

06750

GERMANY DM 6.00

U.K. 60p.

FRANCE 9 Fr. 50

\$1.50 DECEMBER 1974

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THE MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS ISSUE

IS HOWARD HUGHES DEAD AND BURIED OFF AN ISLAND IN GREECE?
PHOTOGRAPHING PAIN AND PLEASURE

THE PRESIDENCY: OVERNIGHT FROM PARTY HACK TO DIVINE ABSOLUTION
EXCITING CENTERFOLD—SEXY APRES SKI—NUDE HOTDOGGING

Howard Hughes is dead," said Tiger Eye. "He died on Tenos, a Greek island, on April 16, 1971. His coffin was lowered into the sea the next day, off the coast of Tenos.

"Lots of people know, they just don't talk about it. It's called the Golden Silence — *omerta*."

Reference: a front-page article in *Midnight*, a Canadian newspaper, dated October 18, 1971, showing two photographs. In one, a feeble-looking man is seated in a wheelchair, his head covered with what appears to be a bandage or surgical cap. He is attended by two men and a woman, who, according to *Midnight*, "bears a startling resemblance to Jackie Kennedy Onassis." In the second snapshot, the two men are helping the paralyzed figure walk, while the woman looks on.

"I took the pictures from the cruise ship *Oriana*, on which my wife and I were enjoying a 10-day holiday," explained [George] Duncastle. "We passed close to *Skorpios*, and the guide on board called our attention to the island."

On August 30, 1971, *Midnight* had published an article with "eyewitness reports" about a mysterious, crippled old man on the Island of *Skorpios*. *Midnight* speculated, unbelievably, that the man was John F. Kennedy, who supposedly did not die in Dallas in 1963. As a result of this article, according to *Midnight*, a number of people came forward with additional information. Koula Markopolis, a Greek national and a registered nurse, told *Midnight* that she had been on Aristotle Onassis's personal payroll for two and a half months, from November, 1968, until January, 1969. Further she said:

"I was hired because I have a good knowledge of English. Mr. Onassis told me that the patient I would be taking care of was an Englishman.

"The job was on the Island of Tenos. I was paid a very high salary to go there . . . [and told] that people who talk about Mr. Onassis's personal business do not work for him long.

"There were three other nurses and two doctors at Mr. Onassis's private hospital on Tenos, but there was only one patient. . . . I thought at the time that he was about 50, but he could have been older or younger." [Hughes would have been 63 in 1968].

