

C A M P A I G N F O R

ACCOUNTABILITY

May 27, 2026

VIA EMAIL

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Hon. Laura Taylor Swain
Chief District Judge
c/o Julie Allsman, Counsel to the Committee on Grievances
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Re: Complaint Against Todd Blanche, New York Atty. Regis. No. 4192456

Dear Mr. Dopico and Judge Swain:

Campaign for Accountability, a 501(c)(3) nonpartisan, nonprofit watchdog organization, respectfully requests that the Attorney Grievance Committee of the First Judicial Department of New York and the Committee on Grievances of the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (together, the “Committees”) investigate Todd Blanche, a New York-licensed attorney and Acting Attorney General of the United States, for potential violations of the New York Rules of Professional Conduct¹ arising out of his conduct in the matter of *United States v. Abrego Garcia*, No. 3:25-cr-00115 (M.D. Tenn.), and *Abrego Garcia v. Noem*, No. 8:25-cv-00951 (D. Md). As documented in detail in a May 22, 2026 Memorandum Opinion, Chief United States District Judge Waverly D. Crenshaw, Jr., dismissed the indictment of Mr. Abrego as the un rebutted product of a presumptively vindictive prosecution instigated by Mr. Blanche.² Further, Mr. Blanche placed DOJ Acting Deputy Director of the Office of Immigration

¹All rule references are to the New York Rules of Professional Conduct, 22 N.Y.C.R.R. Part 1200, available at <https://www.nycourts.gov/ad3/agc/rules/22NYCRR-Part-1200.pdf>. The committee also has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 530B (the McDade Amendment).

² *United States v. Abrego Garcia*, Mem. Op., Case No. 3:25-cr-00115 (M.D. Tenn. May 22, 2026) (Crenshaw, C.J.) (the “Opinion”), available at <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/70475970/312/united-states-v-abrego-garcia/>.

Litigation Erez Reuveni on administrative leave for refusing to advance in court arguments that were factually unsupported and Mr. Reuveni was terminated just a few days later.

Based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law set forth in Judge Crenshaw's opinion, and as further detailed below, Mr. Blanche's conduct potentially violated numerous Rules of Professional Conduct, including Rule 8.4(c) (prohibiting conduct involving "dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation"), Rule 8.4(d) (prohibiting conduct "prejudicial to the administration of justice"), Rule 8.4(h) (prohibiting conduct that "adversely reflects on the lawyer's fitness as a lawyer"), and Rule 3.4(e) (prohibiting the threatened or actual presentation of criminal charges "solely to obtain an advantage in a civil matter"). His conduct also potentially violated Rule 8.4(a)³ and Rule 5.1(d)⁴ by inducing or directing other Department of Justice ("DOJ") lawyers to act despite a personal conflict of interest in violation of Rule 1.7(a)(2)⁵ and to make material misrepresentations to a federal tribunal in violation of Rule 3.3(a)(1).⁶

In addition to violating his obligations under the Rules, Mr. Blanche swore upon admission to the New York Bar to "support the Constitution of the United States" and to "faithfully discharge the duties of the office of attorney and counselor at law." Based on the findings of fact and conclusions of law as set forth in Judge Crenshaw's opinion, Mr. Blanche's conduct in connection with the Abrego Garcia matter is a serious abuse of public office, undermines the integrity of the Department of Justice, and erodes public confidence in the legal profession and in the fair administration of justice.⁷

I. Background

At all times relevant to this complaint, Mr. Blanche served as Deputy Attorney General of the United States and was the direct supervisor of Aakash Singh, an Associate Deputy Attorney General in the Office of the Deputy Attorney General ("ODAG"). Mr. Blanche reported in turn to

³ N.Y. Rules of Prof'l Conduct R. 8.4(a) ("A lawyer or law firm shall not . . . violate or attempt to violate the Rules of Professional Conduct, knowingly assist or induce another to do so, or do so through the acts of another.").

