

## Lawyer Bows Out on Riccobene in Murder Case

By Dave Racher and Gloria Campisi Daily News Writers

Lawyer A. Charles Peruto Jr. yesterday withdrew as counsel for Harry "The Hunchback" Riccobene in a mob murder case. Peruto said he withdrew because he also represents Joseph Pedulla, expected to be a key witness against Riccobene, in an unrelated gun case. Riccobene and four other men are charged in the May 1982 slaying of mob figure Frank John Monte. The lawyer said he made his decision after a meeting with Assistant District Attorney Arnold Gordon, who is prosecuting the Monte case. Peruto had balked at the demand by Gordon during a preliminary hearing for Riccobene and the others that he withdraw because of possible conflict of interest.

Gordon maintained that such a conflict existed because Peruto would have had to cross-examine his client, Pedulla, in the Monte case. Gordon said Pedulla, 35, admitted firing the fatal shots as Monte got into his car at a Southwest Philadelphia gas station and implicated the others. Peruto argued that there was no conflict because he had never talked to Pedulla about the Monte killing.

"I don't feel there is a conflict of interest," Peruto repeated yesterday but added "After the meeting I reached the conclusion that because it might look improper, I shouldn't do it" Peruto repeated yesterday but added: "After the meeting I reached the conclusion that because it might look improper, I shouldn't do it" Peruto represented Pedulla on an unrelated gun charge of which he was convicted last year. Peruto still is representing Pedulla in efforts to reverse a judge's order that his client pay the cost of prosecuting him in that case.