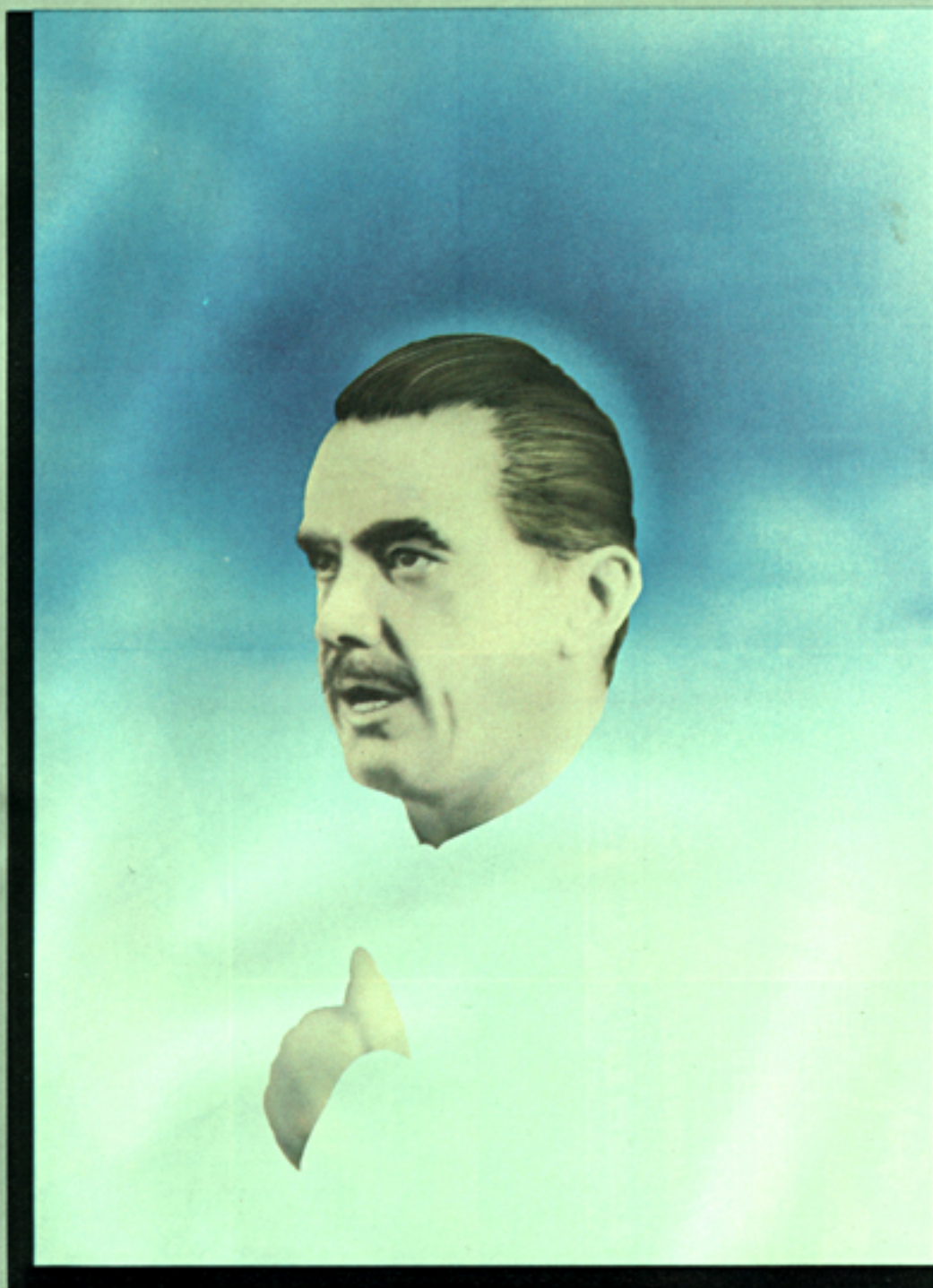
"We had to feed him, bathe him, clean up after him. Sometimes he seemed to listen to us talk, but there was seldom any sign that he understood. Mostly he stared.

"He was quite tall, probably well over six feet tall before he was injured." [Hughes was 6'3"].