⁴ N.Y. Rules of Prof'l Conduct R. 5.1(d) ("A lawyer shall be responsible for a violation of these Rules by another lawyer if: (1) the lawyer orders or directs the specific conduct or, with knowledge of the specific conduct, ratifies it; or (2) the lawyer is a partner in a law firm or is a lawyer who individually or together with other lawyers possesses comparable managerial responsibility in a law firm in which the other lawyer practices or is a lawyer who has supervisory authority over the other lawyer; and (i) knows of such conduct at a time when it could be prevented or its consequences avoided or mitigated but fails to take reasonable remedial action; or (ii) in the exercise of reasonable management or supervisory authority should have known of the conduct so that reasonable remedial action could have been taken at a time when the consequences of the conduct could have been avoided or mitigated.").

⁵ N.Y. Rules of Prof'l Conduct R. 1.7(a)(2) (a lawyer shall not represent a client if "there is a significant risk that the lawyer's professional judgment on behalf of a client will be adversely affected by the lawyer's own financial, business, property or other personal interests").

⁶ N.Y. Rules of Prof'l Conduct R. 3.3(a)(1) (a lawyer shall not knowingly "make a false statement of fact or law to a tribunal or fail to correct a false statement of material fact or law previously made to the tribunal by the lawyer").

⁷ N.Y. Rules of Prof'l Conduct R. 8.4 cmt. [5] ("Lawyers holding public office assume legal responsibilities going beyond those of other citizens. A lawyer's abuse of public office can suggest an inability to fulfill the professional role of lawyers.").

then-Attorney General Pamela Bondi.⁸ Mr. Blanche has since been designated Acting Attorney General. Robert E. McGuire is the Acting U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee.

A. The Civil Litigation in the District of Maryland

On March 15, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) removed Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia from the United States to El Salvador, an act DHS later acknowledged was due to “administrative error.”⁹ On March 24, 2025, Mr. Abrego filed a civil action in the District of Maryland challenging that removal.¹⁰ On April 4, 2025, Maryland District Court Judge Paula Xinis ordered DHS to “facilitate” Mr. Abrego’s return. On April 7, 2025, the Fourth Circuit denied a stay sought by the government, and on April 10, 2025, the United States Supreme Court affirmed in part, holding that the order “properly require[d]” DHS to facilitate the return.¹¹ On April 11, 2025, Judge Xinis found DHS had “made no meaningful effort to comply” with that order and required daily status reports.¹²

On April 15, 2025, the government represented to the Maryland court that “DHS does not have authority to forcibly extract an alien from the domestic custody of a foreign sovereign nation,” which Judge Crenshaw noted, was contradicted by the executive branch’s coordinated return of Mr. Abrego in June 2025.¹³

On June 24, 2025, former DOJ Acting Deputy Director of the Office of Immigration Litigation Erez Reuveni filed a whistleblower complaint providing illuminating details about Mr. Abrego’s removal and repatriation. After Mr. Abrego challenged his removal, Mr. Reuveni took on the matter, which he “initially believed could be resolved through a straightforward return of Mr. Abrego Garcia to the United States,” given that prior practice when DHS had removed someone in error was to seek to resolve the matter without further litigation by correcting the error.¹⁴ Mr. Reuveni sought to arrange Mr. Abrego’s return, but was told by both DHS and Department of State lawyers that “they would only consider any action to attempt to remedy the illegal removal

⁸ Op. at 4 (“The Deputy Attorney General at the time is Todd Blanche. Aakash Singh is an Associate Deputy Attorney General in the Office of the Deputy Attorney General (‘ODAG’) who reports to Blanche.”).

⁹ *Noem v. Abrego Garcia*, 145 S. Ct. 1017, 1018 (2025) (affirming, in part, order requiring the executive branch to “facilitate” Mr. Abrego’s return from El Salvador).

¹⁰ *Abrego Garcia v. Noem*, Complaint, Case No. 8:25-cv-00951 (D. Md. Mar. 24, 2025), available at <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69777799/1/abrego-garcia-v-noem/>.

