

Thumbprint on Envelope That Held a Hughes Will Is Linked to a Beneficiary

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LAS VEGAS, Nev., Dec. 28 (UPI)—A thumbprint on the envelope enclosing the so-called "Mormon will" of Howard R. Hughes has been definitely identified as that of a Utah service station operator who was named a major beneficiary, Attorney General Robert List of Nevada told a District Court today.

Mr. List said that Federal Bureau of Investigation tests had established that the left thumbprint was that of Melvin Dummar, who would inherit more than \$100 million if the document were certified as having been handwritten by Mr. Hughes, who died last April.

The Attorney General told Judge Keith Hayes that six other unidentified fingerprints were found on the envelope, which was dropped on a desk of the Mormon church in Salt Lake City three weeks after Mr. Hughes's death.

Mr. List said the F.B.I. was attempting to identify those prints and was also conducting chemical tests on the ink and paper to determine the age of the document, which is dated 1968. Harold Rhoden, a Los Angeles attorney, has been pressing the will as authentic in a legal battle with Mr. Hughes's relatives and the Summa Corporation, the holding company administering most of the Hughes hotel-casino operations and other farflung enterprises.

Mr. Rhoden has said that he would withdraw the will from probate if it could be proved a forgery, but he said after the court session today that Mr. List's statement was not conclusive. Mr. Rhoden said he wanted his own fingerprint experts to submit their findings.

"Suppose this is a print not put there by human amino acid but by a Summa Xerox machine," Mr. Rhoden said. Asked why he was singling out Summa, he said: "Who else would have the power and ability to do something like this? But I'm not saying hey did it. Maybe this is a genuine print. I don't know."

Mr. Dummar has said under oath that he knew nothing of the will until it became public. He said that in 1968 he gave a ride to a scruffy hitchhiker in the desert and let him off in Las Vegas. He said the man identified himself as Howard Hughes but that he gave him a quarter and forgot about it.

A civil jury trial had been scheduled by Judge Hayes for Jan. 10 to hear the testimony of handwriting experts and others on the legitimacy of the document, but it has been postponed indefinitely. Mr. List said it would be about a month before the results of further Federal Bureau of Investigation tests would be available.