State of Arizona

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

Disposition of Complaints 23-507 & 24-043

Judge: Susanna C. Pineda

Complainants: David B. Gass (23-507)

Anonymous (24-043)

ORDER

Two complainants alleged a superior court judge wrongfully disseminated political statements on social media, publicly demonstrating antisemitic bias.

Maricopa County Superior Court Judge Susanna C. Pineda posted social media content opining on the conflict in Israel and Gaza following the attack against Israel on October 7, 2023, and also on historical events in the region prior to that date. These posts appeared on Judge Pineda's social media account starting in mid-October 2023 until early December 2023. Some of Judge Pineda's posts included video links to other speakers who expressed controversial opinions regarding these same subjects. Judge Pineda is readily identifiable as a judicial officer on her social media account. Her social media posts were available to other judges, court staff, and some other acquaintances.

Rule 1.2 of the Arizona Code of Judicial Conduct provides that "[a] judge shall act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary, and shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety." Comment 1 to Rule 1.2 makes clear the rule "applies to both the professional and personal conduct of a judge." Comment 2 notes that "judge[s] should expect to be the subject of public scrutiny that might be viewed as burdensome if applied to other citizens, and must accept the restrictions imposed by the code." Comment 3 provides that "[c]onduct that compromises or appears to compromise the . . . impartiality of a judge undermines public confidence in the judiciary." And Comment 5 establishes that the test for "appearance of impropriety" is objective. Thus, as applicable here, the Commission must evaluate whether "reasonable minds" would perceive Judge Pineda's social media posts as violative of Rule 1.2 or reflecting "adversely" on her "impartiality."

Judge Pineda's actions on social media violated Rule 1.2, diminishing public confidence in the judiciary and reasonably calling into question her impartiality. Through her social media account, Judge Pineda expressed political opinions on matters currently the subject of widespread, heated public disagreement, such as

calls for a cease-fire in Gaza and criticism of the policies of the Israeli government. In some instances, the tone or language of the posted content was overtly antisemitic or reasonably interpreted as such. These statements from a judicial officer, made directly or indirectly, create an appearance of impropriety in violation of Rule 1.2.

The Commission accepts Judge Pineda's statement that she is committed to principles of equality, and also her statement that she treats all litigants "equally and without bias." But, as noted, the test for determining whether a violation of Rule 1.2 has occurred is objective. The Commission also notes Judge Pineda's ready acknowledgment that she lacked care with her social media presence, and through such carelessness, linked to content with which she disagrees. The Commission agrees with Judge Pineda's assessment that she was "reckless" in some of her actions.

The Commission also concludes Judge Pineda's sincere attempt to limit the distribution of her social media content does not mitigate her violation of Rule 1.2. Although the social media content was available only to members of a designated group, rather than the public at large, this group was comprised of approximately 250 members. Additionally, those group members could easily share or otherwise publicize the content and thereby make it available for public scrutiny, and their doing so would be completely beyond Judge Pineda's control. Judge Pineda's statements were not, under these circumstances, private expressions of opinion.

All thoughtful members of society, judges included, are likely to have opinions concerning the pressing matters of our times. The Commission's findings and conclusions herein should not be construed as condemnation or approval of any particular political view. Judge Pineda is not being disciplined because she holds particular opinions. Judge Pineda is being disciplined because she publicly voiced or endorsed opinions on a matter of intense and emotional public debate, and by doing so she has allowed reasonable minds to question her impartiality.

Accordingly, Judge Susanna C. Pineda is hereby publicly reprimanded for the conduct described above pursuant to Commission Rule 17(a). The record in these cases, consisting of the complaints, the judicial officer's responses, and this order shall be made public as required by Commission Rule 9(a).

 $\label{lem:commission} Commission \ member \ Regina \ L. \ Nassen \ did \ not \ participate \ in \ the \ consideration \ of \ these \ matters.$

Dated: April 2, 2024

FOR THE COMMISSION

/s/ Christopher P. Staring Hon. Christopher P. Staring Commission Chair

Copies of this order were distributed to all appropriate persons on April 2, 2024.

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Arizona Commission on Judicial Conduct 1501 W. Washington Street, Suite 229 Phoenix, Arizona 85007

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2023-507

COMPLAINT AGAINST A JUDGE

| Name: Dav | vid B. Gass | Judge's Name: | Susanna C. Pineda | | |
|---|-------------|---------------|-------------------|--|--|
| Instructions: Use this form or plain paper of the same size to file a complaint. Describe in your own words what you believe the judge did that constitutes judicial misconduct. Be specific and list all of the names, dates, times, and places that will help the commission understand your concerns. Additional pages may be attached along with copies (not originals) of relevant court documents. Please complete one side of the paper only, and keep a copy of the complaint for your records. | | | | | |
| See enclos | sed letter. | | | | |
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| See enclosed letter. | | | | | |
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DAVID B. GASS CHIEF JUDGE



Court of Appeals

STATE OF ARIZONA
DIVISION ONE
STATE COURTS BUILDING
1501 WEST WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007

December 18, 2023

The Honorable Christopher P. Staring, Chair Arizona Commission on Judicial Conduct 1501 West Washington Street, Suite 229 Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: The Honorable Susanna C. Pineda Maricopa County Superior Court

Dear Judge Staring:

I hold sacred my oath as an Arizona judicial officer. I know Judge Susanna C. Pineda does as well. Even so, because judges are self-regulating, I lamentably must file this complaint about Judge Pineda's 51 Facebook posts about Israel, Palestine, and the Israel-Hamas War.

Before preparing and filing this complaint, I considered less serious steps. For example, I contemplated contacting Judge Pineda about the issue, perhaps allowing her to correct the concerns. In many instances, that would be enough. In this case, the alternatives fall short because many have seen her Facebook posts and not just the more than 240 Facebook friends with whom she shared them. As often happens with social media, a person intends to share a post with a limited audience, but the post gets shared. Indeed, what one person may perceive as a private conversation is a very public discussion. Here, members of the public with whom Judge Pineda shared the posts have commented on them, as has Judge Pineda. Those comments are shared as widely as the original post. And folks who are not Facebook friends, indeed folks who do not have a Facebook presence, also viewed and read the posts. As a result, I settled on this as my best option. Even so, out of respect for Judge Pineda, I am sending her a courtesy copy of this letter along with the attachments so she can respond as she deems appropriate.

Along with this letter, I include the required complaint form. In a bookmarked PDF document, I provide printouts of the relevant posts and any related comments. And I include five Recordings¹ of Judge Pineda's Facebook page so the Commission can review the embedded videos and see the relevant posts in context. Combined, the First, Second, and Third Recordings show all of Judge Pineda's posts to her Facebook page from September 5, 2023 through December 17, 2023, including those not relevant to this complaint. By viewing all Judge Pineda's posts (relevant or not), the Commission can put the relevant posts in context within Judge Pineda's entire Facebook page to evaluate their effect on readers.

Freedom of Speech and a Judge's Duty under the Code of Judicial Conduct

The Commission must balance judges' freedom of speech with their solemn duty of actual and perceived impartiality under the Code. As Rule 1.2 says, "A judge shall act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary, and shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety." I do not file this complaint to challenge Judge Pineda's right to hold her opinions. If the parties in the posts had been reversed, I would have the same concern under the Code.

I also recognize the role of free speech and expression in our society. No doubt, the First Amendment guarantees our rights to freedom of speech and the press, and peaceably to assemble. Article 2, section 6 of the Arizona Constitution contains similar—though not identical—protections: "Every person may freely speak, write, and publish on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right."

