

**Opening Statement of Ryan Crosswell
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**Hearing on “Restoring Accountability: Exposing Trump’s Attacks on the Rule of Law”
Before Members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives
Committees on the Judiciary**

Good afternoon. Ranking Member Raskin. Ranking Member Durbin. Senator Schiff. and Members of the Senate and House Judiciary Committee:

For ten years, I served as a federal prosecutor with the Department of Justice, but I started my career in public service as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. I was motivated to serve in the military following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, and I’ve tried to live by life by the marine corps ethos of “honor, courage, and commitment.”

My career as a federal prosecutor started several years later in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, prosecuting white collar fraudsters, violent criminals, child predators, and drug traffickers.

I then served as a prosecutor in San Diego, California, from 2017-2020, where I prosecuted border crimes, including immigration offenses and the smuggling of dangerous drugs into this country from Mexico.

Finally, for the last 4.5 years of my career, I served as a prosecutor at the department of justice’s public integrity section. formed in the aftermath of Watergate, the Public Integrity Section has protected our nation from corruption at the federal, state, and local level.

Throughout my time with the Justice Department, I followed the principles that guide all federal prosecutors.

Follow the facts and the law wherever they lead.

Seek justice in an even-handed and apolitical manner.

Act with fairness, impartiality, integrity, and adherence to the rule of law.

On February 17 of this year, I resigned from the Department, as part of a sequence of events that can only be described as among the saddest in the Department’s history.

I want to make it clear that I had no role in the prosecution of New York City Mayor Eric Adams. My knowledge as to the facts and evidence of the case is limited to that which has been publicly reported. Let me also state that I speak for myself, and myself alone.

The chain of events leading to my resignation began when the Acting Deputy Attorney General ordered the U.S. Attorney’s Office in New York to dismiss the case against Eric Adams. This was not based on the prosecution’s merits. We know this because he openly acknowledged in a

memorandum that Department leadership decided to dismiss the case “without assessing the strength of the evidence or the legal theories on which the case is based.”

This action leveraged the threat of future prosecution to ensure political compliance.

The message that this sent, intentionally or unintentionally, was that public officials may be protected from prosecution as long as they’re politically aligned with the Trump Administration.

In a properly functioning justice system, any public official wishing to avoid prison has to live by one simple rule of thumb: obey our nation’s laws.

And this action raised an even more chilling question: is a Justice Department that will drop charges against those who acquiesce to a political demand a Justice Department that will bring charges against those who won’t?

When the acting U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of New York stood up for the rule of law and resigned rather than carrying out the order, the case was then transferred to our office. When our acting Chief and Deputy Chiefs stood up for the rule of law and resigned rather than carrying out the order, those of us who remained in the section were ordered to produce two attorneys to sign a motion to dismiss. Ultimately, one attorney signed the motion to stop the destruction of the section.

The Public Integrity Section has protected the American people against abuses of power for nearly 50 years.

But it was nearly eliminated in an hour over a dismissal of charges against a man that a grand jury found to have engaged in a criminal abuse of power himself.

At this point, too many lines had been crossed, and so I, too, resigned.

The threats being made against members of the legal community, both in public service and private practice, are real and they are of consequence. To those attorneys facing such threats, I share with you a message that I received on the day that my colleagues and I were ordered to sign the motion dismiss, as the news slowly spread across the country. It came from a fellow Marine. It read “keep your head up”, and “keep your values and your oath at the forefront.” Every attorney who's taken an oath to uphold the law, and every citizen who values democracy, must have a line in the sand that cannot be crossed. Our oaths and our values require it.

I love my country and I loved being a federal prosecutor. It was a privilege to stand up at the start of every case and announce to the court, “Ryan Crosswell, on behalf of the United States.” And I’m so grateful that I had the opportunity to do it for ten years. My heart is with all those public servants who continue to serve and protect me, my family, and the American people. Thank you.