

THE SIRENS OF WARTIME RADIO: AN ANALYSIS OF
THE MEDIA COVERAGE OF FIVE LEGENDARY
FEMALE PROPAGANDA BROADCASTERS

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to understand how the media constructed the images of Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah, and to shed more light on why they are remembered more than their male counterparts. In exploring how the American media covered them, it was found that it essentially constructed the images that defined these women's legacies. As such, the current study explores how the press covered them. In doing so, the study analyzes four primary research inquiries. First, the study seeks to analyze how American newspapers and magazines portrayed each woman to American readers. Secondly, this study considers how the American mass media's portrayal of these women evolved over time from the mid 1940s through the present. The third inquiry considered in this study consists of ways in which the American mass media responded to these five female propagandists either directly or indirectly through print, radio, and visual media. Lastly the study analyzes how each of these women have been kept alive in popular culture over the ensuing decades since their last broadcasts.

For the most part, the print media covered these women out of fascination and aversion. Fascination came from the novelty of having women acting as high profile agents of enemy propaganda organizations in a time when women were mostly homemakers and caretakers. Aversion came from the potential power they had over U.S. servicemen and the fact that they were viewed as traitors to the U.S.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

<i>AP</i>	Associated Press
<i>API</i>	Associated Press International
<i>DPRK</i>	The Democratic People's Republic of Korea
<i>FCC</i>	Federal Communications Commission
<i>GI</i>	Government issue: term used for American soldiers
<i>INS</i>	International News Service
<i>IPA</i>	Institute for Propaganda Analysis
<i>JACL</i>	Japanese American Citizens League
<i>LST</i>	Landing ship tank
<i>NATO</i>	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
<i>NHK</i>	Nippon Hoso Kyokai: Japan Broadcasting Corporation
<i>NVA</i>	North Vietnamese Army
<i>OWI</i>	Office of War Information
<i>POW</i>	Prisoner of war
<i>SDS</i>	Students for a Democratic Society
<i>UN</i>	United Nations
<i>U.S.</i>	United States
<i>WAC</i>	Women's Army Corps

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

By 1966, the U.S. had over 380,000 troops in Vietnam. In February of that year, U.S. forces launched several search and destroy missions under the name of Operation Masher designed to locate and destroy hidden Vietcong forces. In the evenings, they listened to Hanoi Hannah over short-wave radio. Hanoi Hannah broadcast propaganda for the North Vietnamese just as Tokyo Rose had done to World War II soldiers in the Pacific for the Japanese. Columnist Leslie Lieber, in discussing yet another female radio propagandist broadcasting to U.S. troops, wrote:

One war weapon remains constant—the seductive female voice. In World War II, Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally tantalized and infuriated our GIs with sultry invitations to pack it all in and go home. In Korea, there was Seoul City Sue. In the Civil War there was probably a Vicksburg Vickie somewhere, maybe even a Lexington Lil during the Revolution. At any rate, there's one in Vietnam bedeviling our boys today—and they call her Hanoi Hannah.¹

Another article, in referencing each war's proclivity to produce a female short-wave radio siren, stated that:

The broadcasting formula seems simple: get a girl with a sexy voice and a batch of American records likely to appeal to lonely servicemen, intersperse legitimate news items with subtle anti-U.S. propaganda and sit back while grumbling and dissension spread among the enemy.²

¹ Leslie Lieber, *The Des Moines Register*, "Hanoi Hannah," February 13, 1966, 18. accessed online at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/1639902/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

² *The Hartford Courant*, "Hannah's Hanoi-Ing our troops," November 27, 1966, 35A. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/549311237/fulltextPDF/9509F6A225044B07PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

Certainly, more of these women propagandists existed. Many no doubt have been forgotten about through the passage of time. Some were barely mentioned in the American press. Names like Moscow Molly, Peking Polly, Havana Harriett, Manilla Myrtle, and more recently Baghdad Betty are rarely talked about anymore. And while a thorough review of them is certainly in order, they all echoed the broadcasting styles and propaganda techniques of the five women studied in this dissertation. Yet while three of these five women are understudied, all five became legendary figures of 20th Century broadcast propaganda.

Tokyo Rose was a young Nisei woman in her mid-20s who took the ill-fated job of radio announcer for Radio Tokyo.³ It was November 10, 1943, and Japanese forces in the Pacific Theater were being forced back toward Japan by U.S. Naval and Marine actions. The previous month saw Emperor Hirohito signal that Japan's situation had become "truly grave."⁴ In response, Japan ordered an increase in its radio propaganda campaign against American forces. A new program would be established called *The Zero Hour*, but Cousins stressed to the young woman the need to keep the show as light and humorous as possible.⁵

This advice launched what would become a legendary propaganda program aimed at U.S. and Australian forces in the South Pacific. Throughout the course of the program, this Nisei woman became popular among U.S. military personnel who tuned in nightly to listen to her. These soldiers, sailors, and Marines associated her with the name, Tokyo Rose. In the U.S., she became known as a notorious Japanese propagandist who seemed to possess inside knowledge of

³ Nisei is defined as someone who is born in America whose parents are from Japan. Iva Toguri's parents immigrated to America from Japan prior to her birth in 1916. Her father came to the U.S. in 1899, and her mother immigrated in 1913.

⁴ A timeline of the Pacific war can be found here: www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/pacificwar/timeline.htm

⁵ Masayo Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, (New York: Kodansha International Ltd., 2010).

military plans. Tokyo Rose is perhaps the most recognized of all the women radio propagandists, but ironically, she never once associated herself with the name over the airwaves.⁶ The Japanese compelled her to do these programs, and she broadcast only harmless chitchat between popular American songs.

Although Tokyo Rose became a radio sensation during World War II, she was not a singular anomaly. She began what would ultimately become a new propaganda weapon used against American servicemen. This new propaganda weapon, that being females employed to charm and demoralize troops, lasted until the end of Vietnam in the early 1970s. Of the five women analyzed in this dissertation, three were Asian. Iva Toguri was Japanese American, born in Los Angeles in 1916. Toguri broadcast as Orphan Ann for Radio Tokyo during World War II from 1943 to right after Japan's surrender in 1945. Anna Wallis Suhr (known as Seoul City Sue during the Korean Conflict) hailed from Arkansas. Suhr's broadcasting tenure was the shortest lasting only through the summer months of 1950. Her North Vietnamese counterpart, Trinh Thi Ngo (known over the airwaves as Thu Huong and to American GIs as Hanoi Hannah), was the only non-American of the five, born in North Vietnam in 1931. Ngo broadcast for Radio Hanoi from 1962 until U.S. forces left Vietnam in 1973 giving her the longest broadcasting tenure of all five women. She often tied her broadcasts to the anti-war movement in the United States. The other two women were of European heritage and both were known as Axis Sally during World War II. Mildred Gillars (the blond) was of German heritage and born in Portland, Maine, in 1900. Gillars' broadcasting tenure for Radio Berlin lasted the second longest of the five from 1941 through 1945. Rita Luisa Zucca (the brunette) was of Italian heritage and originally from

⁶ Although Iva Toguri has become known as the legendary Tokyo Rose, the name was a GI invention. Toguri broadcast under the name Orphan Ann, and she was one of a dozen or more female broadcasters working for the NHK. She never once referred to herself as Tokyo Rose on the air.

