

Panel That Named Hughes Believed Pressing Inquiry

By ROBERT A. WRIGHT
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LAS VEGAS, Nev., Dec. 28—The Federal grand jury that indicted Howard Hughes and associates yesterday on charges of stock manipulation will reportedly continue to hear evidence that could lead to further indictments.

Yesterday's indictments centered on a board meeting of Air West on Dec. 31, 1968, at which directors opposed to the purchase of the airline by Mr. Hughes reversed their two-day-old vote against the deal. He has a five-year statute of limitations with regard to that meeting would have been reached next Monday, and indictments could not have been made after that date.

Defendants Named

But the acquisition of the airline, now Hughes Airwest, was not consummated until April, 1970, after approval by the Civil Aviation Board and President Nixon. It is believed that the continuing investigation will focus on Airwest's dealings subsequent to Dec. 31, 1968.

The nine-count indictment handed up yesterday charged Mr. Hughes and three of his associates with conspiracy, stock manipulation and wire fraud in an alleged scheme to depress the price of Air West stock and to coerce dissident directors into approving the acquisition proposal.

Named in the indictment in addition to Mr. Hughes were Robert A. Maheu, former chief executive for Hughes interests in Nevada; Chester C. Davis, chief legal counsel for Mr.

Hughes's Summa Corporation, and David B. Charnay, president of Four Star International, a Los Angeles television and motion picture production company.

Another defendant, James H. Nall, who is in charge of land acquisition for Mr. Hughes's interests in this state, was charged in two counts of the indictment with being an accessory and with failure to report his knowledge of a felony.

Named as unindicted conspirators were Herman Greenspun, owner and editor of The Las Vegas Sun, and George Crockett, a longtime friend of Mr. Hughes.

Meanwhile, there was no word from Mr. Hughes, who has faced many legal entanglements but now faces the first criminal charges ever to be leveled against him. The reclusive billionaire, who since Dec. 20 has been living in Freeport, the Bahamas, has not made a public appearance in more than two decades. It is considered unlikely that he will appear for arraignment Jan. 11 in Federal District Court here.

Mr. Hughes, who had been living in London, departed suddenly Dec. 20 for the Bahamas. Earlier this month, a Bahamian magistrate refused to order the extradition to the United States of Robert L. Vesco, the financier who is accused in New York indictments of wire fraud and conspiracy to obstruct justice.

'Pretty Sticky' Move

A Department of Justice lawyer said yesterday in Washington that any attempt to extradite Mr. Hughes would be "pretty sticky."

A State Department official said that the extradition treaty adopted by the Bahamas states that if there is no counterpart in Bahamian law of the charge against a defendant, extradition is not permissible.

Mr. Hughes has a large investment in the Nevada gambling business, which is controlled by the state.

The Nevada Gaming Commission met in executive session to discuss the Hughes indictment. Peter Echevarria, the chairman, said that the meeting was conducted to "get all the information we can about the indictments." He said that the commission was operating under presumption of inno-

cence, but "if he [Mr. Hughes] is convicted and becomes a felon, that's a whole new ball game."

Sam Sady, chief of the television division of the Federal Communications Commission, said in Washington that, if Mr. Hughes became a fugitive, "we would immediately have to take a hard look at his license." Mr. Hughes owns KLAS television here.

Grand Teton Climb Starts

MOOSE, Wyo., Dec. 28 (AP)—Paul Petzoldt, 65 years old, and 25 other climbers left here at 9:30 A.M. today on the first leg of the annual midwinter assault on the 13,766-foot Grand Teton Peak.