Even so, as judges, we must weigh those rights against the duty we swore to undertake when we assumed office. The Code holds us accountable — as judges — for any abuse of our right to "freely speak, write, or publish on all subjects," including online posts and comments.

To that end, the Judicial Ethics Advisory Committee addresses judges' use of social media in its Advisory Opinion 14-01 (AO-14), entitled "Use of Social and Electronic Media by Judges and Judicial Employees." AO 14-01 concludes having a Facebook or LinkedIn page does not in itself violate the Code, even if the page "reveals

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¹ The file titled First Recording includes Judge Pineda's posts from September 5, 2023 through 4:20 p.m. on December 9, 2023. Because Judge Pineda continues to post to her Facebook page, I have provided a Second Recording. The file titled Second Recording includes Judge Pineda's posts after 4:20 p.m. on December 9, 2023 through midnight on December 13, 2023. The file titled Third Recording includes Judge Pineda's posts after midnight on December 13, 2023 through 1:30 p.m. on December 17, 2023. The file titled Fourth Recording goes through the posts on Judge Pineda's page to show with whom Judge Pineda shared them. The file titled Fifth Recording scrolls through Judge Pineda's Facebook friends as of December 17, 2023, which as of that date number 249.

the judge's professional status." I—like Judge Pineda and many other judicial officers—maintain a social media presence.

But as AO 14-01 explains, the Code places boundaries on judges' use of social media. AO 14-01 cites Rules 2.10(A), 2.3(A), and 3.6 and says: "Judges must ensure that any statements they make will not negatively affect judicial proceedings, and they must avoid making statements that could be perceived as prejudiced or biased. . . ." The AO also cites Rule 3.1 and recognizes judges must refrain "from participating in activities that will necessitate frequent disqualifications. . . ." Because Judge Pineda's Facebook page shows her judicial status, her posts merit the Commission's review.

The concern arises because 51 of the 67 posts² Judge Pineda has made on her Facebook page since October 7, 2023 relate to Israel, Palestine, or the Israel-Hamas War.³

Judge Pineda's Publicly Stated Opinions

Because Judge Pineda made the relevant posts and comments on her Facebook page, a reader may reasonably infer they manifest her positions, not just a sharing of ideas. And the information is extensive. Of the 51 relevant posts, 42 include embedded videos, though one of the embedded videos is a duplicate. In total, the posts contain about two hours of video content, many with strongly worded commentary and speeches about Israel and Palestine. They are not neutral. They present as politically aligned with Palestine. True enough, not all the relevant posts directly address the Israel-Hamas War, but all either directly address or by context implicate the general relationship between Israel and Palestine in a one-sided manner.

For example, Attachment 2 shows the 38th post in the First Recording. That post includes an embedded video of a speech by Gideon Levy and starts at 1:22:25 on the First Recording. Mr. Levy's speech purports to relate to the general relationship between Israel and Palestine. Mr. Levy begins that speech by referring to Israelis as believing they are the chosen people, showing his discussion is about the Jewish population, not the country of Israel or its general population. He next makes a joke about asking Jews to go to Israel to face Iranian bombs, again highlighting the focus. At

² Review of the Attachments may raise other Code-related concerns about Judge Pineda's Facebook page. For example, the fifth post in the Second Recording, though relevant, also asks readers to "Take Action Now" and "Call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza to save lives and restore the flow of humanitarian aid." Attachment 16 shows the link in that post takes the reader to a website to sign a petition. This complaint focuses only on posts about Israel, Palestine, and the Israel-Hamas War. I leave review of any other issues to the Commission's discretion.

³ Of the 51 relevant posts, two are duplicates. Attachment 15 shows the 16th post and the 35th post are the same. Of the posts that are not relevant, Attachment 15 shows the 26th and the 41st are duplicates.

⁴ References to location within the Recordings are shown as follows: Hours: Minutes: Seconds.

1:24:15 on the First Recording, Mr. Levy then mentions the Holocaust and Golda Meir, attributing her with saying "that after the Holocaust, the Jews have the right to do whatever they want." Setting aside for the moment the accuracy of the attributed quote, at 1:24:55 on the First Recording, Mr. Levy triggers laughs when he says, "I once wrote that we [referring to Israelis] treat the Palestinians like animals, and I got so many protest letters from animal rights organizations—rightly so." His speech proceeds similarly for about 5 minutes, ending at 1:30:25 on the First Recording with the emcee saying, "Well now I am afraid we are going to need a bodyguard to help you leave."

And within one of the relevant posts, Judge Pineda shared her views on the topic. Her position there reflects the point of view of the other relevant posts. See Attachment 1. The Commission can view Attachment 1 and the related discussion starting at 0:03:18 in the First Recording. Among her comments to that post, Judge Pineda invokes the Holocaust and says, "I also do not and have never agreed with Zionist[s]." She then says, "Seeing the Zionist plan proceeding is horrendous. Seeing a people being rounded up/isolated and confined, then indiscriminately bombed, killed and mutilated is sickening. We should all be appa[l]led because these[] are human beings and silence kills. We know that historically." And as part of that post, Judge Pineda talks about confronting one of the most famous and respected Holocaust survivors (Elie Wiesel) and calling him a hypocrite to his face when, as she describes it, he "explained his Zionist (and bigoted) beliefs as it pertained to the aims of the Israeli state."

Bias and Denigration Demonstrated in the Posts

The extreme nature of some of the relevant posts suggest advocacy, not information sharing. Because some involve misleading information, they fall into the category of propaganda, which is "the systematic dissemination of doctrine, rumor, or selective information to promote or injure a particular doctrine, view, or cause. See Propaganda, Black's Law Dictionary (11th ed. 2019). Propagandistic public statements cast doubt on the speaker's impartiality and freedom from bias on the topics of the statements. And they damage perceptions of the speaker's ability to be impartial and free from bias even in unrelated areas.

Indeed, some relevant posts focus on the idea of propaganda. I include them as relevant because they give context though they are not directed at Israel, Palestine, or the Israel-Hamas War. See Attachment 3. Attachment 3 depicts a demonically masked

⁵ This complaint refers to relevant posts. Not all of Judge Pineda's posts relate to Israel, Palestine, or the Israel-Hamas War. Between Attachments 15, 16, and 17, I show a screenshot of each post Judge Pineda made on her Facebook page from October 4, 2023 through midnight on December 17, 2023. They are in reverse-chronological order, just as they appeared on Judge Pineda's Facebook page. Above each post shown in Attachments 15, 16, and 17, I identify which number post it is on the page of either the First Recording, Second, or Third Recording, the time it appears, and whether I consider it relevant.

figure reading a burning newspaper. The caption reads, "What scares me most is not the fact that our media is lying to us. It's the fact that most of you believe them." Perhaps it is not the wisest post, but I do not suggest it crosses the line in and of itself. But it does echo a broader theme in Judge Pineda's posts: Propaganda. And it denigrates and criticizes all others who do not agree with her position.⁶

The posts about propaganda manifest their relevance in Attachment 4. In that post, Judge Pineda said, "I also believe that there is one sided propaganda." Judge Pineda's comment about one-sided propaganda tracks a theme, echoing Attachment 3's commentary on the media and those willing to believe it.

