

# IRVING SENTENCED TO 2 1/2-YEAR TERM

By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

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**AFTER COURT ACTION:** Clifford Irving and his wife, Edith, at Chelsea Hotel yesterday. Mrs. Irving is to start sentence in Hughes case Monday. He surrenders Aug. 28.

## IRVING SENTENCED TO 2½-YEAR TERM

Wife to Serve 2 Months—  
U.S. Fines Each \$10,000  
—Suskind Gets 6 Months

By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

Clifford Irving, who tried to swindle McGraw-Hill, Inc., out of more than \$750,000 with a bogus autobiography of Howard R. Hughes, the industrialist, was sentenced yesterday to two and a half years in prison, while his wife and researcher received lesser terms.

In addition, the dapper 41-year-old Irving and his German-born Swiss wife, Edith, 36, were fined \$10,000 each by District Judge John M. Cannella, who listened to their pleas for mercy and compassion in a hushed, crowded room on the ninth floor of the Federal Court House at Foley Square.

After Irving was sentenced and fined, the judge fined Mrs. Irving, sentenced her to two years in prison and then suspended all but two months of her term.

A few hours later, in State

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# Irving Sentenced to 2½ Years in Prison

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Supreme Court, the Irvings were conditionally discharged by Justice A. Martinis, but the authors' researcher, Richard Suskind, who was not a defendant in the Federal proceedings, was ordered to prison for six months.

Last March 13, the Irvings pleaded guilty in the Federal court to charges of conspiracy, then joined the 47-year-old Suskind in pleading guilty in State Supreme Court to charges of grand larceny and conspiracy.

"What I have done, you and the court well know, and I know," Irving told Judge Cannella yesterday.

"And the consequences have been a loss of almost everything for me—my reputation, my honor, the financial debt that may last for years or the rest of my life, and a loss of credibility which is very valuable to me, which I deserve to lose because I lived a year of a lie."

## 'Hell or a Purgatory'

Confessing to abusing his first wife's trust in him, Irving said: "What she has gone through, what we have all gone through in the last months—I do not know whether to call it a hell or a purgatory, but it is one of those, and I have heard her cry herself to sleep on more nights than I care to remember, because, she doesn't understand the quality of the nightmare that has surrounded her."

Then he said: "As for our children, I don't know what to say about them. All I hear from my oldest son is, 'When are we going home?'—which is a question I cannot answer."

And Mrs. Irving, who was described by her attorney, M. Philip Lorber, as "a tired, beaten, emotionally drained human being," begged the judge:

"Give us one more chance and to keep us as a family. Don't split us up in time, in prison. Don't let the children pay for it."

Taking into account the fact that the Irvings, who made their home on the Spanish is-

land of Ibiza, have two children, Ned, 4, and Barnaby, 2, Judge Cannella arranged for the Irvings to serve their sentences at different times, starting with Mrs. Irving. He ordered her to surrender to a United States marshal next Monday.

Irving, who had represented to McGraw-Hill, Inc., that he had compiled an autobiography of Mr. Hughes on the basis of 100 secret meetings with the reclusive industrialist, was ordered to surrender next Aug. 28.

Irving, who had faced a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine, will be eligible for parole after serving 10 months of his 30-month term, with release after serving two-thirds of the term if his behavior has been good.

Despite sympathetic portrayals of the couple by Mr. Lober and by Maurice Nessen, Irving's counsel, the court was told by Robert G. Morvillo, assistant United States attorney: "Regardless of how one views the naïveté or gullibility in this case, the defendants intended to, and did, steal \$750,000."

Mrs. Irving—who used a doctored passport and the name H. R. Hughes to open a Swiss bank account for money intended by McGraw-Hill for Howard R. Hughes, the industrialist—still faces charges by the Swiss Government.

Bernard Reverdin, an attorney for the Swiss Government, which has sought the extradition of Mrs. Hughes on charges of forgery, use of forgery, embezzlement and theft, said yesterday that "the Swiss Government has instructed me to proceed with the extradition case on June 21 and that is now the plan."

Mr. Reverdin added that he expected no new instructions.

The hearing scheduled for June 21 in Federal court will determine whether there is probable cause for Mrs. Irving's extradition.

Despite a clouded future and a marriage once jeopardized by her husband's relationship with the Baroness Nina Van Pal-

landt, a singer, Mrs. Irving expressed optimism about her future with her husband.

She told the court: "He has changed, and I will stay with him. I will try to keep the family together, and it will be together. It means years and years of working together."

Emotion ran high at the State Supreme Court proceedings also, but there the pleas for compassion were chiefly made in behalf of Mr. Suskind, who seemed physically jolted by the sentence imposed upon him.

His wife, Ginette, wept during the proceedings, as did Mr. Suskind. They have a 6-year-old son, Rafael.

"It seems incomprehensible to me, the stupidity and foolishness of what we did," Suskind told Justice Martinis. "I am not pleading for mercy for myself, but for my wife and for my son, that they should not be deprived of my presence, such as it is."

But Mr. Suskind was led away immediately after Justice Martinis meted out two concurrent six-month sentences. He will be eligible for parole in four months. He had faced a maximum penalty of seven years on the charge of grand larceny in the second degree, and one year and a fine of \$1,000 on the charge of conspiracy.

## Recovery Anticipated

Both McGraw-Hill and Life magazine, which had originally contracted to serialize the Irving book and then denounced the work as a hoax, declined to comment on yesterday's proceedings.

But Ted Weber Jr., vice president for corporate communications of McGraw-Hill, said the concern continued to anticipate that it would recover its money. Last week the company won a claim of \$776,000 against Irving and is also seeking additional money for expenses.

A spokesman for Mr. Hughes could not be reached immediately for comment on the sentences.