

The 'friendly challenge' to Pats from Hernandez victim's mom

BY KEVIN ARMSTRONG

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BOSTON - One day after Aaron Hernandez's family [donated the convicted murderer's brain to science](#), Ursula Ward, the mother of his victim, issued a "friendly challenge" to the New England Patriots and the NFL players association.

Ward has been pursuing a wrongful death lawsuit against Hernandez since 2013. He was a Patriot readying for his fourth season at the time that he killed Lloyd by firing six bullets into Lloyd's body. The Patriots cut Hernandez immediately after he was arrested on June 26, 2013, but Ward's attorney, Douglas Sheff, urged the team and the union to voluntarily pay damages to the Ward family.

Hernandez was [convicted of killing Lloyd](#) on April 15, 2015. Hernandez was acquitted of a double homicide across the street from Sheff's office last Friday.

"We want to provide the Patriots with an opportunity to become something more," Sheff said, "not just champions of football, to become champions of justice."



Aaron Hernandez had inked a new 5-year deal with the Patriots a year before killing Odin Lloyd. (MICHAEL HEIMAN/GETTY IMAGES)

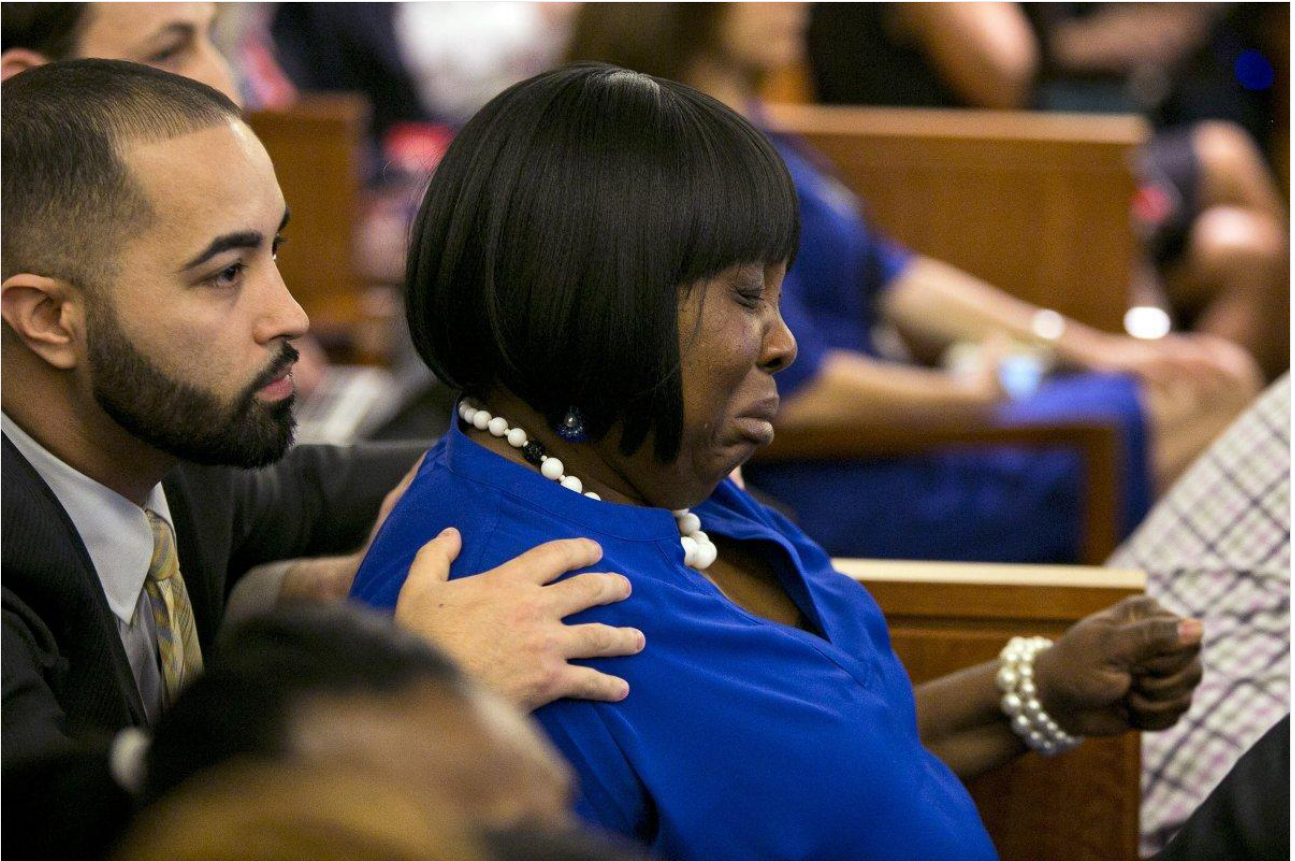
Earlier in the week, Hernandez hanged himself in prison. An archaic law regarding abatement may allow Hernandez to be considered innocent in death because he did not exhaust his appeals process before taking his life.

Sheff noted that the civil case is at the stage where a determination of damages will be reached. He insisted that a vacated verdict in criminal court would not affect his civil case. "I can't speak to what the Patriots will do," Sheff said. "We issued them a friendly challenge. It sure would be nice if they took us up on our invitation."



