



JOHN TLUMACKI/THE BOSTON GLOBE/Dianna Ploss, who led pro-Trump rallies in Swampscott for years, now denies the Holocaust.

She has Jewish relatives. And she's the state's Holocaust denier-in-chief

BY STEVE MARANTZ([HTTPS://JEWISHJOURNAL.ORG/AUTHOR/STEVE-MARANTZ/](https://jewishjournal.org/author/steve-marantz/))

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Meet Dianna Ploss, the demagogue next door. Unsuccessful candidate for governor of “Mass-a-JEW-setts,” as she phrases it. Holocaust denier and alt-right extremist. In her telling, Jews, Israel, and the United Nations are part of a “One World Order” conspiracy to rule over Christian white nationalists and other good folk.

Host of a podcast (<https://rumble.com/user/DiannaPloss>) that caricatures Jews with ancient tropes, blames Jews for most earthly misery, and stops just short of calling for a Final Solution.

Massachusetts born and bred. From Boston's Mission Hill, with stops in Cambridge, Waltham, Gloucester, and Peabody. A blue state demagogue, no less extreme than if she were from Florida, Mississippi, Texas, or any deep red bastion.

We offer Ploss's story with misgiving, in that it accords her attention she relentlessly pursues. With regret for the pain it may cause her Jewish sister-in-law and two Jewish nieces in Massachusetts, and her extended family. And with vigilance, as a window into the basement of alt-right extremism.

Ploss declined to be interviewed, though she did issue an invitation for a Journal reporter to appear on her podcast.

Ploss, 59, is a small-time demagogue by any objective measure. As an independent candidate for governor in 2022, her write-in tally was scant – not a single vote in Swampscott, where she had led outdoor protests for 2½ years, dozens near the home of the Republican governor she calls “Char-LIE Baker.” Her podcast, featuring her brassy Boston persona, pulls in fewer than 500 viewers. Hate watchdog groups tend to ignore her because her reach is too short to be of concern.

But that wasn't always the case. She had alt-right celebrity potential in 2020. She had hosted "The Dianna Ploss Show" on New Hampshire radio WSMN for 21½ years, and was thought to be on the verge of national syndication. She had 43,000 followers on Facebook and more than 34,000 on Twitter.

Then, Ploss stepped in it. On a mid-July day in 2020, she accosted Spanish-speaking workers on a landscape crew in Nashua, N.H., and berated them for not speaking English:

"It is America, you should be speaking English. English.

English ... Is anybody here illegal?"



SPENSER HASAK/THE DAILY ITEM/Ploss, a former nurse and radio show host, attended the Jan. 6, 2021 "Save America" rally in Washington.

Ploss had built her brand preaching the First Amendment and free speech. Yet there she was, haranguing landscape workers for chatting in Spanish.

She videoed her stunt and posted it on Facebook under the heading “Speak English in America.” (It was pulled down but later resurfaced on Instagram (https://www.instagram.com/tv/CCg_MgJHx7e/?utm_source=ig_embed) and got over 300,000 views.) Two days later, WSMN canceled her show and severed ties. Station ownership issued a statement saying it valued “freedom of speech, freedom of expression and assembly. We will not tolerate discrimination, racism or hatred.”

Eventually Ploss’s mainstream social media accounts were taken down or frozen, and her celebrity prospects faded. She descended to the depth of “full-Nazi,” as one Ploss eyewitness puts it. She hooked up with the Rizoli brothers of Framingham and dove into Holocaust denial and Third Reich revisionism. (The Rizolis were flagged as extremists by the Anti-Defamation League in 2009).

Eyewitnesses to Ploss hold out the possibility that she isn’t genuinely demagogic, but that she cynically “performs” it, trying to monetize the so-called attention economy. Copying shock-jock Alex Jones, more or less. Except that while Jones slandered the memory of 20 schoolchildren and six adults killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut (and courts held him liable for damages of more than \$1 billion), her fraud would absolve a genocide.

Hate alert: The following material may be hazardous to human decency.

Before her account was frozen, Ploss posted on Facebook (<https://www.sorryantivaxxer.com/post/dianna-ploss-58-peabody-ma-radio-karen-kookbabbler-running-for-governor-of-ma>): “The J-ws were NOT and are NOT the victims. They were and still are the PERPETRATORS of the most satanic and barbaric atrocities the world has ever faced via their invention of COMMUNISM. Smarten up and stop falling for the J-W PROPOGANDA!”

Her live podcast, now on Rumble, featured a taped parody (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GkNZIooX7UU>) of the Auschwitz death camp. In it, her lieutenant governor running mate, Jim Rizoli, and a fellow denier, Diane King, are costumed as prisoners, in striped pajamas, yellow Stars of David on their chests. They banter about the swimming pool and lunch service at Auschwitz, and how Zyklon-B cyanide-based gas is good for hair and stuffy noses.

