

NEWS

# Glenn Beck's Payment to the Saudi Student He Accused of Financing Terrorism

The new settlement concludes a long court battle between the conservative radio host and the man he said bankrolled the Boston Marathon bombing.

J. WESTON PHIPPEN SEPTEMBER 15, 2016

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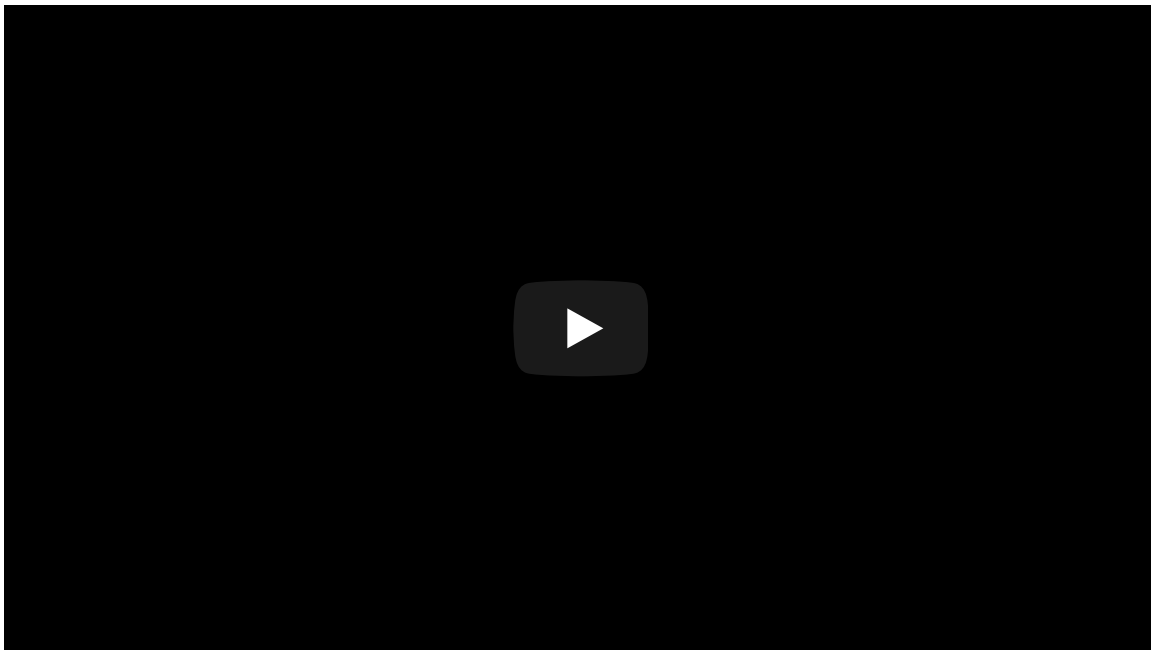
Glenn Beck speaking at a 2015 rally in Washington, D.C. (JACQUELYN MARTIN / AP)

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**NEWS BRIEF** Glenn Beck, the conservative radio host, has settled a lawsuit brought against him by a Saudi Arabian man whom Beck accused of financing the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, despite strong evidence

to the contrary.

Abdulrahman Alharbi, a Saudi student in Boston, was injured near the marathon's finish line during the attack, in which two brothers planted bombs that killed three people and wounded 260 others. Less than a week after the bombing, Beck said his team had found a very “bad, bad, bad, man,” who was involved in the attack. He then threatened the government that if it did not reveal the man's identity, Beck would. “I don't bluff,” he said. “I make promises. The truth matters.”



Beck eventually singled out Alharbi as the “money man” behind the attack. To support this claim, Beck insisted he had received an inside tip from two Department of Homeland Security agents saying Alharbi was involved. When Beck was challenged on this information, he refused to name his sources.

Alharbi sued Beck in 2014, saying the radio host had damaged his reputation with his accusations, even though the FBI said Alharbi was not a suspect the day after the attack. The judge in the case said last month

Beck must provide information to back up his claims. On Tuesday, he decided instead to settle out of court for an unknown amount of money.

As *Politico* reported, a statement included in the filing said:

No party has admitted any fault, wrongdoing, or responsibility as part of the settlement. Defendants have agreed to settlement of the pending action in furtherance of fundamental principles of journalistic integrity by preserving the confidentiality of their sources consistent with their rights and privileges under the First Amendment. The Plaintiff has pursued this action for the reasons set forth in his Complaint and believes those interests have been served by this resolution.

The case prompted debate over First Amendment rights, particularly over whether journalists should have to identify confidential sources, and the way the media treats private figures. Beck had resisted turning over his sources, and argued Alharbi was a public figure because he gave media interviews in the aftermath of the bombing. Judge Patti Saris, of the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts, ruled Alharbi was a private figure, which tipped the case toward Alharbi's favor. The distinction between "private" and "public" is key here. If he were ruled a private figure Alharbi would only need to prove Beck acted negligently when he reported Alharbi financed the bombing; whereas if he were ruled a public figure, Alharbi would need to prove Beck intentionally falsified the information, or acted with reckless regard.

In Saris' 61-page decision released last month, she said Beck had to offer some evidence to back his claims. A freedom-of-information-records request to the Department of Homeland Security offered no evidence linking Alharbi to the bombings. According to the Saris' decision, Beck couldn't turn over his notes because Beck's producer, Joe Weasel, had written the tip on Post-It notes he later threw away.

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