

## Hughes *L.F. Free* linked *Press* to CIA *5/21/74*

(ZNS) — The Howard Hughes empire has been linked to an alleged CIA attempt to assassinate Cuban Premier Fidel Castro in the early sixties.

This surprising connection emerged during testimony given in a Los Angeles federal court in the \$17.5 million slander suit filed against Hughes by his former top aide, Robert Maheu.

Maheu, while being questioned by his own attorneys, revealed that he had been active in the CIA in the early sixties with Hughes' full knowledge and permission.

Maheu testified that he had

once been instructed "by the United States government" to recruit a Los Angeles racketeer named Johnny Rosselli for "a very sensitive assignment." Maheu added that both he and Hughes had known Rosselli for a number of years, but he declined to reveal what the exact nature of the "sensitive assignment" was.

Rosselli is now in jail on a card-cheating conviction — but three years ago, in efforts to free himself, Rosselli had testified that he had worked with Maheu and the CIA in an attempt to assassinate Castro. At the time, few people took Rosselli's charges seriously.

As Rosselli tells it, he became one of a number of hired assassins who set out for Cuba in a boat; but their boat was shot out from under them when they attempted to land on the Cuban coast.

Rosselli has alleged that various Las Vegas gambling interests favored Castro's overthrow so that Havana's gambling casino's could be reopened. The casinos, which were closed down by Castro, were a major source of mobster income under the Batista government. □