¹¹ *Abrego Garcia*, 145 S. Ct. at 1018; *see also* Op. at 4–5 (timeline of D. Md. orders dated Apr. 4, Apr. 10, and Apr. 11, 2025), orders available at <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69777799/21/abrego-garcia-v-noem/>; <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69777799/51/abrego-garcia-v-noem/>; and <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69777799/61/abrego-garcia-v-noem/>.

¹² *Abrego Garcia v. Noem*, Order, No. 8:25-cv-00951 (D. Md. Apr. 11, 2025), available at <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/69777799/61/abrego-garcia-v-noem/>.

¹³ Op. at 5 (citing Apr. 15, 2025 declaration by the Acting General Counsel for DHS); *see also* Op. at 28–29 (Mr. McGuire testified that Main Justice facilitated Mr. Abrego’s return).

¹⁴ Letter from the Government Accountability Project to DOJ Inspector General Michael Horowitz, et. al, Re: Protected Whistleblower Disclosure of Erez Reuveni at 22, June 24, 2025, available at https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/06-24-2025_-_Protected_Whistleblower_Disclosure_of_Erez_Reuveni_Redacted.pdf.

of Mr. Abrego Garcia if DOJ leadership approved it. DOJ leadership never did.”¹⁵ During this period, apparently to cover for the mistake, DOJ leadership began insisting that Mr. Abrego was both a member of the gang MS-13, and even had a leadership role in the gang, although DHS was unable to supply evidence supporting such allegations.¹⁶

Mr. Reuveni had been raising concerns internally to his chain of command for several weeks regarding the government’s compliance with court orders and candor to the courts,¹⁷ yet on April 4, 2025 he appeared in court and told the court that Mr. Abrego’s removal from the United States had been a mistake, but that DHS lacked authority to retrieve him from El Salvador.¹⁸

Shortly after the hearing, Mr. Reuveni received a phone call from DOJ Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the Office of Immigration Litigation Drew Ensign asking why he had not argued, to support Mr. Abrego’s removal, that Mr. Abrego was a terrorist.¹⁹ Mr. Reuveni explained that the government had made no such argument in its briefs, which Mr. Ensign had reviewed, that there was no evidence to support such an argument, and that declaring someone a member of a terrorist organization would not retroactively nullify a grant of withholding removal relief.²⁰

Later the same day and into the early morning hours of April 5, Mr. Reuveni refused directions from his superiors to file a brief arguing that Mr. Abrego was a terrorist and that withholding relief was proper for that reason.²¹ A few hours later, Mr. Reuveni received a letter, signed by Mr. Blanche, placing him on administrative leave allegedly for “failure to follow a directive from your superiors; failure to zealously advocate on behalf of the United States; and engaging in conduct prejudicial to your client.”²² The letter was leaked to the press and news reports included a statement from Attorney General Bondi that “At my direction, every Department of Justice attorney is required to zealously advocate on behalf of the United States...Any attorney who fails to abide by this direction will face consequences.”²³ Mr. Reuveni was terminated without notice on April 11, 2025.²⁴

Nevertheless, within weeks of the government’s representation that it was unable to retrieve Mr. Abrego from El Salvador—and in synchronous coordination with the indictment Mr. Blanche oversaw—the executive branch repatriated Mr. Abrego.²⁵

¹⁵ *Id.* at 23.

¹⁶ *Id.* 22.

¹⁷ *Id.* at 22-24.

¹⁸ *Id.* at 24.

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ *Id.* at 25.

²² *Id.*

²³ *Id.* at 25, citing Glenn Thrush, Justice Dept. Accuses Top Immigration Lawyer of Failing to Follow Orders, *New York Times*, Apr. 5, 2025, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/04/05/us/politics/justice-dept-immigration-lawyer-leave.html>.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ *Op.* at 11.

