

Twitter Thread by Andy Kroll



Andy Kroll

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As someone who's spent, conservatively, thousands of hours reporting on and thinking about Seth Rich, Fox News, and conspiracy theories, the timing of the settlement highlighted in [@benyt's](#) new column doesn't infuriate me as much as the substance of it 1/x

What's infuriating is the absence of any contrition, apology, or remediation by Fox, especially [@seanhannity](#).

As I've reported, Hannity arguably did more than anyone else to amplify the baseless, discredited, and cruel conspiracy theories about Seth. 2/x <https://t.co/cCKdl07ESu>

.@seanhannity hyped it on multiple nights on his Fox show, on his radio show, and on Twitter. We're talking about a combined potential audience here of ~tens of millions of people.~

Imagine one of the loudest voices in TV saying the following about your dead brother or dead son:

“Now, let me connect the dots,” Hannity told his audience. Hannity was arguably the most influential TV host in America, a friend and confidant to the president of the United States, with whom he spoke regularly. If a “disgruntled” Democrat had leaked the emails, Hannity said, it “could completely shatter the narrative that, in fact, WikiLeaks was working with the Russians,” and, further, could mean that Rich was murdered “under very suspicious circumstances.” Maybe Rich “was upset,” he went on, “that the DNC was conspiring to hurt Bernie Sanders and help Hillary Clinton win the nomination.” Later in the show, Hannity interviewed Rod Wheeler, the investigator hired by the Riches and quoted in the Fox News story, who said it “sure appears” that Rich communicated with WikiLeaks.

Even after <https://t.co/jg1xOw4YqF> retracted its original story about Seth and WikiLeaks, Hannity kept hammering away.

“All you in the liberal media,” he said on his radio show, “I am not <https://t.co/YVoDTvSQbr> or <https://t.co/jg1xOw4YqF>. I retracted nothing.” 4/x

On May 23rd, a week after it was first published and went viral, Fox retracted Zimmerman's story. A statement posted on FoxNews.com said it was "not initially subjected to the high degree of editorial scrutiny we require for all of our reporting." A former Fox executive told the Daily Beast: "Retraction. Wow. Roger [Ailes] would brag at meetings how he was proud Fox never had to print a retraction."

Hannity was unmoved. "All you in the liberal media," he said on his radio show, "I am not Fox.com or FoxNews.com. I retracted nothing." Porter Berry, Hannity's executive producer, received a letter from Aaron Rich urging him not to put Kim Dotcom on air. "We appeal to your decency to not cause a grieving family more pain and suffering," Aaron wrote.

Only when Aaron, Seth's brother, pleaded with Hannity and one of his producers, Porter Berry, did Hannity back down.

Even then, he didn't retract or apologize.

Instead he said: "Out of respect for the family's wishes, for now, I am not discussing this matter at this time." 5/x

In fact, he had the gall to claim he was HELPING the Rich family, writing in a tweet (that he since deleted):

"I said publicly over and over to the Rich Family they are in my thoughts and prayers. I m trying to find the truth as the Mom Dad bro asked" <https://t.co/ByD5zfla3C> 6/x

Hannity has never retracted his segments about Seth Rich. Never apologized. Never admitted he was wrong.

Fox would not let me interview him for this ■ story: <https://t.co/cCKdl07ESu> 7/x

Which brings me back to the settlement [@benyt](#) wrote about.

From the outside, you get the impression that Fox, after putting the Riches thru hell, simply paid enough money to make the suit go away, wash it hands of it, as if this were simply the cost of doing business. 8/x

If there any Fox employees out there, current or former, who want to talk about any part of this whole tragedy-debacle involving Seth, I'd love to hear from you.

My email address is in my bio. 9/9