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**Howard Hughes Company Must Pay  
\$2.8 Million to Slandered Ex-Aide**

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LOS ANGELES, Dec. 4—A company owned by Howard R. Hughes must pay Hughes ex-aide Robert A. Maheu more than \$2.8 million, a U.S. District Court jury ruled today. The jury also ruled that Maheu, 57, once the top aide of the billionaire, must pay Summa Corp. \$47,744 in counter claims. The firm contended that he used that amount in company personnel and money for his personal benefit.

The jury reached its verdict during the sixth day of deliberation. Maheu was not in the courtroom. Both sides are expected to appeal the judgments.

The slander suit judgment of \$2,823,333.30 was made against the Summa Corp., which is wholly owned by Hughes. Now believed to be in London, he had called Maheu "a no-good son of a bitch who stole me blind." Hughes

also said, "The money's gone and he's got it."

Those remarks were made during a Jan. 7, 1972, press conference called by Hughes to deny the claim of author Clifford Irving that his biography of Hughes was legitimate. Reporters in Los Angeles asked questions of Hughes via telephone. He was then in the Bahamas. One questioner wanted to know why Hughes had fired Maheu in 1970. Hughes gave the answer that finally led to today's decision.

During the first stage of the trial, which was heard by U.S. District Court Judge Harry Pregerson from last March to June, Summa defended itself by claiming the remarks were true. The same six-member jury, however, decided that the remarks were not true, and the trial proceeded to the penalty phase, which terminated today.

Maheu contended that his reputation had been irreparably damaged. On the stand he sobbed that the remarks

had "ruined me completely." He told the jury he had anticipated grossing \$600,000 a year, with a net income of \$300,000 annually for the rest of his life.

Maheu, a former FBI agent, began working for Hughes in the mid-1950s. In 1967 he took a staff position, earning \$520,000 a year. He also received the free use of a palatial home as well as cars, yachts, airplanes and private clubs.

Summa Corp. attorney Norbert Schlei, however, ridiculed Maheu's alleged income potential. He called a certified public accountant as a witness to testify that in fact Maheu had averaged a net of only about \$34,435 during the years in which his gross income was \$520,000.

The accountant, Harry Alper of Beverly Hills, said Maheu had claimed more than 82 per cent of his gross income as business expenses.

Another witness, former Democratic National Chairman Lawrence F. O'Brien, could not substantiate Maheu's claim that former Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey had thanked him (Maheu) for a \$50,000 cash contribution to his 1968 campaign. Maheu contended he had given the cash to Humphrey, on behalf of Hughes, but Summa contended that Maheu had stolen the cash himself.

In his closing argument, Maheu's attorney, Morton Galane, said one reason Maheu should get a high award from Summa was that O'Brien had once been granted a \$180,000 public relations contract from Hughes. Although O'Brien was good, Galane said, "he was no Robert Maheu."

Galane, who was not available for comment, is expected to receive from 25 per cent to 33 per cent of the final financial award.

The trial revealed a picture of seemingly unlimited cash flows from casino tellers' windows in Las Vegas to the coffers of politicians in Washington.

In addition to the Humphrey money, there was also testimony about a \$100,000 cash contribution by Hughes to former President Nixon's 1968 campaign. Additionally, Hughes personally made a \$25,000 contribution to the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy (D-N.Y.); \$50,000 in 1968 to Sen. Alan Bible (D-Neb.), and \$170,000 to Sen. Howard W. Cannon (D-Nev.), the court was told.