

Hughes Conspiracy Case

Reno

A federal judge yesterday dismissed charges of criminal conspiracy and stock manipulation against billionaire Howard Hughes and three others, saying the federal indictments "fail to state a public offense."

U.S. District Judge Bruce

Thompson said in an order dismissing the indictment that he was unable to find any statute or regulation "which renders the alleged conduct of the defendants criminal."

The indictment, returned by a federal grand jury in Las Vegas July 30, charged

Dismissed

Hughes and three associates with conspiring to drive down the price of Air West airline stock and force the firms' directors to sell out to Hughes in 1968.

It was the second indictment against Hughes in his acquisition of Air West. The first was dismissed last Jan-

uary by Thompson, who called it "the worst criminal pleading" he had ever seen.

Indicted along with Hughes were Chester Davis, the chief counsel for Hughes' Summa Corp., Robert Maheu, former head of Hughes' Nevada empire, and David Charnay, head of Four Star Productions in Los Angeles.

Associated Press