New York City. Zucca broadcast for Radio Rome from 1943 until shortly before her capture in 1945.⁷

Each of these broadcasters became involved in enemy propaganda designed to demoralize American troops while often appealing to their domestic rather than military interests.⁸ Most of these women often spoke indirectly to the wives and mothers of U.S. forces, convincing them to withdraw support for the war effort and pressure Washington to bring troops home. They were known to predict fleet and infantry movements as if they had access to classified American military intelligence. Soldiers, Marines, sailors, and airmen often swore to the fact that these five women routinely made stunningly accurate predictions. Yet their radio programs remained popular among U.S. military personnel despite their propagandistic nature. What they did not say, in fact, often became as powerful as anything they said over the airwaves.⁹ As with Tokyo Rose, American servicemen gave these women their legendary nicknames.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand how the media constructed the images that defined the legacies of Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah, and how this coverage changed as societal norms of women evolved from the 1940s through the second wave

⁷ Richard Lucas, *Axis Sally: The American voice of Nazi Germany*, (Philadelphia & Newbury: Casemate, 2010).

⁸ Rex Gunn, *They Called Her Tokyo Rose*, (BookSurge, 2007). Gunn, in his self-published book, claims that four of the women broadcasted willingly against American interests while the fifth (Tokyo Rose) claimed to have had little choice in the matter. The American POWs in charge of developing the show were under direct imperial orders to do so, and Toguri's voice and style fit their needs perfectly. According to Gunn, the POWs wanted a broadcaster who could convey benign and nonthreatening messages to U.S. forces.

⁹ Ann Elizabeth Pfau and David Hochfelder, "Her Voice a Bullet: Imaginary Propaganda and the Legendary Broadcasters of World War II," *Sound in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 48.

of the American feminist movement in the 1970s. This requires a thorough examination of how the media covered and portrayed these women over time. In doing so, the study hopes also to shed more light on why these women are remembered more than their male counterparts. This has much to do with the fact that these women were unique and subject to much more media scrutiny than male radio propagandists. Each woman, acting as enemy propaganda agents over a mass medium, represented an unprecedented threat to American servicemen. Having women in such powerful positions in broadcasting stood against societal norms regarding gender roles of the mid 20th Century, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. The American mass media defined the legacies of each woman, and these legacies are still discussed in contemporary times whereas their male counterparts are hardly, if ever, mentioned.

One might expect mid 20th Century government propaganda to be a male dominated profession, especially since positions of political power were not commonly pursued by women in the 1940s. Although World War II saw a fifty percent increase in women workers, with about thirty-six percent of the American workforce being female in 1945, most of these jobs involved factory work for the defense industry.¹⁰ But many of the mid 20th Century radio propagandists remembered by name are female. In radio, few people in the U.S. today outside historiography recognize names like William Joyce, who broadcast under the name Lord Haw Haw for Nazi Germany, Douglas Chandler or even Ezra Pound, the poet-turned anti-Semite radio propagandist for Radio Rome. Few still remember the names of wartime propagandists like Fred Kaltenbach, an American who broadcast for the Nazi government and who once proclaimed that “two-thirds of the U.S. fleet” was “destroyed at Pearl Harbor, another third in the Macassar Straits, and still a

¹⁰ Susan M. Hartmann, *The home front and beyond: American women in the 1940s*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 21.

fourth third in the Coral Sea.”¹¹ But many have heard of Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, and to some extent, Seoul City Sue of Korea and Vietnam’s Hanoi Hannah. Yet no study to date has analyzed them collectively, and no research exists that examines how the media covered and portrayed them to the public. As an understudied subject, women *as* propagandists deserve further examination, if for no other reason than they helped redefine how short-wave radio propaganda thereafter existed. They are still written about regarding their legacies, and popular culture such as films, video games, and television keeps their names alive.¹²

The current study, in examining how the media defined the legacies of these five women, seeks to analyze four primary research inquiries. First, the study seeks to analyze how American newspapers and magazines portrayed and covered female wartime short-wave radio propagandists using Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah as exemplar. The study will look for themes and patterns of representations and how the media’s coverage compared from woman to woman. As stated, the legacies each woman left behind were shaped by the coverage they received through the years. The fact that they were female propagandists adds to the uniqueness of their historical legacy.

Second, this study considers how the American mass media’s portrayal of these female radio propagandists evolved from the mid 1940s through the present. By studying prevalent constructs in media coverage of the five propagandists selected for analysis, and by considering the historical context of this coverage, such as the anti-war movement of the Vietnam era, the current study hopes to identify how recurring themes in the media’s coverage of these women

¹¹ Albert Q. Maisel, “Six for the Hangman,” *Coronet*, June 1943, 158. accessed online at <http://www.oldmagazinearticles.com>

¹² Occasional articles regarding these women are still found in the American press as recently as 2016. The legends each woman left behind are still found in American discourse. For example, when the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, the press occasionally speculated as to whether this new war would produce its own Tokyo Rose or Axis Sally.

evolved over time. For example, based on a thorough examination of primary sources such as magazines and newspaper articles from the era, the American press mostly portrayed Iva Toguri as a traitor during and after her treason trial but in later years a new understanding of Toguri developed, one more sympathetic to her plight and association with the legend of Tokyo Rose.

The third research inquiry consists of ways in which the American mass media responded to these five female propagandists either directly or indirectly through print, radio, and visual media. A response is considered any print or broadcast effort made by the mass media to counter in some way any real or perceived threats posed by the five female propagandists. For example, the American government would occasionally employ female broadcasters over Armed Forces Radio in hopes of becoming popular competitors to Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah. Analyzing media responses is important because it gives more insight into how the media covered these five women. As the popularity of each woman spread among U.S. forces, the mass media, and the United States government, sought ways to counter their broadcasts. Overwhelmingly, such attempts were not successful, as U.S. forces preferred to listen to the broadcasts of these five women over domestic counter-propaganda. This section will also explore the reasons why this occurred.

The study's fourth inquiry focuses on how each of these women have been kept alive in popular culture over the ensuing decades since their last broadcasts. Their legacies are far-reaching, and they have each, in some way, become cultural icons, whose names and work have been featured in various television and cinematic productions, books, and even popular video games. This section explores some of the ways each woman's legacy has survived in the public

consciousness and how the press' coverage may have helped define how we remember them in popular culture.¹³

This study seeks to build from these four primary research inquiries a better understanding of how the American print media portrayed females as wartime propagandists in the mid 20th Century and how such coverage may have differed from that of their male counterparts. Furthermore, these four inquiries, when viewed collectively, help us to better understand their legacies.

Reasons for Studying These Propagandists

This study is important for several reasons. First, the practice of using women as radio propagandists against U.S. soldiers represented a new type of threat during wartime, one appealing less to soldiers' immediate survival and more to their sexual desires and domestic longings. This new type of propaganda weapon both fascinated and vexed the national press. Fascination came in the form of the novelty factor these women represented. The potential threat these women posed over the morale of U.S. forces resulted in a national sentiment of aversion. This aversion, along with the sense of fascination, manifested in how the national press covered and portrayed Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah.¹⁴ A thorough understanding of how the press covered, and thus constructed their legends for the American public, is essential to understanding why we remember them and not their male counterparts.

