

# Suspicious Texas to Audit Hughes Estate

## Houston

The state of Texas, dissatisfied with a report indicating Howard Hughes was much less than a billionaire, will make a separate audit in its quest for taxes on the estate, an official said yesterday.

In documents filed Tuesday with courts in Houston and Las Vegas, Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Inc. reported Hughes' net worth when he died was \$168.8 million, far less than the popular estimate of \$2.5 billion or more.

"There's sufficient reason to believe the truth may lie somewhere in between," said Tom Henderson, director of the Inheritance Tax Division of the state comptroller's office.

"Certainly we're going to be doing our own audit and I doubt that we'll come up with the same figures. If they were going to come up with a low figure, at least they could come up with a credible low figure."

Internal Revenue spokesmen said it was probable a separate federal inventory also would be conducted.

Texas Attorney General John Hill is involved in multi-state litigation arising from the fact that no uncontestable Hughes will has surfaced since the reclusive industrialist died April 5 aboard a flight from Acapulco to Houston for medical treatment.

Hill must prove Hughes legally was a Texas resident if the state is to collect an inheritance tax.

*United Press*