"He weighed practically nothing, just skin and bones, no muscles. He

Is Howard Hughes Dead and

A noted theorist on conspiracies, a contributing editor, and an

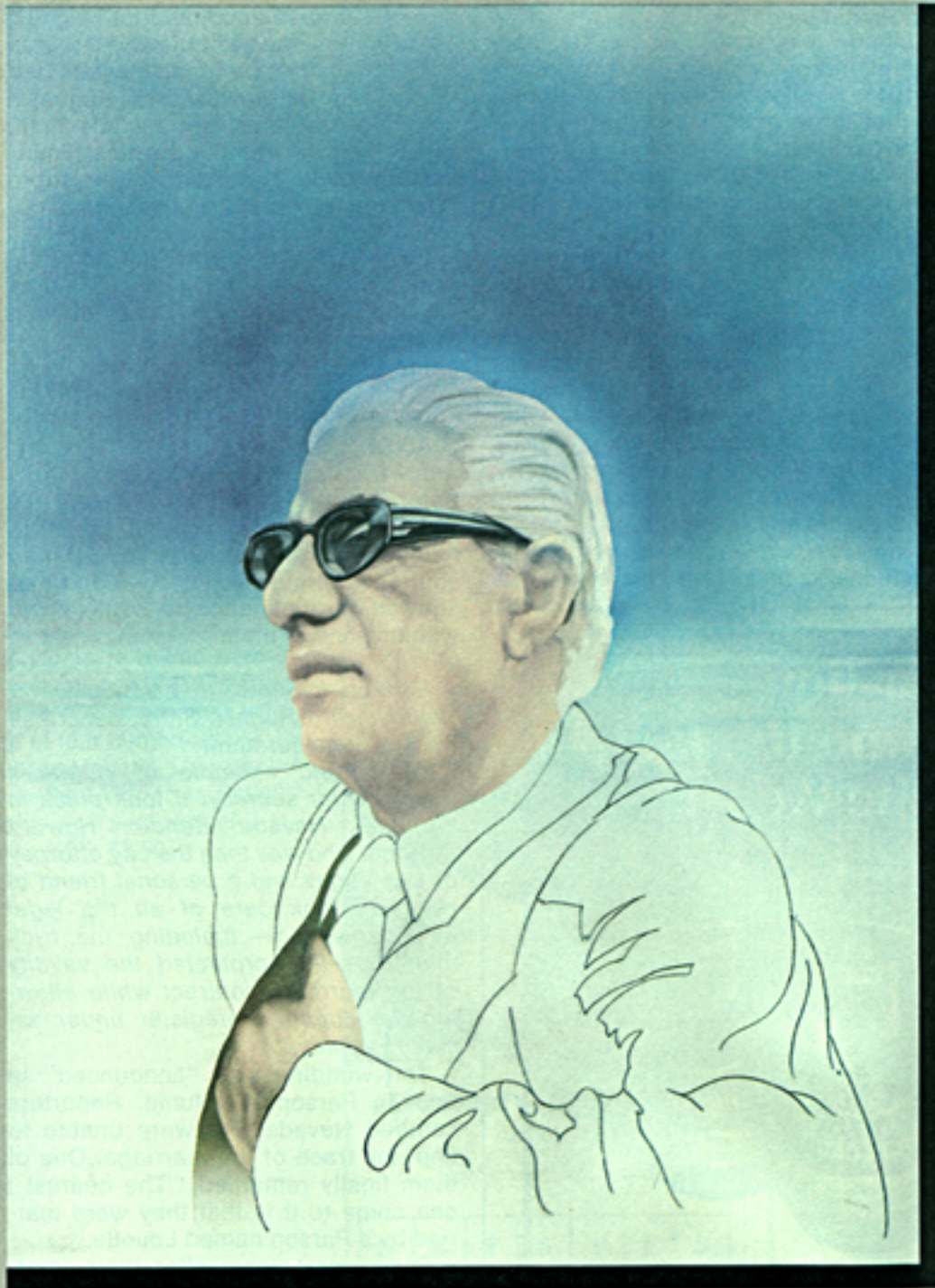


ILLUSTRATED BY BILL IMHOFF

BY MAE BRUSSELL AND

Buried Off a Greek Island?

former named *Tiger Eye* bring us an unlikely tale. Or is it?



was helpless, like a baby. His body was wasted away."

The Greek nurse said her patient was called Mr. Smith. Miss Markopolis describes his injury:

"One of the worst I've ever seen. . . . The entire back of his head was a scarred mass. It had been operated on several times. There was a metal plate under the skin to protect the brain where the bone was broken away.

"I was told that part of his brain had been removed years ago. From the condition of the man I could only assume that it was true. He really had no reason to be alive. He must have had tremendous will and a strong constitution before he was injured."

Miss Markopolis left the employ of Aristotle Onassis in January, 1969.

"Mr. Onassis . . . gave me a large bonus and said he knew I would protect the privacy of 'my poor friend,' as he put it.

"There was a paralyzed and brain-damaged man on Tenos. He was being taken care of like a prince by Mr. Onassis."

Was Onassis's mysterious patient Howard Hughes? If so, who was back in the States minding the machinations of a billion-dollar empire? Or could it be that a "control center" existed somewhere else?

Midnight quotes a tour guide on the Greek ship *Hellas*.

"I saw [the man] in the wheelchair many times in three years past. Our ship always moved close to *Skorpios* to let tourists have a look at the island . . . [the man] was there on nearly every good day. . . . This spring past it was [1971] that I last saw him. He is no longer there."

