

Attorneys eye Aaron Hernandez assets as civil suits loom

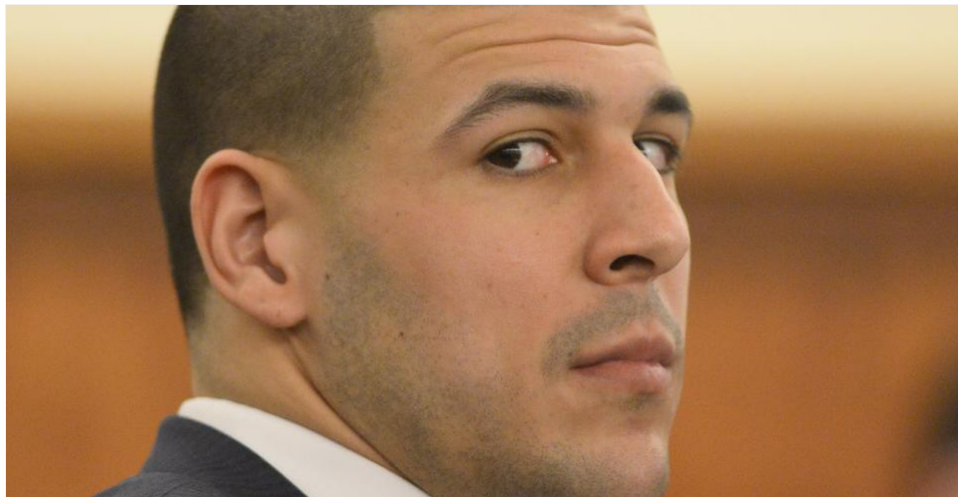


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Former New England Patriots football player Aaron Hernandez looks on during his murder trial at the Bristol County Superior Court in Fall River, Mass., on Friday, April 3, 2015. Hernandez is charged with killing Odin Lloyd. (AP Photo/CJ Gunther, Pool)

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By: Bob McGovern

Attorneys are searching far and wide for Aaron Hernandez's wealth as the former New England Patriot — already guilty of first-degree murder — prepares to defend himself in a number of big-ticket civil suits.

A jury last week found Hernandez guilty of executing his former friend Odin L. Lloyd in a North Attleboro industrial park during the early-morning hours of June 17, 2013. Now that a verdict has been reached, a wrongful death suit brought by Ursula Ward, Lloyd's mother, can begin.

"Justice was served in the criminal system, and now hopefully we'll be able to get them justice in the civil system," said Doug Sheff, the civil attorney who represents Ward. "This is about recovering for the family, and they can recover under Massachusetts law."

Hernandez is also being sued by the families of Daniel de Abreu and Safiro Furtado — two men the former tight end is accused of murdering in cold blood in 2012. Hernandez is still awaiting trial on those charges.

Alexander Bradley, a former Hernandez friend, is also suing him in Florida for shooting him in the face after leaving a Miami strip club in 2013.

Hernandez could be forced to pay out nearly \$20 million if he loses those cases. But attorneys haven't been able to determine how much he has left over from his \$40 million Patriots contract or whether he has assets other than the North Attleboro home where his fiancée, Shayanna Jenkins, and daughter reside.

So far, attorneys for Ward, Abreu and Furtado have attachments on the home — a legal mechanism that holds property until the end of a civil trial.

"We're looking for attachable assets, and we've been looking for attachable assets," said William T. Kennedy, the civil attorney for Abreu and Furtado. "If there were other identifiable assets out there, I'm sure we would be running to court — as would the other parties — to get the attachment as well."

But until a judgment is rendered, it's difficult to search for Hernandez's assets, Kennedy said. Attorneys are stuck with what's searchable in public records.

Both Kennedy and Sheff said they haven't been able to find other assets. Kennedy said his clients "will be happy if they get his last dollar."

There are other mechanisms in which civil litigants can get money from Hernandez, according to David Jaroslawicz, Bradley's attorney. Hernandez's insurance company could be forced to pay if it's found that Hernandez negligently discharged his weapon, Jaroslawicz said.

"If we win, they would have to pay on the verdict if we win on negligence," he said. "With my client, the gun went off. That's the best we've been able to determine. So if it was an accident, the insurance company would be responsible under the policy."



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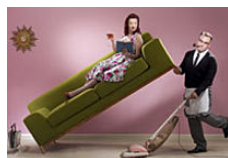
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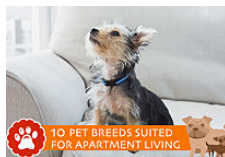
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