B. The Reopened Investigation and the Indictment

Within a week of Judge Xinis’s April 11 finding of noncompliance, on April 17, 2025, the previously closed investigation of a November 2022 traffic stop of Mr. Abrego was reopened.²⁶ The executive branch then mounted a rapid public-facing campaign, including a DHS press release labeling the 2022 stop a “suspected human trafficking incident,” using a still image from a Tennessee Highway Patrol body camera that had existed since 2022.²⁷

Mr. Singh, who reports directly to Mr. Blanche, then exercised “close, regular, and substantive oversight” of the charging decision—including delivering the government’s key cooperator (Jose Ramon Hernandez-Reyes) to Mr. McGuire, the U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee, before Mr. McGuire’s office had even formally opened its own investigation.²⁸ Mr. Singh directed the timing of a draft indictment, and instructed the prosecution team to “keep close hold until we get clearance.”²⁹

On May 15, 2025, Ben Schrader, the Criminal Division Chief of the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Middle District of Tennessee, circulated a written memorandum recommending *against* charging Mr. Abrego and specifically raised concerns of vindictive prosecution. The government nevertheless presented the indictment on May 21, 2025. Mr. Schrader resigned from the U.S. Attorney’s Office that same day, effective immediately, after a fifteen-year career as a federal prosecutor.³⁰

On June 6, 2025, Mr. Blanche publicly stated on national television that the government began “investigating” Mr. Abrego after “a judge in Maryland . . . questioned that decision.”³¹ Mr. Abrego arrived back in the United States the same day, in coordination with the indictment.

C. The Tennessee District Court’s Findings

On May 22, 2026, Judge Crenshaw granted Mr. Abrego’s motion to dismiss the indictment, finding that the government had failed to rebut the presumption of vindictive prosecution. The

²⁶ *Id.* at 5–6, 14–16.

²⁷ *Id.* at 6.

²⁸ *Id.* at 19.

²⁹ *Id.* at 7–11, 18–21 (detailing Mr. Singh’s “close, regular, and substantive” substantive oversight of charging decisions, including delivery of cooperating witness Hernandez-Reyes to McGuire, instructions to “sketch out a draft complaint . . . by 5pm tomorrow,” and direction to “keep close hold until we get clearance”).

³⁰ *Id.* at 10, 11; *Op.* at 30 (“McGuire acknowledged that vindictive prosecution had been ‘in the water’ and that Schrader had specifically raised it. McGuire proceeded over Schrader’s recommendation anyway. . . . Schrader resigned the day of the indictment, effective immediately.”); see also Katherine Faulders, James Hill & Alexander Mallin, Kilmar Abrego Garcia Brought Back to US, Appears in Court on Charges of Smuggling Migrants, *ABC News*, June 6, 2025, available at <https://abcnews.go.com/US/mistakenly-deported-kilmar-abrego-garcia-back-us-face/story?id=121333122> (reporting that “[t]he decision to pursue the indictment against Abrego Garcia led to the abrupt departure of Ben Schrader, a high-ranking federal prosecutor in Tennessee” and that his resignation “was prompted by concerns that the case was being pursued for political reasons”).

³¹ *Id.* at 11, fn.6 (citing Kilmar Abrego Garcia Was Indicted on ‘Very Serious’ Charges, *US Deputy Attorney General says*, *Fox News*, June 6, 2025, available at <https://www.foxnews.com/video/6373969491112>; see *Op.* at 17 (Blanche “directly tie[d] HSI’s investigation to Abrego’s Maryland suit”).

court concluded that “absent Abrego’s successful lawsuit challenging his removal to El Salvador, the government would not have brought this prosecution,” and that the evidence the government characterized as “new” was “not new as a matter of law.”³²

Judge Crenshaw found that Mr. Blanche personally bore responsibility for the tainted investigation, writing: “Instead of investigating the November 2022 traffic stop to identify who was responsible for the human smuggling, Blanche started the investigation to implicate Abrego. He did so to justify the Executive Branch’s decision to remove him to El Salvador.”³³ Judge Crenshaw also found that “[t]he indictment then provided the Executive Branch cover to comply with Judge Xinis’ order to facilitate Abrego’s return to the United States as soon as possible.”³⁴

Judge Crenshaw noted that Mr. Blanche’s own statements revealed that Mr. Abrego had been the victim of vindictive prosecution, writing:

