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Shenandoah teens sentenced to prison in killing of illegal Mexican immigrant

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- POTTSVILLE - Two Shenandoah teenagers in last summer's killing of an illegal Mexican immigrant were sentenced today in Schuylkill County Court.

President Judge William E. Baldwin sentenced Brandon Piekarsky, 17, to serve six to 23 months in Schuylkill County Prison and Derrick Donchak, 19, to serve seven to 23 months in prison for their role in the July 12 attack of Luis Ramirez, 25, of Shenandoah.

A jury in May convicted Piekarsky and Donchak of simple assault. Donchak also was found guilty of corrupting minors and selling or furnishing liquor to minors. Baldwin today found them guilty of underage drinking as well.

Both teenagers have until July 19 to surrender themselves and begin serving jail time or appeal their sentences.

The jury acquitted Piekarsky of third-degree murder and ethnic intimidation, and Donchak of aggravated assault and ethnic intimidation.

The killing created a divide in the community, in part because Ramirez was Mexican and because it involved four popular Shenandoah Valley High School student-athletes.

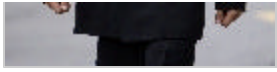
The verdict angered civil rights groups nationwide and drew an angry response from Gov. Ed Rendell. They believe the incident was a hate crime and are calling for federal charges against the teens.

Complete coverage in Thursday's Reading Eagle and readingeagle.com.



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Brandon Piekarsky at an earlier court appearance.





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Derrick Donchak walks into the Schuylkill County Courthouse in Pottsville, Pa., Monday, Aug. 18, 2008.