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FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino claimed the pipe bomb case was a “setup” and an “inside job” in several episodes of his show, “The Dan Bongino Show.” ANDREW HARNIK/GETTY IMAGES

DOJ identifies suspect in Jan. 6 pipe bomb case

FBI leaders previously cast doubt on probe

Rebecca Morin
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – Before joining the Trump administration, FBI Director Kash Patel and Deputy Director Dan Bongino promoted conspiracy theories about the pipe bombs planted in Washington ahead of the U.S. Capitol attack on Jan. 6, 2021, going as far as calling it an “inside job.”

The Justice Department, which includes the FBI, identified a suspect in the case on Dec. 4 after a nearly five-

year investigation.

But years before, both Patel and Bongino repeatedly cast doubt on the investigation into the pipe bombs found outside the facilities, specifically the one found at the Democratic National Committee headquarters when Kamala Harris, who was then-vice president-elect, was at the facility.

Attorney General Pam Bondi, alongside Patel and Bongino, on Dec. 4 identified Brian Cole Jr., 30, of Woodbridge, Virginia, as the suspect in the investigation into the pipe bombs found outside both the Republican National Committee and Democratic National Committee headquarters.

Cole is being charged with use of an

explosive device as more search warrants were still being executed on Dec. 4, Bondi said at a news conference.

“You’re not going to walk into our capital city, put down two explosive devices and walk off in the sunset,” Bongino said at the press conference on Dec. 4. “Not going to happen. We were going to track this person to the end of the earth.”

Patel and Bongino praised President Donald Trump’s FBI and Justice Department in finding the suspect. But in 2024, they promoted conspiracy theories about the incident.

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Netflix-WB deal represents ‘seismic shift’ for industry

Agreement could face strong antitrust scrutiny

Mike Snider
USA TODAY

Netflix has agreed to buy Warner Bros. Discovery’s TV and film studios and streaming division for \$72 billion, a blockbuster deal that would give the streaming pioneer control of one of Hollywood’s oldest and most prized assets.

The agreement, announced on Dec. 5, followed a weekslong bidding war where Netflix seized the lead with a nearly \$28-a-share offer that eclipsed Paramount

Skydance’s nearly \$24-a-share bid for the whole of Warner Bros. Discovery, including the cable TV assets slated for a spinoff. Comcast was the third suitor.

At the close of markets on Dec. 4, Warner Bros. Discovery had a market value of \$61 billion.

If the deal goes through, it would reshape the media landscape.

A combined Netflix and Warner Bros. Discovery could further tilt the power balance in Hollywood in favor of the streaming giant, helping it ward off competition from Walt Disney and the Ellison family-backed Paramount.

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A combined Netflix and Warner Bros. Discovery could further tilt the power balance in Hollywood in favor of the streaming giant. MIKE BLAKE/REUTERS FILE

Panel revises hepatitis B guidance

Committee urges individual-based decision making

Ken Alltucker
USA TODAY

Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s influential vaccine advisory panel on Dec. 5 voted to no longer universally recommend the first dose of the hepatitis B vaccine for newborns within 24 hours of birth.

One day after tabling the vote during a contentious meeting, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended “individual-based decision making” for parents of babies born to mothers who test negative for hepatitis B. For parents who decline the birth dose, the panel recommended the first shot be delayed to “no earlier than two months of age.”

Committee members who supported the change emphasized the panel still recommended newborns get vaccinated at birth when born to a mother with hepatitis B. The panel’s recommendations are sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention director. The committee does not have regulatory authority, but states often consider the panel’s recommendation when requiring vaccines for school-age children and other groups.

Robert Malone, the committee’s vice chairman, characterized the vote as one that pitted individual rights against societal obligations.

“We’re torn by these two conflicting points of views,” Malone said. “There are these two fundamental differences of opinion about the rights of individuals versus the rights of society.”

Committee member Cody Meissner rejected the changes. He said hepatitis B cases are dropping due to the effectiveness of the vaccine.

“It’s a mistake to say, because we’re not seeing so much disease, we can alter the ... frequency or the schedule for administration because we will see hepatitis B infections come back,” Meissner said.

Committee member Joseph Hibbeln said the committee lacked the data to support wording to delay the first dose, noting there isn’t enough evidence to suggest some babies might be better protected by such a delay. He also noted the wording of the questions had been changed four times over four days.

Committee member Retsef Levi, who supported the change, said the risk for children born to a mom without hepatitis B is extremely low.

“Do you want to expose your baby to an intervention that could have some potential harms?” Levi said.

U.S. Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-Louisiana, has been critical of efforts to change the hepatitis B vaccine schedule. On Dec. 4, he criticized the committee’s decision to invite Aaron Siri to discuss vaccinations, calling him a “trial attorney who makes his living suing vaccine manufacturers. He is presenting as if an expert on childhood vaccines.”

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