The propaganda theme permeates Judge Pineda's posts. *See, e.g.,* Attachments 5 and 6. Judge Pineda, however, does not acknowledge the potential propaganda-like nature of her posts. The earlier references to the media and propaganda, thus, imbue these earlier posts with a deeper meaning. Attachment 5 appears at 1:10:25 on the First Recording and quotes Aldous Huxley. It says, "The Purpose of Propaganda is to make one set of people forget that the other sets of people are human." Attachment 6 appears at 0:37:50 on the First Recording and has an embedded video. As the embedded video plays, the post reads, "Zionists won't reveal this to you. They aim to restrict your access to information until they've molded you into their own supporter and advocate." Consistent with the overall theme of Judge Pineda's posts, that post ties the propaganda to one side, Israel.

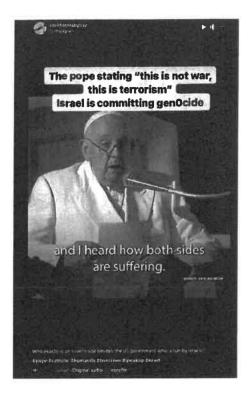
Propaganda issues also arise because of the sources of some of Judge Pineda's posts. For example, Attachment 7 shows bias in its message and source. The embedded video goes on for more than nine minutes. The post itself extols people to listen to "this professional lady," though her credentials are never disclosed. The scripted video purports to offer factual points in dramatic fashion to prove Israel is working to ethnically cleanse Palestinians from Gaza. The sources for the supposedly factual points are never disclosed. And the Commission can assess the logic and reasoning employed to determine whether it falls into the category of propaganda. The video's source also raises concerns. The scroll at the bottom of the post shows it was produced by Vince Focarelli. Mr. Focarelli was convicted for his role in leading an Australian criminal biker gang.

In the context of propaganda, I return briefly to the above-discussed quote Mr. Levy attributed to Golda Meir. He provides no source for it. And at best, it appears to be a misquote of a comment originally attributed to Menachem Begin, not Golda Meir. And it originally surfaced in an opinion piece more than 30 years after Golda Meir's death.

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⁶ The source of the post—Crazy Democrats—claims it "highlights all the crazy, socialistic, communistic, and just plain wacky thinks [sic.] that D."

Another post raises similar validity grounds. Many posts online attributed statements to the Pope about Israel and genocide. In that vein, Judge Pineda posted the following:



This post is the 9th on the Second Recording, appearing at 0:17:20. It suggests the Pope has said Israel is engaging in genocide. The Vatican has debunked this claim. And as for the one-sided nature of the post, at the bottom it says: "Who exactly is on Israel's side besides the U.S. government who [sic.] is run by Israelis?

As to the overall meaning and facial bias in Judge Pineda's posts, the Commission should consider Attachment 8, the earliest relevant post Judge Pineda made on the subject. It serves as the beginning of her discussion, its foundation. Attachment 8 appears at 1:45:50 on the First Recording. The simple message is "Let the Quran Speak." Again, the post is not problematic or objectionable by itself. But the posts that follow show it to be an ongoing, biased discussion of religion. Indeed, Judge Pineda posted the above-referenced Gideon Levy speech later on the same day.

One of Judge Pineda's most recent posts confirms this biased religious foundation. In the Third Recording, from 0:2:50 through 0:03:10, the embedded video plays with this message:

airstrikes interrupt prayers at Catholic Church in Gaza.

Christian Palestinians in Gaza are also being killed by . The oldest church in Gaza was bombed last week. is after all Gazans – not just Muslims!

Christians: Will you speak up for your brothers and sisters in Gaza? Or will you turn a blind eye as they are massacred?

Gaza is not a "Muslim" issue. Every night I pray for ALL Gazans.

Notably, the post goes beyond statements. It calls on Christians to act. The second post in Attachment 17 includes the individual screen shots showing the above messages.

As a final point, the Recordings show Judge Pineda's comments from before and after October 7, 2023. The posts themselves do not acknowledge the events of October 7, 2023. By not recognizing and discussing those events in context with the events since, Judge Pineda's posts do not reflect a full-throated sharing of ideas. Instead, the posts present a biased view of what is happening. The issue is manifest in the comments to the post in Attachment 4. In the comments, Judge Pineda asks, "Do you believe carpet bombing and killing of innocent children, i.e., shooting fish in a bucket, is okay? . . . As[k] yourself what was happening in Israel prior to 10/7?" In fairness, when another person pushed back, she said she believes the events of October 7, 2023, happened, and she goes on to say, "[I]t does not justify the extreme reaction." Even so, someone felt the need to push back, which highlights the overall bias issue with the posts.

For the above reasons and those that follow, the Commission should consider whether Judge Pineda's posts carry propaganda-like messages themselves and thus violate the Code by showing bias.

Public Knowledge about Judge Pineda's Posts

Judge Pineda maintains a Facebook Page. When two people connect on Facebook, Facebook identifies them as being friends. Because Judge Pineda and I are Facebook friends, I can see the posts Judge Pineda makes available to her friends in what is called her feed. On Friday, December 8, 2023, I unfollowed Judge Pineda's feed so her posts would not appear on my Facebook page. I did not unfriend her so I could review the relevant posts and prepare this letter and the attachments.

Judge Pineda's Facebook page is available publicly, but she has limited the public's access to it. She limited access to the posts relevant to this complaint to her 249 Facebook friends, including our 33 mutual Facebook friends. Judge Pineda's Facebook friends include fellow judicial officers, court employees, and members of the public, including her family members.

The Fourth Recording shows Judge Pineda understands how to share the posts with different audiences. She shares most of her posts, including the relevant posts, with her Facebook friends. At 0:08:07 in the Fourth Recording, the Commission can see her post about breast cancer awareness month. Judge Pineda shared that post with the public, not just her Facebook friends.

Judge Pineda's Status as a Judge Evident on Her Facebook Page

Judge Pineda's Facebook page evidences her judicial status. Judge Pineda's page shows she works at the Maricopa County Superior Court and includes photos of her in her robes and in the courtroom. See Attachments 9, 10, and 11. In the first two minutes of the First Recording, I show Attachments 9, 10, and 11 as they appear on Judge Pineda's Facebook page. I show Attachment 12 on the First Recording starting at 1:49:45. As noted above, some of Judge Pineda's Facebook friends are judges, court employees, and lawyers. Her page is not that of an otherwise-anonymous Facebook member whose affiliation with the court might not be known or readily identified.

Those facts do not inherently create any issues under the Rules or AO 14-01. But on Friday, December 8, 2023, others—including judges and lawyers—asked me if I had seen Judge Pineda's posts. I had not. Her posts, thus, are known as having been made by a sitting judge.

For that reason, the Commission should evaluate Judge Pineda's posts as public statements.

The Effect of Judge Pineda's Posts on Readers

Judge Pineda's relevant posts affected those who read them. In considering whether Judge Pineda's posts violate the Code, I recommend the Commission consider how readers responded to the posts.

Attachment 4 and the Related Comments

As explained above, Attachment 4 contains an embedded video speech by Chris Hedges. Attachment 4 appears at 0:29:45 on the First Recording. In the speech, Mr. Hedges talks about Israel entering the final stage in a decades-long campaign to ethnically cleanse Palestinians. This exchange occurred in the comments between Judge Pineda, CS, and JB (as shown below):

CS:

I only have 1 question. Do you believe the attacks and kidnappings happened on October 7th or do you think that is a lie just so Israel could go into Gaza?

CS:

Ooh they just released 13 hostages!

