



## **Bowie Blade-News This Week**

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# The idiotic violence in this country needs to end in Miami



I just cannot seem to wrap my brain around the violence that seems to surround and follow professional athletes anymore. In case you have been on vacation or refuse to watch SportsCenter - aka "The News" - Washington Redskins fourth-year safety Sean Taylor passed away early Tuesday morning, just about 24 hours after being shot at his Florida home. The former University of Miami star and father of a 1-year-old daughter was just 24 years old - barely out of adolescence himself!



Taylor had missed the previous two football games due to injury and was reportedly seeking a second opinion from a surgeon in Miami, where Taylor was born, attended high school and college, and sadly has now died. Perhaps the circle of life was completed, but it was not a full circle. Not at 24 years old.



In addition to my adoration for the Redskins, I morphed into a Denver Broncos fan at age 12. And as a Broncos fan, it pained me to the core to hear about Taylor's shooting. It brought back memories of not even a full year ago when Broncos defensive back Darrent Williams was shot and killed outside a Denver night club early New Year's Day. Williams, like Taylor, was flashy on the field and it was evident that each enjoyed playing the game of football. Let's not get all romantic and fool ourselves, we all know that professional athletes are using their physical exploits to get paid. I don't fault these guys, I'm jealous of them. But in the case of guys like Williams and Taylor, a real NFL fan can easily tell that these guys could still get up for every game every Sunday.



The manner in which Taylor was murdered is something you would most likely never fathom outside of an episode of "The Sopranos." Taylor's Miami home was burglarized nearly two weeks ago and a knife was left on the bed, presumably as a way to convey some sort of message to Taylor. Maybe the trespassers were looking for a quick payday and maybe it was more than that, but a knife left on a bed is a message to

me!

Then early Monday morning intruders apparently cut the phone lines and disarmed the alarm before entering Taylor's home. Everything after that is murky, to say the least. Was there a struggle between Taylor and the trespassers? Were these guys there to take him out? Why were his daughter and girlfriend spared? There are many unknown variables here and hopefully the Miami-Dade police will get some leads and tips from the community regarding the whereabouts and identities of the cowards who successfully pulled off their mission. The bullet that hit Taylor struck his femoral artery, causing major blood loss and, of course, death.

When I really sit back and sink my teeth into this entire thing, I agree with Bowie resident Anthony Kennedy, who believes that the nation's gun laws are certainly largely to blame for these types of tragedies. Kennedy played college ball at Virginia Tech in the early- to mid-'90s, and considering that "once a Hokie, always a Hokie," he is not unfamiliar with tragedy hitting close to home. A Virginia Tech student went on a psychotic spree in April, shooting and killing more than 30 VT students and faculty on campus. Kennedy, who also spent time with the Dallas Cowboys under Jimmy Johnson, said that he never had to experience anything like what Taylor's Washington teammates are going through this week.

Personally, I think it is high time that our elected officials take a stronger stance against easily purchased handguns and disarm the cowards who use the weapons to commit beastly crimes. The Bill of Rights and the Constitution may as well have been written alongside the Magna Carta - and in hieroglyphics! Each is outdated and needs to be amended to properly represent the changes in technology and the times we live in. Guns are deadlier than ever before and I will no longer tolerate the excuse that hunters need them to shoot a deer from 300 yards. Be a man! In "the olden days," men would use bows and arrows - and even rocks - to hunt. Not semiautomatic weapons and high-powered rifles. Give me a break! Our safety begins right at City Hall with Mayor G. Fred Robinson and the newly elected City Council and it runs right up the line to Congressman Steny Hoyer and then to President George Bush, who is from Texas and picks fights with other nations - not likely the prez will support my views on gun control.

I hope I get one e-mail or letter from some gun-toting hunter who thinks I am trying to alienate him of his right to bear arms. You know what? That is exactly what I am trying to do! Because if you don't know that there are thugs out there who only consider a gun as a substitute for true bravery then you don't belong with a gun in your hand, and that includes Laser

Tag!

On the topic of Taylor, he surely made his four seasons in Washington interesting. He arrived as the fifth pick in the 2004 NFL Draft and immediately began getting into trouble. In fact, Taylor allegedly brandished a handgun of his own in Miami following the alleged 2005 theft of some all-terrain vehicles belonging to him. Add a drunk driving charge, which was eventually dismissed, and numerous fines for late hits and other on-field antics, and Taylor was hardly propped up by the league as a role model.

Former Bowie resident Mike Richman recently released "The Redskins Encyclopedia," an in-depth and thorough history of the Washington football franchise. "It's a major loss for the Redskins community," said Richman. "The Redskins have to regroup and get over the depression and sting and rally around this death." He added, "I know it's easier said than done."

Richman also pointed out Taylor's dislike for the media, which resulted in very few sound bytes from the safety, who led the team this season with five interceptions. But lately, many teammates said they began to notice a change in Taylor's demeanor and attitude. Wide receiver James Thrash told the Associated Press, "From the first day I met (Taylor), from then to now, it's just like night and day. He's really got his head on his shoulders and has been doing really well as far as just being a man. It's been awesome to see that growth."

Many, including Thrash, attribute that growth to Taylor joining the ranks of fatherhood. Now, in addition to his daughter, Taylor leaves behind somewhat of a broken legacy. Redskins fans will now never know how Sean Taylor truly turned his life around.

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