

Rebozo: Held Hughes Cash For 3 Years

Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo has testified that he held \$100,000 in cash given him by a Howard Hughes employee for three years without knowing for what purpose the money would be used.

In a deposition filed in U.S. District Court here, Rebozo said he assumed the money was a contribution to the 1972 presidential campaign but that he never discussed the money with campaign fund-raisers.

The reason for his silence, Rebozo said, was his fear that the contribution from Hughes would be embarrassing to the campaign. Rebozo said he returned the money, which he received in the summer of 1970, in the spring of 1973 on the advice of an attorney.

The deposition is one of several taken by Common Cause in an attempt to verify the accuracy of a report filed by the Nixon re-election committee of campaign contributions that were made before a new campaign financing law took effect. It is the first time that Rebozo has testified publicly under oath about the controversial Hughes contribution.

Rebozo said the money was first offered to him in 1968 but that he rejected it at the time because he felt "that perhaps another Hughes loan could create some embarrassment for the campaign." He was referring, he said, to a 1958 loan from Hughes to President Nixon's brother, Donald Nixon, that he said had been "distorted by the press" and became a 1960 campaign issue.

However, he said that he accepted the funds two years later at the insistence of Hughes emissary Richard Danner. The payment was made in two \$50,000 installments, but Rebozo said he never actually counted the money or gave Danner receipts for it.

He said he and Danner never discussed the purpose for which the money was given.

"I understand that he (Danner) has indicated it was intended for congressional races, and . . . as far as I was concerned then, the only race I was interested in was the presidency and the 1972 campaign," Rebozo said.

He said the only person he told about the contribution at the time was Rose Mary Woods, the president's personal secretary.

"I just thought that somebody close to the President should know about it if anything happened to me," Rebozo said. The money was kept in a safe deposit box at his Key Biscayne bank, drawing no interest, until he returned it last year, he added.