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez:

[To] CS Do you believe carpet bombing and killing of innocent children, i.e., shooting fish in a bucket, is okay? I do not condone war. I also believe that there is one sided propaganda. FYI, I believe, and it has subsequently been proven, that the US used 9/11 as an excuse to do something bigger. As yourself what was happening in Israel prior to 10/7?

CS:

If you can't answer my first question the rest of the conversation is mute. Based on your 911 bs comment, you are a conspiracy theorist and I am just really disappointed. But to each their own, I will however answer your question. No I don't like to see any civilians killed in war, not the Israelis or the Palestinians, but I know who started it, and why did they start it? They knew they had no defense but could rally the ma[]rt[y]rs and conspiracy theorists to want to end Israel and the Israeli people.

JG:

[To] Susie Pineda-Rodriguez Israel is not carpet bombing, but using very precise weapons to eliminate their targets. The Israelis also warn civilians to evacuate an area that is targeted. It is Hamas that uses human shields to protect their leaders. It is Hamas that turns hospitals, schools and mosques into targets by launching missiles from these sites and storing weapons there.

The population of Gaza has doubled in a generation from one million to two million people. How can they claim genocide?

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez:

Of course Gaza has grown in population, where do they go when they lo[]se their land to "settlers." Look at the pre 1948 maps and look at the

isolation of the Palestinian people. Remember how [J]ewish ghettos were made in Europe. History repeats itself and we stay silent or try to just turn to not look. I refuse to stay silent.

CS:

[To] Susie Pineda-Rodriguez you still [] have not answered my question. Do you think the events of October 7th really happened or not?

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez:

I do but it does not justify the extreme reaction.

CS:

[To] Susie Pineda-Rodriguez why do you think Hamas did it?

Judge Pineda did not respond to CS's last question.

The comments to this post, including the observations by those communicating with Judge Pineda, speak for themselves. Judge Pineda says she refuses to remain silent. She comments on the effect of "one sided propaganda" and raises 9/11, leading CS to say, "Based on your 911 bs comment, you are a conspiracy theorist and I am just really disappointed. But to each their own"

Attachment 13 and the Related Comments

Attachment 13 contains an embedded video speech by Miko Peled. The post shown in Attachment 13 appears at 0:51:45 in the First Recording. In the embedded video, Mr. Peled says Israel has engaged in a terroristic campaign with a goal of ethnically cleansing the Palestinians. He refers at first to the Jewish population, but he then transitions to referring to Zionists, referring to the entire Jewish population as a group of immigrants who just got off the boat.

In the comments, JG said, "Miko Peled's views are as respected as David Dukes and Alex Jones. If Fresno Mexicans demanded California be returned to Latinos; rename it Alto California and all of the white people be expelled to Europe, what would your reaction be?" JG's comments highlight the controversial nature of the Miko Peled's speech and in turn Judge Pineda's post. Even so, even after JG expressed his concern, Judge Pineda added a second video from Miko Peled, which can be seen at 0:18:25 in the Second Recording.

Attachment 14 and the Related Comments

Attachment 14 contains an embedded video of a woman interviewing people at a protest. Attachment 14 appears at 1:01:10 in the First Recording. In the video's opening scene, a woman is holding a sign as shown here:



The opening scene wears its antisemitic message on its face, though the video tries to explain why it is not. But the video goes further, showing a group of people chanting "From the river to the sea." That chant triggered these comments.

CS:

Did you watch this whole video? Do you know what from the river to the sea means. Do you see anyone with remorse for what was done to Israeli citizens to start this whole thing. Do you think the people of Gaza had a better quality of life when occupied by Israel or in the time leading up to what happened on October 7th? Do you really think Israel is committing genocide? You feel that the Israeli people should vacate Israel, the only Jewish State in the world surrounded by predominantly Muslim countries. Where shall they go or should they just be wiped out as referenced in the River to the Sea rhetoric. When Israelis died I felt sad. When innocent Palestinians die, I feel bad. I just don[']t think any of these protesters feel bad about what was done to Israelis and actually approve[] of it.

Palestine is in the process of being freed, from the oppression of Hamas.

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez:

I believe that war is hell and children should not be killed. I also believe that certain playbooks get repeated by those with power to obtain their end irrespective of the suffering placed on a population.

CS:

Well.at least I know where you stand.

JG:

The land of Israel has been populated by the Jewish people since 2000 BC --> Before Christ. . . .

The comments manifest the effect Judge Pineda's post had on JG and CS. And CS's final comment shows the post and its comments altered his view of Judge Pineda.

Other Videos and Posts on the two Recordings

As mentioned above, Judge Pineda has made 51 posts about Israel, Palestine, and the Israel-Hamas War. I do not discuss them all in this complaint. They appear in context in the Recordings.

My reasons for labeling most of the relevant Facebook posts as "relevant" is obvious, even for the videos. But the relevance of some is not always obvious at first glance. For example, the eighteenth post in the First Recording shows a black and white image of a baby sleeping. See Attachment 15; First Recording at 0:28:45 and 1:53:00. Overlaying the image is a message lamenting the death of babies. On its face, it does not directly suggest any relevance to Israel, Palestine, or the Israel-Hamas War. In the First Recording at 1:53:00, I scroll over the post to show the hashtags that come up. Those hashtags show the post's pro-Palestinian roots. I do the same with the other posts when such information is available so the Commission can see the nature of the posts. I scroll over the relevant posts to show that additional information starting at 1:50:00 in the First Recording.

Judge Pineda's relevant Facebook posts almost all reflect the same one-sided point of view. Their one-sided and politically charged nature raises concerns. Indeed, the members of the public who engaged Judge Pineda in discussions on Facebook express their concern in their comments.

True, not every relevant post, standing alone, raises concerns. But none stand alone. They collectively make up more than 75% of Judge Pineda's posts since October 7, 2023. They are a body of public-facing statements. They merit review individually and collectively.

Relevant Code Provisions

With the above, the Commission should consider whether Judge Pineda's posts and the associated discussions, individually or collectively, violate:

- Rule 1.2: "A judge shall act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary, and shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety."
- Rule 1.3: "A judge shall not abuse the prestige of judicial office to advance the personal or economic interests of the judge or others, or allow others to do so."
- 3. Rule 2.4(B), which says: "A judge shall not permit family, social, political, financial, or other interests or relationships to influence the judge's judicial conduct or judgment."
- 4. Rule 2.10(A), which says: "A judge shall not make any public statement that might reasonably be expected to affect the outcome or impair the fairness of a matter pending or impending in any court or make any nonpublic statement that might substantially interfere with a fair trial or hearing."
- 5. Rule 3.1(A), which prohibits judges from participating "in activities that will interfere with the proper performance of the judge's judicial duties."
- 6. Rule 3.1(B), which prohibits judges from participating "in activities that will lead to frequent disqualification of the judge."
- 7. Rule 3.1(C), which prohibits judges from participating "in activities that would appear to a reasonable person to undermine the judge's independence, integrity, or impartiality or demean the judicial office."
- 8. Rule 3.6: "A judge's public manifestation of approval of invidious discrimination on any basis gives rise to the appearance of impropriety and diminishes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary."

I appreciate the Commission's attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

David B. Gass Chief Judge Arizona Court of Appeals, Division One

enc.

cc (with enc.). The Honorable Susanna C. Pineda

David B. Gass Letter re: The Honorable Susanna C. Pineda

The Honorable Susanna C. Pineda Attachments 1 through 17

Note: Yellow highlight has been added to show Judge Pineda's comments to the posts.

Second Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:03:20

December 7, 2023 at 12:46 p.m.