A BURIAL AT SEA

According to *Midnight*, American Army Major David Cordrey said he saw the same man.

Major Cordrey witnessed on April 18 of this year [1971], a burial service in the Ionian Sea.

"Two high-powered speedboats [came] out from *Skorpios* and started clearing the waters around a rocky point at one end of the island," said the major.

"Later in the day, people gathered on the rocky point. I was curious and watched through my binoculars. One was a priest. One was Jackie Onassis, and one was Ted Kennedy. They and the others went through a ceremony over a coffin, and then watched while it was lowered into the sea."

But *Tiger Eye* said Howard Hughes died on April 16, 1971, and was buried the next day — at Tenos in the Aegean Sea.

Tenos is a Cycladic island, about 75 miles southeast of Athens, in the Aegean Sea. (continued on page 30)

Skorpios is an Ionian Island, about 160 miles west of Athens, in the Ionian Sea.

Was one man buried, or two? If so, who were they?

KEY YEAR: 1957

Tiger Eye said that Howard Hughes had been helpless and out of the country since 1957.

Could a shift from the natural desire of a powerful man for privacy, to a calculated effort by others to conceal the fact that he was no longer running the Hughes empire be distinguished?

Much of the basic information about Howard Hughes's pre-1957 existence was published in *Howard: The Amazing Mr. Hughes*, by Noah Dietrich, Hughes's righthand man — from 1925 to March 12, 1957.

The background of the man who, in 1925, inherited the Hughes Tool Company, is well known. During the thirties, Hughes, the famous aviator, broke the record for an around-the-world flight and was greeted by a ticker-tape parade in New York City. He designed airplanes and angled unsuccessfully for government contracts. He adored women and had his picture taken with a stream of actresses and protégées. In 1942, he hired press agent John Meyer to curry favor with politicians,

generals, and the like. (John Meyer is now press aide to Aristotle Onassis; one of his responsibilities is watching over Jackie.

"During the late 1940s and through the 1950s Howard's political contributions ran between \$100,000 and \$400,000 per year," says Dietrich. Among the recipients were "councilmen and supervisors, tax assessors, sheriffs, D.A.'s, governors, Congressmen, Senators, judges, Vice-Presidents and Presidents."

Johnny Meyer seasoned the bait with glamorous women. And it worked. In 1943, Hughes Aircraft was awarded its first large government contract — for \$70 million.

Hughes's "reclusiveness" seems to date from a plane crash on July 7, 1946, when he was critically injured. Reports of his injuries vary. Dietrich mentions nine broken ribs, bad burns on the left hand, and left lung collapsed and filled with blood. Other accounts include severe facial burns, a skull fracture, and a crushed cheekbone that had to be removed. Hughes was left with facial scars and could no longer make normal use of his left hand. Apparently, he also suffered a hearing impairment, and became increasingly deaf.

After his recovery, Hughes grew a mustache to help cover his scars. He

became obsessed with the need to protect himself and spent nearly all his time in seclusion. He surrounded himself with ex-FBI men like Robert Maheu, ex-cops, and Mormons, who he thought might be more trustworthy than others. Tales of his eccentricities were never ending. Hughes and Dietrich did most of their business over the phone.

Early in 1957, one of Hughes's Houston lawyers suggested that Dietrich have a guardian appointed for Hughes, because the lawyer believed he was out of his mind. Dietrich refused. Two weeks later, Dr. Verne Mason, Hughes's personal physician and by this time, Director of the Hughes Medical Foundation, made the same suggestion: "Declare Howard Hughes incompetent." Again, says Dietrich, he refused.

On March 12, 1957, Dietrich quit, *over the phone*, in a conversation with "Hughes," who was supposedly then in residence at his very private bungalow at the Beverly Hills Hotel.

MARRIAGE HOWARD HUGHES STYLE

According to many accounts, Howard Hughes "married" actress Jean Peters the very next day — May 13, 1957. They'd dated on and off for a number of years. But Hughes had squired a string of actresses and had showed no inclination to settle down with any one of them.