Blanche stated that the Executive Branch began “investigating” Abrego after a judge in Maryland “questioned” the Executive Branch’s decision to deport him. The Court previously found that Blanche’s “remarkable statements could directly establish that the motivations for Abrego’s criminal charges stem from his exercise of his constitutional and statutory rights,” and that Blanche “directly tie[d] HSI’s investigation to Abrego’s Maryland suit.” **Blanche’s words directly confirm that the Executive Branch reopened the criminal investigation because the Judicial Branch required the Executive Branch to facilitate Abrego’s return from El Salvador.**³⁵ (emphasis added) (internal citations omitted)

While Mr. Blanche’s statements are about the investigation, not the indictment, Judge Crenshaw found Main Justice was directing the prosecution. He noted that Mr. Singh, who answered to Mr. Blanche at Main Justice, was heavily involved in prosecutorial decision-making and that when Mr. Singh contacted Mr. McGuire about the case, “it was not as a peer, but as McGuire’s supervisor in ODAG. When Singh informed McGuire about the evidence developed against Abrego, it was clear what Singh and Blanche wanted McGuire to do.”³⁶ The court found Mr. Singh was extensively involved in the indictment process and that it “could not ignore the chain of command that McGuire reported to: Singh, Blanche, and then Bondi.”³⁷ In sum, the court found, “[i]nstead of investigating the 2022 traffic stop to identify who was responsible for the human smuggling, Blanche started the investigation to implicate Abrego. He did so to justify the Executive Branch’s decision to remove him to El Salvador.”³⁸

³² Op. at 12, 31–32; Op. at 17 (the body-camera video and Mr. Hernandez-Reyes’s knowledge of Mr. Abrego’s alleged activities “w[ere] not newly discovered or previously unavailable” and could have been obtained “earlier through due diligence”).

³³ *Id.* at 26.

³⁴ *Id.* at 32.

³⁵ *Id.* at 17.

³⁶ *Id.* at 18, fn. 9.

³⁷ *Id.* at 20.

³⁸ *Id.* at 26.

The court found “persuasive, credible, objective evidence” that Mr. McGuire did not make the decision to indict Mr. Abrego on his own, but rather that Mr. Blanche and Mr. Singh were deeply involved, despite the concerns of Mr. McGuire’s own criminal division chief, who resigned the day Mr. Abrego was indicted, that the prosecution of Mr. Abrego might appear vindictive.³⁹

II. Violations of the New York Rules of Professional Conduct

As an officer of the legal system, Mr. Blanche bears a “special responsibility for the quality of justice.”⁴⁰ Further, under New York rules, “[a] prosecutor has the responsibility of a minister of justice and not simply that of an advocate. This responsibility carries with it specific obligations to see that the defendant is accorded procedural justice. . . .”⁴¹ Judge Crenshaw’s factual findings, uncontradicted by any contrary evidence, support multiple potential violations of the Rules.

A. Rule 8.4(c), (d), and (h) —Misconduct

Rule 8.4 prohibits, among other things, conduct involving “dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation” (subsection (c)), conduct “prejudicial to the administration of justice” (subsection (d)), and any conduct that “adversely reflects on the lawyer’s fitness as a lawyer” (subsection (h)). Comment [3] confirms that Rule 8.4(d) is intended to reach conduct “that results in substantial harm to the justice system comparable to those caused by obstruction of justice.”⁴²

Misconduct Before the District Court for the District of Maryland

Mr. Reuveni’s recitation of the facts makes clear that Mr. Abrego was removed by mistake and that the U.S. always had the ability to repatriate him, which was further demonstrated by the fact that the executive branch eventually did return him, timed with the unsealing of the indictment against him. Mr. Reuveni also explained that, as an officer of the court, he was unwilling to sign a brief he knew included statements that were untrue. For this, Mr. Blanche put him on administrative leave, allegedly for failing to follow orders, failing zealously advocate on behalf of the United States; and engaging in conduct prejudicial to the United States.

