

# Senior FBI official who resisted Trump demands is ousted

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The FBI is forcing out more senior officials, including a former acting director who resisted Trump administration demands to turn over the names of agents who participated in Jan. 6 Capitol riot investigations. (AP Video by Nathan Ellgren)

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI is forcing out more senior officials, including a former acting director who resisted Trump administration demands to [turn over the names of agents](#) who participated in [Jan. 6 Capitol riot investigations](#) and the head of the bureau's Washington field office, according to people familiar with the matter and internal communications seen by The Associated Press.

The basis for the ouster of Brian Driscoll, who led the bureau in the turbulent weeks after President Donald Trump's inauguration in January, were not immediately clear, but Driscoll's final day at the FBI is Friday, said the people, who were not authorized to discuss the personnel move by name and spoke to the AP on the condition of anonymity.

"I understand that you may have a lot of questions regarding why, for which I have no answers," Driscoll wrote in a message to colleagues. "No cause has been articulated at this time."

Another high-profile termination is Steven Jensen, who for months had been the assistant director in charge of the Washington field office, one of the bureau's largest and busiest. He confirmed in a message to colleagues Thursday he had been told he was being fired effective Friday.

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“I intend to meet this challenge like any other I have faced in this organization, with professionalism, integrity and dignity,” Jensen wrote in an email.

Jensen did not say whether he had been given a reason, but his appointment to the job in April was sharply criticized by some Trump supporters because he had overseen a domestic terrorism section after the 2021 riot at the Capitol. The FBI has characterized that attack, in which the Republican president’s supporters [stormed the Capitol](#) in a bid to halt the certification of election results after [he lost to Democrat Joe Biden](#), as an act of domestic terrorism.

People familiar with the matter identified another agent being pushed out as Walter Giardina, who has drawn scrutiny from Sen. Chuck Grassley, the Republican chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. Giardina’s prior investigations have included the one into Trump aide Peter Navarro, who was convicted of contempt of Congress.

Spokespeople for the FBI declined to comment Thursday. The FBI Agents Association said in a statement that it was concerned by reports of the firings of senior leaders and that it was reviewing all legal options to defend its members. The group said firing agents without due process would make the country less safe.

“There is a review process when employment actions are taken against agents. The process was established so that the FBI could remain independent and apolitical. FBI leadership committed — both publicly and directly to FBIAA — that they would abide by that process. We urge them to honor that commitment and follow the law,” the statement said.

## **A broader personnel purge**

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The news about Driscoll and Jensen comes amid a much broader personnel purge that has unfolded over the last several months under the leadership of FBI [Director Kash Patel](#) and his deputy, Dan Bongino. Numerous senior officials including top agents in charge of big-city field offices have been pushed out of their jobs, and some agents have been subjected to polygraph exams, moves that former officials say have roiled the workforce and contributed to angst.

Driscoll is a veteran agent who worked international counterterrorism investigations in New York and had commanded the bureau’s Hostage Rescue Team. He had most recently served as acting director in charge of the FBI’s Critical Incident Response Group, which deploys resources to crisis situations.

Driscoll was named acting director in January to replace [Christopher Wray](#) and served in the position as Patel’s nomination was pending.

Driscoll made headlines after he and Robert Kissane, the then-deputy director, resisted Trump administration demands for a list of agents who participated in investigations into the Jan. 6 riot. Many within the FBI had seen that request as a precursor for mass firings, particularly in light of separate moves to fire [members of special counsel Jack Smith's team that prosecuted Trump](#), reassign senior career Justice Department officials and force out prosecutors on Jan. 6 cases and top FBI executives.

## The Justice Department's request

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Emil Bove, the then-senior Justice Department official who made the request and was last week [confirmed for a seat on a federal appeals court](#), wrote [a memo](#) at the time accusing the FBI's top leaders of "insubordination" for resisting his requests "to identify the core team" responsible for Jan. 6 investigations.

He said the requests were meant to "permit the Justice Department to conduct a review of those particular agents' conduct pursuant to Trump's executive order" on "weaponization" in the Biden administration.

Responding to Bove's request, the FBI provided personnel details about several thousand employees, identifying them by unique employee numbers rather than by names.

In his farewell note, Driscoll told colleagues that it was "the honor of my life to serve alongside each of you."

He wrote: "Our collective sacrifice for those we serve is, and will always be, worth it. I regret nothing. You are my heroes and I remain in your debt."

## Agents demoted, reassigned and pushed out

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The FBI has moved under Patel's watch to aggressively demote, reassign or push out agents seen as being out of favor with bureau leadership or the Trump administration.

In April, for instance, the bureau [reassigned several agents](#) who were photographed kneeling during a racial justice protest in Washington that followed [the 2020 death of George Floyd](#) at the hands of Minneapolis police officers.

Numerous special agents in charge of field offices have been told to retire, resign or accept reassignment.

Another agent, Michael Feinberg, has said publicly that he was told to resign or accept a demotion amid scrutiny from leadership of his friendship with Peter Strzok, [a lead agent on the FBI's Trump-Russia investigation](#) who was fired by the Justice Department in 2018 following revelations that he had exchanged negative text messages about Trump with an FBI lawyer, Lisa Page. Feinberg said he resigned.

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Associated Press writer Alanna Durkin Richer in Washington contributed to this report.