Stanton O'Keefe, in his book, *The Real Howard Hughes Story*, describes the marriage ceremony:

"A classic example of Hughes's penchant for secrecy. It took place in Tonopah, Nevada. Senator Howard Cannon, who was then the city attorney of Las Vegas and a personal friend of Hughes, took care of all the legal arrangements — including the trick maneuver that protected the validity of the marriage contract while allowing the couple to register under assumed names."

The wedding was "announced" in Louella Parsons's column. Reporters combed Nevada, but were unable to find any trace of the marriage. One of them finally remarked, "The nearest I can come to it is that they were married by a Parson named Louella."

For several years after their "marriage," Hughes and Jean Peters were supposed to be living in a Bel Air mansion, but the owner of the house never saw the "husband." The couple was not seen in public together in over thirteen years of marriage, and there is no record of their ever having been photographed with each other.

After "Hughes" moved to Las Vegas late in 1966, their "marital life" consisted, or so it seemed, of devoted

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Howard Hughes

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Jean Peters flying out from an empty house in Bel Air to visit "Howard" in Las Vegas for half an hour or so, every couple of weeks. After thirteen years of "marriage," Jean Peters filed for a divorce. It came through in June 1971. Jean allegedly got \$2 million out of the deal.

Was this "marriage" only an elaborate explanation of why Hughes stopped chasing movie actresses in 1957?

If Hughes was buried at sea in April, 1971, was his "divorce" a ploy to quell persistent rumors that he was dead, or dying? Dead men don't get divorces. Or do they?

Jean Peters isn't talking.

DOUBLES

When Dietrich faded from the scene in 1957, other men in the Hughes organization moved up — among them, ex-FBI man Robert Maheu and Chester Davis.

A San Francisco paper quotes Maheu: "In 1957 (Hughes) went to Montreal. Then he traveled to the Bahamas, where he stayed six or seven weeks on the fifth floor of the Emerald Beach Hotel in Nassau before returning to Los Angeles."

But Maheu admitted that he himself had only seen "Hughes" twice, and briefly — in 1954 and 1966 — during the sixteen years he worked for his organization. *Someone* came back from Nassau to Los Angeles. Was it Hughes — or a Hughes double?

There are many photos of Howard Hughes circa 1947, a year after the plane crash which almost killed him. The face is slightly twisted; the mustache is a bit too long; and the smile is almost gone.

In the Dietrich book we get our first look at the man who may have been Hughes's double. This photo shows a handsome, smiling "Hughes" at the controls of a plane. It is dated May 1, 1947, but it doesn't look like other pictures of Hughes taken at the same time. It looks like a photo of a man named Brucks Randell, taken in 1954. According to a story in the *San Jose Mercury*, January 24, 1972, Brucks Randell, a bit actor, was hired by a Hughes employee, Gerald Chouinard, to pose as Howard Hughes's double in 1957 and 1958, to "draw newsmen and others off the recluse's trail." "I did this on my own incentive because I was afraid to ask Hughes's permission," Chouinard said. "We fooled the press. We fooled everybody. We never had to say, 'This is Howard Hughes' anywhere we went. We never mentioned that name to anyone. We let

people draw their own conclusions."

Has anyone seen Brucks Randell recently — the only (as far as we know) publicly identified Hughes double — and during the critical years of 1957 and 1958?

Early in 1958, Frank McCullough of *Time* sought to interview Hughes. McCullough made a list of about fifty questions and passed them along to a Hughes aide. Two days later, the phone rang, and a flat, nasal voice at the other end identified himself as Howard Hughes. "Hughes" called at all hours of the night, and engaged in long monologues. When McCullough insisted on a *personal meeting*, "Hughes" had him driven to an unfinished runway at Los Angeles International Airport. McCullough writes: "A lanky six-footer came ambling out of the dark, asked my name and stood there. I stuck out my hand and said, 'Good to meet you personally, Howard.' The figure beat a hasty retreat, clutching his right hand to his chest. 'Oh,' he explained, 'I can't shake hands. I was just sitting in my car eating a hot dog, and I got mustard on my hand. What's more, I was shaving and I cut my hand' . . . (Hughes is dreadfully afraid of picking up germs through human contact.)"

