

# Expert vouches for Hughes

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Efforts to judge the authenticity of a purported Howard Hughes will have brought to light a crudely written manuscript, possibly the draft of a novel by the late billionaire.

The manuscript, scrawled on about 100 pages of unlined white paper, is part of the contents of a wrinkled paper bag in custody of Clark County court officials.

The bag also contained scraps of paper and gambling cards on which random thoughts had been written.

"We know the writing on these papers belongs to Howard Hughes and we think the white pages are part of a manuscript he was writing," said county Clerk Loretta Bowman.

She said the papers were taken

from a Las Vegas hotel by the authorities, but she would not say where or when. There was no indication when the manuscript may have been written.

Hughes lived on the top floor of the Desert Inn here from 1967 to 1970.

After studying the handwriting on the manuscript and the will and on papers known to be in Hughes' hand, graphoanalyst Henry Silver said Friday he was "positive beyond doubt" the will was genuine.

Silver, who has served as a handwriting analyst in three court matters relating to Hughes, examined the documents with the approval of a judge, but his study was not an official court evaluation. Officials said the burden of proving the will is authentic will be up to former Hughes aide Noah Dietrich,

designated executor in the will.

Dietrich is to file petitions of administration tomorrow. If his petition is accepted, he will be charged by the court with dividing up the Hughes fortune, estimated at between \$1.5 billion and \$2.5 billion.

Dietrich and others originally doubted the authenticity of the will, partly because its poor spelling seemed uncharacteristic of Hughes. The will was discovered Thursday on a desk at the headquarters of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) in Salt Lake City.

However, Silver said "there is no question" the will and manuscript were "written by the same man, Howard Robard Hughes."

Three pages of the manuscript obtained by the Associated Press showed spelling errors similar to

## will; novel manuscript the key

those in the will, such as "hoarse" for "horse," "converstation" for "conversation" and "off" for "of."

The manuscript, in parts ungrammatical and awkwardly phrased, tells of an industrious man who has trouble with women and falls afoul of the law. The chief characters are a woman named Darlene, her parents, and friends named Jerry and Jack.

One paragraph demonstrates the manuscript's rambling style:

"... Two fellows were keeping a conversation in the middle of the lane on the highway, thire car running & they first sat their the 50ther cars were ahead off them almost ¾ off a mile ... I just kept on until I finally seen that they were just setting in the middle off the road."

Officials of the Mormon Church were trying to determine

how the purported will was found on the 25th floor of the church's office building.

It was reported that former Texas Gov. John Connally, a director of a Houston bank involved in the search for a Hughes will, had been on the same floor on unrelated business with the church three hours before the will turned up.

Through a spokesman in Austin, Tex., Connally said yesterday. "It's a vicious, malicious, irresponsible story. Its clear implication is that the bank was guilty of wrongdoing and that I have violated professional ethics. This is all too characteristic of some reporters' interest in engaging in scandal by slander."

The will directed that a quarter of Hughes' wealth go to the Howard Hughes Medical Institute of Miami, and the balance was apportioned to his two former wives, four universities, officers of his companies,

charitable causes and Melvin Dummar, a 31-year-old service station owner who said he once picked up Hughes in the Nevada desert.

Dummar, of Willard, Utah, said he found Hughes, bleeding from the ear, near a desert road in January 1968 and gave him a ride into Las Vegas.

Dietrich said of Dummar's account: "I would not place much credence in the story ... It doesn't sound like Howard to be out alone in the desert."

Dummar was reported under sedation because of emotional collapse. Friends said he was suffering from "mental strain" after hearing he had been named a beneficiary.

"I imagine we will all be long dead when the estate of Howard Robard Hughes is finally settled," said Harold Rhoden, an attorney for the 87-year-old Dietrich.