

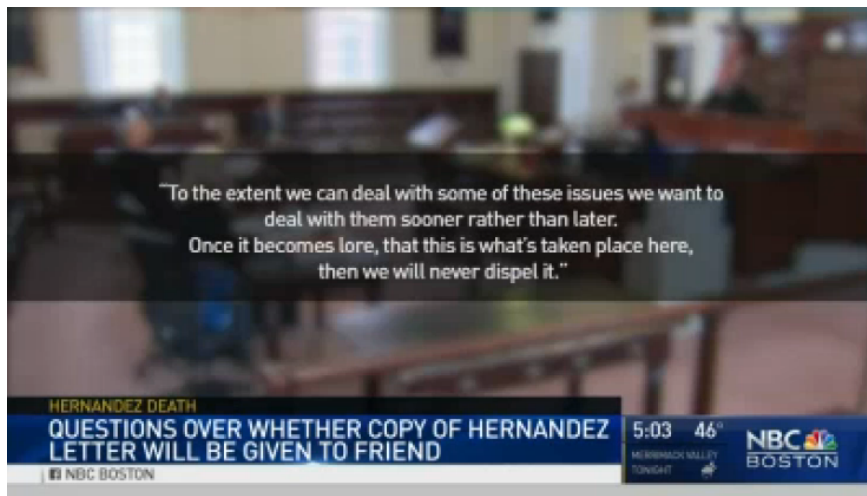


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Legal Battles Over Aaron Hernandez's Estate Ramp Up

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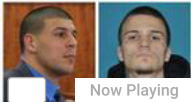


One of the three letters Aaron Hernandez wrote before his suicide was to a fellow inmate, Kyle Kennedy, prompting rumors and speculation over their relationship. (Published Tuesday, April 25, 2017)

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How much money and property did former NFL star Aaron Hernandez leave behind, and who has a rightful claim to those assets? Legal battles have been brewing for years over who should get Hernandez's money, but his suicide in prison last week ramped up those questions and more. Here's a look at the various legal claims and the key players:

THE PLAYER

Hernandez, who grew up in Bristol, Connecticut, and played football at the University of Florida, was considered an up-and-coming star during his three seasons as a tight end for the New England Patriots (2010-2012). He was cut from

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Hernandez Jurors Invited to Private Funeral

A jury found Aaron Hernandez not guilty two weeks ago. Following his death, the names of several of those jury members were on the guest list at Hernandez's private funeral in Bristol, Connecticut. (Published Tuesday, April 25, 2017)

In 2015, Hernandez was convicted of first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison in Lloyd's death. While investigating Lloyd's killing, authorities found evidence they believed implicated him in an earlier double slaying in Boston, the 2012 drive-by shooting of two Cape Verdean immigrants, Safiro Furtado and Daniel de Abreu. He was charged in the slayings in 2014. A jury acquitted him on April 14. Five days later, Hernandez was found hanging from a sheet in his prison cell.

THE MONEY

- [Investigation Continues Into 'Issues' in Hernandez's Death](#)

In August 2012, Hernandez signed a five-year, \$40 million contract. He was paid about \$10 million of the total.

After his arrest in Lloyd's killing, the Patriots withheld the remaining \$5.91 million that had been guaranteed under his contract, including a \$3.25 million deferred signing bonus payment and base salary of \$2.46 million. It is unclear how much money Hernandez spent on his defense in the two criminal cases and how much money remains in his estate.



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THE LAWSUITS

The families of Furtado, de Abreu and Lloyd all filed wrongful-death lawsuits against Hernandez. Lawyers for the three families say they will move ahead with the lawsuits against his estate.

- [Hernandez Hinted at Suicide Weeks Before Death: Attorney](#)

Doug Sheff, a lawyer for Lloyd's mother, Ursula Ward, says a judge has already found Hernandez liable in Lloyd's death. He said a trial eventually will be held to



owned.

William Kennedy, a lawyer for the de Abreu and Furtado families, said he believes the families have a viable civil claim despite Hernandez's acquittal in criminal court. Kennedy said the legal standard of proof in civil court is much lower than criminal court, where prosecutors were required to prove Hernandez's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

THE CONVICTION

Hernandez's death means his murder conviction in the Lloyd case is likely to disappear. Under Massachusetts case law, defense attorneys can seek to have convictions vacated when a defendant dies before an appeal is heard. Hernandez's automatic appeal in the Lloyd case had not yet been heard by the Supreme Judicial Court.

Hernandez's appellate lawyers filed a motion Tuesday seeking to dismiss his conviction. Prosecutors said they would oppose the request, but legal experts say it's unlikely they will prevail. The state has until Monday to file a motion opposing the conviction dismissal, and Hernandez's lawyers have until next Thursday to file a response to the state's response.

Lawyers for the victims' families say they are exploring what impact, if any, the voiding of the conviction could have on the civil cases. The Boston Globe reported that Hernandez's contract with the Patriots - obtained by the Globe - appears to preclude his estate from collecting any money, even if his conviction is vacated. The newspaper also cited a clause in the NFL's collective bargaining agreement, which states that any player who is unavailable to the team "due to conduct by him that results in his incarceration ... may be required to forfeit signing bonus."

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