Was "Hughes" also afraid of leaving

unnecessary fingerprints lying around?

"Hughes" took McCullough for a ride in a 707, with a co-pilot and Jean Peters. McCullough reports that "Hughes," the crack aviator, was a lousy pilot. When "Hughes" landed the plane it "hit hard, bounced about five times, and rolled to a screeching halt just before the fence."

That was the first — and last — time "Howard and Jean" ever made a dual appearance.

Was the lousy pilot really Howard Hughes or his double Brucks Randell? And who would have the motives to stage such an elaborate hoax?

The "Hughes" mythology since 1957 is littered with references to various doubles.

Robert Maheu, describing the "military maneuvers" used to transport "Hughes" from Boston to Las Vegas in November 1966, says that a man "posing as Hughes" got into one railway train, while "the *real* Hughes" sneaked into another train.

At the other end of the line, Maheu informs us, a "false Hughes" was carried "surreptitiously" through the lobby of the Desert Inn on a stretcher while "the *real* Hughes" strode unnoticed through the lobby with the rest of the mob.

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Howard Hughes

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According to Omar Garrison's book, *Howard Hughes in Las Vegas*, "A favorite game among many Las Vegas residents . . . is 'watching for Hughes.' He has been reported — in various disguises — in restaurants, bars, casinos . . . at airports, and (in jest) walking across Lake Mead. . . . Most of these sightings have been of a Hughes look-alike who, until 1968 [our italics], was employed by the invisible man as a decoy.

"The Hughes stand-in was discharged for undisclosed reasons. . . . Thereafter, he disappeared into a private home in Van Nuys, California, and has not been seen in public since."

How do you "disappear" into a private home? And where does the back door take you?

A FAREWELL TO VEGAS

"Hughes" supposedly departed from the penthouse at the Desert Inn, Las Vegas, on Thanksgiving Eve, 1970. The timing is important. Rumors were rife that Hughes was ill or dying; demands were being made that he appear in person to reorganize his Las Vegas empire. Things were getting hot.

Was it really Howard Hughes who departed from Las Vegas — or was it, once more, the Hughes double?

Then someone surfaced in the Bahamas. "Hughes" was quickly passed through Customs under the watchful eye of the U.S. Consul — *without ever making an appearance.*

KLEENEX BOXES WITHOUT TOPSES WERE THE SHOES OF HOWARD HUGHES

After December, 1970, some descriptions of the rare "Hughes" sightings became increasingly bizarre.

Was the *real* Hughes seriously ailing somewhere? Were careful preparations being made to see that even his death did not interfere with the smooth operation of the Hughes empire? And by whom?

From the many conflicting descriptions of Hughes sightings in 1971 and 1972, there may even have been two Hughes doubles floating around the world for a time.

One was described as a tall, scrawny, sickly, bearded semi-cripple, weighing less than one hundred pounds, with six-inch-long fingernails and scraggly white hair down to the middle of his back, who occasionally wore Kleenex boxes on his feet to avoid contact with the ground.

The other "Hughes" was a vigorous, well-groomed executive, who wore a

neat Van Dyke beard, kept his gray hair cut to the normal length, shook hands freely, was said to chat with visitors, and gave interviews every now and then — but only to people like the President of Nicaragua, or else over the phone.

Bob Rehak, the skipper of a luxury yacht who said he brought "Hughes" from the Bahamas to Florida in February 1972, gave a newspaper interview describing his "Hughes" this way: "He had this stringy beard, real thin, and it came halfway to his waist. His hair was real fine, too, down over his shoulders. . . . During those twenty-two hours, he used up six to eight boxes (of tissues), wiping his chin, wiping his face, his hands, his spoon, nearly everything he touched."

Rehak said his passenger constantly wrote notes on a yellow legal pad. "It was a funny thing — after he got through writing something on a pad or using a box of Kleenex, his men would tear it up in little bits and throw it overboard."

Tiger Eye insists that Hughes died in 1971. Yet the masquerade continued. Why?

