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Maheu Tells of White House Request

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LOS ANGELES, May 16 — Robert A. Maheu, once manager of the Howard Hughes holdings in Las Vegas, told a Federal court jury today that he had once had a White House request to break up a friendship between a man who worked for him and F. Donald Nixon, the President's brother. "We had been requested by the White House to break up the romance between [John] Meier and Don Nixon," Mr. Maheu testified while giving evidence in support of his claim for \$17.3-million in defamation damages against Mr. Hughes' holding company, Summa Corporation.

Mr. Maheu said that the two men had been conducting business interviews together, with Mr. Meier identifying himself as a close associate of Mr. Hughes and Mr. Nixon letting it be known that he was a brother of the President.

Yesterday, Mr. Maheu told in detail of his assignment in 1960 from Mr. Hughes to prevent publication of details of Mr. Hughes's loan of \$205,000 to Donald Nixon.

3 Resignation Demanded

Mr. Maheu did not go so far in his testimony today as

he did in his depositions before the trial. There, he said that it was Charles G. Rebozo who told Richard C. Danner, a Hughes employe, that Donald Nixon and Mr. Meier should be kept apart.

It was Mr. Danner who carried \$100,000 in \$100 bills to Mr. Rebozo from Mr. Hughes, a matter that has been under investigation by various Federal agencies for more than a year.

Mr. Maheu said that it was Mr. Meier's refusal to follow orders that he stay away from Donald Nixon that caused Mr. Maheu to demand Mr. Meier's resignation in September, 1969.

Mr. Meier worked on the payroll of Robert A. Maheu Associates, the witness said, so he would be separated from the Hughes company during a period when Mr. Meier was supposed to be working with antiwar and antiweapons testing groups.

Mr. Hughes opposed the testing of nuclear weapons in Nevada and used Mr. Meier—and Mr. Maheu and others employed by him—to further this opposition. Mr. Maheu said that Mr. Hughes felt that because he held a defense contract he could ill afford to be exposed as using antiwar and

antiweapons groups to support his campaign against nuclear testing.

Memo From Hughes

In 1968, Mr. Maheu testified, he found that Mr. Meier had been telling people about his closeness to Mr. Hughes, contrary to their arrangement. Mr. Maheu wanted to dismiss Mr. Meier, he testified, and showed a memorandum to him from Mr. Hughes, dated March 16, 1968, that said, "I urge you not to fire Meier until we discuss him further."

In 1960, after the White House request was made that Mr. Meier and Donald Nixon be kept apart, Mr. Maheu testified, he assigned one of his own Maheu Associates employes, Dean Elson, formerly the agent in charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation office at Las Vegas, to keep track of Mr. Meier.

Mr. Maheu said that Mr. Elson found in September, 1969 that Mr. Meier and Donald Nixon were meeting secretly at the Santa Ana, Calif., airport. Mr. Meier was asked to resign, Mr. Maheu said, but he added that Mr. Hughes attempted to get Mr. Maheu to rehire him. Mr. Maheu said that he refused.