

FBI deputy director says he's leaving in January

Zac Anderson and Josh Meyer
USA TODAY

FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino announced Dec. 17 he is leaving in January after less than a year as the No. 2 official at the nation's premier law enforcement agency – and after reported conflict with Attorney General Pam Bondi over the release of the Jeffrey Epstein investigative files.

Bongino is a former Secret Service agent, New York City police officer and host of the podcast "The Dan Bongino Show," which brought him an audience of millions of followers and supporters of Trump's "Make America Great Again" movement.

Since March, he has helped lead a shakeup of federal law enforcement by Trump loyalists. With Patel in charge and Bongino as his deputy, the agency purged top FBI officials, including a former acting director and other senior leaders, claiming they were too politicized and not sufficiently loyal to Trump and his agenda. Some of the ousted FBI leaders filed a federal lawsuit they had been illegally terminated.

When asked about Bongino on Dec. 17, Trump said, "Dan did a great job. I think he wants to go back to his show."



FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino announced on Dec. 17 he is leaving the law enforcement agency in January after less than a year in his position.

KYLIE COOPER/REUTERS FILE

as the agency deputy, who traditionally oversees the vast law enforcement agency and its day-to-day operations. The role has previously been held by career FBI agents who were familiar with its broad portfolio of law enforcement and intelligence work.

Bongino's earlier roles in the Secret Service's Presidential Protective Division and as a police officer had helped propel him to a prominent position as a Fox News host and prominent voice in conservative media.

He used that platform to rail repeatedly against the FBI and Justice Department for their handling of the Epstein files, suggesting a cover-up intended to protect influential men who were allegedly part of the late financier's sex trafficking ring.

Once at the FBI, however, Bongino declared on Fox News that he'd reviewed the FBI files and determined that Epstein did, in fact, kill himself – and that he didn't keep a client list as pro-MAGA conservatives had long claimed.

In July, the FBI and DOJ further infuriated Bongino's former followers by announcing that after "an exhaustive review," they were not going to release the Epstein files after determining "that no further disclosure would be appropriate or warranted."

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR DESIGNATION OF BROWNFIELD AREA

Subject: 9450 SE Gomez Avenue Brownfield Designation. This is a request by Oasis Development, LLC and The Palms of Hobe Sound, LLC for adoption of a resolution designating the property located at 9450 SE Gomez Avenue as the Oasis Site Rehabilitation Area, also known as a brownfield, on approximately 19.44 acres. This designation is proposed pursuant to Florida Statute Section 376.80.

Location: The subject site is located on the west side of SE Gomez Avenue, east of SE Dixie Highway and east of SE Federal Highway. The site is formerly known as the Sunshine State Carnation Farms.

The Martin County Board of County Commissioners will conduct two public hearings on the request. The second public hearing will be as follows:

Public hearing: BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS (BCC)

Time: 5:05 P.M., or as soon after as the matter may be heard

Dates: Tuesday, January 6, 2026

Place: Martin County Administrative Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida 34996

All interested persons are invited to attend and be heard.

The public hearing will be held in the Commission Chambers on the first floor of the Martin County Administrative Center, 2401 SE Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida 34996. Written comments may be mailed to: Paul Schilling, Director, Martin County Growth Management Department, 2401 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart, Florida 34996. For further information, including copies of the original application or agenda items, contact Jenna Knobbe, Senior Planner at (772) 288-5495.

Persons with disabilities who need an accommodation in order to participate in this proceeding are entitled, at no cost, to the provision of certain assistance. This does not include transportation to and from the meeting. Please contact the Office of the ADA Coordinator at (772) 320-3131, or the Office of the County Administrator at (772) 288-5400, or in writing to 2401 S.E. Monterey Road, Stuart, FL, 34996, no later than three days before the hearing date. Persons using a TTY device, please call 711 Florida Relay Services.

If any person decides to appeal any decision made with respect to any matter considered at the meetings or hearings of any board, committee, agency, council, or advisory group, that person will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to insure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record should include the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.