Mr. Reuveni was first placed on leave and later fired for abiding by the Rules of Professional Conduct. Mr. Blanche’s actions in firing a DOJ lawyer for truthfully telling the court Mr. Abrego had been removed in error and for then refusing to participate in a scheme to cover up that error by misleading the court about both the government’s ability to secure Mr. Abrego’s return, and his supposed membership in a gang, indicate he may have been responsible for misrepresentations to the court, which were prejudicial to the administration of justice.

³⁹ *Id.* at 27-28.

⁴⁰ N.Y. Rules of Prof’l Conduct, Preamble ¶ 1 (a lawyer is “an officer of the legal system, with special responsibility for the quality of justice”).

⁴¹ N.Y. Rules of Prof’l Conduct R. 3.8 cmt [1].

⁴² N.Y. Rules of Prof’l Conduct R. 8.4 cmt. [3] (“The prohibition on conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice is generally invoked to punish conduct, whether or not it violates another ethics rule, that results in substantial harm to the justice system comparable to those caused by obstruction of justice . . .”).

Similarly, the government’s representations to the Maryland court that DHS lacked authority to retrieve Mr. Abrego, something contradicted by the executive branch’s coordinated return of Mr. Abrego on the same day the indictment was unsealed,⁴³ and something apparently dictated by Main Justice⁴⁴ also may violate Rule 8.4(c).

Misconduct before the District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee

Judge Crenshaw found the evidence before him “reflect[ed] an abuse of prosecuting power.”⁴⁵ The court found that “absent Abrego’s successful lawsuit challenging his removal to El Salvador, the Government would not have brought this prosecution.”⁴⁶ Throughout his opinion, Judge Crenshaw laid responsibility for the investigation and prosecution of Mr. Abrego at Mr. Blanche’s feet. Further, Mr. Blanche’s own public statement tying the reopening of the investigation to the Maryland court order ratified the retaliatory rationale of the prosecution. He said that the executive branch began investigating Mr. Abrego only after a Maryland judge “questioned” the executive branch’s decision to deport him.⁴⁷

The court noted that the public justification offered by the government for the prosecution—that the case rested on “new evidence”—did not withstand scrutiny: the body-camera video and the cooperating witness’s knowledge of Mr. Abrego’s alleged activities “w[ere] not newly discovered or previously unavailable” and could have been obtained “earlier through due diligence.”⁴⁸ Suggesting the case rested on new evidence when it clearly did not, also may constitute a misrepresentation in potential violation of 8.4(c).

In sum, the Chief Judge of the Middle District of Tennessee found evidence showed Mr. Blanche had abused his prosecuting power by “start[ing] the investigation to implicate Abrego. He did so to justify the Executive Branch’s decision to remove him to El Salvador.”⁴⁹ Holding that this conduct “failed to rebut the presumption of vindictiveness,” the court dismissed the indictment of Mr. Abrego.⁵⁰ The court’s finding that Mr. Blanche abused of his prosecutorial authority in this matter adversely reflects on his fitness as a lawyer.

B. Rule 3.4(e) — Criminal Charges to Obtain Advantage in a Civil Matter

Rule 3.4(e) prohibits a lawyer from “present[ing], participat[ing] in presenting, or threaten[ing] to present criminal charges solely to obtain an advantage in a civil matter.” Yet, as Judge Crenshaw painstakingly explained, Mr. Blanche appears to have engaged in such conduct. After the Supreme Court affirmed that the executive branch was required to facilitate Mr. Abrego’s

⁴³ Op. at 11.

⁴⁴ *Id.* at 27 (“Main Justice returned Abrego to the United States.”); *see also Id.* at 29 (“Abrego’s return was outside [McGuire’s] control He was timing the indictment around steps Main Justice was taking to return Abrego from El Salvador.”)

⁴⁵ *Id.* at 32.

⁴⁶ *Id.*

⁴⁷ *Id.* at 11 and fn. 30, *supra*.

⁴⁸ Op. at 17.

⁴⁹ *Id.* at 26.

⁵⁰ *Id.* at 12.

return to the U.S. and was being publicly embarrassed by daily status reports demonstrating its non-compliance, the government needed a face-saving strategy.

