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New Story of Hughes Loan To Nixon Kin

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Author Clifford Irving quotes Howard Hughes as saying that former Defense Secretary Clark Clifford was the man who asked Hughes for a \$205,000 loan for Richard Nixon's brother.

Clifford, a one-time adviser to former President Truman and a cabinet member in the Johnson administration, denied any connection with the deal.

"It is a complete fabrication," Clifford said when contacted at his home in Washington. "There is not one iota of truth in that statement. It had to be made up out of whole cloth."

In a television interview yesterday, Irving said that what Hughes got in return for the 1956 loan is described in the billionaire industrialist's alleged autobiography. Irving claims he helped prepare the soon-to-be-published book, the authenticity of which has been challenged.

BROKER

Mr. Nixon and his brother have denied that Hughes got any favors as a result of the loan. Irving said he would not call Hughes a "fixer," but rather "a man who makes very careful arrangements to see that he gets what he wants."

The voice of a man claiming to be Hughes said in a recent telephone news conference that he never knew Irving and that the book is a hoax. Irving says he knows it was not Hughes' voice because the man had too many memory lapses and talked longer than Hughes can without a break.

A Nevada firm, which claims Hughes sold it the rights to his life story for \$10, has filed suit to block publication of Irving's book by McGraw-Hill Publishing Co. and its serialization in Life magazine. A hearing is set for next Wednesday.

Irving was questioned about the Nixon loan in a CBS interview by Mike Wallace.

LOAN

The loan was first reported by the late columnist Drew Pearson shortly before the 1960 election. Pearson said Hughes made the unsecured loan to Donald Nixon in 1956, while Richard Nixon was vice president, and that afterward Hughes' problems with various governmental agencies had improved.

Mr. Nixon's campaign manager called Pearson's

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story a "smear." Donald Nixon confirmed the loan, but said he had never asked his brother to do anything for him or anyone else. He said he got the loan through a friend, lawyer Frank J. Waters. Waters then was a lobbyist for Hughes.

Donald Nixon said he sought the loan in an unsuccessful effort to save his chain of restaurants. The loan was secured, he said, by his mother's lot in Whittier, Calif. A gas station was built on the lot and Nixon said it was worth \$228,000 when it was finally given in payment for the loan.

In the TV interview, Irving said Hughes said Donald Nixon "was running a joint in California that served Nixonburgers, and Hughes also remarked that he would have been better off working for the Salvation Army or any other non-profit organization. Mr. Hughes was asked for the money."

"By whom?" Wallace asked.

"By a representative."

"Who?"

Mike.

"That's Mr. Hughes' story, Mike."

"If I know, can I say? Can I ask a question?" asked Wallace, who has read purported transcripts of Irving's conversations with Hughes.

"If you know, you can ask."

"Clark Clifford?" asked Wallace.

"That's what Mr. Hughes says," Irving replied.

"What was the quid pro quo for the \$205,000?" Wallace asked. "Why would Howard Hughes lend Richard Nixon's brother \$205,000 for some Nixonburgers?"

"He . . . the quid pro quo is described in the book," Irving replied.

BROADCAST

Wallace said later in the broadcast that Clifford told him there was "not a grain of truth" in the claim that he or anyone in his office had anything to do with the loan.

He acknowledged, however, that his law firm has represented the Hughes Tool Co. since 1950," Wallace added.

Irving told Wallace there had been one witness to one of his many meetings with Hughes. His researcher, Richard Susskind, happened to be with Irving once when Hughes arrived early, the author said.

He said Hughes pulled a bag from his pocket and offered Susskind a prune. The researcher asked whether it weren't an organically grown prune and a surprised Hughes asked him how he knew it.

Irving said that set the two men "off and running on a discussion of organic prunes and vitamins and what not."

Another purported Hughes "memoir," published by the Ladies' Home Journal, quotes Hughes as saying he plans to have his body frozen after death and preserved for eventual revival.