

# Man Behind Hughes



## Jack Anderson

**T**HE MAN who has stepped into the late Howard Hughes' shoes is brash, brawling attorney Chester C. Davis.

Federal authorities believe the 66-year-old Davis may have been secretly calling the shots for the eccentric billionaire long before Hughes died last April. Davis is a director and general counsel for the giant Summa Corp., which controls most of Hughes' assets.

Mexican investigators have established that Hughes was not mentally competent during most of his stay in that country. He died a penthouse hermit, ensconced in Acapulco's fashionable Princess hotel.

Dr. Victor Montemayor, who was called in to administer to the wealthy recluse, found him emaciated, dehydrated and afflicted with bed sores and a bleeding tumor. Concluded the physician: "The patient had been seriously neglected."

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**T**REASURY SECRETARY William Simon, impressed with the mounting evidence that Hughes may have been incompetent during his final years, has ordered an investigation by the Internal Revenue Service. Simon wants to protect the government's share of the Hughes fortune.

If Hughes wasn't in control of his affairs, Simon wants to know, why wasn't a guardian appointed? Who was in control?

So far, the clues point to Chester Davis. Over the past several years, our

sources say, the Hughes organization has lost the stamp of its sole stockholder and has slowly assumed the feisty Chester Davis personality.

For instance, Hughes shunned publicity, covered up scandals and never permitted controversy to explode onto the front pages. If he had a dispute with subordinates, he simply bought them off.

It would have been totally contrary to the Hughes personality to engage in a public power struggle with aide Robert Maheu, who supervised Hughes' Las Vegas dominion. Yet Maheu was fired and the scandal hit the headlines.

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**T**HE WAY the fracas was handled, our sources suggest, indicates it was the result of Chester Davis' bulldozer mentality. Howard Hughes, they claim, simply wouldn't have acted like that.

Now there is evidence Davis is personally masterminding a clever scheme designed to keep the Hughes empire from being carved up by courts in several states where the billionaire had holdings.

The Summa Corp. has asked a Delaware court to appoint Hughes' cousin William Lummis as the firm's new sole stockholder. Since Summa was incorporated in Delaware, the courts there may have jurisdiction over all other state courts.

Davis and Lummis, a government affidavit reveals, have a close, confidential relationship.