

# National Archives Head Resigns as Trump Takes Control of Records

Sources name conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt and far-right journalist John Solomon as potential replacements.

and  
Dan Friedman David Corn



The National Archives building in Washington. Caroline Brehman/AP.

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**The acting head** of the National Archives announced his resignation on Friday, paving the way for Donald Trump to continue his takeover of the government's records and the agency that serves as custodian of the nation's history.

Deputy Archivist William Bosanko informed staff in an email Friday that he will step down on Tuesday. Bosanko, who has worked at the agency since 1993, has been the acting head of the National Archives and Records Administration for just a week, after Trump fired Archivist of the United States Colleen Shogan.

Under federal law, a president can fire the archivist but must also "communicate the reasons for any such removal to each House of the Congress." Trump did not do that. Over a week ago, the Trump White House moved to make Secretary of State Marco Rubio the acting archivist, despite standing law that the deputy archivist assumes those responsibilities if the position is vacant.

Bosanko's exit is part of a Trump putsch at the agency, which was deeply involved in the case of the top-secret documents Trump removed from the White House when he left office in 2021. According to two sources familiar with the situation, Bosanko was pushed out by Jim Byron, a 31-year old who was recently president of the Richard Nixon Foundation. Byron delivered Bosanko an ultimatum: Resign now or be fired next week.

Reached by phone Friday evening, Byron declined to comment.

Byron has been working out of the Archives' offices as a political appointee representing the White House. Byron has often described himself as a mentee of Hugh Hewitt, an ardent pro-Trump commentator who preceded Byron as head of the Nixon Foundation and who now sits on its board. (The Nixon Foundation and the Archives have occasionally been in conflict with each other, which often happens with presidential foundations and the government agency that oversees presidential libraries, according to an Archives source.)

Speculation at the Archives regarding the next head archivist has focused on Hewitt and two other candidates: John Solomon, a far-right journalist known for reporting and promoting false claims about Joe Biden's connections to

Ukraine in 2019, and Ezra Cohen-Watnick, a former senior director of intelligence at the National Security Council in the early days of the Trump administration, who was hired by then-National Security Adviser Michael Flynn (before Flynn was fired) and later ousted by H.R. McMaster, Flynn’s successor. (In 2022, Trump designated Solomon and Kash Patel, now his pick to lead the FBI, as his representatives to the Archives.)

After this story first published, Hewitt told *Mother Jones*, “I am never going back into government. Ever. I want to stay on air through the end of the story and then enjoy grandkids. Not for me.”

Trump clashed with the National Archives after leaving office in 2021 with a slew of government documents, many highly classified. Trump refused efforts by the Archives to retrieve the material, prompting the Justice Department to subpoena him for the missing documents. Trump allegedly then had staffers at his Mar-a-Lago residence hide boxes of classified documents from FBI investigators. And he allegedly ordered an aide to delete security camera footage of boxes being moved in a bid to hide evidence from a grand jury. Trump was also charged with violating the Espionage Act by showing classified material to visitors who lacked security clearances.

Trump, who has maintained without evidence that he declassified all the material he removed from the White House, avoided trial after Judge Aileen Cannon, a Trump appointee, threw out the case based on the claim that Special Counsel Jack Smith, who brought the charges, had not been properly appointed.

This makes the Archives a target for the revenge-a-thon Trump’s administration is mounting.

Under federal law, the chief archivist must “be appointed without regard to political affiliations and solely on the basis of the professional qualifications required to perform the duties and responsibilities of the office.” Trump, though, may have other qualifications in mind. With the archivist appointment, he not only will be able to extract payback; he will be able to control the government agency that helps shape American history.