Secondly, except for Tokyo Rose and to a lesser extent Axis Sally (Mildred Gillars), the lack of scholarly attention about women *as* propagandists and how their legacies impacted short-

¹³ Examples include video games such as *Battlefield 1942* and films and television shows such as *M*A*S*H*, *Flags of Our Fathers*, and *Good Morning Vietnam*.

¹⁴ This can be seen through an examination of press coverage regarding each woman. The media's fascination with these radio sirens resulted in ongoing coverage, and the negative tone often associated with the coverage highlighted the media's aversion to them.

wave broadcast propaganda necessitates this study and others like it. Most gender studies involved with propaganda have concentrated on women either *in* or as a target *of* propaganda. Studies such as those by John Toohey¹⁵ (who studied images of women in World War I propaganda postcards), David Monger¹⁶ (who explored the perception of women's roles because of domestic British propaganda during World War I), and Maureen Honey¹⁷ (who explored the propaganda images of working class women handling masculine professions on the home front in World War 2), have concentrated on women as subjects of propaganda. Toohey's work on women as subjects of propaganda highlights the patriotic ways in which propaganda campaigns utilized them, in his case examining postcards that either showed women to be "united, defiant, and ready to stand by the sides of the soldiers" or in the case of German and Austrian postcards, "willing to suffer alongside the soldiers."¹⁸ Monger's research, also on women as the subjects of propaganda, documents several themes associated with women in World War I propaganda. These themes included propaganda designed to highlight the "woman's part" in wartime. Women were objects men needed to defend as well as protectors of the domestic lifestyle while men were away fighting. Monger also documents propaganda geared to women replacing men in the workplace to fill vital industrial positions vacated by soldiers off fighting. Honey's book follows this theme in the creation of the Rosie the Riveter stereotype and the dominant images of working-class women in the workforce during World War II. Like Monger's research, Honey documents ways in which women were domestic defenders as well as equals to men in their

¹⁵ John Toohey, "Messengers from home: Reading images of women in real photo propaganda postcards from France and Germany," *Early Popular Visual Culture* 12, No. 4 (2014).

¹⁶ David Monger, "Nothing special? Propaganda and women's roles in late first world war Britain," *Women's History Review* 23, No. 4 (2014).

¹⁷ Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the riveter: Class, gender, and propaganda during world war II*, (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).

¹⁸ John Toohey, "Messages from home," 402.

absence. More scholarship on women as propagandists is needed for several reasons. As the U.S. is still a nation involved in combating enemy propaganda from a variety of fronts and technological formats, a thorough study of previous atypical tactics such as employing women to disseminate political persuasion to a predominately male audience (US military personnel), might help us to better understand historically nonconventional enemy propaganda.

Third, the legacies Iva Toguri (Rose), Mildred Gillars (Sally), Rita Louisa Zucca (Sally), Anna Wallis Suhr (Sue), and Trinh Thi Ngo (Hannah) left behind in propaganda history alone deserve more historical attention. Their broadcasts presented U.S. forces with a new kind of enemy, one that appealed less to soldiers' and sailors' military readiness and more to their homesickness, their need for female companionship, and their sexual desires. Furthermore, no study to date has analyzed the coverage of *all* these women ranging from World War II to Vietnam.

These five propagandists provide a lens of understanding sociocultural changes regarding women inherent in American society from the mid 1940s through the end of the Vietnam War. Media reaction to women in positions of power over men underscored these sociocultural changes. The articles examined for these five women helped to construct the images and legends each woman is remembered by. Societal norms for American women changed significantly from the 1940s through the 1970s. First, World War II and the Korean War occurred between the end of the first wave of American feminism and the advent of the second. Societal norms saw women primarily as homemakers and caretakers as discussed by Maureen Honey in her exploration of women in the workforce during World War II. Women were by and large viewed, according to Honey, as "defenders of the nation's homes" while the domestic work they did "provided a

stable environment for soldiers, defense workers, and the country as a whole.”¹⁹ Honey furthers this point by adding that the mid 20th Century adopted a “neo-Victorian” model of family and relationships.²⁰ Author William Henry Chafe furthered this point writing to the effect that in the 1940s, although women had many “careers” in society, their one true vocation remained motherhood. Furthermore, women were the “cement of society,” holding families together while soldiers were away fighting.²¹ This societal model preferred women in the homes and men in the workforce and involved in national defense. The idea of women in the professional world, competing for jobs, threatened male-dominance. The national press from World War II to the Korean War wrote from the perspective of this social model in its coverage of women acting as political agents of enemy propaganda against the United States.

In what author Sheila M. Rothman termed, “women’s special sphere,” society defined women’s work as sex-stereotyped occupations exemplified by “typists, stenographers, department store clerks, and school teachers.”²² Rothman added that women were typically hired in wider professions when men were unwilling, off to war, or when “women made up the cheapest available and sustainable labor pool.”²³ Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, for example, openly defied this societal norm. They occupied a position of possible influence and power over men, and they succeeded in a domain set aside for men, that being propagandists.

Relevant themes explored in this study include how the American print media both during and in the years following their broadcasts portrayed each propagandist and how these

¹⁹ Maureen Honey, *Creating Rosie the riveter*, 135.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 137.

²¹ William Henry Chafe, *The American woman: Her changing social, economic, and political roles, 1920-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 206.

²² Sheila M. Rothman, *Woman’s proper place: A history of changing ideals and practices, 1870 to the present*, (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1978), 42.

²³ *Ibid*

media perceptions may have changed over time. Based upon the research, U.S. military personnel listened to the broadcasts of female propagandists because of the entertainment value and sexual presence of their voices.

Japanese, German, North Korean, and North Vietnamese propaganda organizations understood the potentially persuasive power these female broadcasters had as instruments of government-sponsored propaganda. Even more, the *imaginary* power they could potentially have over American forces worried military leaders more than anything they said, especially in the case of Iva Toguri, whose eventual persecution centered less on facts and more on the *legend* of Tokyo Rose, a mythically composite character made up of around a dozen female broadcasters. Ironically, the mass media compared many future women radio propagandists to Tokyo Rose.²⁴ A more thorough understanding is needed in how they all compared and in how they were perceived.

By the end of each war, their legends grew to almost mythic proportions, and yet they were not as vilified by U.S. military personnel as one might think. Many newspaper articles, for example, show that sailors and Marines enjoyed Toguri's broadcasts not only for her teasing humor but because of the music *The Zero Hour* played. Other newspaper articles reference the soft, "silky-voiced" Hanoi Hannah who often caused GIs to fantasize about her appearance.²⁵

These women are also remembered less as broadcasters and more as legendary figures that could name individual soldiers on the battlefield, predict U.S. military movements with

²⁴ As will be discussed, Seoul City Sue and Hanoi Hannah were often compared to Tokyo Rose in newspaper and magazine articles. To a lesser degree, they were often compared to Axis Sally (Mildred Gillars) as well.

²⁵ Phillip Shenon, "Hanoi Hannah reflects on Vietnam broadcasts," *Austin American-Statesman* (Austin, Texas), November 27, 1994. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/256522301/fulltext/B8428DAFB3F54AA1PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

stunning accuracy, and forecast doom for all Americans involved. Their names are remembered, yet history hardly produces a footnote for their overwhelmingly numerous male counterparts.

