

## Bond asked in murder conviction after 62 years

Posted by [TBN\\_Charles](#) On 12/11/2014

**La Plata, MD** - The compelling story of Charles Edret Ford, 81 continues.

Ford is serving a life sentence in the Maryland Department of Corrections in Cumberland for a murder he still maintains 62 years later he did not commit, after being convicted by an all-white jury in 1952.

Ford's pro bono attorneys, William F. Renahan and Mary J. Pizzo asked for a new trial in Charles County Circuit Court in La Plata Dec. 2, a request Charles County Circuit Court Judge Helen I. Harrington said she would take under advisement.

According to Renahan, Harrington's written opinion will be rendered in January 2015.

At that time, Renahan asked the court to free Ford on bond.

Harrington asked the attorney to file a formal motion, which he did Dec. 8.

In that motion, Renahan outlined his case, stating that "the defendant was afforded ineffective counsel at his 1952 trial and that the instructions given to the jury were most likely flawed."

Citing a "substantial probability" that Ford will be granted a new trial "or some other substantial Post-Conviction relief," he asked for the defendant to be released from DOC on bond.

The reasons he gave in the motion state that the defendant's lawyer at the time "failed to properly investigate the case; failed to present any witness who would assist the defendant in the presentation of his case; failed to prepare the defendant for trial; failed to move for suppression of the defendant's inculpatory statement which was improperly obtained by coercion directed at the defendant and by incarcerating the defendant's then-girlfriend to further coerce the defendant into making a statement against his will."

Other points brought forth by Renahan include the lawyer of Ford failing to cross examine the state's witnesses "in that those witnesses provided inconsistent and conflicting identification testimony" and that Ford's attorney "failed to object to the defendant (an African-American) being tried by an all-white jury in a de jure racially segregated county."

Renahan also claims that Ford's 1952 lawyer failed to object to improper jury instruction concerning reasonable doubt, that the attorney failed to file a post-trial motion for reconsideration of sentence, and failed to file a post-trial motion for review of the sentence by a three-judge panel, although the defendant had requested he do so.

"In the meantime, I got an e-mail from a woman who is Mr. Ford's great-niece," Renahan said. "Her aunt told her about her great-uncle and she read the article on [thebaynet.com](#) and I got them all in touch. So now his family is coming out of the woodwork."

The attorney also filed a motion concerning a 1976 assault case which occurred at the DOC and for which former Charles County Circuit Court Judge George W. Bowling, a case prosecuted by then-assistant state's attorney Robert C. Nalley, adding a consecutive 10-year sentence onto Ford's life sentence. Renahan also asked for his client to be released on bond from that decree as well.

He said he hopes the judge's decision will be forthcoming soon.

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