

Hughes Aide's Story on Contri

butionConflicts

With Others

By Morton Mintz
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A Howard Hughes aide and long-time friend of President Nixon has sworn that the \$100,000 in currency he gave to another friend of the President, C. G. (Bebe) Rebozo, was intended to support 1970 Senate and House candidates who had been "particularly helpful to the administration."

The statement by the Hughes aide, Richard G. Danner, puzzled the lawyer who was questioning him in connection with a pending lawsuit.

Recalling that Danner had said he gave \$50,000 of the currency to Rebozo in August, 1969, the lawyer, Morton R.

Galane of Las Vegas, asked, "Well, what campaign was taking place in 1969?"

"There was only one campaign involved — that is, the campaigns which were the off-year congressional elections occurring in 1970," Danner replied.

The Danner testimony given in a deposition proceeding on Sept. 4 but unavailable in full until yesterday, either does not support or conflicts with statements by Rebozo, Robert A. Maheu, former manager of Hughes Nevada Operations and Galane's client in a defamation suit against Hughes, and Chester C. Davis, the Hughes lawyer to whom Rebozo refunded the \$100,000 several months ago.

A Senate Watergate committee source has said that committee investigators are looking into the "possibility" that the \$100,000 helped finance Mr. Nixon's home in San Clemente. A implication of this possibility is that the currency Hughes contributed was not necessarily the same currency which Rebozo, through Davis, refunded to the billionaire industrialist recluse.

Rebozo, during a five-hour interview with committee investigators last Monday on Key Biscayne, said he kept the \$100,000 in safety deposit boxes for approximately three years, along with a written instruction that in the event of his death the cash be con-

sidered a campaign contribution.

Rebozo, who was unable to produce a copy of the directive, also was reported to have said that he made the refund because continued possession of the currency had become an embarrassment.

Maheu gave a different impression of the origins and purposes of the money. In a deposition in July, he swore that the \$100,000 was earmarked for President Nixon, who had chosen Rebozo to receive the cash.

Maheu foresaw possible "eventual embarrassment" because money he understood was being claimed as a presidential campaign contribution was being delivered so long af-

ter the 1968 presidential election.

Maheu's testimony related the money not to campaign contributions, but to three trips Danner made at Hughes' request, to see Attorney General John N. Mitchell in 1970.

Danner, in his deposition, said he saw Mitchell about Hughes' effort to acquire the Dunes Hotel in Las Vegas. Rejecting objections by the Justice Department's Antitrust Division, Mitchell cleared the acquisition—which ultimately fell through—in August or September, 1970.

But, Danner said, there "never was any discussion, any intimation, that this was a quid pro quo."

Attorney Davis told Senate Watergate investigators Wednesday that Rebozo, on refunding the \$100,000, gave yet another impression, sources said. *10 OCT*

Davis said Rebozo told him that he kept the money in safety deposit boxes because he was confused about its intended purpose or destination, the sources said.

Danner complicated the situation even further in his deposition. He told of a meeting during the 1968 campaign in which he, Rebozo and a Hughes lawyer discussed "the possibility of the Hughes organization making a contribution to the Nixon campaign,"

Danner said. Later, he said, word came back that "\$50,000 had been agreed upon."

Danner told lawyer Galane that he changed his testimony in an Internal Revenue Service inquiry about the date of delivery of the first \$50,000 to Rebozo. Danner said the date he gave the IRS in May, 1972, was August of 1969; in May, 1973, Danner amended the date to August of 1970—but said he was uncertain. Maheu indicated that first delivery was made in 1969.

Danner, who runs Hughes' Sands Hotel in Las Vegas, told Galane that he first met Richard Nixon in 1947, that he saw him on a number of occasions in the home of then Represent-

tative and later Senator George Smathers (D-Fla.), and that then Senator Nixon was his guest on a Florida vacation in 1950. Soon after the 1968 elections, Danner said, he visited Mr. Nixon in the Bahamas. The other guests were Rebozo and another Nixon friend, Robert Abplanalp.

A former FBI agent, Danner was retained by General Motors in 1966 as a middleman in the famed Ralph Nader "snooping" episode. He testified that he worked for the Nixon-Agnew ticket in Florida and Washington in 1968 after managing campaigns for Smathers. Danner joined the Hughes organization in February, 1969.