The court found that Mr. Blanche’s “words directly confirm that the Executive Branch reopened the criminal investigation because the Judicial Branch required the Executive Branch to facilitate Abrego’s return from El Salvador.”⁵¹ In essence, to cover up for having mistakenly deported Mr. Abrego, Mr. Blanche created a criminal case to create the public impression Mr. Abrego was a dangerous criminal and to deter Mr. Abrego from fighting his deportation. This conduct appears to violate Rule 3.4(e).

C. Rules 8.4(a) and 5.1(d) — Inducing Conflicted Representation

Rule 8.4(a) prohibits a lawyer from inducing another lawyer to violate the Rules “or do[ing] so through the acts of another,” and Rule 5.1(d) makes a supervising lawyer responsible for a subordinate’s violation where the supervising lawyer “orders or directs the specific conduct or, with knowledge of the specific conduct, ratifies it,” or, in a managerial role, knows of the conduct and fails to take reasonable remedial action.

The February 5, 2025 Bondi memorandum—issued through the chain of command Mr. Blanche supervises—warned line DOJ attorneys that any failure to “advance good-faith arguments on behalf of the Administration, or otherwise delay[] or impede[] the Department’s mission” would expose them to “discipline and potentially termination.”⁵² Further, Mr. Reuveni’s suspension and termination in connection with the *Abrego* case received widespread press coverage.⁵³ Within that environment, Mr. Singh, Mr. Blanche’s direct report, exercised close, regular, and substantive oversight of the *Abrego* prosecution and ultimately delivered the indictment over the express objection of the Tennessee Criminal Division Chief, Ben Schrader who wrote: “I have attached to this email a memorandum recommending against charging” Abrego. “Please pass it along to relevant parties in D.C. as well.”⁵⁴ Mr. Schrader resigned the day the indictment was returned.⁵⁵

This sequence of events raises the question of whether Mr. McGuire and others in the Tennessee U.S. Attorney’s Office pursued the case under a personal conflict—their professional judgment that the case lacked merit, on the one hand, and their financial interest in keeping their jobs against the backdrop of the Bondi memorandum and the contemporaneous removal of other U.S. Attorneys for perceived disloyalty on the other. As discussed above, both Mr. Blanche and Ms.

⁵¹ *Id.* at 17.

⁵² *Op.* at 4; Feb. 5, 2025 Bondi memo available at <https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1388521/dl?inline>.

⁵³ *See e.g.*, Perry Stein and Katie Mettler, [Justice Dept. Suspends Lawyer Who acknowledged Deportation Was a Mistake](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/05/ezra-reuveni-justice-attorney-suspended-deportation-mistake/), *Washington Post*, Apr. 5, 2025, available at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2025/04/05/ezra-reuveni-justice-attorney-suspended-deportation-mistake/>; Evan Perez, [Justice Department Fires Immigration Lawyer Who Argued Case of Mistakenly Deported Man](https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/15/politics/doj-fires-immigration-lawyer-who-argued-abrego-garcia-case-source-says), *CNN*, Apr. 15, 2025, available at <https://www.cnn.com/2025/04/15/politics/doj-fires-immigration-lawyer-who-argued-abrego-garcia-case-source-says>;

⁵⁴ *Op.* at 10.

⁵⁵ *Id.* at 11.

Bondi stated that Mr. Reuveni was fired for his refusal to make false representations in the civil matter involving Mr. Abrego and his termination was the subject of widespread news coverage.

Judge Crenshaw noted that in his testimony at the evidentiary hearing, Mr. McGuire had been unable to explain “the objective evidence of pressure from DOJ. He knew that DOJ attorneys had been warned that delaying or impeding the Department’s mission could result in discipline or termination. He knew that DOJ attorneys, including U.S. Attorneys, had been removed from office for perceived disloyalty to the Executive Branch [yet] [] offered no objective explanation for how he insulated the charging decision from that pressure.”⁵⁶

Government lawyers who participated in the prosecution of Mr. Abrego out of fear of losing their government positions would violate Rule 1.7(a)(2), which prohibits a lawyer from representing a client if “there is a significant risk that the lawyer’s professional judgment on behalf of a client will be adversely affected by the lawyer’s own financial, business, property or other personal interests.”

