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CORRUPTION

# New FBI Whistleblower Says Deputy Director Threatened Agents Uncomfortable With J6 Investigations

BY: TRISTAN JUSTICE

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## A whistleblower claimed Abbate threatened FBI employees concerned about the bureau’s overblown response to the Jan. 6 riot.



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**A**n independent nonprofit government watchdog that specializes in whistleblower protection sent letters to Congress and the Department

of Justice (DOJ) this week with more evidence of misconduct by FBI leadership.

On Thursday, Empower Oversight [submitted](#) an affidavit of a new FBI whistleblower who came forward with allegations of improper intimidation by FBI Deputy Director Paul Abbate. The whistleblower claimed that shortly after Abbate's appointment in February 2021, Abbate threatened agency employees concerned about the bureau's overblown response to the Jan. 6 Capitol demonstrations that same year.

During a secure video conference, said the unnamed employee, Abbate called on agency staff with concerns about the bureau's approach to the Jan. 6 riot to meet with the deputy director personally so he could, in the whistleblower's words, "set them straight."

"I have witnessed hundreds of Director [Secure Video Teleconference]s and have never seen a direct threat like that any other time," the whistleblower said in the affidavit. "It was chilling and personal, communicating clearly that there would be consequences for anyone that questioned his direction."

In May, House lawmakers on the Select Subcommittee on the Weaponization of the Federal Government [heard](#) from several other FBI whistleblowers who made similar claims about the conduct of agency leadership.

Former FBI Special Agent Steve Friend, who filed for whistleblower protection in August, told the committee he raised concerns over the FBI's reaction to the Capitol riot, which he thought "could have undermined potentially righteous prosecutions and may have been part of an effort to inflate the FBI's statistics on domestic extremism."

"I also voiced concerns that the FBI's use of SWAT and large-scale arrest operations to apprehend suspects who were accused of nonviolent crimes and misdemeanors, represented by counsel, and who pledged to cooperate with the federal authorities in the event of criminal charges created an unnecessary risk to FBI personnel and public safety," Friend said. "At each level of my chain of command, leadership cautioned that despite my exemplary work performance, whistleblowing placed my otherwise bright future with the FBI at risk."

Garret O'Boyle, another former FBI special agent who filed for whistleblower protection, told lawmakers how he moved his family "halfway across the country" before the FBI suspended him for speaking out.

"They allowed us to sell my family's home. They ordered me to report to the new unit when our youngest daughter was only two weeks old. Then, on my first day on the new assignment, they suspended me; rendering my family homeless and refused to release our household goods, including our clothes, for weeks," O'Boyle said.

House Republicans on the Judiciary Committee, led by Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan, have [sought testimony](#) from at least 16 FBI employees to probe agency misconduct related to whistleblower retaliation.

Empower Oversight made clear in a Thursday [press release](#) that "while the affiant doesn't know and isn't associated with Empower Oversight's other FBI clients, the affidavit is relevant to FBI whistleblower cases that are currently under inspector general review."

According to the affidavit, Abbate's threat goes against the bureau's training for new employees who are taken for a tour of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to learn about the lessons for law enforcement.

"The message was this: when orders or policies are wrong, when we are told to do things that violate core values and principles, we must have the courage to ask difficult questions and raise objections. We should be able to do that without fear of being crushed," the whistleblower said. "The Deputy Director's threats sent the opposite message: Dissent will not be tolerated. If you question my response to January 6, I don't want you in my FBI."

"Abbate's threat to employees was witnessed by numerous other FBI employees and constitutes evidence of intent to retaliate against any dissent," said Empower Oversight President Tristan Leavitt. "This evidence can be independently corroborated by dozens, if not hundreds, of other FBI employees if congressional committees and the Justice Department Inspector General would investigate and document the results."

The FBI has spent years stonewalling congressional oversight into agency conduct surrounding the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021. In May, Jordan re-upped [demands](#) for an FBI briefing over the two pipe bombs planted at the RNC and DNC. The FBI, [according](#) to former FBI Agent Kyle Seraphin in an interview with The Washington Times, knows what car the suspect used but hasn't pursued the individual in question.

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The pipe bombs, Seraphin added, were found inoperable.

The FBI has also [refused](#) to answer Republican lawmakers' questions about the extent of the agency's involvement at the Capitol on the day of the riot. Three months after The New York Times ran the [headline](#), "No, there is no evidence that the F.B.I. organized the Jan. 6 Capitol riot," the paper followed up with [another](#) in September 2021: "Among Those Who Marched Into the Capitol on Jan. 6: An F.B.I. Informant."

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*Tristan Justice is the western correspondent for The Federalist and the author of Social Justice Redux, a conservative newsletter on culture, health, and wellness. He has also written for The Washington Examiner and The Daily Signal. His work has also been featured in Real Clear Politics and Fox News. Tristan graduated from George Washington University where he majored in political science and minored in journalism. Follow him on Twitter at @JusticeTristan or contact him at Tristan@thefederalist.com. Sign up for Tristan's email newsletter [here](#).*

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