

Killer Ordered to take anger course

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The judge said she wasn't going to send the 24-year-old decorated war hero to prison for killing a man last summer, but she said he has to do something about that temper. So, Common Pleas Judge Lisa A. Richette told Patrick Meeink he'll have to attend an "anger course" as part of a sentence to be imposed later. Richette convicted Meeink of involuntary manslaughter in the death of Edwin Tustin, who died of a head injury after fighting with Meeink outside Tustin's home on Tree Street near 4th, South Philadelphia, last July 9. She also convicted him of simple assault on the victim's wife, Janice, 48.

Richette said she didn't think Meeink intended to kill Tustin, but that he had to learn to control his anger. The judge acquitted Eric Holt, 22, of Ritner Street near 2nd, of all charges after his lawyer, Joel S. Moldovshy, called his client "a peacemaker" who pulled Meeink from the elderly man during the altercation. Moldovsky said Holt did not take part in the beating of the husband or wife.

Meeink's lawyer A. Charles Peruto Jr., said that Meeink got into an argument with Janice Tustin and that her husband intervened. Janice Tustin testified that when her husband went inside to get a flashlight, Meeink slapped her in the face and neck and shoved her to the ground. Later, she said, she saw her husband on the ground. When police arrived, she was shouting to Meeink, "You killed my husband!"

Peruto said Janice Tustin, who admitted she was drinking vodka on her front steps, was in no condition to give reliable testimony. In a statement to police, Holt said he didn't know how the incident began, but when he saw Meeink "arguing with the lady, he got mad and pushed her. I grabbed Pat and tried to get him into the house. The next thing I saw was the guy laying on the ground, not moving." Meeink was decorated for pulling a wounded soldier 175 yards to safety in war-torn Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.