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Testimony On Hughes Contribution

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The machinations involved in delivering \$100,000 in cash contributions to a President were found somewhat perplexing yesterday by the judge in Robert A. Maheu's \$17.5 million defamation case.

Maheu, deposed chief of billionaire Howard Hughes' Nevada operations, was questioned closely by U.S. District Judge Harry Pregerson about elaborate efforts to get the money to President Nixon from 1968 to 1970.

Although the \$100,000 had been pledged on behalf of Hughes to Mr. Nixon's 1968 campaign, Maheu testified, the first attempt to deliver the initial \$50,000 was not made until a month after the election. It did not get to the President's close friend, C. G. (Bebe) Rebozo, until mid-1969, he said.

"Why did it take so long?" asked Pregerson who is presiding over the trial of Maheu's suit against Hughes Summa Corp.

The injection of third persons, Maheu replied.

He said that the contribution originally was solicited by Richard Danner, an ex-FBI agent who reportedly had introduced President Nixon to Rebozo many years earlier.

He testified that Danner and Rebozo consulted with another ex-FBI agent, Washington attorney Edward P. Morgan, on how the delivery would be made.

Morgan, according to Maheu, demanded that a receipt for the money be obtained. However, he said, that could not be accomplished.

There was no assurance that the candidate, Mr. Nixon,

would be aware that the money came from Howard Hughes, Maheu testified in explaining Morgan's position.

Why did he want a receipt if he wanted it secret, asked the judge.

To protect himself, Maheu replied, adding that Morgan washed his hands of the whole thing when a receipt could not be arranged.

The names of Mr. Nixon's brother, Donald, and John Meier, then a Hughes aide, next came into the picture as potential intermediaries, Maheu continued.

Mr. Rebozo got cold feet and did not want to be involved in receiving the money because of those names mentioned, he testified.

Maheu said \$50,000 in checks, meanwhile, was distributed to Nixon campaign committees in Nevada. And on Dec. 6 or 7, 1968, the first attempt to deliver \$50,000 cash to the President-elect was made in Palm Springs, he went on, but they could not have an appointment.

The money taken to Palm Springs was then used to repay a loan obtained earlier that year to make a \$50,000 cash contribution to then Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, according to Maheu.

He testified that in July of 1969 he obtained another \$50,000 in cash from Hughes' personal account in Los Angeles. He said he gave it to his son Peter, for delivery to Danner, who then delivered it to Rebozo.

By that time Maheu said Danner had been hired by the Hughes organization as managing director of the Frontier Hotel in Las Vegas and was paid an additional fee as a conduit to the administration via Mr. Rebozo.

The \$100,000 donation to Rebozo has been confirmed and Maheu's attorneys have introduced the recapitulation of events to show that Maheu carried out Hughes' orders.

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