

## HOW WILL YOU BE REMEMBERED?

Written by Jeffrey L. Boney, Associate Editor  
Wednesday, 05 December 2012 00:00

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You would have to have been living under a rock to not have already heard about the tragic events that took place this past Saturday involving football player Jovan Belcher.

Belcher, a 25-year old linebacker for the Kansas City Chiefs, shot and killed Kasandra Perkins, his 22-year old girlfriend and the mother of his 3-month-old daughter, Zoey, and then turned the gun on himself.

The tragic chain of events began shortly before 8 a.m. at the couple's Kansas City home when Belcher shot Perkins multiple times in front of his mother, who was in town visiting and helping them take care of the newborn.

After shooting Perkins, Belcher jumped in his car and drove to the Chiefs practice facility at Arrowhead Stadium. After getting out of his car, Belcher walked up to head coach Romeo Crennel and general manager Scott Pioli with a pistol in his hands and began to have a conversation with them. He thanked them for everything they had done for him and then as police approached, he shot himself in the head. He was declared dead at the scene.

The details of what actually led up to the shootings is still being investigated, but one thing we know for sure is that these two individuals, Belcher and Perkins, are dead and will no longer be able to make an impact on this world and in the life of their daughter.

I, for one, will not give him any praise for committing such a heinous act. If he was competent enough to suit up and play football every week and make tackles, he was competent enough to walk away and tackle this situation with competency.

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Then you have those that will argue that he could have had some sort of mental challenges or concussions. Listen, professional athletes undergo constant testing, so if the organization or his family comes out and tells us that he had a history of diagnosed mental illness, then I'll then believe that narrative. But it's speculative.

Speculation as to why he did it aside, factually, we know what happened. You can try and spin it any way you like, but we know the facts as they have been presented by the murderer.

Belcher, through his act of domestic violence and decision to kill himself, has left his daughter parentless. This decision will forever define his legacy and will be one of the primary things about his life that will be remembered.

My main concern is that 3-month old child. That child will grow up and have to answer and ask themselves the same questions about their parents and what happened to them, coupled with the memory of it having to be told and re-told could be overwhelming and devastating.

Truly, I pray this will not be the case.

My intent isn't to spend my energy and thoughts deciphering why this happened. I know what has happened and until someone provides another alternate set of events, I'm fixed on my belief that he had no known mental issues.

The jury didn't have to know that Rae Carruth was mentally unstable to convict him of murder for his role in the execution-style murder of his pregnant girlfriend.

I know exactly what happened. He killed his girlfriend, drove to his job, talked to his bosses, killed himself and left his child parentless.

That is his outgoing legacy. Unfortunately, the legacy that Perkins leaves has been snuffed out by the decisions of another.

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Remember Joe Paterno, who was my favorite college football coach?

What Paterno did on the field and to develop the character within the players he coached, at Penn State University, was something to be admired. There was no one better at it than him, if you ask me.

However, on November 2011, he was fired by the university as a result of the child sex abuse scandal involving his former assistant coach Jerry Sandusky. An investigation conducted by former FBI director Louis Freeh found in July 2012 that Paterno concealed facts relating to Sandusky's sexual abuse of young boys. The investigation also uncovered evidence that Paterno persuaded university officials not to report Sandusky to authorities in 2001. On July 23, 2012, the NCAA vacated all of Penn State's wins from 1998 through 2011 as part of its punishment for the child sex abuse scandal, eliminating 111 of the games Paterno had coached and won, dropping him from second to 12th on the list of winningest NCAA football coaches.

Isn't that something?

You can find yourself at the top of your game and with a heightened sense of accomplishment, but because of a bad decision you can find yourself at rock bottom and your legacy forever tarnished.

At many cemeteries, you can see tombstones all around. All of them have a noticeable distinction. They have a date of birth and a date of death. They also have a dash mark that separates the two dates. That dash mark represents the things that we have done on this Earth and the things that we didn't do. In other words, that little dash mark is your legacy. The questions that I have for you are, when you leave this Earth how will you be remembered and what will that dash mark mean to others who take the time to remember you?

SELAH!

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