

IS NFL TELLING STORIES NOW ABOUT PREVIOUSLY SEEING RAY RICE VIDEO BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE(D) IT EXONERATES RICE?

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Ray Rice – ELEVATOR KNOCKOUT ... Fiancee Takes
Crushing Punch [Video]

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NFL officials are everywhere claiming that no
one saw the Ray Rice video released today by TMZ
back when they considered his punishment.

But, as Deadspin points out, Peter King's
reporting from July clearly suggests both the
NFL and the Ravens had seen the video. Here's
what he wrote in July:

There is one other thing I did not write
or refer to, and that is the other
videotape the NFL and some Ravens
officials have seen, from the security
camera inside the elevator at the time
of the physical altercation between Rice
and his fiancée. I have heard reports of
what is on the video, but because I
could not confirm them and because of
the sensitivity of the case, I never
speculated on the video in my writing,
because I don't think it is fair in an
incendiary case like this one to use
something I cannot confirm with more
than one person. I cannot say any more,
because I did not see the tape. I saw
only the damning tape of Rice pulling

his unconscious fiancée out of the elevator.

But I don't think Deadspin emphasizes the implication of this enough.

King raised the reports of the video he got to explain why he had said he thought it was fair for Rice to get just a 2-game suspension (though he thought 4 to be more fair). That is, people told him this video exonerated Rice.

There is a certain (perverse) logic to that. It suggests that because Rice's then fiancée swung at him, he was justified in belting her, which led her to lose consciousness. (It's not clear to me whether the blow itself or hitting her head on the railing knocked her out). That might explain why she issued an apology at the time, because obviously swinging at Rice and getting knocked out in response makes it all her fault.

That is, the scandal of the video – in addition to the fact that they appear to be lying about having considered it in their discussion of Rice's punishment – is they believed that because Janay swung at Rice he was justified in swinging back.

Even assuming that was their logic, though, remember that Roger Goodell was at this same time giving long, long punishments to various people for doing the harmless thing of smoking dope.

Update: In a follow-up post, now showing that Chris Mortenson and several other reporters also got the same report, Deadspin does emphasize this. NFL was telling reporters in July this video exonerated Rice (because Janay "attacked" Rice). Now they're claiming they never saw it.