



Ursula Ward talks about forgiving Aaron Hernandez

Posted: Apr 21, 2015 10:03 PM EDT

Updated: Apr 22, 2015 6:08 PM EDT

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BOSTON (WHDH) - Ursula Ward had so much joy when she forgave Aaron Hernandez for killing her only son, that she says she would have hugged him if he told her he was sorry.

Instead, the former New England Patriots tight end simply stared her down in the courtroom

"I wouldn't blink," Ward recalls. "I'm gonna show you I'm as tough as you are. That toughness is because I wanted justice for my baby."

And she got it. Hernandez was sentenced to life in prison for the murder of Odin Lloyd. But for Ward it came with knowing she wasn't there when her son lay dying in an Attleborough industrial park.

"Even after the verdict I find myself waking up at 3:23 in the morning. Every morning." She said that was the time that her child needed her, and she wasn't there for him. "I didn't feel his pain and I thought I should have but I didn't."

Lloyd's mom said the two shared a special bond, which made listening to graphic testimony of his wounds all the more painful. At one point, the judge instructed her not to cry or show any emotion as she reviewed photos taken at the morgue of her son's bullet ridden body.

"I got strength," Ward remembers. "I don't care what it takes. You will never get an opportunity to take me out of the courtroom. Even if it makes me stay silent for my baby, I'm gonna be here in the end."

And she was. Ward gave an impassioned victim impact statement that spoke of forgiveness and stunned most trial watchers; including the lawyer representing the family in its wrongful death lawsuit against Hernandez.

Doug Sheff said he was floored by Ward's forgiveness. "I was extremely proud of her and the way she presents herself with dignity and class; contrary to the way Aaron Hernandez represented himself."

"Love makes you grow," Ursula explained. "In order to grow you have to forgive, you have to be at peace with yourself. I woke up the Sunday morning before the verdict with such a joy in my heart and I said this is the day I can let go of the pain. They have taken too much of my life."

She says her strength to forgive comes from her faith, and her belief that after all the years of looking out for her son, he is now looking out for her.

"He's my guardian angel. I always say Odin, mommy's gonna hug you again, someday we are gonna to see each other."

Ward said she has one more hurdle to overcome. Her son's bedroom is just the way he left it and has been locked since his death.

She's now working on the courage to open the door and go inside.