

Judge in Hughes Case Calls Witness a 'Liar'

Las Vegas

District Judge Keith Hayes suddenly lashed out yesterday at witness Melvin Dummar, calling him a "liar" and threatening to "have a piece of your hide" if he fails to tell the truth about his involvement with the so-called "Mormon will" of Howard Hughes.

"Brother Dummar," said the judge, who is a Mormon, in a traditional religious greeting to a fellow Mormon, "I want the truth. Where did it (the will) come from?"

"A man brought it to the station," Dummar, a Utah gas station operator, responded.

"Do you know who wrote it?" the judge asked.

"I do not," the witness replied.

"Did you participate in its preparation in any way?"

"I did not."

The judge's sudden admonition followed Dummar's testimony that he first saw an envelope containing

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the purported will—which bequeathed one-sixteenth of Hughes' \$2.5 billion fortune to Dummar—on a counter of his station on the morning of April 27, 1976.

Dummar said a man apparently left it there.

Hayes called to Dummar on the witness stand, "Turn your chair around and face me!"

"You have been examined by Harold Rhoden whom I consider to be a competent attorney. The majority of your testimony is that you're a liar. You have now launched into your third story.

"We are here seeking the truth. Mr. Dummar, I think you are lying now. If I were to ask for a raise of hands in this room, you would be astonished at how many people here think you are lying."

The judge allowed Rhoden to proceed with his examination of Dummar, but only after further chiding:

"There are a few things that are valuable. Personal freedom is valuable. Good health. Love and respect of your family and your own self-respect. I don't believe you. There is a saying that, 'Doth it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?'"

"I'm not concerned about your soul. I'm concerned about your hide. You better be concerned about your hide. I will make it my duty to have a piece of your hide."

The judge then instructed the attorney general's office to "prosecute if he is proven to be lying."

"When I first saw it, it was on the back bar (counter) of the station," Dummar said. "A man drove in and started talking about 'wouldn't it be nice if I were in it (the will). I thought he was off his rocker.'"

Dummar said the mystery man showed up at his station about 10 a.m. that day.

"What did I think of Howard Hughes dying? — I remember him saying that," Dummar said. "I also remember him saying he had been looking for me.

"I remember him saying 'Wouldn't it be nice if a guy like me were in Howard Hughes' will.'"

Dummar said he recalled telling the man the story about picking up a disheveled old man in the Nevada desert, giving him a quart-

er and taking him to Las Vegas where the man identified himself as Hughes.

"I don't remember what he said," Dummar said. "I wasn't interested."

Dummar said that after the man, whom he described as between 40 and 50, neatly dressed and about 5-foot-10, left his station he noticed the envelope had been left near some of his schoolbooks.

"I picked it up and read it and it has been a nightmare ever since," he said.

Dummar recalled that the envelope containing the will was sealed originally.

"I steamed it open," he said. "I read the will. Then I put it back into some of my books. I opened it several times and sealed it back up so nobody would know it had been opened. I put it back in my notebook."

The 31-year-old gas station operator from Willard, Utah, said it was a couple of hours before his wife, Bonnie, came home. Then he drove to Salt Lake City, about 40 miles away, and went to the visitor's center in the Mormon church complex.

Dummar testified that he went to the 25th floor of the church office building and asked to see Spencer W. Kimball, president of the Church. He was told Kimball was tied up and couldn't see him.

"I then went down the hall. I asked where the restroom was. That's when I got to thinking I didn't want to do anything."

Dummar said he placed the envelope that contained the will inside another envelope and "wrote a note as best as I could remember what the man had said to me. I put it on a desk and left."

On April 27, church officials found the envelope and came to Las Vegas to file it with the court.

United Press



UPI Telephoto

**MELVIN DUMMAR (RIGHT) AND LAWYER, ROGER DUTTON
In Las Vegas court, before testimony on Hughes will**