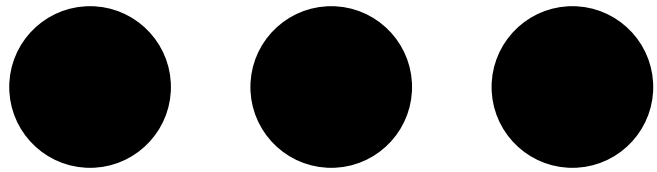




## New Trump/Russia Narrative, Claims Trump Colluded With Fox News on Seth Rich/WikiLeaks Story

In the murky world of politics — and by extension political news — it's sometimes difficult to know with any degree of certainty what is going on behind the scenes. Case in point: the private detective who investigated the murder of DNC staffer Seth Rich and was reported to have said that Rich's computer contained evidence that he was the source of WikiLeaks' publication of DNC e-mails last summer is now suing Fox News' parent company, 21st Century Fox Inc, for reporting that.



Earlier this week *Bloomberg* [reported](#) that the private investigator, Rod Wheeler, claims in his lawsuit that Fox News not only took his comments out of context, but even quoted him as saying things he never said. Furthermore, Wheeler claims that his whole investigation — financed by Dallas financier and Trump supporter Ed Butowsky, who is also a frequent guest on *Fox Business News* — was a setup orchestrated between the White House and Fox News and that he was an unwitting participant.

The murder of Rich on July 8, 2016 — coming on the heels of the publication of a trove of damning DNC e-mails — caused a stir, not least because it was steeped in mystery. Police said the death of Rich was the result of a robbery in an area of the city with escalating levels of crime, including armed robbery. But when Rich was found shot twice in the back at 4:20 a.m., nothing was missing: He still had his watch, phone, and wallet. His father said, "If it was a robbery — it failed because he still has his watch, he still has his money — he still has his credit cards, still had his phone so it was a wasted effort except we lost a life."

Many speculated at the time that Rich may have been involved in leaking the DNC e-mails to WikiLeaks and may have been on his way to the FBI office to blow an even bigger whistle when he was killed. Then, one month after Rich's murder, Julian Assange, the founder and editor-in-chief of WikiLeaks, [appeared on the Dutch television program \*Nieuwsuur\*](#) to discuss the DNC leaks. In that interview Assange came dangerously close to implying that Rich may have been the source of the leaked e-mails:

Whistleblowers go to significant efforts to get us material and often very significant risks. As a 27 year-old, works for the DNC, was shot in the back, murdered just a few weeks ago for unknown reasons as he was walking down the street in Washington.



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on August 4, 2017

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Adding more fuel to the fire, WikiLeaks also offered a \$20,000 reward for information leading to a conviction in the Seth Rich case.

When Fox News [reported](#) in May that Wheeler — a former D.C. police homicide detective who said he was working for the Rich family — claimed “there is tangible evidence on Rich’s laptop that confirms he was communicating with WikiLeaks prior to his death,” it seemed to be another — perhaps the most important — piece of evidence that Rich’s murder may have been due to his having provided all those damning DNC e-mails to WikiLeaks. According to the Fox News article, Wheeler also claimed — based on statements he had obtained from sources within both the FBI and D.C. Metro police — that there was an active coverup involving those agencies.

Fox News later issued a statement essentially retracting the article because Wheeler — after coming under fire for his claims — backtracked most of his story.

Now, in his lawsuit against 21st Century Fox, Wheeler is claiming that he never made those claims in the first place and that he was set up. The new narrative is a spin on the same old narrative that has been being trotted out for months. The newest iteration is that Wheeler was roped in by Dallas financier Ed Butowsky and Fox journalist Malia Zimmerman, who were preparing a story (in collusion with Trump) to shift the attention away from claims that Russian hackers (in collusion with Trump) had provided the e-mails to WikiLeaks who published them. So Trump, Fox News, and WikiLeaks are all — to one degree or another — Russian surrogates. And anyone who believes that Rich was murdered for leaking the DNC e-mails is a conspiracy kook.

Right. Because believing in a conspiracy that includes the president of the United States, a major American news outlet, an organization dedicated to driving a stake through the heart of government secrecy, and a foreign government that treats secrecy like a sacrament makes a lot more sense than believing that operatives withing the DNC killed one of their own for revealing the criminal actions that are part and parcel of that group of miscreants. Just ask Vince Foster.

As *Bloomberg* reported:

Wheeler also claimed that Butowsky kept White House officials apprised of their progress on the story and showed it to Trump before it was published. “Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article,” Butowsky said in a May 14 text message to Wheeler, according to the lawsuit. “He wants the article out immediately. It’s now all up to you, but don’t feel the pressure.”

Wheeler also allegedly claims (this writer is careful not to say he actually claims, because he did, after all, deny the last things he was quoted as claiming — even though he said many of them on camera) that he was inflamed by the Fox News story. According to *Bloomberg*, the story “inflamed Wheeler, who claims the shocking conclusion in the story hinged on quotes about Rich and WikiLeaks that were attributed to him, but which he never said. Wheeler said that when he confronted Fox about his concerns, he was told by Butowsky that “the quotes were included because that is the way the President wanted the article,” according to the suit.”

Wheeler’s suit also claims that he was “defamed” by the article and that he was “discriminated against” because he is black. According to *Bloomberg*:

Wheeler, who is black, claims he was defamed by Fox News because of the bogus quotes and that he was discriminated against based on his color, getting less air time and pay than his white colleagues.



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Wheeler, it seems, has quite a few complaints. Perhaps, this would be easier to understand and believe if Wheeler had not played along with what he now denounces. But, alas, he did play along — even by his own admission.

When Fox News issued the statement essentially retracting the original story, that statement included the following verbatim exchange of Wheeler’s on-camera interview:

FOX 5 DC: “You have sources at the FBI saying that there is information...”

WHEELER: “For sure...”

FOX 5 DC: “...that could link Seth Rich to WikiLeaks?”

WHEELER: “Absolutely. Yeah. That’s confirmed.”

Wheeler called that a “miscommunication.” He also claims — in the lawsuit — that when he said that, he was basing it on a conversation with Butowsky and Zimmerman, who he says told him they had an unnamed source in the FBI who confirmed those claims. In other words, he claims he was paid to say what he was told to say. That’s not exactly a picture of trustworthiness.

Let’s just unpack that, shall we?

Wheeler claimed — on camera — that he “for sure” had “sources at the FBI” with “information that could link Seth Rich to WikiLeaks.” He then reiterated, “Absolutely. Yeah. That’s confirmed.” That doesn’t sound like “miscommunication.” If it’s true, the correct word for it would perhaps be “bombshell.” If it’s not true, the correct word is “lie.”

So, the American people — who have been overfed (to the point of obesity) a narrative of Trump/Russia collusion are now expected to sit down to another heaping helping of that narrative served up by a man who — while claiming that he was “discriminated against” for being black by being given less airtime than his white colleagues (leaving one to wonder whether he thought he should be paid more and given more airtime to tell what he now calls lies) — is now repudiating (by claiming he never said it and if he did say it, he misspoke) his own claims that he had information and sources he now admits he never had.

The funny thing about people who lie is that you just don’t know when to believe them. If, as Wheeler claims, this is a setup, it is likely Trump — and not Wheeler — who is the target.



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