# Electrician wins legal battle over late mother's will



An electrician has successfully contested his late mother’s will in a legal battle that concluded at the Central London County Court, resulting in a £700,000 decision split between him and his sister. The controversy revolves around a video that surfaced, depicting the sister, Lisa Baverstock, guiding and 'propelling' their terminally ill mother’s hand to sign a will shortly before her death.

Margaret Baverstock, aged 76 at the time, was gravely ill and suffered from advanced dementia, arthritis, and suspected lung congestion. In March 2021, just eight days before her passing, she signed a will that left all her assets, valued at approximately £700,000, exclusively to Lisa, effectively disinheriting her son, John Baverstock, who is now 61.

Following his exclusion from the will, John contested its validity, asserting that his mother was unable to comprehend what she was signing due to her dire health condition. The court was shown videos produced by Lisa, which depicted Margaret’s struggle during the signing process, where she could only convey her assent through minimal responses like 'yeah' or simple grunts.

In the courtroom, John's barrister, Mark Jones, argued that Lisa was manipulating their mother’s hand to execute the signing of the document. He stated, "She finally placed a pen between her fingers... and placed first her right hand and then her left hand over the deceased’s hand," suggesting that Lisa's actions coerced Margaret into participating in the signing. The will itself was described as a homemade document, drafted by Lisa and naming her as the executor and sole beneficiary.

The court's proceedings revealed a familial backdrop fraught with tension, particularly between the siblings. John maintained that Lisa had been resentful towards him, especially after moving into their mother’s home in 2019 to care for her. A contentious moment in their relationship occurred in February 2021, with John alleging that Lisa threatened to involve the police if he did not vacate the house and return the keys. Lisa, on the other hand, claimed that her mother had made her intentions clear throughout the years and had desired for the will to reflect that wish. She interpreted Margaret’s actions as affirmations of her intent rather than indications of incapacity.

Judge Jane Evans-Gordon presided over the case and ruled that the will had not been executed properly, citing that Margaret "had no idea what was going on" during the signing of the document. The video evidence played a significant role in this ruling, with the judge asserting that Margaret could hardly respond when the will’s contents were read aloud to her.

In considering the signing process, the judge pointed out that "Lisa manipulated her hand and herself physically caused the deceased’s hand to move and make marks on the document," indicating a complete lack of independent action from Margaret. Furthermore, it was noted that the signature did not resemble any previous examples of Margaret’s handwriting.

Ultimately, the court found that Margaret lacked the necessary testamentary capacity and that there was insufficient evidence to suggest she understood or approved the will's contents. Consequently, the judge deemed the will invalid, and with no other legitimate will on record, Margaret died "intestate," resulting in a division of her estate between John and Lisa. Additionally, Lisa was ordered to cover John’s legal fees, which are expected to amount to approximately £80,000.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/will-baverstock-hudge-ruling-b2709316.html> - This article corroborates the details of the case involving Margaret Baverstock's will, including the video evidence showing Lisa guiding their mother's hand and the court's ruling that the will was invalid due to Margaret's lack of understanding and testamentary capacity.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/will-baverstock-hudge-ruling-b2709316.html> - It further explains the familial tensions and the court's decision to split the estate between John and Lisa, with Lisa ordered to pay John's legal fees.
* <https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/2024-04_agenda_book_for_evidence_rules_meeting_final.pdf> - Although not directly related to the specific case, this document discusses the importance of video evidence in legal proceedings, which is relevant to the role of the video in the Baverstock case.
* <https://lifetimelawyers.org.uk/Public/Members/Non-menu-posts/Court-and-Legal-Updates-Content/Trusts-of-land-and-contentious-probate.aspx> - This article provides context on contentious probate cases, highlighting the challenges and complexities involved in disputing wills, which is similar to the situation in the Baverstock case.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/will-baverstock-hudge-ruling-b2709316.html> - It details the court's process in determining the validity of a will, including assessing testamentary capacity and the execution process, which were central to the Baverstock case.
* <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/will-baverstock-hudge-ruling-b2709316.html> - The article also mentions the outcome of the case, where the estate was divided between the siblings due to the will being deemed invalid.