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ADL criticizes Framingham cable TV host

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Jim Rizoli comments on the Holocaust during the Oct. 13 airing of his public access TV show.

By Matt Rocheleau, Globe Correspondent

A Framingham Town Meeting Member, local business owner and co-founder of a local anti-illegal immigration group was criticized by a national civil rights group for promoting Holocaust denial videos recently on his weekly public access TV show.

In an entry posted to the "Extremism" section of their website, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which fights anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry, called Jim Rizoli a "Holocaust denier" and an "anti-Semite," for remarks made during the Oct. 13th episode of "The Jim Rizoli Weekly Show."

Rizoli, who co-founded Concerned Citizens and Friends of Illegal Immigration Law Enforcement with his twin brother Joe Rizoli, has since denied the league's claims of being an anti-Semite or a Holocaust denier.

While hosting his show on Framingham Public Access Television on Oct. 13, Rizoli defended Mahmoud Ahmadinejad against claims that the Iranian president denied the Holocaust's existence.

Rizoli also repeatedly told viewers during a 10-minute segment of the hour-long program to check out two Web sites. One is headlined with "Holocaust Denial Videos: 9 hours of free internet video about how the holocaust is a myth" and another says "no Jews or gentiles were ever killed in gas chambers or gas vans by the Nazis."

In a phone interview Thursday, Rizoli said, "I don't deny the Holocaust. You'd have to be crazy to do that. I just have some issues with it."

He said one of those issues is about the number of people who died during the Holocaust. He said he believes more Christians lost their lives than Jews, only around 300,000 people died, not six million, and that the majority were not killed but "died of sickness and disease."

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He added, "No matter what the figure was, it was too many. One death is too many."

Rizoli said he was exercising free speech, that "there's really no issue here," and was only trying "to get people thinking."

However, some local residents have taken offense to his remarks.

Rizoli said he has received verbal threats since the show aired and expects his credibility as an outspoken opponent of illegal immigration could be damaged. He also expects his comments on the sensitive topic could also hurt him when he runs for re-election as a Town Meeting Member next year and as owner of a Framingham-based carpet-cleaning business.

"These people here will kill you," he said. "People are calling me saying 'you better watch out.'"

But, despite some negative response, Rizoli said he will not avoid the topic, or other controversial topics, in the future; and would not apologize to anyone who might have been offended by what he said on the recent TV show.

"I don't apologize for nothing. They should apologize to me for threatening me," he said.

Rizoli and his brother were both [accused of being Holocaust deniers](#) a year ago by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Jim, Joe and their anti-illegal immigration group are known for targeting the area's large Brazilian population, of which around 71 percent are believed to be in the country illegally according to [a recent study](#). The duo often refer to Brazilians as "criminaliens," and have been accused of being hateful and racists towards Brazilians.



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