

## Bond hearing set for man jailed for 63 years

Posted by [TBN\\_Charles](#) On 09/10/2015

**La Plata, MD** - Charles Edret Ford, 84, was supposed to be in Charles County Circuit Court Thursday, Sept. 10, but wasn't transported to La Plata from the Maryland Department of Corrections in Jessup, where he has spent the past 63 years on a first-degree murder charge.

Defense attorney William Renahan wasn't sure why.

"He was supposed to be here," Renahan told Charles County Circuit Court H. James West. "I'm very reluctant to move forward without him."

Renahan intended to ask that his client be released on bond pending a new trial he procured from Charles County Circuit Court Judge Helen I. Harrington July 6.

That trial is scheduled for January 2016.

"We could do it Oct. 5, but that is a civil case day for me," West suggested. "My Golden Rule is that thou shalt not schedule any criminal matter on a civil non-jury day."

West noted that Ford's 60-plus years of incarceration would be an unusual thing in today's society.

"My theory is he could have been paroled in the mid-1960s, but he picked up this assault charge," he said.

Ford was sentenced in 1952 after being convicted by an all-white jury in what Renahan maintains was a prejudiced Charles County.

Renahan is seeking relief for his client pro bono, and said Ford has cancer and is beginning to exhibit signs of dementia.

Charles County Assistant State's Attorney Constance Kopelman admitted to West that she has been unable to find any court records or accounts of the original 1952 trial, and that any witnesses who testified in that trial are probably no longer living.

In the end, West broke his Golden Rule and agreed to hear the case Oct. 5.

If Renahan has his way, Ford will become a free man for the first time in 63 years at that hearing.

Contact Joseph Norris at [joe.norris@thebaynet.com](mailto:joe.norris@thebaynet.com)

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