Bangladesh Cricket Sarcasm

Thanks crowd for spreading the truth

Jeff Geller

So, you agree with Hamas when they make statements like this: https://youtu.be/Egipqa0ZhUk?si=bA8ZDDnsuR-By-uT



YOUTUBE.COM

Hamas official: 'We have not killed any civilians' Hamas official: 'We have not killed any civilians'

1d

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez

I'm not saying anything about Hamas. I stand by the innocents on both sides. I cry seeing children mutilated and killed. I also do not and have never agreed with Zionist. I met Elie Wiesel while I was in college and called him a hypocrite to his face when he explained surviving the Holocaust and then explained his Zionist (and bigoted) beliefs as it pertained to the aims of the Israeli state. This after studying and reading 40 books on how the Holocaust was allowed to take place. The class was called Propsectives on the 20th Century: The Holocaust." Seeing the Zionist plan proceeding is horrendous. Seeing a people being rounded up/isolated and confined, then indiscriminately bombed, killed and

mutilated is sickening. We should all be appauled because theses are human beings and silence kills. We know that historically.

1d

Jeff Geller

https://www.facebook.com/share/r/ttip2dHG7Zcb7bLx/?mibextid=UaIRPS

1d

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez

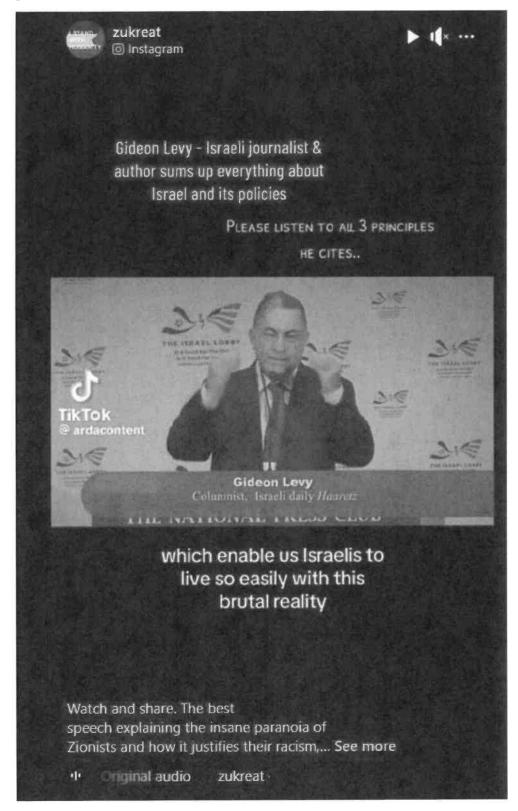
Jeff Geller , the conclusion drawn (ethnic cleansing) is wrong. The numbers show an exodus. We can say the number of Caucasians in the US is dropping and the number of Hispanics rising but that doesn't equate to ethnic cleansing. It looks like studies show the Jewish population in Europe is dwindling, no cleansing there. Migration possibly to other countries (2) 23h

Aldo Rodriguez

I know a way to stop it immediately. Maybe they should ask Allah to put an end to this. Or maybe ask God. Things that make you go hmmmm.

22h

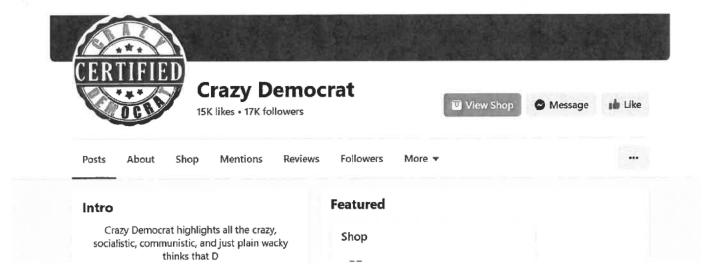
Thirty-Eighth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:22:25



Thirteenth Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:25:00

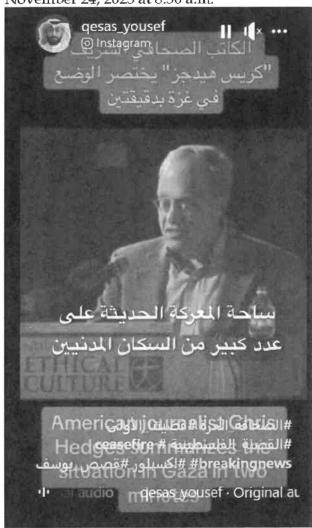






Nineteenth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:29:45

November 24, 2023 at 8:30 a.m.



Craig Sacks

I only have 1 question. Do you believe the attacks and kidnappings happened on October 7th or do you think that is a lie just so Israel could go into Gaza?

2w

Craig Sacks

Ooh they just released 13 hostages! 2w

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez

Craig Sacks Do you believe carpet bombing and killing of innocent children, i.e., shooting fish in a bucket, is okay? I do not condone war. I also believe that there is one sided propaganda. FYI, I believe, and it has subsequently been proven, that the US used 9/11 as an excuse to do something bigger. As yourself what was happening in Israel prior to 10/7?

Craig Sacks

If you can't answer my first question the rest of the conversation is mute. Based on your 911 bs comment, you are a conspiracy theorist and I am just really disappointed. But to each their own, I will however answer your question. No I don't like to see any civilians killed in war, not the Israelis or the Palestinians, but I know who started it, and why did they start it? They knew they had no defense but could rally the maarters and conspiracy theorists to want to end Israel and the Israeli people.

Jeff Geller

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez Israel is not carpet bombing, but using very precise weapons to eliminate their targets. The Israelis also warn civilians to evacuate an area that is targeted. It is Hamas that uses human shields to protect their leaders. It is Hamas that turns hospitals, schools and mosques into targets by launching missiles from these sites and storing weapons there.

The population of Gaza has doubled in a generation from one million to two million people. How can they claim genocide?

2w

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez

Of course Gaza has grown in population, where do they go when they loose their land to "settlers." Look at the pre 1948 maps and look at the isolation of the Palestinian people. Remember how jewish ghettos were made in Europe. History repeats itself and we stay silent or try to just turn to not look. I refuse to stay silent.

2w

Craig Sacks

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez you still have not answered my question. Do you think the events of October 7th really happened or not?

2w

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez

I do but it does not justify the extreme reaction.

2w

Craig Sacks

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez why do you think Hamas did it?

2w

Jeff Geller

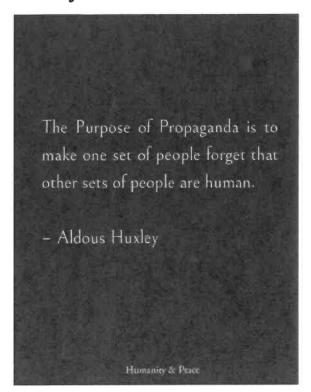
https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZPRvQgBCY/

TIKTOK.COM

TikTok · heyitsrenny

1w

Thirty-First Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:10:25

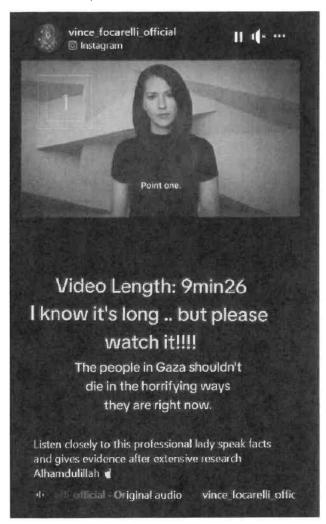


Twenty-Third Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:37:50



Forty-Second Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:35:05

November 7, 2023 at no time listed



Tom Purzak https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZT8DdP473/ TIKTOK.COM TikTok · AIPA 3w