LITTLE GREEN REASONS

To quote Clifford Irving: "There are about two billion little reasons — all of them green."

Dietrich reports Howard Hughes's first "major" purchase of an election. It involved the contribution of \$60,000 to a successful senatorial campaign in 1952. Hughes moved on to bigger things.

A few weeks after the election in November 1956, Hughes negotiated a \$205,000 "loan" to new Vice President Richard M. Nixon's brother, Donald. (See *The Nixon-Hughes "Loan"; the "Loan" No One Repaid*, by Nicholas North-Broome.) The loan was said to be for the purpose of bailing out Donald's failing restaurant, Nixon's, in Whittier, California. *Specialité de la maison* was the "Nixonburger."

"Security" for the loan was a vacant lot, assessed for tax purposes at \$13,000. The lot belonged to Nixon's mother. The restaurant went bankrupt a few months later. No one knows what happened to the \$205,000.

Some observers have intimated that Hughes's loan to Donald, in effect, "bought" Vice President Nixon for Hughes. Shortly thereafter, the troubles of Hughes's airline, TWA, were over; an antitrust suit against Hughes Tool was quietly shelved; various investigations of other Hughes operations ground to a halt.

But perhaps the nicest thing that happened to the Hughes empire is described by Dietrich:

"Something curious happened one

month after the loan was made [February 1957]. The Internal Revenue Service made a reversal and ruled that the Howard Hughes Medical Foundation was entitled to tax-exempt status. The request for tax exemption had twice been refused by the IRS and the Treasury Department. But early in 1957, Howard was able to win that status for his foundation, which owned all the stock in Hughes Aircraft."

Result: All the proceeds from Hughes Aircraft, estimated as at least half a million dollars a year, are swallowed up by the Hughes Medical Foundation, with headquarters in Miami, Florida. The sole trustee of the Foundation is Howard Hughes. As a privately-owned, tax-exempt foundation, the Howard Hughes Medical Foundation is not required to render any account of how much money it receives, and how it is spent, except to the IRS.

Was an open-ended money funnel set up, into which millions of tax-free dollars could disappear? Wouldn't the man who controlled such a funnel be in a position to control U.S. elections — and thus, the United States — through tax-free "contributions"?

And what about the Hughes Vegas casinos which, oddly, lose money while the other casinos rake it in?

Does the "lost" money find its way somehow into the "Hughes" tax-free Hughes Medical Foundation? Where does it go from there?

Hughes has been reported to have tried to "buy" the Bahamas. Or was it Nicaragua?

What about "buying" Biafra, reputed to be sitting on a pool of oil, and subjecting it to some "top secret medical research" — conducted by a "top-secret" Hughes communications and weather satellite?

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Howard Hughes

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Hank Greenspun, editor of the *Las Vegas Sun*, explained that the unsuccessful attempt to break into his files in the summer of 1972 was because his files contained "Hughes's game plans for the election of Presidents, Senators, and Governors . . ."

If the price of a Vice-President is a quarter of a million dollars, what would a President cost?

IS HOWARD HUGHES REALLY A COMPUTER?

An article in the *Los Angeles Times*, January 28, 1971, described a computer which had been programmed to "write" the signature of Howard Hughes — with a photo of the computer "signing" a piece of paper. Handwriting experts argued that the computer's signature was an obvious fake. "But," they added, "the digitizer-computer-plotter system could be used with greater sophistication to produce handwriting good enough to fool a handwriting expert."

In 1968 a Hughes aide ordered a computer record prepared: "a chronological synopsis of every news story or book which had ever been published about Hughes, plus private material supplied by the Hughes Tool Company."

The result was an inch-and-a-half-thick cross-referenced biography of Howard R. Hughes. "Only a few copies of the print-out were ever made. They were distributed only to top Hughes executives."

Had the metamorphosis from man to machine begun?

In January 1972, the Associated Press reports, in an effort to "prove" once and for all that Hughes was alive and well somewhere, seven handpicked (by the Hughes organization) reporters sat in a conference room, speaking with "a voice emanating from a small box . . . All agreed the voice was indeed that of Hughes. Two voiceprint experts concurred."

