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The Latest: Lawyer for Hernandez victim's mother still suing

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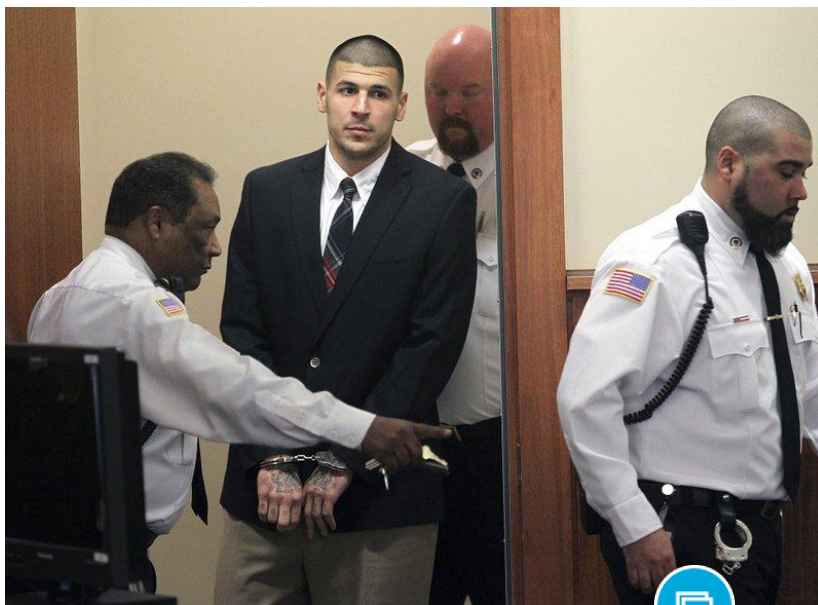


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MILFORD, Mass. (AP) — The Latest on the death of former NFL star Aaron Hernandez (all times local):

6:10 p.m.

A lawyer who represents the mother of the man former NFL star Aaron Hernandez was convicted of killing says she's moving forward with a wrongful-death lawsuit.

Hernandez hanged himself Wednesday in prison, where he was serving a life sentence for the 2013 slaying of Odin (OH'-dihn) Lloyd. Lloyd had been dating the sister of Hernandez's fiancée.

Attorney Doug Sheff represents Lloyd's mother, Ursula Ward. He says a judge has already found Hernandez was liable in Lloyd's death. He says all that's left for a judge or jury to decide is the amount of damages to be awarded to Lloyd's family.

Sheff says the lawsuit will proceed against Hernandez's estate. He says he has placed liens on Hernandez's Massachusetts home, estimated to be worth \$1.3 million.

No date has been set for the civil trial.

2:10 p.m.

One of Aaron Hernandez's longtime friends says he's in shock and grieving after the NFL star was found hanged in his prison cell.

Alex Cugno (KOOG'-no) grew up with the former New England Patriots tight end in Bristol, Connecticut. Cugno says he and other Hernandez pals can't believe he took his own life.

Cugno says he thinks it's "fishy" that Hernandez would have killed himself when he was just acquitted of a 2012 double murder.

Hernandez was serving a life sentence without possibility of parole for the 2013 slaying of Odin Lloyd. Prison officials say he was found hanged in his cell early Wednesday in a high-security prison in Massachusetts.

His friend says he'll remember Hernandez as a happy, goofy man who was always trying to make people laugh.

1:50 p.m.

A lawyer for the families of two men Aaron Hernandez was acquitted of killing says the relatives "don't take any joy" in Hernandez's apparent suicide, even though they believe he was responsible for their deaths.

Attorney William Kennedy represents the estate of Safiro Furtado and the family of Daniel de Abreu in wrongful-death lawsuits against Hernandez. Kennedy says the lawsuits will go forward, but will now be against Hernandez's estate.

Kennedy says the families of Furtado and de Abreu "understand what kind of loss" Hernandez's family is dealing

with now. He said despite Hernandez's acquittal in criminal court last week, the families still plan to try to hold Hernandez accountable for the killings in civil court.

1:10 p.m.

Aaron Hernandez's apparent suicide has an inmate advocacy group calling for more mental health services in Massachusetts prisons.

The former New England Patriots player was found hanged in his prison cell Wednesday.

Leslie Walker, executive director of Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts, says the Department of Correction has taken some steps over the last decade to make it more difficult for inmates to take their own lives. One of those steps was to install clothing hooks that collapse if a significant amount of weight is placed on them.

But she says the department needs to hire more mental health professionals. She says prison officials also should make frequent checks on the mental state of inmates who are serving life sentences without the possibility of parole, as Hernandez was.

11:45 a.m.

Aaron Hernandez's lawyer says he intends to conduct his own investigation into the NFL star's hanging death.

Jose Baez says he was "shocked and surprised" when he was told that the former New England Patriots tight end was found hanging from a bedsheet in his prison cell.