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez

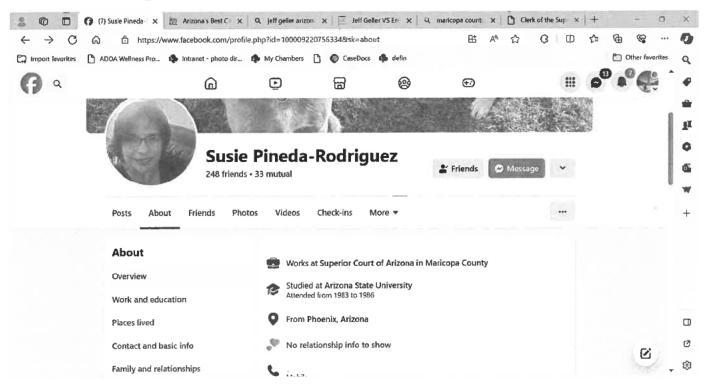
Tom Purzak I do not doubt that Hamas is a terrorist organization. I just feel that indiscriminate bombing is wrong because the innocent casualties is too high.

3w

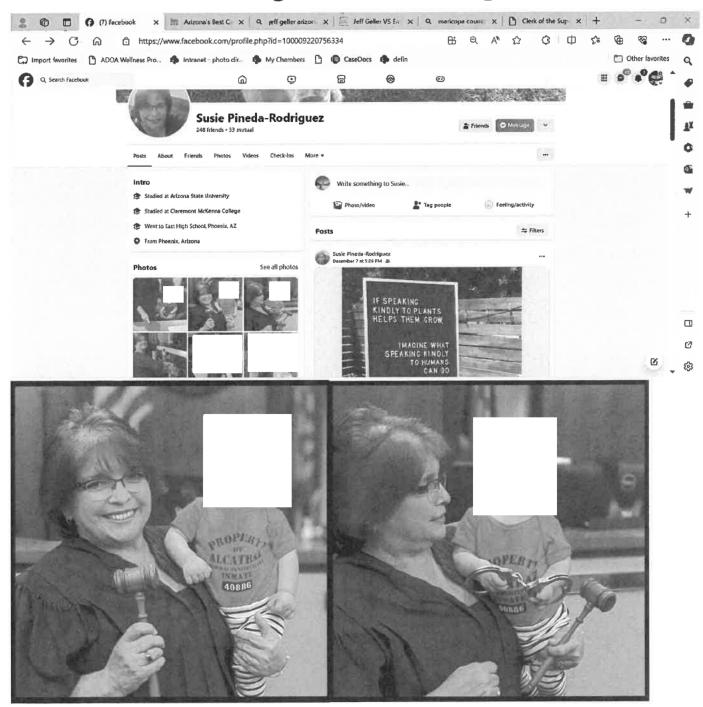
Forty-Fourth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:45:50



Facebook Top Banner and "About" Information



Facebook Top Banner on Posts Page with Photos of Judge Pineda in the Courtroom wearing a Robe and Holding a Gavel



Facebook Photos Page: Judge Pineda in the Robe with State Seal

in the Background



Shown on First Recording Starting at 1:49:45

Facebook Melina Leigh shared a memory.

September 21, 2023 at no time listed

I think Me and Muffin are due for a visit!

Stasy Danielle Susie Pineda-Rodriguez Muffin's 4ft 4 now.

2 Years Ago

Melina Leigh is with Stasy Danielle.

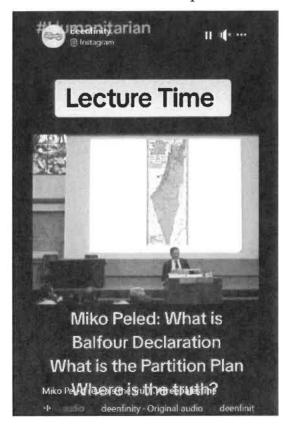
We went to visit the Honorable Stasy Click and ran into the Honorable Susanna Pineda.

Fun Fact: I externed for Judge Pineda when I was pregnant with Muffin. She gave me the attorney oath (swore me in) while holding Muffin.



Twenty-Seventh Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:51:45

November 18, 2023 at 9:35 p.m.



Jeff Geller

Miko Peled's views are as respected as David Dukes and Alex Jones.

If Fresno Mexicans demanded California be returned to Latinos; rename it Alto California and all of the white people be expelled to Europe, what would your reaction be?

2w

Twenty-Eighth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:01:10

November 17, 2023 at 7:10 a.m.



Craig Sacks

Did you watch this whole video? Do you know what from the river to the sea means. Do you see anyone with remorse for what was done to Israeli citizens to start this whole thing. Do you think the people of Gaza had a better quality of life when occupied by Israel or in the time leading up to what happened on October 7th? Do you really think Israel is committing genocide? You feel that the Israeli people should vacate Israel, the only Jewish State in the world surrounded by predominantly Muslim countries. Where shall they go or should they just be wiped out as referenced in the River to the Sea rhetoric. When Israelis died I felt sad. When innocent Palestinians die, I feel bad. I just dont think any of these protesters feel bad about what was done to Israelis and actually approve.of it. Palestine is in the process of being freed, from the oppression of Hamas.

3w

Susie Pineda-Rodriguez

I believe that war is hell and children should not be killed. I also believe that certain playbooks get repeated by those with power to obtain their end irrespective of the suffering placed on a population. 3w

Craig Sacks

Well.at least I know where you stand.

3w

Jeff Geller

The land of Israel has been populated by the Jewish people since 2000 BC --- >Before Christ. Here's the timeline, in case you didn't realize that it is their homeland, as designated by Lord Jesus Christ.

1900 BC: Abraham chosen by God as the Father of the Jewish Nation.

1900 BC: Isaac, Abraham's son, rules over Israel.

1850 BC: Jacob, son of Issac, rules over Israel.

1400 BC: Moses leads the people out of Egypt and back to Israel.

1010 BC: King David unites the 12 tribes into one nation.

970 BC: King Solomon, son of David, builds the first temple structure in Jerusalem

930 BC: Israel is divided into two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Israel and the Kingdom of Judah.

800s BC: The rise of the prophets, God's messengers.

722 BC: Kingdom of Israel is conquered by Assyrians.

605 BC: Kingdom Judah is conquered by the Babylonians.

586 BC: Solomon's Temple is destroyed by the Babylonians.

539 BC: Persians conquer the Babylonians and take control of Israel.

538 BC: The Jews return to Israel from exile.

520 BC: The Temple is rebuilt.

450 BC: Reforms made by Ezra and Nehemiah.

433 BC: Malachi is the end of the prophetic age.

432 BC: The last group of Jews return from exile.

333 BC: The Greeks conquer the Persian empire.

323 BC: The Egyptian and Syrian empire take over Israel.

167 BC: Hasmonean's recapture Israel,

and the Jews are ruled independently.

70 BC: Romans conquer Israel.

20 BC: King Herod builds the "second" temple

6 BC: Jesus Christ is born in Bethlehem

70 AD: Romans destroy the temple

After that, the people were captives to the Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, and Crusaders. Through all of these events, the Jewish people continued to live in Israel. There were more or less of them, depending on the centuries, but there was never a time when the Jews didn't live in the land.