The reporters agreed that the man they spoke to had to be Hughes, because of his detailed answers to some of the questions. But other observers found the answers inadequate. Even computers don't win them all.

Sophisticated new photographic techniques can easily detect differences between one person's physiology and another's. Is this why around 1968, the Hughes organization was reported to be quietly buying up every old newsreel with Hughes in it that they could find?

In 1972, the Hughes empire, disguised this time as Rosemont Enterprises, successfully suppressed the

publication of Clifford Irving's "biography" of Hughes. But it simultaneously "allowed" other material to slip through to the public, in the form of excerpts from a Hughes "autobiography," *My Life and Opinions*, "edited" by Robert P. Eaton. Eaton claimed his book was based on two manuscripts given to him by Hughes in 1970, after a thirteen-year, "almost clandestine" friendship dating back to 1957. But Tiger Eye tells us Hughes had been out of the country and helpless all that time.

The excerpts were published in the *Ladies' Home Journal*, February 1972 — the same month that skipper Bob Rehak conveyed his "Howard Hughes" to Miami. They contained this remark by Hughes:

"It is possible to keep a man's death hidden for several years through use of computerized voice tapes which can continue to communicate and even answer questions completely in character by means of telephone."

HUGHES ON ICE

Eaton disclosed Hughes's desire to have his body deep-frozen after death, to be revived later when medical science developed the proper techniques.

"Hughes" speaking, via Eaton in *Ladies' Home Journal*:

"If instructions were left that the estate was to remain the continued responsibility of the deceased, the computer would instruct those charged with its management by relaying instructions as though the deceased were still alive.

"It is possible even now to select, by use of a computer, words, phrases, even inflections out of a mass of taped sounds in the subject's own voice, so that one would believe he was actually speaking to the person himself . . . [It is possible that] a man's death could actually be hidden for a number of years to all but a trusted and loyal few."

Why was the Eaton book released? What purpose was it meant to serve? Could it have been to establish Hughes as a man whose dearest wish is to run his empire even from the grave if necessary? In accordance with an elaborate will, every effort would then be made by Howard Hughes's estate to keep the Hughes estate intact until its rightful owner could rise again from his icy tomb, like a second Christ, thanks to the theoretical miracles of scientific rejuvenation, and take the reins himself.

Or was it to establish Hughes as a cryogenics "nut"? Then his "frozen remains" would remain securely sealed up in a capsule, safe from any possibly embarrassing examinations to determine whether they were Hughes's or a double.

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Howard Hughes

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The capsule might even contain other items: a "voice box"; a cross-referenced biographical computer print-out; several thousand assorted, verified "fingerprints"; some old newsreels, and a magnetic tape that knows how to write *Howard R. Hughes* a million times without making a single mistake.

Today, a \$250 million ship, the 618-foot "Hughes" *Glomar Explorer*, is writing Howard Hughes's name across the bottom of the ocean. Like a giant phonograph needle, the Hughes rig circles the ocean floor, sucking up 5,000 tons of minerals a day.

Hughes communications satellites encircle the globe, with the potential of reaching into every TV set in the world. In Las Vegas, Hughes casinos rake in the chips.

Howard Hughes has recently been indicted in two criminal cases — and is still a major recipient of multimillion-dollar government contracts — paid for out of our tax dollars.

Hughes has allegedly influenced every major election, contributing liberally to both Democrats and Republicans, up to the Presidential level, since 1956.

Hughes's name has been linked with the Watergate conspiracy, at the highest level of our government.

Hughes oil-well drill bits suck the oil from thousands of wells, Hughes airplanes ferry us back and forth, and Hughes police helicopters keep us in line.

For the public, the questions remain. Is Howard Hughes dead?

Are the gnarled remains of the legendary billionaire resting in a coffin at the bottom of the Aegean Sea? Is Howard Hughes a computer?

Has Aristotle Onassis, like a great green octopus, got hold of yet another empire? □

Based on material from *Why Was Howard Hughes Kidnapped?* Copyright ©1974 by Mae Brussell and Stephanie Caruana.

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