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By Malia Zimmerman

The Democratic National Committee staffer who was gunned down on July 10 on a Washington, D.C., street last July just steps from his home in the cozy Washington DC's Columbia Heights neighborhood, leaked thousands of highly controversial emails to WikiLeaks that were generated internally between DNC party leaders, Fox News has confirmed after a 10-month investigation.

A federal investigator who reviewed an FBI forensic report detailing the contents of DNC staffer Seth Rich's computer generated within 96 hours after his murder, said Rich made contact with Wikileaks through Gavin MacFadyen, a famous American investigative reporter, documentary filmmaker, and director of Wikileaks who was living in London.

"I have seen and read the emails between Seth Rich and Wikileaks," the federal investigator told Fox News, confirming the MacFayden connection. He said the whole case was put to rest after the FBI initial audit. FBI agents were told not to investigate further. The emails sit inside the FBI today, said the federal agent, who asked to remain a confidential source.

Rod Wheeler, a former DC homicide police detective who now runs a private detective firm, said he too uncovered substantial evidence and information that led him to believe the connection between Rich and Wikileaks.

“My investigation up to this point shows there was some degree of email exchange between Seth Rich and Wikileaks,” said Wheeler, who was hired to investigate Rich's murder. “I do believe that the answers to who murdered Seth Rich sits on his computer on a shelf at the DC police or FBI headquarters.”

The last of the 44,053 emails and 17,761 attachments between Democratic National Committee leaders, which spanned from January 2015 through late May 2016, were transferred from Rich to Wikileaks before May 21. Fifty days later, Rich was murdered, shot twice in the back and left to die just steps from his home.

On July 22, just 12 days after Rich was killed, Wikileaks published the emails. They showed top DNC officials conspired to stop Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont from becoming the party's presidential nominee. That controversy resulted in Debbie Wasserman Schultz resigning as DNC chairperson. A number of Sanders supporters refused to back party nominee, Hillary Clinton, and some subsequently formed groups to work against Clinton and their party.

On August 9, Wikileaks added another mysterious twist to Rich's murder by announcing: “WikiLeaks has decided to issue a US\$20k reward for information leading to conviction for the murder of DNC staffer Seth Rich.”

While some in the intelligence community and Congress have blamed Russian hackers for stealing and leaking emails from the DNC and Hillary Clinton's campaign to Wikileaks to impact the election in Donald Trump's favor, the emails show, at least in the case of the DNC emails, the emails were forwarded by Rich. Some close to the investigation believe he could have done this to expose the party's bias against Sanders.

The Metropolitan Police Department has no suspects and no substantial leads as to who the killer or killers may be, sources close to the investigation said.

Metropolitan Police, including the police chief, have continuously refused to grant interviews, answer emailed questions, or take phone calls from Fox News about the murder investigation, or about the FBI's findings or initial involvement in the case.

A source close to the investigation said the DC mayor is closely monitoring this case and officers are restricted in terms of what they can say or not say to the family and the media.

"It appears that the investigators are walking on eggshells with regard to the case," the source said.

The FBI's national office has refused to respond to several inquiries about any initial assistance the agency's cyber experts provided in the investigation.

"My investigation shows someone within the DC government, Democratic National Committee or Clinton team is blocking the murder investigation from going forward," Wheeler said. "That is unfortunately. Seth Rich's murder is unsolved as a result of that."

Despite obvious knowledge of Rich's involvement with Wikileaks, DC police have stuck to their initial theory that Rich's murder was the result of a botched robbery.

The botched robbery theory, which police have pursued for nearly a year, isn't panning out, Wheeler said. The dual assailants caught on a grainy video tape from a camera posted outside a grocery mart, shot Rich twice in his back, but did not take his wallet, cell phone, keys, watch or necklace worth about \$2,000.

Police detectives typically look at several possible working theories, but Wheeler said that this case appears to be different.

"Something about the email theory has the police tight-lipped," Wheeler said.

Police could look into whether Rich was killed by someone he knew for personal reasons, possibly out of jealousy, betrayal or anger. They could also investigate whether he was murdered for political reasons, either out of revenge for him releasing DNC emails to Wikileaks or to prevent him from sending additional files, Wheeler said.

Police should consider all angles, Wheeler said, especially in light of WikiLeaks' founder Julian Assange alluding on August 9 during an interview with a Dutch television reporter that Rich was the source.

"I am suggesting," Assange told the Dutch reporter, "that our sources take risks, and they, they become concerned to see things occurring like that."

On Twitter, Wikileaks announced the reward but said Assange's statement "should not be taken to imply that Seth Rich was a source for WikiLeaks or to imply that his murder is connected to our publications" because Wikileaks has a policy not to release the names of its sources, even after their death.

In subsequent appearances on Fox News Channel, Assange confirmed, "We're interested in anything that might be a threat to alleged WikiLeaks sources."

Assange has not returned a series of recent emails from Fox News about Rich. MacFayden, the director of Wikileaks who initially made contact with Rich, died October 22.

D.C. police announced a \$25,000 reward, and Republican lobbyist Jack Burkman issued a \$130,000 reward, totaling \$175,000 with Wikileaks' reward for information about Rich's killer.

Wheeler said all leads in this case need to be followed to solve Rich's murder including where he went the night he died, who he encountered that night, and who he spoke to on the phone.

Rich had been at Lou's City Bar a couple of miles from his home until about 1:15 am. He walked home, calling several people along the way. He called his father, Joel Rich, who he missed because he had gone to sleep. He talked with a fraternity brother and his girlfriend, Kelsey Mulka.

Around 4:17 a.m., Rich was about a block from his home when Mulka, still on the phone with him, heard voices in the background. Rich reassured her that he was steps away from being at his front door and hung up.

Two minutes later, Rich was shot twice. Police were on the scene within 3 minutes. Rich sustained bruising on his hands and face. He remained conscious, but died at a nearby hospital within 1 hour and 40 minutes.

Police detectives will not say whether Rich provided them with any clues about the identity of his attackers or their motivation, Wheeler said. However, Wheeler believes Rich could have provided information prior to his death of who was responsible for carrying out his murder.

Police also have refused to release security footage from a market on the corner of the crosswalk where Rich was killed. The footage shows two people following Rich across the tiny crosswalk just moments before he was attacked. The camera captured grainy footage of the assailants' legs and Rich as he fell backwards into the street after being shot.

Wheeler said normally police would release the footage to the media. The family also should be privy to the entire case jacket, with all the details of the case, unless they are considered suspects, Wheeler said. However, to date, the family has not received a copy of the tape or most of the details related to their son's murder case. The homicide case remains open, according to a spokesperson for DC police.