

Fascist podcaster and Trump loyalist Dan Bongino named FBI deputy director

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On Sunday, President Donald Trump posted on his social media site that fascist radio/podcast host Daniel (Dan) Bongino would be the next deputy director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), working directly under recently confirmed Kash Patel. On Monday, Patel was also sworn in as the acting director of the Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) agency, putting him in charge of two separate Department of Justice agencies.

In addition to being a virulent anti-communist, Bongino's chief qualification for leading operations at the FBI is his unflinching loyalty to Trump and his fascist politics, which he defends in near-daily television, radio and internet programs. His installation, like Patel's, portends the further transformation of the repressive domestic police/intelligence agency into a personalist force loyal to Trump.

Trump wrote on Sunday that Bongino's installation was "Great news for Law Enforcement and American Justice!" He declared that Bongino will be "working with our great new United States Attorney General, Pam Bondi, and Director Patel. Fairness, Justice, Law and Order will be brought back to America, and quickly."

The following day, Patel posted on social media that he welcomed Bongino, whom he characterized as "a warrior and lifelong servant." Patel added, "He's a cop's cop."

Bongino, 50, is a former New York Police Department cop who began working for the US Secret Service in 1999. When Hillary Clinton ran for Senate that year, Bongino was assigned to help protect her. After Clinton's campaign, Bongino was assigned to protective details for Presidents George W. Bush and eventually Barack Obama.

Bongino left the Secret Service in 2011 and ran for Senate as a Republican in Maryland in 2012, losing to incumbent Democrat Ben Cardin by nearly 30 percentage points. Two years later, Bongino challenged incumbent

Democratic Rep. John Delaney for Maryland's 6th District, losing by just over 3,000 votes. After moving to Florida, Bongino ran for Congress again in 2016, this time failing to advance in Florida's 19th Congressional District Republican primary.

Throughout his congressional campaigns, Bongino made regular appearances on Alex Jones' *InfoWars* program. He attempted to cultivate support among Jones' fascist audience by parlaying his experience in the Secret Service to lend credibility to Jones' deranged conspiracy theories. At the same time, Bongino began publishing "behind the scenes" books detailing his alleged experiences in the Secret Service and criticizing Obama and the Democrats.

Following the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bongino joined the chorus of pro-pandemic personalities railing against vaccine mandates and the efficacy of masks in preventing the spread of airborne viruses. Under the Biden administration, Bongino called on his listeners to engage in "mass civil disobedience" in response to the US government and companies enforcing vaccination. In 2022, Bongino was permanently suspended from YouTube after railing against medical masks, which he dubbed "face diapers."

Bongino's far-right political activism goes back more than a decade. Beginning in 2013, Bongino began coordinating his political efforts with top Trump coup co-conspirator Virginia "Ginni" Thomas, wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. In 2013, *Mother Jones* reported that Bongino was among the "conveners" listed in a May 8, 2013 meeting of Groundswell operatives that included Stephen K. Bannon, then chairman of Breitbart; Leonard Leo of the Federalist Society; and Lori Roman, "a former executive director of the American Legislative Exchange Council," or ALEC, a powerful corporate front group that writes "model legislation" for capitalist politicians.

In 2015, Bongino began hosting “The Dan Bongino Show,” a video podcast which quickly became popular on Facebook and YouTube despite Bongino’s constant caterwauling about “big tech” censorship.

A frequent hawker and promoter of guns, in 2018 Bongino briefly hosted a program for the National Rifle Association. In 2019, Bongino started “The Bongino Report,” a far-right news aggregate site. Bongino also regularly appeared on Fox News and hosted a Saturday night program, “Unfiltered,” until 2023.

Throughout the first Trump administration, Groundswell, now known as Third Century Group (TC Group), had high-level access to the Trump administration, regularly holding meetings with White House officials. Following Trump’s loss to Biden in the 2020 election, Groundswell operatives were activated to “stop the steal” and keep Trump in power.

In a 2021 interview with the *New Yorker*, Bongino admitted that Ginni Thomas was a “good friend” who was constantly encouraging him to do more. He said: “She says all the time, ‘Dan, we’re the leaders we’ve been waiting for.’ Everybody is waiting for this white knight to come and save the day, but it’s not going to happen. We’re the ones.”

As leader of Groundswell, Thomas admitted, under questioning by the January 6 House Select Committee, that she coordinated the group’s efforts to overturn Trump’s loss, primarily through advancing the “independent state legislature” theory, which posits that state legislatures, not voters, have the power to choose presidential electors.

Working in concert with Republican lawyers Cleta Mitchell and John Eastman, Thomas emailed Republican state legislatures in battleground states Trump lost demanding they reject the popular vote and instead install pro-Trump electors. “Article II of the United States Constitution gives you an awesome responsibility to choose our state’s electors,” Thomas wrote to then-Arizona Speaker of the House Rusty Bowers and other lawmakers following Trump’s defeat.

While Thomas was pressuring Republican lawmakers, Bongino, alongside Alex Jones and other Trump-aligned media personalities, used their programs to advance Trump’s lies and gin up support for the January 6 assault on Congress. Leading up to the attack, Bongino repeatedly parroted Trump’s claim that the election was tainted with “mass voter fraud.” He also hosted Trump’s coup lawyers Rudy Giuliani and Sidney Powell to push bogus claims that Dominion Voting machines had been

manipulated against Trump.

There is no question that Bongino’s regurgitation of Trump’s lies animated at least some of the fascists. National Public Radio reported in January 2021 that Air Force veteran and QAnon adherent Ashli Babbitt retweeted posts from Bongino 50 times during the last year of her life. Babbitt was shot and killed while trying to breach the House Chambers on January 6.

Following the attack on the Capitol on January 6, Bongino, like Trump, was briefly suspended from Twitter. This did not stop Bongino from continuing to defend Trump and downplay the attack. Like Patel, Bongino has advanced the “fedsurrection” narrative, which blames the “deep state” for luring gullible Trump supporters to the Capitol.

As deputy director of the FBI, Bongino will carry out Trump and Patel’s dictates to prosecute political opponents and use the instruments of the state for domestic repression.

The installation of Trump co-conspirators at the top levels of the FBI underscores the fact that the fight against fascism cannot be waged through the Democratic Party or the bourgeois courts. Four years after January 6, not only has the aspiring dictator returned to the White House, his top allies now occupy leading positions in the repressive police state.

The defense of democratic rights requires the mobilization of the working class against the entire US political establishment and its police agencies, which do not exist to “protect” the lives and rights of the vast majority of the population, but to protect social inequality and the dictatorship of the oligarchy.



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