Ploss announced Rizoli as her running mate on the June 17 podcast with Rizoli’s twin brother, Joe. The episode (<https://www.audacy.com/podcasts/joseph-rizolis-podcast-117062/episode-41-dianna-ploss-in-her-run-for-ma-governor-picks-her-lt-governor-jim-rizoli-1467669163>) includes an exchange in which Jim Rizoli asserts that Hitler took down Jewish bankers to save the Third Reich, that the U.S. should follow his example, and erect a statue in his honor.

Her podcast of Aug. 24 (<https://rumble.com/v1h6ny1-dr.-e.-michael-jones-joins-dianna-ploss-live.html>) featured Holocaust denier and anti-choicer E. Michael Jones, who asserts that Jews plotted the abortion movement and “are responsible for the death of 50 million unborn children in this country ...”

Ploss's Oct. 30 "Hoaxbusters" (<https://rumble.com/v1qorql-the-hoaxbusters-live...-sunday-october-30-2022.html>) podcast has Joe Rizoli asserting that Jews are "filthy people" because they went unbathed in Nazi death camps. "You got dirty Jews who never showered in a year," Rizoli says. "[General George S.] Patton said the smell of these people was so bad he couldn't eat the next day ... They're filthy people. They provided showers and all this stuff for them and they didn't use it."

Ploss, abridged:

Twice-divorced, now single. Grew up in Boston, on Mission Hill, oldest of four children, Catholic school education. School bus driver father and bartender mother divorced. At age 16, gave birth to a daughter. Married and divorced her daughter's father, then married and divorced a Waltham cop. Worked in a bank and auto body shop, painted houses. Community college, nursing school and nursing license, in 2000. Worked in cardiac surgery, psychiatry, and urgent care at Mass. General. Quit nursing in 2015 to briefly hawk a filter purifier for beverages. Sold her Cambridge three-family, co-owned with a former fiancé, and lived off the proceeds.



Ploss hosts a Holocaust denial podcast.

Ploss's extremism took root in 2013. A lifelong Democrat, she reregistered as a Republican because, she said, "The country was going in the wrong direction." She gravitated to Trump in 2016, she told an interviewer, because "He was the tough guy ... He didn't take any garbage from people. He retaught people how to have self-respect. He showed that you can stand up for yourself."

Ploss started a volunteer Mass4Trump committee and traveled the state with a life-size cardboard cut-out of Trump. When Trump won in 2016, a New York Times reporter rode with her to Washington for the inauguration. She shared that she had lost faith in President Obama because he was soft on crime, non-supportive of police. Even so, she had signed up for Obamacare because her private health insurance had become too expensive. "I don't feel good that I had to do that," she said.

In 2017, Ploss ran for Gloucester's seat on the Massachusetts Republican Committee, and was rebuffed after bitter in-fighting with an entrenched local family. By 2018, Ploss had broken with the Massachusetts Republican Party, which she derided as "RINO" – Republican In Name Only – because, she wrote, "hardly any of the state's espoused GOP leadership is on the right." She served as press secretary to a fringe gubernatorial candidate, homophobe Scott Lively, and promoted herself as a radio personality.

During the pandemic and election run-up in 2020, she organized pro-Trump, pro-police, anti-mask, anti-Black Lives Matter protests, often in Swampscott, Winthrop, and Plymouth. She live-streamed herself shouting at cars, pedestrians, and counter-protesters. The initials for Black Lives Matter, Ploss shouted, are an acronym for "Burn, Loot, Murder." Her supporters held 'White Lives Matter' signs and a Confederate flag.

Democratic grassroots organizer Alix Smullin stood with counter-protestors at the Swampscott Civil War Monument and was joined by Democratic Congressman Seth Moulton of Salem, a Marine Corps veteran. Ploss confronted Moulton and videoed the encounter. "She was in Seth's face, literally screaming at him "Seth-y, Seth-y," and calling him a war criminal," Smullin recalled. "It went on and I am sure she called him other things ... her behavior could fairly be described as assaultive."

Several hundred Swampscott residents signed a petition asking Ploss to denounce white supremacy and to encourage mask-wearing at protests. She refused. Petition organizer Aaron Berdofe recalled: "The Confederate flag in front

of the monument really turned people off. She wasn't doing Trump any favors; she surfaced the most vile parts of his movement. His support in Massachusetts actually went down."

Ploss's aforementioned spectacle in Nashua was followed by another in Plymouth. On Halloween day in October 2020, Ploss was arrested (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTo7gCqSf9c>) after allegedly punching a counter-protester.

