



Trump official targeting Jan. 6 investigators worked on those cases himself

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Emil Bove, then President Trump's attorney, looks on as Trump appears remotely for a sentencing hearing in Manhattan Criminal Court last month in New York City, after Trump was found guilty of falsifying business records.

Jeenah Moon/Pool/Getty Images

After a mob of Donald Trump's supporters violently stormed the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, [Emil Bove](#) led efforts by federal prosecutors in Manhattan to help the FBI aggressively investigate, identify and arrest rioters from the New York region.

Four years later, Bove is now the acting No. 2 official in President Trump's Justice Department. He has used that perch to denounce the Capitol riot investigation and spearhead a purge of prosecutors — and potentially of FBI agents — who worked on Jan. 6 cases.

The disconnect between Bove's aggressive stance to hold rioters accountable for the Jan. 6 assault and his current hostility around the investigation has troubled some former colleagues.

"At no point did I ever hear him or anybody else express concern about these investigations and these arrests that we were making," said Christopher O'Leary, who was a top counterterrorism official in the FBI's New York field office at the time. "We never heard any pushback from him or anybody in his office."



POLITICS

Justice Department changes rattle current and former agency veterans

The Department of Justice didn't immediately respond to questions about the disconnect between Bove's role in New York and his actions since entering the Department of Justice.

When the Jan. 6 attack happened, Bove was the co-chief of the terrorism and international narcotics unit at the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York.

In that role, he helped supervise all of the office's work related to the Capitol attack, directing prosecutors to support the FBI in the investigation and overseeing efforts to obtain things like search warrants, according to O'Leary and a former prosecutor who worked with Bove.

Like O'Leary, the former prosecutor said Bove never voiced any reservations about the riot investigation. To the contrary, the former prosecutor said, Bove "gave strong, direct encouragement to the line prosecutors to aggressively pursue the investigation, legal process, support FBI, etc."

The person spoke on condition of anonymity in order to describe the office's internal dynamics.



POLITICS

Trump gave pardons to hundreds of violent Jan. 6 rioters. Here's what they did

As the unit co-chief, Bove also took part in weekly meetings of the [Joint Terrorism Task Force](#) in New York, which gave him an overview of cases and operations in the New York region, including Jan. 6 investigations.

Bove and his team, O'Leary said, "were intimately involved in all of these cases and very knowledgeable of it [the investigation]."

"I always had a good working relationship with him, was impressed with him as an attorney, as a trustworthy partner, as a committed professional to our counterterrorism cases," O'Leary said.

But his view has changed in recent weeks in light of what Bove has done since moving into a top job in Trump's Justice Department.

"I'm really surprised and disappointed by his actions, how he's pursuing FBI agents and employees who were conducting investigations in the same manner that they would have conducted any investigation," O'Leary said.

Moves at the agency

Bove left the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan about a year after the Capitol riot. He moved into private practice and joined Trump's [legal defense team](#) alongside Todd Blanche, who has been nominated to serve as deputy attorney general at the Justice Department under Attorney General Pam Bondi.

If Blanche is confirmed, Bove would serve as his top deputy. But until then, Bove has been the acting deputy attorney general.

And in that role, over the past three weeks, he has imposed a series of personnel moves that have [shaken the department](#) and the FBI.

He has [transferred](#) several top career attorneys with decades of experience to a new office that handles immigration enforcement, effectively pushing them out of the department.

He's also fired dozens of Capitol riot prosecutors at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington, D.C. The Jan. 6 prosecutors were brought in during the Biden administration to help handle the more than 1,600 Capitol riot prosecutions, which was one of the largest investigations in Justice Department history.



INVESTIGATIONS

FBI agents, prosecutors fear retribution from Jan. 6 rioters pardoned by Trump

In a memo, Bove said hiring those prosecutors was a "subversive" step by the Biden

administration and hampered the ability of the department to "faithfully implement" Trump's agenda.

On the FBI front, he has [pushed out](#) eight senior bureau officials, according to the memo, and demanded the names of FBI agents who worked Jan. 6 cases, touching off fears of possible mass firings at the bureau.

Bove has told the bureau that the list of names is needed in order to review the agents' conduct in light of an executive order Trump signed about ending the purported [weaponization](#) of the federal government.

"No FBI employee who simply followed orders and carried out their duties in an ethical manner with respect to January 6 investigations is at risk of termination or other penalties," Bove wrote in an [email last week](#) addressed to all FBI employees.



POLITICS

DOJ says will not fire FBI agents who acted in 'ethical' way over Jan. 6 cases

The only individuals who should be concerned, he continued, "are those who acted with corrupt or partisan intent, who blatantly defied orders from Department leadership, or who exercised discretion in weaponizing the FBI."

After a tense back-and-forth, the FBI and acting Director Brian Driscoll ultimately provided a list of names of bureau employees to the Justice Department. Driscoll has told the FBI workforce that he is one of the agents who worked Jan. 6 cases, according to an email he sent.

While Bove didn't work as a line prosecutor charging defendants, he did supervise prosecutors doing the legal legwork on Jan. 6 cases.

In at least one instance, Bove and Driscoll worked on the same Jan. 6 case: the arrest of Samuel Fisher in Manhattan, according to the former prosecutor who worked with Bove in New York. Driscoll participated in the arrest of Fisher, who was ultimately sentenced to 120 days in prison for his activities at the U.S. Capitol. Bove was up late that night reviewing the legal paperwork to support the FBI, the former prosecutor said.

The former prosecutor said that if a list of department attorneys who worked on Jan 6. cases was collected in the same way as the list of FBI agents was, "Emil's name would surely be on that list as well."



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