

Judge in Libel Suit Asks Financial Data On Hughes Concern

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LOS ANGELES, July 18 (UPI) — Howard R. Hughes's main holding company has been ordered to reveal confidentially to a Federal judge how much it is worth, to help determine how much will be taken away from it in libel damages.

United States District Court Judge Harry Pregerson issued the order yesterday against the Summa Corporation, formerly the Hughes Tool Company, through which Mr. Hughes owns most of his property and industries. It may be worth billions.

The order is part of a court action between Summa—representing Mr. Hughes—and Robert A. Maheu, formerly the secretive billionaire's top executive in Nevada.

Mr. Maheu won a libel suit against Mr. Hughes for Mr. Hughes's remark, in a telephone news conference, that Mr. Maheu had been dismissed because "he stole me blind." The same jury is scheduled to begin consideration Oct. 8 of how much Mr. Hughes must pay Mr. Maheu in damages.

The judge ordered attorneys for Summa to reveal the concern's net worth, gross assets,

income and profits to be used as possible guidelines in fixing damages.

A Summa attorney, Norbert Schlei, objected, arguing that "We are not trying the wealth of the defendant" and that previous court actions had established that Summa was worth more than \$335-million, far above the \$17.5-million demanded by Mr. Maheu in his suite.

The judge pointed out that the figure asked for by Mr. Maheu could be ignored by the jury, which can award less—or more—in damages if it feels justified. He rejected the argument by Mr. Schlei that it is "extortion" to base the penalty on what Summa can bear.