Rita Fiorillo, mother of a trans son, had led counter-protests against Ploss throughout the year. "She came in like a bull in a china shop, swearing, yelling, calling people 'vagas,'" Fiorillo recalled. "She and her bodyguard grabbed my sign. She's very handsy and always acts like other people are assaulting her – she positions her camera so it looks like that. I kicked over her camera tripod. She took a swing and punched me in the face and got arrested. Her friends berated the police and called them communists."

Ploss subsequently filed a complaint against Fiorillo, who was charged with assault and destruction of property. Ultimately charges against both women were dropped. But Fiorillo, along with Berdofe, continued to track Ploss's activities.

Trump's loss in November 2020 put Ploss at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021 to protest the "stolen" election. She posted one video (<https://archive.org/details/G6AeuPyesszF9Y2yc>) of herself pressing forward with the mob, coughing and wheezing in the gaseous air. "They're attacking us, I'm getting attacked," she says. "Can't breathe. Eyes are burning. I'm OK. I'm OK, I am. Don't be worried." In another video

(<https://twitter.com/MissLiss630/status/1349204016627122180>) she is shouting, “They’re trying to push us off the Capitol. We’re not leaving. We’re not leaving. We are fighting for our country. We are not backing down. This is not America. It is not America.” Ploss stayed outside the Capitol and avoided arrest.

SPENSER HASAK/THE DAILY ITEM

In Swampscott, Dianna Ploss held rallies that attracted everyone from Trump supporters to opponents, who held counter vigils for the Black Lives Matter movement.

Throughout 2021, Ploss moved further into extremism, railing against local Human Rights Commissions (<https://diannaploss.com/articles/dianna-ploss-exposes-united-nations-activity-in-massachusetts>) and the United Nations Agenda (<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>) 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Whereas, before, she stood alongside Jews who held an Israeli flag at the protests in Swampscott, she no longer would. Israel, she said, was responsible for 9-11 and the Oklahoma City bombing, and had stolen America's enriched uranium.

"How come nobody talks about the people in Palestine and the 750,000 that were slaughtered so that Israel and the Rothschilds could take over that land," Ploss said on her podcast. "That was not a Biblical sign from God, that was a political purchase. Because the plan is for the New World Order to be headquartered in Jerusalem and for Greater Israel. I did not know that before. I do now."

By the time she declared her independent candidacy (<https://diannaploss.com/>) for governor in August 2021, she had washed her hands of Trump, who, she declared, was "part of the SWAMP." She had been "shocked" to observe police back down from "Antifa and BLM thugs" at pro-Trump rallies. America was in the final stages of a "Bolshevik Takeover."

"There is no right and left," she wrote. "It is US vs. THEM."

Trump's endorsement of Geoff Diehl – the Republican candidate for Massachusetts governor – in October 2021 was the last straw. "That was when she lost it," said Rita Fiorillo. "When she went full-Nazi."

Or pretended to. Fiorillo suspects Ploss is disingenuous about her intolerance, different from the Rizoli brothers, whose hostility and aggression look to be heartfelt and sincere.

“Her candidacy wasn’t real,” said Fiorillo. “It was just fake to get attention. She didn’t seek signatures to get on the ballot. She never had an event, didn’t go door-to-door. She didn’t even try. The whole thing was a grift. It was all about getting money.” (Ploss’s campaign raised \$11,572.55, according to the state Office of Campaign and Political Finance.)

But Berdofe, another eyewitness to Ploss, thinks her “shock-jock” act morphed into genuine conviction. “I wish it was grifting,” Berdofe said. “But it seems she’s trying to find a connection with a group of people. I’ve been watching this radicalization happen over time. She’s gone from dabbling with QAnon straight into pure antisemitic conspiracy theories and Holocaust denial. You can’t grift your way down that rabbit hole. I don’t know how that transition happened, but it seems to have turned into pure belief at this point.”

Which is what Abington resident Holly Tse indicated when she resigned as campaign treasurer for Ploss and Jim Rizoli. In an Aug. 3 letter to the state Office of Campaign and Political Finance, Tse wrote, “My reason for my resignation is my religious, personal and political beliefs no longer aligning with theirs.”

Berdofe, who has Jewish lineage and lives with his wife and his son and daughter in Swampscott, said he feels threatened by Ploss. “It’s unnerving to watch anyone lose their grasp of reality in real time,” he said. “I’d be more sympathetic to that loss if her beliefs didn’t dictate that somehow there is motivation to violently

punish a certain segment of the human population, perhaps including myself, for simply existing. I do think her descent is illustrative of how easy it is to get caught up in these radicalization riptides and rabbit holes and how clear the through-line is from Trumpian politics to hate-based conspiracy theories.”

