

Hughes and 3 Others Cleared Of Stock Manipulation Charges

RENO, Nov. 14 (AP)—A Federal judge's dismissal of conspiracy and stock manipulation charges against Howard R. Hughes, the billionaire industrialist, and three other persons has ended a court battle of almost a year.

Judge Bruce Thompson of United States District Court said in an order dismissing the indictment yesterday for the second time that "we can find no statute or regulation which renders the alleged conduct of the defendants criminal."

Attorneys for the four defendants had argued that the indictment was unclear and failed to state an offense.

Judge Thompson said that the dismissal of the criminal indictment did not preclude civil action against the defendants.

The men who were indicted with Mr. Hughes by a Federal grand jury in Las Vegas on July 30 were Chester Davis, the chief counsel for Mr. Hughes's Summa Corporation; Robert M.

Maheu, the former head of Mr. Hughes's holdings in Nevada; and David Charnay, head of Four Star production in Los Angeles.

The four-count indictment charged the men with conspiracy, a stock manipulation, wire fraud and aiding and abetting illegal activities in connection with Mr. Hughes's acquisition of Air West airlines in 1968.

The grand jury returned the indictment one day after it said it could not return an indictment and seven hours before the Government could have run out of time to file charges against Mr. Hughes.

Similar indictments were returned by the jury six months earlier, but they were thrown out by Judge Thompson, who called them "the worst case of criminal proceedings I have ever encountered."

The dismissal, however, gave the Government six more months in which to bring a new indictment.