Location map

Group digs for truth behind U.S. secrets

Michael Loria
USA TODAY

A secret Central Intelligence Agency mind control program, National Security Agency spy operations aimed at Martin Luther King Jr. and Muhammad Ali. A federal manual for political assassinations.

It's not just the stuff of spy novels. It's also part of the daily work of the National Security Archive, which is turning 40.

The archive, a self-described group of "activist archivists," is not a government agency and collects declassified documents acquired through the Freedom of Information Act and other sources. Since its founding in 1985, the group has uncovered some of the nation's darkest secrets.

"These documents reveal what was done in the name of the American people but without their knowledge," Peter Kornbluh, an analyst with the group since 1986, told USA TODAY. "These declassified documents are the currency of history. They contain the words, positions and operations of foreign policy actors of the United States of America, and often they contain summaries of operations in other countries that are the only documentation of what happened there, so they will remain forever invaluable."

The group is celebrating their 40th anniversary this week. Documents obtained by the archives group shed light on everything from how U.S. officials backed coups in Latin America to the torture of terrorist suspects at black sites after 9/11.

According to legal experts and government watchdogs, the body of work produced by the archive serves a vital function in the nation by providing a check on government power.

"Without those 20 historians, archivists, and document nerds, government would be more able to control public narratives," said Stephen Kinzer, the author of books on the nation's covert operations around the globe. "Their work is especially important under an Administration as dedicated to secrecy as this one."

The group's anniversary comes at a point where Americans are calling for government transparency.

President Donald Trump came into office and quickly moved to release long-secret files, namely related to the assassinations of former President John F. Kennedy, his brother and presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy, and civil rights icon Martin Luther King Jr.

Recently, widespread calls for the Justice Department to release files from the investigation of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein spurred Congress to pass the Jeffrey Epstein Transparency Act. And on Dec. 10, the House passed a bill that would force the Pentagon to release video showing a military strike on survivors of a U.S. attack on an alleged drug cartel vessel.

However, according to scholars, some of the most telling files in the nation's history have only come to



A 1973 memo, titled "Potentially Embarrassing Agency Activities," notes that CIA plans to kill Cuban leader Fidel Castro had already been reported on in the media. "While the columns contained many factual errors, the allegations are basically true."

PROVIDED BY AIN-OMARA GARCIA MEDEROS/MIA REUTERS

light through the work of determined analysts at the archive.

Among the archive's biggest coups is a 702-page collection of CIA files known as the "family jewels" report. The documents detail "25 years of Agency misdeeds," the archive said in releasing the files in 2007.

One memo, titled "Potentially Embarrassing Agency Activities," lists a catalog of CIA plans that have since become classic examples of how top government leaders lost control of the agency.

Among items listed in the 1973 memo was a program to "influence human behavior through the administration of mind or personality altering drugs to unwitting subjects"; confirmation that there was "quite extensive Agency involvement" in the assassination of Rafael Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic; and plots to assassinate Cuban leader Fidel Castro.

The memo notes that CIA plans to kill Castro had already been reported on in the media: "While the columns contained many factual errors, the allegations are basically true."

Covering the release of the documents, USA TODAY reported the documents included a 1960 plot to poison Cuban leader Fidel Castro by conspiring with "organized-crime figures and an aide to tycoon Howard Hughes."

"We will find in the press coverage of today's release reminders of some things the CIA should not have done," CIA Director Gen. Michael Hayden was reported saying. "The documents truly do provide a glimpse of a very different era and a very different agency."

Archive analysts rely on the Freedom of Information Act to gain access to the long-secret documents. The federal law dating back to 1967 obligates government agencies to turn over records to the public with some exceptions.

Indian River County Solid Waste Disposal District (S.W.D.D.) wishes everyone

Happy Holidays!

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PACKAGING MATERIALS Styrofoam, bubble wrap, air pillows and wraps may be recycled at any of the 5 Convenience Centers or Main Landfill.

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