Pursuant to Rule 8.4(a) Mr. Blanche, who supervised Mr. Singh and Mr. McGuire, is responsible for inducing other prosecutors, including Mr. Singh and Mr. McGuire to violate the rules by abusing their prosecutorial authority. Indeed, Judge Crenshaw’s opinion described how Mr. Singh, Mr. Blanche’s direct subordinate, “delivered” the cooperating witness, dictated the timing of the indictment, and instructed the team to “keep close hold until we get clearance”; and Mr. Blanche personally called Mr. McGuire to congratulate him on Mr. Abrego’s return.⁵⁷ Given that Mr. Blanche instigated, advocated, and apparently insisted on a prosecution he could have halted at any time, he is likely responsible for Mr. Singh’s and Mr. McGuire’s apparent violations of the rules of professional conduct under Rule 5.1(d).

D. Rule 3.3(a)(1) Candor to the Tribunal

Rule 3.3(a)(1) prohibits a lawyer from knowingly “mak[ing] a false statement of fact or law to a tribunal or fail[ing] to correct a false statement of material fact or law previously made to the tribunal by the lawyer.”

By directing DOJ lawyers to falsely tell the Maryland district court that DOJ did not have the ability to secure Mr. Abrego’s return, but within weeks of that representation, in synchronous coordination with the indictment Mr. Blanche oversaw, repatriating Mr. Abrego to face charges in Tennessee,⁵⁸ Mr. Blanche appears to have violated Rule 3.3(a)(1).

Judge Crenshaw also found that the government’s rationale for the prosecution of Mr. Abrego rested on characterizations of the available evidence as “new” that the court rejected as legally and factually unsupported.⁵⁹ As Mr. Blanche was the one to instigate the investigation, it appears

⁵⁶ *Id.* at 29-30.

⁵⁷ *Id.* at 24, 29.

⁵⁸ *Id.* at 11.

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 23.

he may have directed or ratified the representations made by subordinate DOJ lawyers to a federal tribunal, potentially violating Rule 3.3(a)(1).

III. Conclusion

Mr. Blanche's conduct in connection with the prosecution of Mr. Abrego, as documented by Chief Judge Crenshaw's detailed factual findings, after a hearing where DOJ presented its own evidence, appears to represent a serious breach of his ethical obligations under the New York Rules of Professional Conduct. Mr. Blanche's actions undermine the integrity of the department, required a federal court to dismiss a criminal indictment as the un rebutted product of vindictive prosecution, prompted the resignation of a fifteen-year career federal prosecutor who refused to participate in this vindictive prosecution, and threaten to further erode public trust in the legal system if permitted without consequence.

There are few authorities remaining who stand between Mr. Blanche and the weaponization of the justice system to serve the president's political will.⁶⁰ The Committees, however, are uniquely positioned to put a stop to this by preventing Mr. Blanche from using his New York Bar license to repeat his conduct in the *Abrego* case. Failing to discipline Mr. Blanche under these egregious circumstances will embolden others who would use our system of justice for their own political ends.

Campaign for Accountability respectfully requests that the Committees conduct a thorough investigation into these allegations and, based on the findings, impose appropriate disciplinary measures.

Respectfully submitted,



Michelle Koppersmith
Executive Director
Campaign for Accountability

cc: Board of Professional Responsibility
of the Supreme Court of Tennessee

⁶⁰ In considering complaints filed against then-Deputy Attorney General Emil Bove III, the committee declined to act, referring the complaints to DOJ's Office of Professional Responsibility ("OPR"). *See e.g.* <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/25955920-ny-bar-response-to-cfas-emil-bove-complaint/>. The last head of OPR was fired in 2025, however, and any attorneys currently working in the office are terminable by Mr. Blanche. As detailed above, numerous DOJ lawyers have been fired for insufficient loyalty. Under these circumstances, it is self-evident that a referral to OPR is futile. Further, both New York Bar and federal law make clear that the New York bar has jurisdiction over this matter.