arrested at a New York airport this week in connection with the theft of \$1.2 million dropped from an armored truck were returned to face a preliminary arraignment in Philadelphia late yesterday.

About 50 persons, including friends and relatives, packed an observation area, sealed off behind Plexiglas from the courtroom, during the arraignment at the Police Administration Building, 8<sup>th</sup> and Race Streets.

Joseph John Coyle, 28, of the 2300 block of South Front Street, South Philadelphia was charged with theft of lost or mislaid property, receiving stolen property and conspiracy.

Francis Anthony Santos, 27, of Sicklerville, New Jersey, was charged with hindering apprehension of prosecution; aiding in the consummation of a crime and conspiracy.

Coyle is charged with picking up pouches containing the \$1.2 million which dropped from a Purolator Armored Inc. truck at Swanson and Porter Streets in South Philadelphia on February 26<sup>th</sup>. Santos is charged with helping him get to JFK International Airport last Wednesday where he was arrested before he could board a flight to Mexico.

Despite the strong objections of a Philadelphia assistant district attorney; Municipal Court Judge Samuel M. Lehrer set bail for Coyle at \$25,000 and for Santos at \$5000. Lehrer later reduced Coyle's bail to \$15,000.

About 1 A.M. today, Coyle's family posted bail. Santos had posted bail earlier.

Assistant District Attorney Robert Casey has urged Lehrer to set bail for Coyle at \$200,000 and for Santos at \$100,000, which would have required Coyle to put up \$20,000 and Santos \$10,000. The judge was told neither one had an arrest record.

"I would think now, by this juncture," Lehrer said, "this defendant (Coyle) knows this world is very, very small." He set a further hearing date of 8:30 A.M. next Wednesday at the 11<sup>th</sup> and Wharton Streets police station, in South Philadelphia.

Noting the public interest in the case, Lehrer said it was the first time he had ever allowed TV cameras into his courtroom.

Coyle and Santos had arrived at police headquarters at 4:45 P.M., sitting in the back of an unmarked Philadelphia police car, handcuffed left wrist to left wrist.

Asked for comment, Coyle smiled and shook his head.

Philadelphia Detective Marty Mikstas said Coyle had told him on the drive down from New York he was glad to be getting back to Philadelphia.

Before the arraignment, Coyle's sister, Ellen O'Brien, 31, who declined to give her address in South Philadelphia, spoke with a reporter.

Coyle, she said, was "never in trouble a day in his life."

Santos and her brother, she said, "grew up together. Frankie is the greatest kid in the world. He's fabulous."

Coyle was represented by A. Charles Peruto, Jr., son of the prominent Philadelphia defense lawyer. Peruto told the court Coyle is a longshoreman at Girard Point Pier.

Santos was represented by lawyer Joseph Santaguida, who said Santos is a night dispatcher with the Delaware River Pilots Association and attends Camden County Community College during the day.