

Scratch & Win

From Peabody Award-winning GBH News comes “Scratch & Win”, a riveting podcast chronicling Massachusetts’ unexpected role in transforming America’s gambling landscape from mob-controlled betting to a government-sanctioned lottery revolution.



About the Host

Ian Coss is an acclaimed podcast creator and host of GBH News’ “The Big Dig”, which topped Apple’s history podcast charts and was named one of The New Yorker’s Top 10 podcasts of 2023. His audio memoir “Forever is a Long Time” garnered widespread acclaim from *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, and Apple Podcasts.

Podcast Details

- Launches January 29, 2025
- 8 episodes, released weekly
- Produced by GBH News
- Hosted by Ian Coss
- Available on all podcast apps and YouTube

Sponsor Benefits

- Host-read pre-roll 0:15 spot
- Podcast promo spots on GBH 89.7, i.e. “[Sponsor] is proud to support Scratch & Win...”
- Podcast promo spots on the GBH 89.7 live stream (non-skippable)
- Display ad on GBH.org, including podcast landing page

Scratch & Win on YouTube will feature footage from the GBH Archives!

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Series Overview

Part 1: The Instant Ticket

Massachusetts introduced a state-run lottery, but most people still preferred to gamble illegally. Enter an invention that changes the game: the nation's first scratch ticket.

Part 2: The Lottery Czar

A power struggle unfolds in the MA State House over who will control the new lottery: the governor or the treasurer. And what made the MA lottery the most successful and innovative lottery in the country?

Part 3: Have You Played Your Number

The State Lottery challenges organized crime head on by emulating their bread-and-butter operation: 'the numbers'. It's an opportunity and a huge risk: can they copy the illegal games while still maintaining the public's trust?

Part 4: The Last Mafia Boss of Boston

The FBI, aided by Whitey Bulger, arrest mafia boss Gennaro Angiulo, upending Boston's gambling underworld. Hear wiretaps of Angiulo's headquarters and first-hand accounts from FBI agents on the case.

Part 5: The Cherry Street

The state lottery was never just about stopping crime, it was about bringing in money. In 1980, an anti-tax ballot measure throws MA state finances into chaos, putting new pressure on the lottery to support struggling cities and towns.

Part 6: The Game Dreams Are Made Of

State lotteries take off in the 1980s, fueled by a game called Lotto. In MA, Lotto is cancelled after just a few months. But it comes roaring back when it is relaunched with a new name and marketing campaign.

Part 7: The Dirtiest Race in the Commonwealth

State Treasurer Robert Crane has grown the lottery into the most successful operation of its kind. But his political opponent, Joyce Hampers, says *he's* the real crook sparking a mud-slinging referendum on ethics and politics.

Part 8: The Other Massachusetts Miracle

After a redesign, the scratch ticket finds new, *enduring* life – not the typical lifecycle for lottery games. This episode considers the legacy Crane built and how state lotteries helped set the stage for the gaming landscape of today.

Notable Interviews:



John Koza, inventor of the scratch ticket



Dawn Hayes, lottery broadcaster



Barney Frank, former member of U.S. House of Representatives for MA

Marketing & Promotion:

- Episodes in *Planet Money* and Slate's *Decoder Ring* feeds
- On-air spots and host appearance on GBH 89.7
- High visibility display ads on GBH.org and GBH newsletters
- Paid social media
- Designated landing page