Review of Literature

Radio developed rapidly in the interwar years between the First and Second World War as a private enterprise in America and a government propaganda tool in Germany. According to The Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA), radio had no prominence as a method of mass communication until the 1920s, when its unique capabilities were first exploited through broadcasts of prominent speeches. These town meetings “of the air” offered orators a platform where their words could be heard by millions and not disputed or confronted with objections from listeners.²⁶

Part of radio’s power, according to Will Irwin, is in the rapport broadcasters can form with regular listeners due to the intimacy of the human voice. As Irwin notes, “the *magic* inherent in the human voice, has the means of appealing to the lower nerve centers and of creating *emotions which the hearer mistakes as thoughts.*”²⁷ The power of radio over public opinion had already been witnessed after the October 30, 1938, dramatization of *War of the Worlds* by Orson Welles. The surrounding national hysteria and legal fallout served as example of what radio could do in irresponsible or malicious hands. Legal implications of the broadcast included a national debate over how deeply government should control radio content and to what extent the industry should self-regulate.²⁸

²⁶ The Institute for Propaganda Analysis, *The fine art of propaganda: A study of father Coughlin's speeches*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1939), 15

²⁷ Jackaway, Gwenyth L., *Media at war: radio's challenge to the newspapers, 1924-1939*, (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1995), 65.

²⁸ Justin Levine, “A History and analysis of the federal communications commission’s response to radio broadcast hoaxes,” *Federal Communications Law Journal* 52, no. 2 (2000).

The Nazis distinguished radio from other communication mediums in four ways. First, radio reaches out to listeners on a more personal level than other medium, wirelessly entering one's home through a simple radio receiver set. A broadcaster could speak directly to a listener in his or her own home unlike cinema that required mass viewing in crowded theaters.

Secondly, it is more efficient than print media in that it utilizes the spoken word with all the feeling and emotion delivered by the presenter. This is especially crucial in understanding the power female propagandists had over U.S. military personnel due to the siren-like passion and eroticism often inherent in their vocal delivery.

Third, radio is immediate in nature, as most programming of the World War II and Korea era often occurred live. Wartime events could be transmitted as they occurred to audiences eager for the latest news. In addition, the American public saw radio as the most trusted and "friendly" source of news information, which added to its power as a propaganda delivery format. According to author Gerd Horten, in 1945, around 61% of surveyed Americans received their news primarily from radio as opposed to 35% from newspapers, a near total reversal from 1939.²⁹ This coupled with the immediacy of radio transmission gave propaganda a timeliness factor that other mediums could not achieve.

Fourth, radio is not restricted to certain audiences. Anyone can receive radio broadcasts that are in range of the transmission. This allows messages to be heard by anyone, at any time.³⁰ An estimated fifty-two million radio sets existed in American homes by 1939, and the number

²⁹ Gerd Horten, *Radio goes to war: The cultural politics of propaganda during world war II*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2002), 14.

³⁰ Philip E. Jacob, "The Theory and Strategy of Nazi Short-Wave Propaganda," *Propaganda by Short Wave*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 65.

increased yearly.³¹ With receiver sets in more than 80% of American homes by 1941, tens of millions of Americans could tune in to their favorite shows at leisure.³² By 1973, during the broadcasting period of Hanoi Hannah, the worldwide number of radio sets had grown to roughly nine hundred million. A third of that number, around three hundred million, could receive short-wave broadcasts. North America alone had more than three hundred and sixty-three million radio sets in residential service.³³

Consequently, short-wave radio added yet another avenue for propagandists to spread their messages to the world. Propagandists now had at their disposal motion picture film, radio, *and* print resources to work with. World War II would thus become a war of technologies, both on the battlefield and in mass communication, which allowed for instantaneous information transmission to diverse audiences. George Church posits two of the most potent aspects of short-wave radio are its immediacy and the fact that it is a wireless medium. In this way, it cannot be censored short of restricting ownership of receivers and electronic jamming, and there are no wires to cut.³⁴ Church reiterates that this represents a problem of control for nations being infiltrated with short-wave propaganda. United States in the years leading up to the Second World War had no coherent policy to combat it. Furthermore, the American public, weary of entering yet another European conflict, by large, still maintained a strong isolationist urge.

³¹ Ernst Kris & Hans Speier, *German Radio Propaganda: Report on home broadcasts during the war*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1944), 51.

³² James Spiller, "This is War! Network Radio and World War II Propaganda in America," *Journal of Radio Studies* 11, No. 1 (2004).

³³ Julian Hale, *Radio power: Propaganda and international broadcasting*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975), xii.

³⁴ George F. Church, "Short Waves and Propaganda," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (April 1939): 209.

Another aspect of radio propaganda that adds to its power as an instrument of persuasion is what Ann Elizabeth Phau and David Hochfelder refers to as “imaginary propaganda.”³⁵ Phau and Hochfelder make the claim that Second World War radio broadcasters such as Mildred Gillars and Iva Toguri became legendary (as well as notorious) not only through what they said on-air, but what audiences and military personnel *claimed* they said. For example, the authors make the claim that the accuracy of Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, and William Joyce’s (Lord Haw Haw) predictions became greatly exaggerated throughout the course of the war, elevating them to almost mythical status. Gossip, rumors, speculation, and outright faulty collective memories often attributed quotes and proclamations erroneously to the various broadcasters. Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, for example, became legends among military personnel who often claimed these women knew of secret military operations and troop movements.

Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally

Most of the available scholarship on the five women propagandists in this study concern Iva Toguri (Tokyo Rose) and Mildred Gillars (Germany’s Axis Sally). Very little has been done on either Anna Wallis Suhr (Seoul City Sue) or Trinh Thi Ngo (Hanoi Hannah). Mostly this is because the legends of Axis Sally and Tokyo Rose set a precedent for how radio propaganda was done, and all others, for lack of a better term, are usually considered imitations.

Of all five women, Iva Toguri has been studied the most. Hers is a story not only of a pioneering wartime broadcaster but also of a convicted traitor who served six years in prison and fined \$10,000 for operating as an enemy propagandist. Hers is also a story of a pardoned patriot whose legacy has become one of a loyal American, forced to make the best of a bad situation,

³⁵ Ann Elizabeth Phau and David Hochfelder, “Her Voice a Bullet: Imaginary Propaganda and the Legendary Broadcasters of World War II,” *Sound in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

while outwitting Japanese propaganda officials by broadcasting innocuous, lighthearted banter to American military personnel and offering aid and comfort to prisoners of war. In hindsight, Toguri was convicted for being something she never actually was, Tokyo Rose.

Most studies on Iva Toguri and the legend of Tokyo Rose center around her conviction and eventual pardon by President Gerald Ford in 1977 or have been biographical in nature. Clifford Uyeda explores the campaign to win the presidential pardon from its initiation to the successful conclusion.³⁶ Uyeda's article came out at transitional period where Iva Toguri's legacy transformed from one of a Nipponese turncoat to an American patriot falsely imprisoned by a judicial system bent upon holding someone accountable for Japanese treachery. Uyeda maintains it was time for the nation, especially a highly suspicious Japanese-American population, to hear the truth surrounding Iva Toguri and the legend of the fictional Tokyo Rose.

