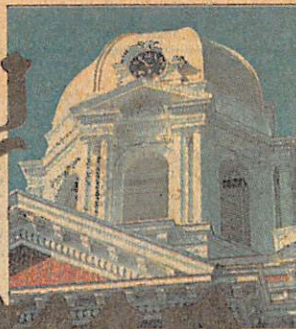




Former president George Bush was hospitalized Thursday with a heart problem. Page 7

Weather: Partly cloudy, chance of rain. Page 12

The Daily Tribune News



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Friday, February 25, 2000

Heldt, Harkins earn acquittal

By MARC PEARSON
Staff Writer

It took a Bartow County jury less than 40 minutes on Thursday to acquit two men on felony murder and involuntary manslaughter charges.

Both Heith Hadley Harkins, 29, of Texas, and Sean Phillip Heldt, 35, of Kentucky were found not guilty on all

charges stemming from the Aug. 9, 1999, drowning death of Anthony Ray Kittle, 42.

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Kittle died from drowning after being involved in a fight with Harkins on a dock at Lake Allatoona.

Don Evans Jr., a Cartersville lawyer who defended Harkins, said the case was an incident of self-defense.

"Although he used force, he was entitled to for self-defense," Evans told jurors on Wednesday.

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...for two days. He did not know for sure when the episode will be aired, but said possibly on Thursday.

"It's exciting," Brunt said. "I've never been to New York before."

Brunt said he kept the show and the excitement in the back of his mind as he handled Heldt's case. His client faced a felony murder charge before being acquitted by a jury on Thursday.

HELDT

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"I feel very sorry for his family, of course it was a loss," Heldt said.

Heldt has contacted his former boss, who has assured him that his job is still available to him. He said he will consider that option and possibly go back to

school to study electrical engineering.

When the jury reached a decision in the case, he said he was shaking and worried, even though he knew he was innocent.

"It was the most emotional, stressful experience of my life," Heldt said. "I'm elated and relieved. Words can't really express the way I feel."

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