

Lawyer for Aaron Hernandez victim's family challenges Patriots to pay family

By [Evan Allen](#) and [John R. Ellement](#)

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The New England Patriots can become “champions of justice” by agreeing to pay \$6 million to the estate of former tight end Aaron J. Hernandez, a move that would make that money available to the family of Odin L. Lloyd who was shot to death by Hernandez in 2013, a lawyer said Friday.

Douglas K. Sheff, the lawyer for Lloyd’s mother Ursula Ward, made the request during a press conference in Boston. He said Hernandez has already been ruled legally responsible for Lloyd’s death in a wrongful death lawsuit brought by the Lloyd family.

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The only issue outstanding issue in the lawsuit, he said, is how much the family will recover from the estate of Hernandez, who killed himself this week in his state prison cell, where he was serving life without parole for murdering Lloyd in North Attleborough in 2013.

The Patriots severed all ties with Hernandez after his arrest. But his suicide came before his conviction was reviewed by an appellate court, possibly clearing the way for the Patriots to resume payments that some media reports as put as high as \$6 million.

Sheff said he did not know the actual number, but he issued what he called the “friendly challenge” in hopes of spurring the team into quickly resolving the issue.

“I want to issue a very friendly challenge to the New England Patriots, the best team, the best team in the NFL. Nothing like them. Nothing like them,” Sheff said. He said if they released the money, they could become something more than Super Bowl champions, they could become “champions of justice.”

Sheff said he did not know how much money was left in the Hernandez estate after two first-degree murder trials against Hernandez. Hernandez, 27, was acquitted last week in the second case, in which he was accused of a double murder in Boston in 2012.

Ursula Ward, Lloyd’s mother, joined Sheff at the press conference, telling reporters that she forgave Hernandez for murdering her son.

“I pray to God his soul is at peace,” she said. “I pray he finds comfort. I pray he finds peace.”

Ward said she was pushing forward with the lawsuit because it could help her family financially and because she hopes to fund scholarships in her son's name as well as provide support for families of other homicide victims whose deaths do not get media coverage.

"I lost my best friend. I lost my son. I lost a lot of my life," she said. "I am not going to lie to you, it will help. ... But even if there's not a penny, it has nothing to do with my justice for Odin Lloyd. I'm going to use my voice."

Sheff said the family doesn't want any money from the team turned over to the Hernandez estate without the Lloyd family getting a chance to intercede.

Under a quirk of Massachusetts law, because Hernandez's case had not yet been reviewed on appeal, his conviction in the Lloyd case could be vacated.

Questions have been raised about whether, because of that, his estate is entitled to recover any or all of \$5.91 million that was previously guaranteed in his contract but the Patriots withheld after his arrest.

The Globe's Ben Volin [reports](#), however, that the Patriots probably are not going to have to pay the \$5.9 million.

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