Frederick Close's "dual biography" of Iva Toguri examines her life from a small child growing up in California to the young woman who traveled to Japan in 1941 to care for an ailing aunt, a trip that inadvertently changed her destiny forever. Close continues his exploration through the war years where the legend of Tokyo Rose began and how this legend was unfairly attributed to Toguri in 1945.³⁷ Her eventual treason trial, prosecution, and pardon are also explored. Similarly, Russell Warren Howe's book also explores Toguri's misfortune being connected with the legend of Tokyo Rose, which like Close, reminds readers that there was never actually a real Tokyo Rose. In fact, up to a dozen Japanese women broadcast for Radio Tokyo during the war. As Howe points out, Iva Toguri was not even the only female broadcaster

³⁶ Clifford I. Uyeda, "The pardoning of "Tokyo Rose": A report on the restoration of American citizenship to Iva Ikuko Toguri," *Amerasia* 5, No. 2 (1978).

³⁷ Iva Toguri broadcast under the name of Orphan Ann for the radio program, *The Zero Hour*. She never referred to herself as Tokyo Rose, nor did anyone else who broadcast for the NHK.

on *The Zero Hour*, as she did not work most weekends. He quotes the Office of War Information (OWI) in that “the name is strictly a GI invention” and that “government monitors listening twenty-four hours a day never heard the words Tokyo Rose over a Japanese-controlled Far Eastern radio.”³⁸ The fact that so much innuendo and hearsay from U.S. forces concerning Tokyo Rose, coupled with the fact that at least a dozen women were often erroneously connected with the legend, helped seal Iva Toguri’s fate after the war. As both Close and Howe recount, an eager and manipulative American media coupled with national curiosity over the woman behind the legend led to Iva Toguri being forever associated with the moniker.

Ann Elizabeth Pfau’s book devotes a chapter to Tokyo Rose. Pfau explores the legendary status of the mythic radio siren by analyzing her broadcasts as well as how they related to her trial. Yasuhide Kawashima also explores Toguri’s treason trial, and like Howe and Pfau, concludes that Iva Toguri’s patriotism, while the subject of prosecution, should never have been questioned. According to Kawashima, “Iva was dedicated to supporting the American cause at all costs, and her patriotism took the form of strong pro-American, pro-allies, and anti-Japanese attitudes.”³⁹ The fact that Iva Toguri refused to renounce her U.S. citizenship when pressed by Japanese officials combined with her tenacity in refusing to purposefully demoralize Allied forces through her broadcasts is well documented in most of these biographical works.

As explained by David Ward in his 1971 article, Toguri’s successful prosecution came down to a single October 1944 broadcast regarding the famous naval battle in the Leyte Gulf,

³⁸ Russell Warren Howe, *The Hunt for “Tokyo Rose”*, (Lanham: Madison Books, 1990), 65.

³⁹ Yasuhide Kawashima, *The Tokyo Rose Case: Treason on Trial*, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2013), 161.

which was resounding victory for the U.S. Navy.⁴⁰ According to transcripts, Toguri, broadcasting as Orphan Ann, said the following: “Orphans of the Pacific, you are really orphans now. How will you get home, now that all your ships are sunk?”⁴¹ She was convicted only on one of eight counts of treason for falsely reporting U.S. Naval losses, even though the broadcast humored servicemen and in no way lowered their morale. Ward ends with a candid indictment of the U.S. judicial system surrounding Toguri’s trial even insisting that race might have factored into her harsh conviction. The trial, as noted by Ward, “appears to have been nothing other than a sordid, time-consuming and expensive act of petty vengeance, unworthy of a great nation and of the American people.”⁴² Similar sympathetic views on Iva Toguri can be found in Judith Keene’s book analyzing the treason trials of Toguri, Charles Cousens, and British broadcaster John Amery, who worked for Radio Berlin.⁴³ Biographical work such as Kawashima’s, Keene’s, and Ward’s illustrate what could be considered treason trials designed to seek justice for retribution. Especially in the case of Iva Toguri and her associate Charles Cousens, two propagandists who broadcast not through ideological convictions rather because the Japanese compelled them to do so. The discourse of justice for retribution will be seen again when analyzing prominent themes of media coverage.

Race, gender, treachery and treason as they related to Toguri’s trial, are subjects of Naoko Shibusawa’s 2010 article, which addresses the legal prosecution of Tokyo Rose and its aftermath from a lens of how race and gender may have played a part in the U.S. Government’s

⁴⁰ David A. Ward, “The unending war of Iva Ikuko Toguri D’Aquino: The trial and conviction of Tokyo Rose,” *Amerasia* 11, No. 2 (1971).

⁴¹ *The Circleville Herald*, “Tokyo Rose is Guilty,” 30 September, 1949, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/90460014/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

⁴² David A. Ward, “The unending war,” 34.

⁴³ Judith Kenne, *Treason on the airwaves: three Allied broadcasters on Axis radio during World War II*, (Westport: Praeger, 2009).

decision to prosecute her. As Shibusawa states, American popular culture of the 1940s saw Asian women as “calculating and revenge-seeking” creatures, not the innocent and loyal European and American women who generally need men’s protection.⁴⁴ The idea of a young, patriotic Asian-American woman forced into broadcasting for the Japanese did not fit the prevailing conceptions of the day, as noted by Shibusawa. Furthermore, Toguri did not betray America for a male lover as did Mildred Gillars, Rita Luisa Zucca, and Margaret Joyce (wife of William Joyce). It was easier for prosecutors to successfully portray her as “a female Nipponese turncoat” so commonly seen in the press, as this fit all notions of 1940s Asian femininity. Cinematic representations of Asian women in the mid 20th Century often involved femme fatale stereotypes such as highly intelligent, treacherous, and somewhat vengeful “dragon ladies.”⁴⁵

Shibusawa also makes the claim that rigid ideas of proper female roles in society may have helped seal Iva Toguri’s fate. Femme fatales, as discussed earlier, often threatened male dominance. This threat can be used to explain the “the post-war hostility towards American women” that “stemmed from the encroachments they made into male domains during the war as well as from the larger political context.”⁴⁶ Propaganda and mass persuasion, especially in the early to mid 1940s, stood out as a male dominated domain.

Perhaps most crucial, Shibusawa explores the idea that Iva Toguri’s prosecution came down to the U.S. needing a scapegoat to justify its internment policy against Asian-Americans, many of whom had been placed in detention camps out of fear their loyalty may inherently lie

⁴⁴ Naoko Shibusawa, “Femininity, Race and Treachery: How 'Tokyo Rose' Became a Traitor in the United States After the Second World War,” *Gender and History* 22, No. 1 (April 2010), 169.

⁴⁵ The words of head prosecutor Thomas DeWolfe, who previously suggested all charges against Toguri be dismissed due to lack of any serious evidence against her. Quoted in Masayo Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, (Tokyo and New York: Kodansha International, 1979), 213.

⁴⁶ Naoko Shibusawa, “Femininity, Race and Treachery,” 183.

with Imperial Japan. As Tacie Dejanikus has stated, regarding the estimated 110,000 Japanese-Americans incarcerated “if one traitor could be found the hue and cry over violation of their civil liberties might die down.”⁴⁷ According to Shibusawa, Toguri’s prosecution may have given the U.S. a valid reason for its internment policy while simultaneously feeding into popular stereotypical assumptions of treacherous Oriental females made so popular in films and pulp fiction.

