

Hughes Will Is Valid, An Expert Asserts

Los Angeles

The handwriting expert who helped nail Clifford Irving for forgery on a phony Howard Hughes autobiography yesterday backed up a claim by Noah Dietrich that a purported Hughes will found at Mormon church headquarters is valid.

Henry Silver held a news conference at the office of Harold Rhoden, attorney for Dietrich, who was named executor.

"If it's a forgery, it's a perfect forgery—and that's impossible," Silver said.

Silver said he scrutinized the paper stock, the ink and the handwriting on the document, now in custody of the county clerk at Las Vegas, at the request of the American Broadcasting Co. He said he has no doubt it is a valid will written by Hughes, who died April 5 at the age of 70.

Silver said that, contrary to previous reports, Hughes was an erratic speller and had a "pattern of consistent inconsistencies" in his handwriting. Some common words in the asserted will were misspelled.

"All the handwriting including the signatures were definitely written by Howard R. Hughes," the expert said of the document that may put Dietrich, 87, in control of the Hughes estate, estimated unofficially as high as \$2.5 billion.

United Press