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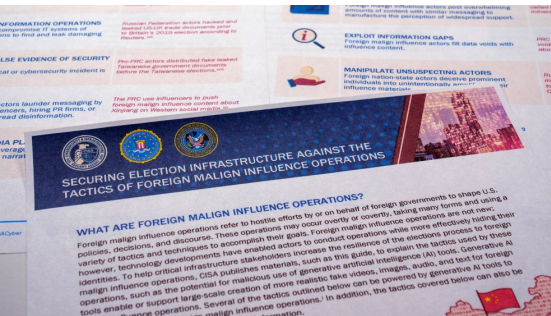
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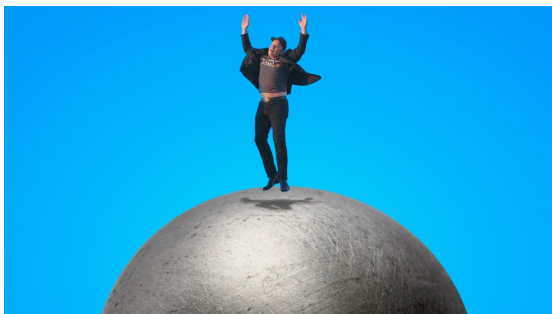
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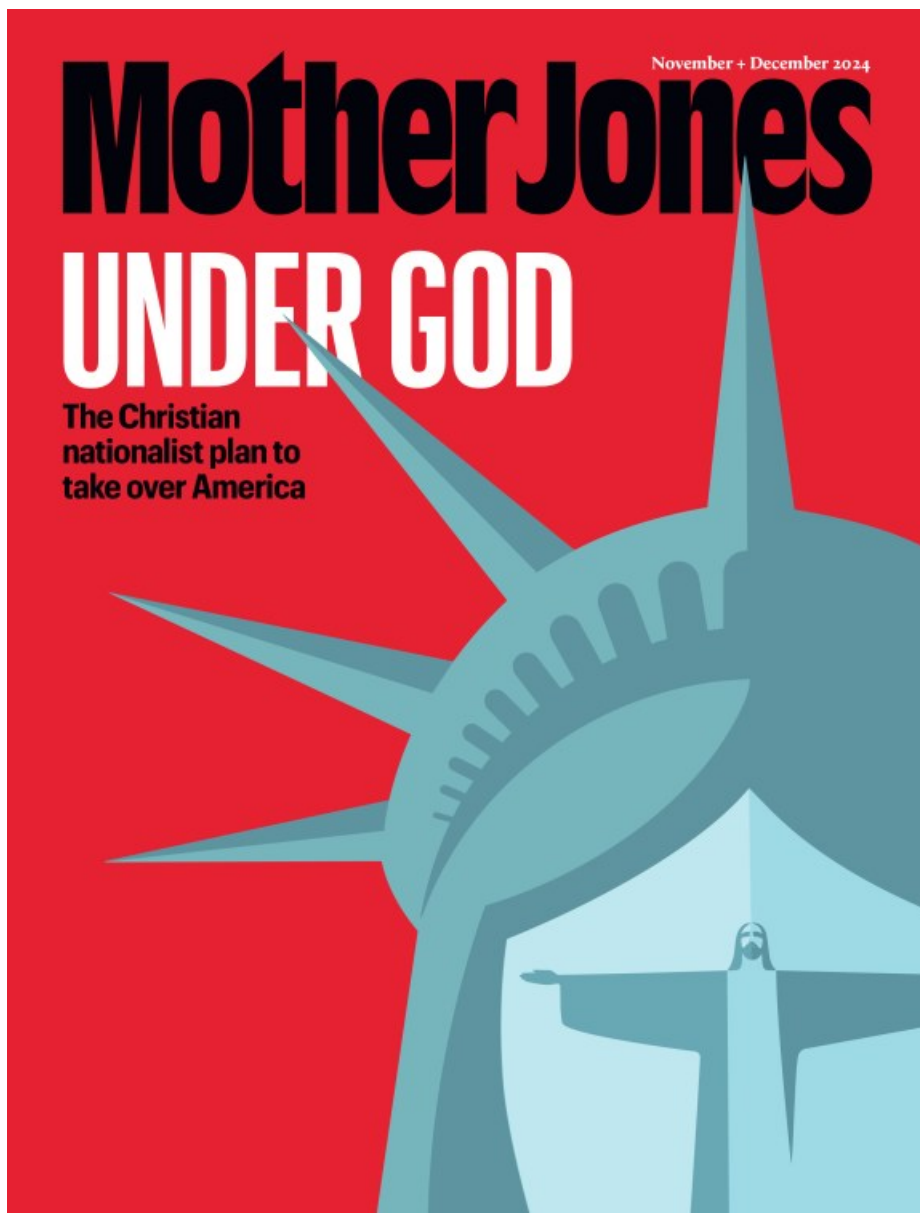
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