

Nev. Judge in Hughes Will Case Demands Any Fingerprint Data

Post 12/15/76
From staff reports and news dispatches

LAS VEGAS, Dec. 14—A county judge today ordered Nevada Attorney General Robert List to present in court Dec. 28 all information available about fingerprints found on the \$2.5 billion "Mormon will" of Howard Hughes and the envelope in which it was enclosed.

District Judge Keith Hayes also postponed a scheduled Jan. 10 jury trial on authenticity of the document after attorneys told the court there was reason to believe the envelope bore the fingerprints of Utah service station attendant Melvin Dummar.

Dummar, who was not in court, was named a beneficiary of one-16th of the eccentric billionaire's fortune in the will, which was left on a desk in the Mormon Church headquarters in Salt Lake City three weeks after Hughes' death last April.

Los Angeles attorney Harold Rhoden, who has been pressing the will as genuine, said he would accept that it was probably a forgery and withdraw it from probate if Dummar's prints are found.

Judge Hayes said, however, that the trial on the will's authenticity would proceed at a later date even if such fingerprints are found.

"This case is not going to be left in limbo," Hayes said. "If the proponents of the will do not come forward, there will still be a trial."

"There are potential criminal charges here," List said. "What they

are and who they might be filed against, I'm not going to say at this point."

Attorney James Dilworth, representing three Hughes relatives and Summa Corp., told Judge Hays that Attorney General List's office "told us Dummar's fingerprints were on some of the documents. There is clear and convincing evidence that repudiates most if not all of Dummar's testimony. The poor young man up there in Utah has put us all to tremendous expense—played games with us."

Dummar gave a deposition in the case last week, Rhoden said, adding he doesn't think Dummar could have written the Mormon will: "He didn't have the education, the experience... I may be wrong."

Hayes directed that List present all evidence that law enforcement agencies have, including fingerprints.

The judge approved chemical tests on the will's paper and ink, primarily to establish its age. The will was dated 1968. That information presumably also will be made available at the Dec. 28 hearing.

Dummar has said his only connection with Hughes came in 1968 when he gave a ride to a sleazy hitchhiker in the Nevada desert. He said the man told him he was Howard Hughes. Dummar said he let the man out in Las Vegas, gave him a quarter and dismissed the affair until he learned he had been named to receive more than \$100 million.