

In the Circuit Court of Page County, Virginia.

W. T. G. Snyder et als.

vs

Eliza J. Suthard etc.

To the Hon. T. N. Haas, Judge of the Circuit Court for Page County, Virginia.

Your complainants W. T. G. Snyder, Bettie L. Koontz, Emma B. Shuler and Lillie B. Ward, respectfully represent to your Honor that their uncle- James P. Snyder, late of the County of Page and State of Virginia, departed this life on the 27th. day of January, 1911, seized and possessed of large property, real and personal, located in the said County of Page.

Your complainants further say that they are four of the five children of John <sup>W.</sup> Snyder, a brother of the said James P. Snyder, and that their said father, if living, would be entitled, assuming that the said James P. Snyder died intestate, to a one sixth interest in and to his whole estate, the said James P. Snyder having died without issue; and that your complainants are entitled to four fifths of said one sixth interest that would have passed to their father, the said John <sup>W.</sup> Snyder, had he survived the said James P. Snyder.

Your complainants say that the personal property of which the said James P. Snyder died possessed was appraised at \$ 5812.68 and that the real estate of which he died seized and possessed was supposed to be worth from fourteen to fifteen thousand dollars at the time of his death.

That at the time of his death, and for forty years prior thereto there was a family by the name of Southard, which resided in the house with the said James P. Snyder, or at least Calvin Suthard, the husband and Eliza J. Suthard the wife, a defendant here, went upon the place to live some forty years ago, as hired help thereon, and that their children were born there at different periods, the surviving ~~among~~ of whom are Hortense Huffman and Lula A. Roudabush, defendants here.

Your complainants represent that almost immediately after



garden wherein all women were exceeding beautiful and had eyes as big as ostrich eggs and as blue as the heavens themselves. He would at times grow apprehensive and suffering from a hallucination believed his life was in eminent danger- that some of his kin whom wanted his estate would murder him, and he would frequently lock himself by night and heavily armed keep vigil in a solitary room, pacing to and fro until the dawn of morning.

Around the family burial place he built a stone wall nearly two feet thick and four feet and an half high and left no place of entrance, gate or door way thereto, and even his own remains had to be lifted over this fortification of the dead by means of improvised steps etc.

In this unfortunate condition he was easily the willing victim of whatever happened to be the wishes of Eliza J. Suthard, and she was the only person, after the death of a daughter/whom he had reared tenderly and educated carefully and well. ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxx~~ who had any influence or control over him, but ~~it~~ in her, the said Eliza J. Suthard such influence and control was absolute, powerful and complete and had been for years. and it was through her influence as exercised upon an insane mind that he even became afraid of being poisoned at the hands of those who were of near kin to him. This was so fixed a sentiment in his mind that even the Suthard girls, defendants here, knew it, and one of them remarked at the home of one of the relatives at a dinner when asked why she did not bring Uncle Jim along, meaning uncle James P. Snyder, replied 'why, your Uncle Jim would be afraid of being poisoned here.'

Your complainants further allege and aver that the said alleged will was framed and executed at the direction and under the influence of the said Eliza J. Suthard, and was kept by her in her own possession, and that all of the papers of the said decedent were in her possession at the time of the death of the said James P. Snyder, and none of them were allowed to be examined or inspected by any of the next of kin of the said decedent, and

tho some of the next of kin, or very near relatives, made request the night after the burial of the said decedent, that they be allowed to examine the papers of the said decedent along with the said Eliza J. Suthard or other members of her family, which was absolutely refused and they were refused admittance to the house, she even going to the extent of calling up an officer over the phone, making request that he come there to protect her, tho there had been no act, threat or behavior on their part which would demand or even suggest such course on her part.

Your complainants allege and charge that the paper writing aforesaid of which probate has been received, is not the will of the decedent, James P. Snyder; in tender consideration whereof and for as much as your Complainants are without remedy in the premises save in a court of equity where matters of this sort are alone and properly cognizable and relievable, your complainants pray that the said Eliza J. Suthard, Hortense Huffman, and Frank W. Huffman, her husband, Lula A. Roudabush and P. J. Roudabush, her husband, be made parties to this bill, and required to answer the same, but an answer under oath is hereby expressly waived; and this merely as a step or a part of this proceeding to obtain a trial before a jury; and that proper process may issue; that an issue devisavit vel non be made up and tried by a jury at the bar of this court, to ascertain and try whether the said paper writing admitted to probate as aforesaid is or is not the true last will and testament of the said James. P. Snyder; that the said probate be set aside, that the said paper writing be declared and decreed not to be the last will and testament of the said James. P. Snyder, and that all such other, further and general relief may be afforded your complainants as the nature of the case may demand or to equity shall seem meet. And your Complainants will ever pray etc.

Leedy Perry, p. q.

W. J. Snyder  
Bettie L. Hooy  
Emma B. Shuler  
Lillie B. Ward