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Odin Lloyd's mother Ursula Ward is asking the Patriots for money to aid the family. (DOMINICK REUTER/AP)

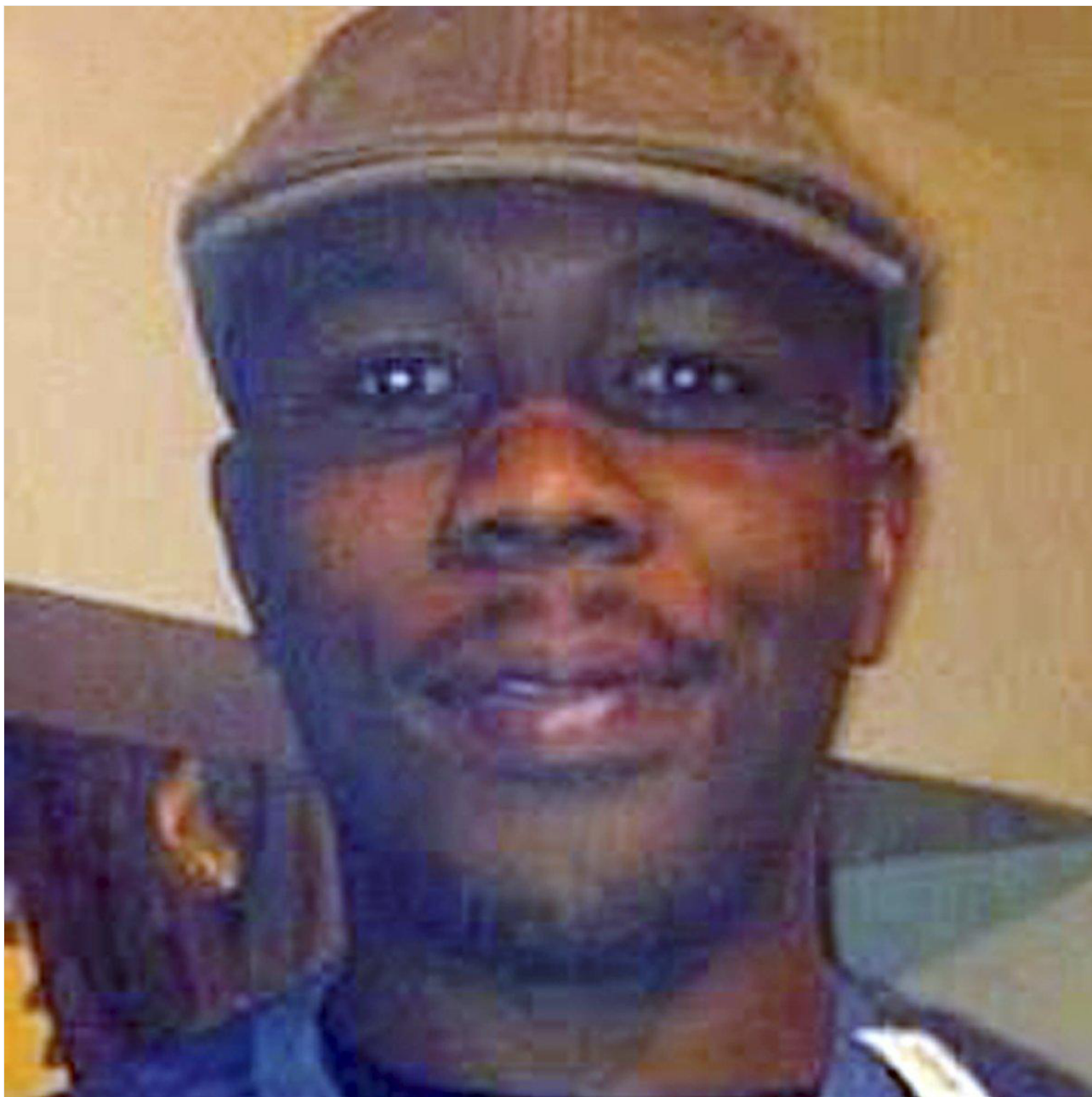
Hernandez signed a five-year contract worth up to \$40 million with the Patriots in 2012 after his second season. He was serving a life sentence without the possibility of parole when he was found dead in his prison cell Wednesday morning. The Chief Medical Examiner ruled Hernandez's death a suicide Thursday afternoon. Sheff labeled his request of \$6 million that he believes Ward is owed "of little consequence to the team" but of "tremendous assistance" to the grieving families. "That would be the right thing to do," Sheff said.

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Rise and Fall of Aaron Hernandez

Hernandez's old house in North Attleborough, Mass., is on the market for \$1.3 million. It has five bedrooms and seven bathrooms. It spans over 5,000 square feet. Ward maintained that she was simply seeking justice after losing her only son. She has daughters and noted that she continued to think about Hernandez in light of this week's suicide.

"I pray to God he finds comfort and God will forgive him," Ward said.



Odin Lloyd (UNCREDITED/AP)

Hernandez, like Lloyd, was 27 when he died. Hernandez pumped six .45-caliber bullets into Lloyd after driving Lloyd to an undeveloped section of an industrial park by Hernandez's manse.

Hernandez's brain was donated to Boston University's research center for Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy or CTE on Thursday.

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