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## Habitual Criminals--Jury Trial

Thomas McKendree Chattin Jr.  
*West Virginia University College of Law*

F. Richard Hall  
*West Virginia University College of Law*

John Woodville Hatcher Jr.  
*West Virginia University College of Law*

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to be given the evidence. This being so, then the importance of producing a homicide weapon is a matter of fact, not law, to be determined by the jury.

### Habitual Criminals—Jury Trial

The petitioner, *P*, was convicted of a felony punishable by an indeterminate prison sentence. Pursuant to the habitual criminal statutes an information was filed by the State charging that *P* had previously been convicted of a felony and imprisoned. *P* denied being the same person named in the information. The court, without informing *P* of the necessity of impaneling a jury to try the issue of identity, proceeded without a jury to try the issue raised by the information. The court held the charges in the information to be correct and added an additional five years to *P*'s indeterminate sentence. In his habeas corpus petition *P* alleged that because the court did not impanel a jury to determine the issue of identity the court was without jurisdiction to impose the additional sentence. *Held*, void as to the additional sentence, but the petitioner must serve the remainder of his indeterminate sentence. The right to trial by jury in habitual criminal proceedings is of such character that it cannot be waived. Habitual criminal proceedings providing for additional punishment of felons are wholly statutory. Thus courts have no inherent or common law power or jurisdiction in such proceedings. It is generally held that statutes in derogation of common law are strictly construed in favor of the felon. The statute, W. VA. CODE ch. 61 art. 11 § 19 (Michie 1966), specifically states that when the identity alleged in an information is at issue, a jury *shall* be impaneled to determine the issue. This clearly confers jurisdiction, in such matters, upon the jury and not upon the court acting in lieu of a jury. The court has consistently held habitual criminal statutes to be mandatory and jurisdictional. *Ringer v. Boles*, 157 S.E.2d 554 (W. Va. 1967).

The narrow holding of this case is that in the habitual criminal statutes the word *shall* means *must* and the lower court must follow, to the letter, the procedure set out in the statute.

### Mandamus—Eminent Domain

In an original proceeding in mandamus, the petitioner sought to compel the State Road Commissioner to institute against the petitioner a proceeding in eminent domain in order to ascertain and