

August 1, 2017 12:24pm

A new lawsuit filed by a Fox News commentator accuses the network of inventing quotes from him in a report that claimed a Democratic National Committee staffer was murdered for leaking emails to WikiLeaks.

Rod Wheeler, a private investigator and former police detective, claims he was pressured into helping “put to bed speculation that President Trump colluded with Russia in an attempt to influence the outcome of the Presidential election,” according to his defamation suit filed Tuesday in Manhattan federal court.

Wheeler accuses Trump supporter Ed Butowsky and Fox reporter Malia Zimmerman of fabricating two quotes attributed to him in the story because “that is the way the President wanted the article,” the suit reads. Jay Wallace, Fox’s president of news, told NPR there was no “concrete evidence” that Wheeler was misquoted.

The report — which aired May 16 and was retracted a week later — blamed the DNC email leaks during the 2016 presidential election on staffer Seth Rich, who was shot to death in July of that year.

Butowsky had hired Wheeler on behalf of the Rich family to investigate Seth’s murder.

The lawsuit cited a May 14 text message from Butowsky to Wheeler that said, “Not to add any more pressure but the president just read the article. He wants the article out immediately. It’s now all up to you. But don’t feel the pressure.”

Butowsky also allegedly left Wheeler a voicemail that same day, saying, “We have the full, uh, attention of the White House on this. And tomorrow, let’s close this deal, whatever we’ve got to do.”

The story was published less than 36 hours later, according to the complaint.

“Zimmerman, Butowsky and Fox had created fake news to advance President Trump’s agenda,” alleges the suit, filed against 21st Century Fox, Fox News, Butowsky and Zimmerman.

Wheeler, a former Washington, DC homicide detective, accuses Butowsky of being in regular contact with a handful of Trump officials — former press secretary Sean Spicer, chief strategist Steve Bannon and Sarah Flores, the Justice Department’s director of public affairs — in the months leading up to the Fox story.

[Fox retracted the Rich story](#) on May 23, saying, “The article was not initially subjected to the high degree of editorial scrutiny we require for all our reporting. Upon appropriate review, the article was found not to meet those standards and has since been removed.”

But Wheeler says his reputation has been damaged because Fox didn’t bother clearing his name and “never admitted that Zimmerman had misquoted him.”

Butowsky, a wealth management consultant who has appeared on Fox, denied having any dealings with the president whatsoever.

“This whole thing is just a bunch of crap. There’s nothing truthful here at all,” Butowsky said. “I’ve never

talked to the president in my life. The text message that's in that suit is teasing with Rod because Rod has been begging and asking me for a long time to get him a job in the White House."

Jay Wallace, the president of news at Fox News, said, "The accusation that FoxNews.com published Malia Zimmerman's story to help detract from coverage of the Russia collusion issue is completely erroneous. The retraction of this story is still being investigated internally and we have no evidence that Rod Wheeler was misquoted by Zimmerman.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump had "no knowledge of the story" during a daily briefing Tuesday.

"It's completely untrue that he or the White House were involved in the story," she told reporters. "Beyond that, this is ongoing litigation and I will refer you to the actual parties involved."

Zimmerman could not be reached for comment.

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