

Former DNC head Donna Brazile raises new questions over killing of Seth Rich, says she feared for her life

Andre Damon
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A series of statements by Donna Brazile, the former interim chairperson of the Democratic National Committee, has once again raised questions about the death of Democratic Party staffer Seth Rich on July 10, 2016.

Rich, then 27, had served as data director of voter expansion for the Democratic National Committee (DNC) since 2014. He was shot about a block from his apartment in the Bloomingdale neighborhood of Washington, DC.

Rich was killed by two gunshot wounds to the back, in a murder case that remains unsolved. Police were quick to declare his murder a botched robbery, despite the fact that none of his possessions had been taken. He was killed two weeks before Wikileaks began publishing emails leaked from the DNC.

In her new book, *Hacks: The Inside Story of Break-ins and Breakdowns that Put Donald Trump in the White House*, and in interviews over the past several days, Brazile has said that she feared for her life after the murder of Rich.

Brazile appeared Sunday on ABC's "This Week" to discuss her book, in which she alleges that the Clinton campaign exercised inappropriate authority over the Democratic National Committee prior to Clinton's selection as the nominee.

Asked by moderator George Stephanopoulos about her critics within the Democratic Party, Brazile told them to "go to hell." She went on, "And I say go to hell because, why am I supposed to be the only person that is unable to tell my story?"

"I have heard a lot of people tell me various things as well. But here's what they don't know... They don't know what it's like to bury a child. I did, Seth Rich."

Asked by Stephanopoulos, "You mentioned Seth Rich who, of course, was killed during the campaign. Did you feel under threat?" Brazile responded, "Every day," adding, "My house right now is—I got every different kind of security device. I had to get my home swept. I had to get the DNC swept twice. It was horrible."

Much of Brazile's book is devoted to a criticism of the Clinton campaign's "data-driven" approach, which prioritized targeted advertising over traditional, on-the-ground campaigning and voter expansion efforts. Her focus on this issue would have made her relationship with Rich, the staffer in charge of voter expansion data, close.

Brazile's close relationship with Rich makes clear that he was not a "low-level" staffer, as he has generally been described. He was clearly a significant figure in the DNC. Brazile includes Rich among those to which the book is dedicated, calling him "my DNC colleague and patriot, Seth Rich." She reports that Rich's death "made [people in the DNC office] feel unsafe."

In her book, Brazile strongly implies that the FBI carried out an investigation of Rich's murder, which the agency has up to this point denied. "The FBI said that they did not see any Russian fingerprints there," Brazile writes, "but they promised to look into the case."

Brazile advances several possible motives for his murder. She speculates that Rich might have been killed by the "Russians," writing, "With all I knew now about the Russians' hacking, I could not help but wonder if they had played some part in his unsolved murder."

At another point, she speculates that Rich may have been killed by an opponent of the Democratic Party. “All I could think about was Seth Rich. Had he been killed by someone who had it out for the Democrats? Likely not, but we still didn’t know,” she writes.

Brazile refers only briefly to statements from WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who indicated that Rich may have been the source of the leaked DNC emails, raising the possibility that he had been murdered as a result. Brazile notes that “a Dutch television interviewer asked Julian Assange about Seth’s death. On the tape I saw of the interview, Assange fueled a conspiracy theory. He dropped his smirk and said, ‘Our sources take risks.’ Assange was implying that Seth was a source for WikiLeaks!...”

WikiLeaks subsequently offered a reward for information leading to the conviction of Rich’s killers.

Over the course of the past year, the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and *Washington Post* have repeatedly denounced any deviation from the official narrative that Rich’s murder was a “failed robbery” as “fake news” and a “conspiracy theory.”

Regardless of who Brazile speculates may have been behind the killing, one of the highest-ranking Democratic Party operatives believes that there may have been a political motive for Rich’s death. Why then have the major newspapers denounced anyone who has sought a political explanation for his death?



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