Baez says in a statement Wednesday that there were "no conversations or correspondence from Aaron to his family or legal team that would have indicated anything like this was possible."

He says Hernandez was looking forward to an opportunity for a second chance to prove his innocence in the 2013 slaying of Odin Lloyd.

Baez won an acquittal last week for Hernandez in the separate 2012 double killing of two men. He says Hernandez's loved ones are "heartbroken and determined to find the truth surrounding his untimely death."

10:30 a.m.

The Massachusetts maximum security prison where Aaron Hernandez apparently hanged himself has seen its share of troubles since it opened nearly two decades ago.

There have been several other inmate suicides at the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center, several attacks on prison staff and several instances of inmate-on-inmate violence. The most famous one was the strangulation of convicted pedophile priest John Geoghan (GAY'-gehn) by another prisoner.

The prison, built for \$105 million, was hailed as the nation's most technologically advanced when it opened in 1998. It has more than 1,000 cells.

It is named for two former prisons workers killed in 1972 during an aborted escape attempt.

Hernandez was found by guards hanged with a bedsheet at about 3 a.m. Wednesday. The former NFL star was pronounced dead at a hospital about an hour later.

10:15 a.m.

Aaron Hernandez's death means his murder conviction is likely to disappear.

Under Massachusetts law, defense attorneys can seek to have convictions vacated when a defendant dies before an appeal is heard.

Hernandez was convicted of first-degree murder in the 2013 death of Odin Lloyd.

Authorities say Hernandez was found hanging in his Massachusetts prison cell early Wednesday and was

pronounced dead at a hospital.

Removing a conviction after the death of a high profile defendant has precedent in the state.

Former Roman Catholic priest John Geoghan's child molestation conviction was vacated after he was beaten to death in his prison cell in 2003.

John Salvi, who was convicted of killing two abortion clinic workers in Brookline in 1994, also had his convictions dismissed after he killed himself in prison.

9:05 a.m.

Massachusetts state police say they have launched an investigation into former NFL star Aaron Hernandez's death by hanging in prison.

Worcester District Attorney Joseph Early, Jr., says detectives assigned to his office and the Department of Correction are investigating Hernandez's death.

Authorities say Hernandez used a bedsheet to hang himself early Wednesday at the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center in Shirley, Massachusetts.

Early says Massachusetts' chief medical examiner is conducting an autopsy in Boston to determine the exact cause and manner of death.

Bristol County District Attorney Thomas Quinn prosecuted Hernandez in the 2013 murder of Odin Lloyd. Quinn calls Hernandez's death "a shocking and sad end to a very tragic series of events that has negatively impacted a number of families."

7:45 a.m.

The New England Patriots learned of former tight end Aaron Hernandez's apparent suicide as they prepared to go to the White House to celebrate their fifth Super Bowl title.

Guards found the 27-year-old Hernandez hanging from a bedsheet in his cell Wednesday morning at the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center in Shirley, Massachusetts, where he was serving a life sentence for a murder conviction.

Patriots spokesman Stacey James said: "We are aware of the reports but I don't anticipate that we will be commenting today.

Hernandez played three seasons for the team before he was arrested and charged with murder in the 2013 shooting of Odin Lloyd, who was dating his fiancée's sister. Hernandez was acquitted just days ago of the 2012 shootings of two other men in Boston.

7:30 a.m.

A Massachusetts prisons spokesman says he's not aware of any suicide note written by Aaron Hernandez before the former New England Patriots star hanged himself in his cell, but stresses that the investigation is ongoing.

Assistant Deputy Commissioner of Communications Christopher Fallon also says Wednesday that officials had no concern that Hernandez was planning on taking his own life. The 27-year-old was housed in the general population unit of the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center in Shirley. He says Hernandez would have been transferred to a mental health unit if there was any concern about his well-being.

Hernandez was serving a life sentence for the 2013 murder of Odin Lloyd. He was acquitted on Friday of a 2012 double homicide in Boston.

7 a.m.

Massachusetts prison officials say former NFL star Aaron Hernandez has hanged himself in his cell and has been pronounced dead at a hospital. He was 27.

An official with the Massachusetts Department of Corrections says Hernandez was found hanged in his cell just after 3 a.m. Wednesday. Authorities tried to revive the former New

England Patriots tight end, and he was pronounced dead at UMass Memorial - HealthAlliance Hospital in Leominster at 4:07 a.m.

Prison officials say the Hernandez was in a single cell in a general population housing unit at the Souza Baranowski Correctional Center in Shirley, Massachusetts They say he hanged himself using a bed sheet that he attached to a cell window.

Authorities say Hernandez tried to block the cell door from the inside by jamming the door with various items.

Hernandez, who was serving a life sentence for a 2013 murder, was acquitted Friday in a 2012 double slaying prosecutors said was fueled by his anger over a drink spilled at a nightclub.

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