Axis Sally

Axis Sally consisted of two women. Rita Luisa Zucca broadcast from Rome, and by many accounts preceded Radio Berlin’s Mildred Gillars, but it is Gillars who is most often associated with the name. Perhaps the seminal work published on the life of Gillars is Richard Lucas’ 2010 book.⁴⁸ Her life resembles that of Leni Riefenstahl in many respects. Both were dancers and interested in acting. Riefenstahl made a successful career in acting in Dr. Arnold Fank’s mountain films, which centered around idealistic, stoic characters surviving against impossible odds in mountaintop settings. The American born Gillars, however, did not have a successful film career in the U.S., and eventually moved to Germany to pursue cinematic opportunities that never came. Whereas Riefenstahl became a documentary filmmaker for Nazi Germany, Gillars soon began radio broadcasting. As Lucas explains, Gillars’ big break into radio broadcasting came about because Germany needed more announcers who spoke clear American English. They hoped to produce propaganda that audiences in the U.S. could better relate to. Up until then, most propaganda broadcasters had thick, German accents which could possibly turn

⁴⁷ Tacie Dejanikus, “Tokyo Rose’ - Destroying the stereotype,” *Off Our Backs* 6, No. 1 (March 1976), 29.

⁴⁸ Richard Lucas, *Axis Sally: The American voice of Nazi Germany*, (Philadelphia & Newbury: Casemate, 2010).

away American audiences, especially considering Hitler's aggressive policies in Western Europe. Gillars would ultimately broadcast under the name of Midge.

As will be discussed later, her Radio Berlin program was aptly titled *Home Sweet Home*, a name given to reinforce the Nazi goal of inducing homesickness and nostalgia in U.S. forces to lower their fighting resolve and morale. The show eventually rebranded itself as *Midge at the Mike*. As noted by Lucas, *Midge at the Mike* transformed *Home Sweet Home* into a program of political commentary. It also attempted to resonate with women of the American home front with intimate talk “with mothers, wives and sweethearts of America about the war, the current political situation, and the nefarious ways of Franklin Roosevelt” and his always present cast of “Jewish advisors.”⁴⁹ Whether attempting to lower the resolve of American fighting forces by addressing them directly or through female pressure from the home front, Mildred Gillars became, for many war fighters, the voice of Nazi German resolve over the airwaves. Gillars, like Iva Toguri before her, ultimately spent 12 years in prison for treason and was paroled in 1961. Like Riefenstahl, Gillars spent the rest of her life associated with her wartime personae, Axis Sally.

Ann Elizabeth Pfau, in a 2009 article, explores the changing perception of Axis Sally in contemporary times from one whose siren-like voice was a harbinger of doom over the radio to a sexy femme fatale popularly portrayed in contemporary Hollywood films and video games. This reimagining of Gillars comes in stark contrast to the homely, often unflattering portrayal of her in the American press after her identity became publicly known.⁵⁰ As stated by Pfau, the twenty-first century realization of Mildred Gillars in American pop culture presents her image during

⁴⁹ Ibid, 81.

⁵⁰ Examples of these press descriptions will be given in Chapter 3, as it is part of how Axis Sally and her work was perceived.

wartime as an “unseen but seductive presence on U.S. military bases, aboard American naval vessels, and even in foxholes across the European, Mediterranean, and North African theaters of operation” where she remained an object of “erotic, as well as historical, fascination and fantasy.”⁵¹ Although this is partially correct, as will be seen later, U.S. forces often fantasized about the appearances of Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally only to be let down when their identities were discovered. This is also explored by Richard Lucas in an essay for World War II magazine in which he details U.S. reaction to the “cross-eyed, bow-legged, and sallow-skinned” Zucca, and the rather homely looking “middle-aged former showgirl from Ohio” Gillars.⁵²

Rita Luisa Zucca, the Italian Axis Sally, has been ignored by historians. Mostly this is because Mildred Gillars became associated with the brand and is often referred to as *the* Axis Sally. Zucca, a native born New Yorker, eventually moved to Italy and ultimately renounced her American citizenship, an act that later spared her from prosecution. Mildred Gillars did not renounce citizenship, but she did swear an oath of allegiance to Nazi Germany when she became Midge. As for Zucca, her radio program was titled *Jerry’s Front Calling*, and her traditional signoff was “a sweet kiss from Sally.”⁵³ Zucca, like Gillars, was known for a seductive sounding voice and tantalizing messages to U.S. forces. Her final broadcast came on April 25, 1945. Although not considered unattractive in appearance, the thin brunette suffered from a wandering eye, which accounted for her being often called cross-eyed.

⁵¹ Ann Elizabeth Pfau, *Axis Sally, "The greatest generation," and Generation Y*, (2009), accessed online at www.academia.edu/222409/Axis_Sally_The_Greatest_Generation_and_Generation_Y.

⁵² Richard Lucas, *With a Sweet Kiss From Sally* (January/February 2010), 51, 49.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 52.

Seoul City Sue and Hanoi Hannah

As with Rita Luisa Zucca, scant historical attention has been given to Anna Wallis Suhr and Trinh Thi Ngo. It is not clear why the work of these women broadcasters has not received more scholarly attention, as they in many ways represent a direct lineage of radio propagandists began by Iva Toguri and Mildred Gillars. When they are mentioned, however, it is usually about their World War II counterparts. Perhaps the lack of historical attention lies in the fact that Suhr and Ngo are not considered pioneers in the field as was Toguri and Gillars, and by the time the Korean Conflict began, Americans were still enthralled with the very public trials of Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally.

Born in 1900 in Arkansas and raised in Oklahoma, Anna Wallace Suhr, like her World War II predecessors, was an American. She became a teacher in Texas for many years before taking part in a Methodist missionary trip to Korea. She soon fell in love with and married Suhr Kyoon Chul, a colleague with whom she had developed a deep romantic attachment; the marriage cost her citizenship. According to many accounts, her marriage kept her from leaving Korea when hostilities began in June of 1950.⁵⁴ Over the years, Suhr became known as the “true voice of Korea” and was often compared to Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally by the American Press, as will be discussed in Chapter Four. She broadcast for Radio Seoul as well as Radio Pyongyang as a propaganda mouthpiece for the North Korean government. American military personnel nicknamed her Seoul City Sue.

Vietnamese by birth, Trinh Thi Ngo was not an American citizen, unlike Toguri, Zucca, Gillars, and Suh. According to some sources, Ngo referred to herself as Thu Huong, which

⁵⁴ *The Eagle*, “‘Seoul city Sue' taught school in Texas before going to Korea," 11 September, 1950, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/53109901/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue%2BSeptember%2B>
C

means “*The Fragrances of Autumn*.”⁵⁵ Other translations found in the press for Thu Huong included Autumn Fragrances, Autumn Perfume, and Autumn Scent. U.S. military personnel serving in Southeast Asia knew her as Hanoi Hannah and occasionally the “Dragon Lady.” Ngo broadcast for Radio Hanoi, and like Tokyo Rose before her, became popular with U.S. forces.

Methodology

As Richard Boyer once stated, “past events always consist of a text and a context.”⁵⁶ Quoting Stuart Hall, Sheila Webb explains that the mass media “provide a groundwork” on which “social imagery” is constructed in the consciousness of the receiving public. In other words, images of subjects and people are constructed “in a cultural environment that is mediated by newspapers, magazines, and such.”⁵⁷ Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally Italy, Axis Sally Germany, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah broadcast over enemy short-wave radio directly to U.S. forces. The mass media became the primary way Americans learned of these women. Newspapers and magazines often reported on their radio broadcasts and even chronicled the treason trials of Iva Toguri and Mildred Gillars. Opinions were mainly formed through these ongoing press reports.