Keiko Zoll, another Swampscott resident who saw Ploss’s demonstrations, denounces her Holocaust denial. “As a Jew, I think it’s disgusting, it’s delusional,” Zoll said. “You have historical evidence that you can’t really argue with. Given the current political climate that we’re in and the rise of antisemitism that we’re seeing not just nationally, but globally, it’s absolutely scary.”

Jews have ample cause to be wary of Holocaust denial, said Rabbi David Meyer of Temple Emanu-El in Marblehead.

“It dismisses a very unique event of profound Jewish suffering,” Meyer said. “It promotes longstanding antisemitic tropes about the Jewish desire to control the minds and politics and finances of the world – the hateful charges that laid the groundwork for the Holocaust to begin with. It rejects the need for a sovereign Jewish state in the aftermath of the genocide and so it promotes an anti-Israel agenda. And then it avoids the responsibility for the violence that comes from promoting Jew hatred and antisemitic memes ... because there was no Holocaust.”

Rabbi Yossi Lipsker of Swampscott-based Chabad of the North Shore called for Jews to be vigilant: “The abnormality of denying the genocidal cold-hearted murder of six million Jews is, ironically, as abnormal as the cold-hearted acts were themselves. Lessons learned from the past require us to take the words of

the unhinged at face value. This means simply that we vociferously and vigilantly call out abnormality before it settles into the collective unconscious and normalizes. The Holocaust was the result of the gradual humanization of subhuman cruelty.”

Christopher Mauriello, a Salem State professor who teaches Holocaust history, believes that denial is part of a broader assault on democratic values. “We need to continue to seek out truth over distortions and lies, what really happened in history instead of imagined extremist counter-narratives based on fear, racism, and hatred. Without acknowledging the reality of the Holocaust as it actually happened from 1933-45 in Nazi Germany, and teaching it to a new generation of Americans, we cannot claim to be a democracy based on truth and justice,” he said in an email.

Rewind to October 2020. The Swampscott petition ([https://www.change.org/p/dianna-ploss-demand-for-a-public-denunciation-of-white-supremacy-by-dianna-ploss?](https://www.change.org/p/dianna-ploss-demand-for-a-public-denunciation-of-white-supremacy-by-dianna-ploss?utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=81087540-b9af-11e7-b3bf-5110da9f7ab5)

[utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=81087540-b9af-11e7-b3bf-5110da9f7ab5](https://www.change.org/p/dianna-ploss-demand-for-a-public-denunciation-of-white-supremacy-by-dianna-ploss?utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=custom_url&recruited_by_id=81087540-b9af-11e7-b3bf-5110da9f7ab5)) against Ploss’s ‘White Lives Matter’ rallies went up on change.org for public comment.

Kristin Spearing wrote: “I am Dianna’s cousin and I denounce her racist behavior. I believe in freedom of speech, but she has taken it too far. She grew up in a racist and abusive household and this is the fallout from the torment she received as a child. I guess she needs attention even if it’s negative attention. Pray for her ...”

In an interview, Spearing said she and Ploss are maternal first cousins, but do not speak. Ploss's extended family, she said, is "sickened" by her antisemitism and Holocaust denial. One of Ploss's brothers is married to a Jewish woman, and their two daughters were raised as Jews and were bat mitzvahed. Spearing's husband is from Jewish lineage.

"Overall we don't agree with her," said Spearing, 55. "This Holocaust denial is just not right, she needs to stop.

"She's putting us at risk. There's a lot of extremists on both sides, and they're dangerous. I've seen it on both sides.

"Maybe she'll stop if she knows she's affecting other family members. I have dear friends and family and people I don't even know who this has affected on so many levels. And it will never go away.

"On behalf of my family I apologize for her, because she never will. I mean it from the bottom of my heart."

Her estrangement from family is alluded to on her website (<https://diannaploss.com/>). Ploss writes: "Dianna is aware that many of you know who we are NOT allowed to mention and/or criticize. In fact, if you do this, you will lose your job, your friends, your family, and potentially, your life."

Spearing holds out hope that Ploss can salvage and redeem herself.

"Just let it go," she urges her cousin. "Do better."

Steve Marantz is a former Boston Globe and Boston Herald staff reporter. Comments can be sent to editor@jewishjournal.org (<mailto:editor@jewishjournal.org>).

One Response

Gerry RomanikDecember 4, 2022 at 12:45 pm (<https://jewishjournal.org/2022/11/23/she-has-jewish-relatives-and-shes-the-states-holocaust-denier-in-chief/#comment-17274>)
says:

Powerful article Steve. I am very proud of you. Aunt Gerry

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