
Former NFL star dead after being 'SHOT at home while preparing to take girlfriend on date'

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Reche Caldwell, who had one of his best seasons as a wide receiver in the NFL alongside Tom Brady at the New England Patriots, has reportedly been shot and killed at the age of 41 during an attempted robbery at his home in Tampa.

Caldwell is said to have returned home to retrieve a jacket while preparing to take his girlfriend on a date when he was shot in the chest and leg by two intruders, according to accounts quoting the former NFL star's mother, Deborah, which claim that the attack was a targeted rather than random murder.

The older brother of former Super Bowl champion Andre died in the ambulance on his way to hospital after emergency services arrived at the scene, according to a TMZ report that says two ambushers leapt out of bushes in an attempt to rob him.

Caldwell, whose real name is Donald, spent half of his six-season NFL career with first team San Diego Chargers before switching to the

Patriots in 2006, where he caught 61 passes from Brady for 760 yards and four touchdowns – all career highs.

"He was a good person who smiled all of the time," his mother is said to have told the outlet.

"He tried to help everyone he could. He was the type of guy who would take his shirt off his back and give it to you."

The Florida Gators, for whom Caldwell played college football, announced they were "deeply saddened" by the news.

Former team-mate Wes Welker, who played with Caldwell for the Patriots and Chargers, said he was thinking of "Bubba Caldwell" and was "so sad" to learn of the fatal shooting. "His smile and attitude were contagious," he added.

2005 Super Bowl winner Benjamin Watson, who was also a Patriots player with Caldwell, said he "always kept us laughing and light hearted."

"Always had the biggest smile," he added. "Always had the greatest stories. Sad to hear about the passing of my team-mate."