In exploring how the media portrayed each propagandist, it is also of primary concern that an attempt be made to explain the context associated with the articles chosen for study. The current research seeks to offer interpretation and explanation for *why* each female propagandist received the coverage and portrayal they did. The key in this endeavor is discovering the narrative that consistently evolved through the years regarding covering these women. As

⁵⁵ Quoted from <http://www.psywarrior.com/hannah.html>.

⁵⁶ Richard Boyer, “The Inquisitor, the Witness, and the Historian: The Document as Dialogue,” *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 18, no. 3 (primavera 1994): 398.

⁵⁷ Shelia M. Webb, “The woman citizen: A study of how news narratives adapt to a changing social environment,” *American Journalism* 29, no. 2 (2012): 11.

Dianne Bragg stated in her 2013 doctoral dissertation, “editors printed articles in their publications specifically because they accurately reflected the concerns, values, and culture of a particular newspaper’s readers.” Bragg goes on to write that “reading the newspapers of this era offers some insight into the concerns and perspectives of the communities they served.”⁵⁸ This is important because the media narratives surrounding these women (and to a large degree their male counterparts) offer a unique vehicle from which to also explore the national sentiments and concerns of the American public during the times of each broadcaster.

Articles collected suggest a media narrative surrounding the subject of American traitors and how justice would ultimately be served. Especially in World War II, hatred for Adolf Hitler, Nazis, Imperial Japan, and Fascism spurred angry feelings toward Mildred Gillars, Rita Louisa Zucca, and Iva Toguri, all three American citizens who were accused of conducting treasonous broadcasts against the U.S. and its armed forces. This anger manifested itself in press reports as well as newspaper sound offs, editorials, and in popular culture.

Ultimately, the narrative evolved to that of a more forgiving and sympathetic press, mainly with Iva Toguri, who went from a maligned and hated figure to that of an American patriot falsely accused of treason over faulty testimony and false accusations.⁵⁹ As will be explored, this sympathetic reconsideration occurred with Trinh Thi Ngo (Hanoi Hannah), and to some extent, Ann Wallace Suhr (Seoul City Sue) as well. The larger consideration is that these female radio propagandists received negative press originally, and through changing American sentiment and a more sympathetic press as time wore on, their legends remained alive in the American consciousness.

⁵⁸ Dianne M. Bragg, “The Causes of the Civil War: A Newspaper Analysis,” (doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama, 2013), 28.

⁵⁹ Clifford, Uyeda, “The pardoning of “Tokyo Rose”: A report on the restoration of American citizenship to Iva Ikuko Toguri,” *Amerasia* 5, no. 2 (1978).

This research relies on an extensive collection of newspaper and magazine articles collected from all over the nation. Articles were collected from the beginning of each propagandist's broadcasting time through the present. In all, over 1,223 articles were collected for the women propagandists. Of that number, 423 pertained to Tokyo Rose (ranging from 1943-2016), 404 for Axis Sally (ranging from 1944-2015), 106 for Seoul City Sue (ranging from 1950-1990), and 290 for Hanoi Hannah (ranging from 1962-2015). These articles are from the periods surrounding the broadcasting tenure of each radio propagandist. Articles dating after the Vietnam War (after the broadcasting period of Hanoi Hannah) will be examined as well to establish how press coverage of these five women changed over time.

Newspaper articles have been culled from the subscription service at www.newspapers.com and scholarly databases including ABI/INFORM, ProQuest, and LexisNexis. Keywords used in the search include the names of each broadcaster, what they were known as (Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, etc.), and the institutions they worked for. In addition, articles dealing with radio propaganda, Axis broadcasters, and short-wave radio are also considered in the search. Magazines are ascertained primarily through online archives such as: www.archive.org, www.oldmagazinearticles.com, www.unz.org/Pub/, <http://mediahistoryproject.org>, and <http://starsandstripes.newspaperarchive.com>. These online repositories store primary source articles from the time periods in question. The analysis of primary sources includes consideration of such factors as potential biases toward each broadcaster based upon race, national identity, and gender.

Discussion of each of the five women propagandists will occur chronologically, beginning with Iva Toguri and culminating with Trinh Thi Ngo. In this way, it is possible to see how the media coverage and portrayal of these women changed over time and how coverage of

each may have varied. Chapters Three through Six follow the same layout with sections labeled as follows: background, the war years, postwar years, and Conclusion. Background offers historical context leading up to each woman's tenure at the mic as well as biographical information. The war years' section centers around the broadcasting period of each woman and how the press covered them. Postwar years examines press coverage in the years following their broadcasting tenures and highlights how this coverage changed over time. Conclusion concludes each chapter with a brief discussion and analysis.

Press analysis includes examining prevalent themes found in national coverage. For example, many articles objectified these women as sexual creatures "cooing" to U.S. forces. In this regard, these articles paid less attention to the intellectual arguments these women may have made, especially regarding Axis Sally (Mildred Gillars) who regularly presented well-articulated arguments against the Roosevelt administration and its support for Jews. Other themes included concern over U.S. troop morale because of these women, and quite the opposite, how servicemen loved listening to their nightly broadcasts. Several articles wrote about how these women grossly misrepresented facts and even invented far-fetched stories. Still others regarded the potential persuasive power these women held over U.S. servicemen and how these women were treasonous. In addition, many articles wrote about how America should deal with women who have committed treasonous acts against the United States.

These themes are important factors in understanding the national discourse regarding these and how the print media represented them to their readership. They represent an evolving discourse that began with Tokyo Rose and ended with Hanoi Hannah. The current study offers analysis into how this coverage and these themes changed within the context of evolving American attitudes toward the proper role of women in society. This is key to understanding why

women radio propagandists were covered the way they were and might also illuminate why we remember them more than their male counterparts.

The study is not concerned with analyzing the ideologies and thoughts behind individual newspapers and magazines, rather it concentrates on national sentiment and prevailing themes that ran throughout media coverage of the five women radio propagandists. Apart from sound offs and editorials, many of the articles culled from small regional newspapers originated from wire services, and the current study will reference this via footnotes where possible.

This study often quotes Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah from known broadcasts; however, only an assortment of actual recordings remain for analysis, especially with Seoul City Sue and Axis Sally Italy (Zucca). Most of the broadcast quotes in this study came from press articles of each period that reprinted partial transcripts. FBI.gov offers a handful of Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally Germany (Gillars) transcripts and online media repositories such as the Old Time Radio Catalog offer CDs of small portions of select Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally Germany broadcasts.⁶⁰

Only a few full recordings remain of Axis Sally and Tokyo Rose broadcasts, and what remains is often in very poor condition as the originals were recorded from short-wave broadcasts onto primitive phonographic equipment. Very few full broadcasts of Seoul City Sue and Hanoi Hannah remain, but they are archived on audio tape that is fragile and not in circulation.⁶¹ Other websites contain bits of recordings that have been edited and altered as sound bites and may not be entirely usable. Fortunately, newspaper articles and other sources from the period offer transcripts to understand the propaganda techniques of each female broadcaster.

⁶⁰ Website URL is: <https://www.otrcat.com>.

⁶¹ The University of Tulsa has full recordings of Seoul City Sue's broadcasts in their library's special collections, but they would not allow me to play them or duplicate them, as the master tapes had deteriorated and were fragile.