They stayed,

they built their communities,

they raised their families,

practiced their faith and they suffered at the hands of many outside rulers, but they always kept their faith.

It is what sustains them, even now.

In 1948,

the UN established the State of Israel, the nation of Jews.

• • • Don't buy the Palestinian lies that they are entitled to the land. It simply is not true. God will also provide a way for his chosen people to live in Israel, as He has for thousands of years.

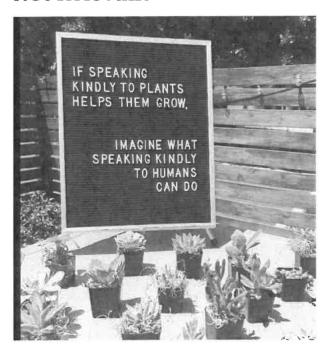
2w

Attachment 15

Images of Relevant Posts in Reverse Chronological Order as They Appear on the First Recording

First Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:03:01

Not Relevant



Second Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:03:20 Relevant



Third Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:06:45 Relevant



Fourth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:08:45 Relevant



Fifth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:09:45 Relevant



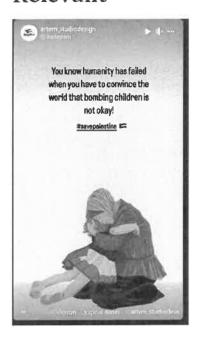
Sixth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:10:45 Relevant



Seventh Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:12:20 Relevant



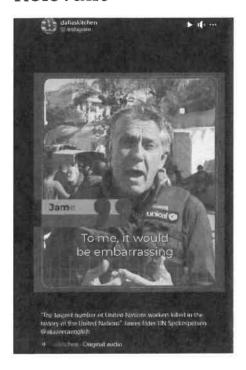
Eighth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:13:30 Relevant



Ninth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:13:50 Relevant



Tenth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:15:45 Relevant



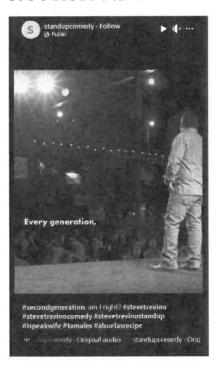
Eleventh Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:16:55 Relevant



Twelfth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:19:15 Not Relevant



Thirteenth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:21:00 Not Relevant



Fourteenth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:21:50 Relevant



Fifteenth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:25:50 Relevant

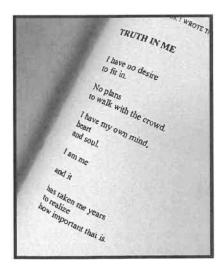


Sixteenth Post (Duplicate of the thirty-fifth post) on the First Recording Starting at 0:26:25

Relevant



Seventeenth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:28:10 Not Relevant



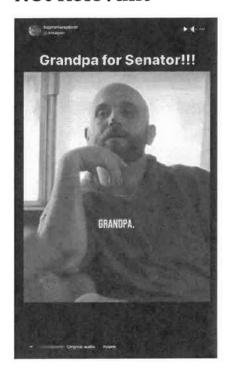
Eighteenth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:28:45 Relevant



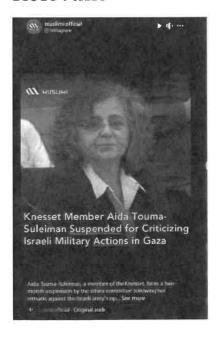
Nineteenth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:29:45 Relevant



Twentieth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:34:45 Not Relevant



Twenty-First Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:35:40 Relevant



Twenty-Second Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:37:15 Relevant



Twenty-Third Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:37:50 Relevant



Twenty-Fourth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:39:50 Not Relevant



Twenty-Fifth Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:41:15 Relevant

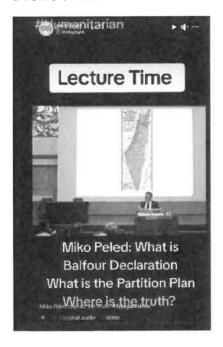


Twenty-Sixth Post (Duplicate of Forty-First Post) on the First Recording Starting at 0:51:30

Not Relevant



Twenty-Seventh Post on the First Recording Starting at 0:51:45 Relevant



Twenty-Eighth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:01:10 Relevant



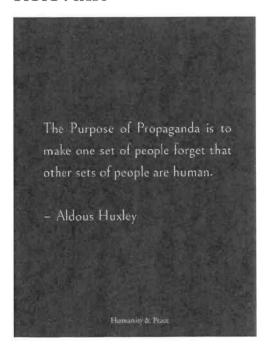
Twenty-Ninth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:04:20 Relevant



Thirtieth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:06:55 Relevant



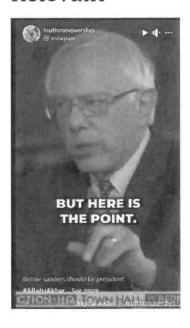
Thirty-First Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:10:25 Relevant



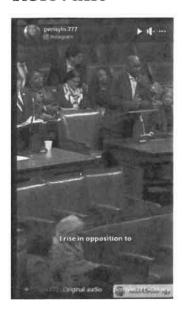
Thirty-Second Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:11:00 Not Relevant



Thirty-Third Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:12:00 Relevant



Thirty-Fourth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:12:45 Relevant



Thirty-Fifth Post (Duplicate of the Sixteenth Post) on the First Recording Starting at 1:14:15

Relevant



Thirty-sixth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:16:00 Relevant



Thirty-Seventh Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:21:50 Not Relevant



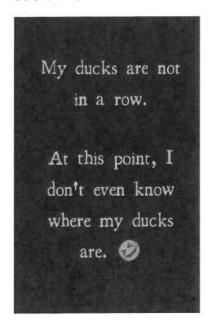
Thirty-Eighth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:22:25 Relevant



Thirty-Ninth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:30:30 Not Relevant



Fortieth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:34:40 Not Relevant



Forty-First Post (Duplicate of Twenty-Sixth Post) on the First Recording Starting at 1:34:55

Not Relevant



Forty-Second Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:35:05 Relevant



Forty-Third Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:45:00 Relevant



Forty-Fourth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:45:50 Relevant



Forty-Fifth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:48:20 Not Relevant

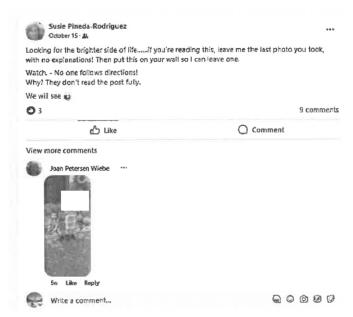


Forty-Sixth Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:48:40 Not Relevant

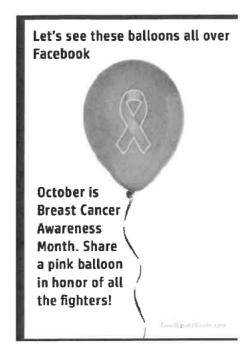


Forty-Seventh Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:48:50 Not Relevant

First Post After October 7, 2023



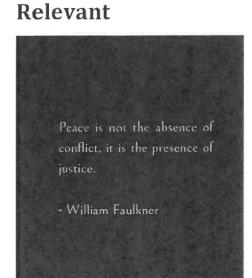
Forty-Eight Post on the First Recording Starting at 1:49:15 Last Post Before October 7, 2023



Attachment 16

Images of Relevant Posts in Reverse-Chronological Order as They Appear on the Second Recording

First Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:00:20



Second Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:00:45 Relevant



Third Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:01:15 Relevant

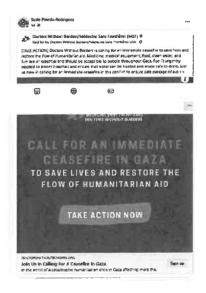


Fourth Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:03:35 Relevant

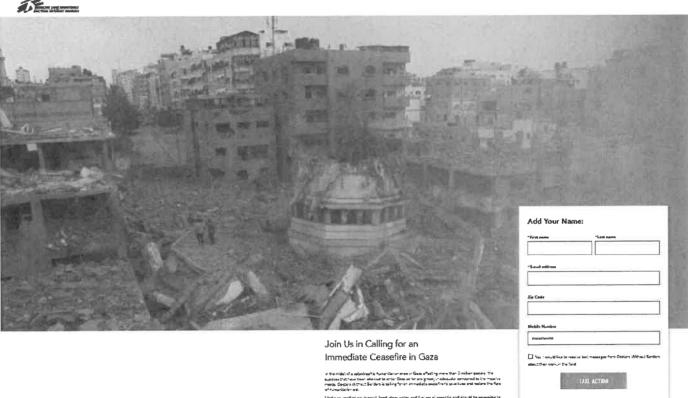


Fifth Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:04:50

Relevant







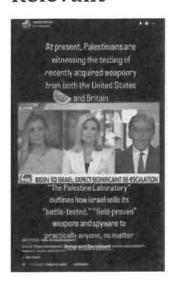
Sixth Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:05:25 Relevant



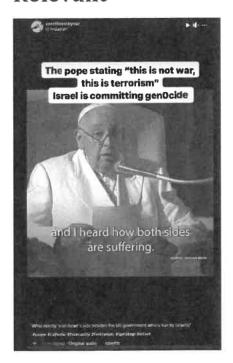
Seventh Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:15:20 Relevant



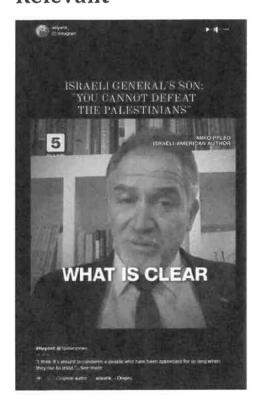
Eighth Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:16:15 Relevant



Ninth Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:17:20 Relevant



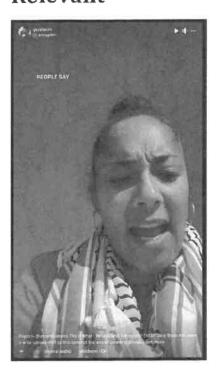
Tenth Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:18:25 Relevant



Eleventh Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:22:40 Relevant



Twelfth Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:22:55 Relevant



Thirteenth Post on the Second Recording Starting at 0:25:00 Relevant



Attachment 17

Images of Relevant Posts in Reverse-Chronological Order as They Appear on the Third Recording

First Post on the Third Recording Starting at 0:00:25 Relevant



Aldo Rodriguez

He's right. We destroyed Iraq due to greed and lies about WMD'S. Hell, I can only imagine what's next? Iran, China, Russia, Yemen. It'll only going to get worse. It's in our nature to destroy ourselves. Greed, power and destruction is all I've seen in my 50 years of life.

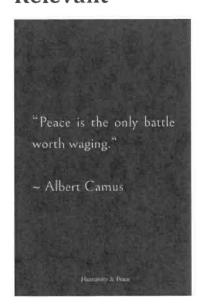
Second Post on the Third Recording Starting at 0:02:45 Relevant



Third Post on the Third Recording Starting at 0:03:20 Relevant



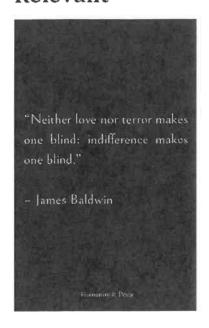
Fourth Post on the Third Recording Starting at 0:05:05 Relevant



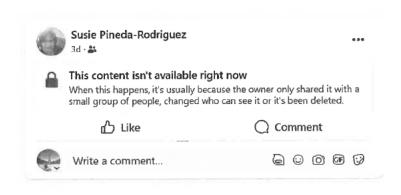
Jeff Geller

"We can forgive the Arabs for killing our children. We cannot forgive them for forcing us to kill their children. We will only have peace with the Arabs when they love their children more than they hate us" - Golda Meir

Fifth Post on the Third Recording Starting at 0:05:35 Relevant



Sixth Post on the Third Recording Starting at 0:05:45 Not Relevant



Comp Attach 1
Flash Drive
DEC 19 2023
2023-507



Honorable Susanna C. Pineda

SUPERIOR COURT OF ARIZONA

IN MARICOPA COUNTY
East Court Building
1010 West Jefferson Street, Suite 913
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

January 24, 2024

Resp 2023-507 JAN 29 2024

Commission on Judicial Conduct 1501 West Washington, Suite 229 Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: Case No. 23-507

Dear Commission Members:

I am in receipt of the judicial complaint filed against me by Judge David Gass and your letter directing that I address his claims that I have violated Rules 1.2, 1.3, 2.4(B), 2.10 (A), 3.1(A) 3.1(B). 3.1(C), and 3.6. Each of these claims are based on my Facebook posting regarding the Israeli/Gaza "War" from mid-October to approximately mid-December.

I honestly wish that Judge Gass would have reached out to me about his concerns. He is a friend and I respect his counsel. I received a copy of his complaint on December 18. After reading it, I recognized that I was reckless in reposting certain post and immediately ceased posting anything regarding the conflict in Israel. I will honestly state that I was in a state of grief and shock and allowed that state to cloud my judgment. I was grieving for the innocent victims of this war-No more, No less.

With regards to his complaint, I acknowledge that I have shared the post provided by Judge Gass with my friends and family on Facebook, admittedly without recognizing that "embedded" within some of those post were positions that I would strongly disagree with, including any position which would purport to advocate antisemitic views or desire any harm to the State of Israel. I have and always will advocate for co-existence for all people.

My sharing of post was intended to bring light to what I perceive to be a human tragedy unfolding that was not necessarily reported by our news organizations. I have honestly been paralyzed by the images that I have seen and was looking for a way to have people see this tragedy so it could end quickly.

I also did not recognize that certain posts were soliciting funds for any purpose. Looking back at the post provided by Judge Gass, I would not have re-posted or shared them had I recognized that they solicited donations for any organization. I am aware of this restriction and have religiously followed it. For example, I have received post soliciting contributions for humanitarian aid for Gaza, as well as for Israel, but I have not "shared" them because I am aware doing so would, in all likelihood, violate Rule 1.3.

As for the extent of dissemination of the shared post, Judge Gass and I, as well as other judicial officers are members of a Facebook group. My other Facebook friends are actual friends and family. All of these people know I am a judicial officer. I interact with them on a regular basis, both on Facebook, and in person. Those individuals include "JG" and "CS" referenced in the complaint. These individuals would never appear before me. As Judge Gass notes, I do not generally "post" to the public at large. The post he notes in his complaint were limited to my "friends," and not a larger audience.

I want the commission to know that nothing regarding these Facebook posts has affected my judgment as a judge or how I treat the individuals or cases that appear before me. I have and continue to treat all litigants before me equally and without bias.

Although this response is brief, I hope the Commission will understand that I did not intend to violate the Rules that govern our behavior as judges. I should have been more careful. If this Commission has any further questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Susanna C. Pineda Judge, Maricopa County Superior Court