In summary, the current research attempts to explore *how* each propagandist was portrayed in the mass media by examining newspaper and magazine articles of the period as well as offer explanations as to *why* these portrayals occurred and what factors may have contributed. This will occur by identifying the themes used in the media narratives of Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah. Emphasis will be placed on interpreting the narratives of each propagandist, how the media's portrayal has changed in contemporary times, and how male enemy propagandists have been covered in the press compared to their female counterparts.

Organization of the Study

Chapter Two begins with a discussion of popular propaganda definitions as well as an analysis of Axis propaganda strategies used in World War II. This discussion sets in place a broader understanding of the tactics used by the five female radio broadcasters, and how this may have affected the media's portrayal of them.

Chapter Three focuses on Iva Toguri and her legendary connection with Tokyo Rose. The chapter begins with biographical material followed by a detailed analysis of press coverage surrounding her from the origin of the Tokyo Rose phenomenon to the present day. Chapter Four examines Axis Sally and includes a detailed discussion of both Rita Louisa Zucca and Mildred Gillars. Chapters Five and Six deal with North Korea's Seoul City Sue and North Vietnam's Hanoi Hannah respectively. Biographical material precedes a detailed examination of print media coverage of each woman.

Chapter Seven concludes the study and consists of a detailed summary of findings, the study's limitations, and avenues for future research. The conclusion examines the legacies each woman left behind and how their names have been kept alive in popular culture. The final chapter also offers recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER 2 AXIS SHORT-WAVE RADIO STRATEGIES AND FEMME FATALE

Although propaganda is a well-studied aspect of communication, much research in the modern era has been devoted to the *effects* of persuasive messages and less on its constructs. Since the genesis of media effects studies, in what J.M. Sproule refers to as a paradigm shift “by which propaganda analysis was replaced by its later competitor, statistical-experimental communication research,” classic propaganda studies have been few and far between.⁶² What is even less researched, ironically, is gender and how it relates to classic propaganda efforts and their techniques.

Definition of Propaganda

As this research involves attempts at short-wave radio persuasion from the mid 20th Century, a proper definition of propaganda should be given followed by a description of common strategies used by adversarial radio broadcasters. As has been noted in numerous studies, propaganda is not so easily defined, although there are generally accepted guidelines for what constitutes it. In addition, there are many definitions of propaganda from a variety of writers because propaganda is both elusive and complex. Elusive in that it is not always recognized as propaganda, especially in peacetime. It can be found in an abundance of sources including advertising, speeches, slogans, and even public debate. It is not always used for nefarious purposes and can even take the form of harmless public service announcements. It is

⁶² J.M. Sproule, “Propaganda studies in American social science: The rise and fall of the critical paradigm,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 73 (1987), 60.

complex because it can exist in many forms and through practically every communication outlet. At its heart, propaganda is a persuasive message or series of messages crafted for a reason, by an individual or group, and disseminated to a target audience. It does not occur randomly or through happenstance. According to the The U.S. War Department:

Most students of the subject agree that propaganda has to do with any ideas and beliefs that are intentionally propagated. They agree also that it attempts to reach a goal by making use of words and word substitutes (pictures, drawings, graphs, exhibits, parades, songs, and similar devices)... Types of propaganda range from the selfish, deceitful, and subversive to the honest and aboveboard promotional effort. It can be concealed or open, emotional or containing appeals to reason, or a combination of emotional and logical appeals.⁶³

Jacques Ellul states in his pivotal 1965 book that propaganda is:

a set of methods employed by an organized group that wants to bring about the active or passive participation in its actions of a mass of individuals, psychologically unified through psychological manipulations and incorporated in an organization.⁶⁴

The current study, however, relies on the classic definition of propaganda as proposed by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis. Per the IPA, propaganda is “expression or opinion or action by individuals or groups deliberately designed to influence opinions or actions of other individuals or groups with reference to predetermined ends.”⁶⁵

Propaganda as it relates to the current study specifically concerns broadcast short-wave radio transmissions from enemy nations of the United States. These enemy broadcasts were regular programs specifically aimed at U.S. military personnel and were intended to demoralize,

⁶³ United States Armed Forces Institute, “What is Propaganda?,” Found online: <http://web.archive.org/web/20010129090400/http://www.mcad.edu/classrooms/POLITPROP/palace/library/whatispr.html>.

⁶⁴ Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men’s Attitudes*, (New York: Vintage Press, 1965), 61.

⁶⁵ The Institute for Propaganda Analysis, *The fine art of propaganda: A study of father Coughlin's speeches*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1939), 15.

confuse, and lower the fighting spirit of U.S. forces. American and British radio propaganda, although referenced occasionally, is not explored in depth.

The Techniques of Axis Radio Propaganda

American concern over the rapidly expanding power of international propaganda after The Great War necessitated the formation of the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (IPA) in 1937 to educate Americans as to the potency and effects of propaganda and how to recognize it. The IPA also worked to identify basic propaganda techniques. Seven were categorized, which included: name-calling, glittering generality, transfer, testimonial, plain folks, card stacking, and band wagon. Since that time, the list has varied. Author Magedah Shabo, for example, lists assertion, false dilemma, the lesser of two evils, and pinpointing the enemy for a total of eleven propaganda techniques. Although the techniques may change depending on technological resources and avenues available to the propagandist, the mission remains the same: coordinated campaigns of persuasion to alter preexisting thought and action.

In researching the coverage and portrayal of the five female propagandists, it is important to establish how the Axis Powers (and thus North Korea and North Vietnam) utilized techniques of propaganda. Germany employed the largest and most powerful propaganda machine the world had ever seen during World War II, as Hitler and Dr. Joseph Goebbels firmly believed in the power of mass political persuasion. Both North Korea and North Vietnam could not have developed as powerful a propaganda infrastructure as Germany and Japan, but since Seoul City Sue and Hanoi Hannah are often compared to Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, this study focuses mainly on the techniques of the Axis powers of World War II when considering broadcast propaganda.

Charles Rolo's 1942 book that categorizes six commonly used Axis propaganda

strategies. These six strategies, also explored in Frank Rybicki's 2004 doctoral dissertation, provide an excellent framework from which to analyze the techniques of Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah. Understanding the basic propaganda strategies used by these five women help establish context from which they were covered in the American mass media. Rolo's categories include: strategy of division, strategy of paralysis, strategy of confusion, strategy of alternatives, strategy of diversion, and strategy of terror.

The first strategy used by Nazi propagandists, the *strategy of division*, is self-explanatory. The Nazis attempted to fracture and divide the unity of Allied nations through rumors and insinuations. Often this approach came in the form of remarks geared to agitate British and French unity early in the war. After America's entrance in December of 1941, this strategy was employed to put a wedge between Anglo-American relations. William Joyce, known as Lord Haw Haw, often broadcast divisive commentary geared to weaken the Anglo-American coalition. For example, as quoted in Rolo's book, Joyce made the claim that:

America will fight to the last Englishman... Germany, as the Fuhrer has said a dozen times, has never coveted the Empire. She has even offered to guarantee its defense. Not Germany, but your so-called friend the Unites States, is the real enemy.⁶⁶

These types of broadcasts were common, as German and Japanese propagandists often attempted to use the strategy of division to agitate racial strife in the U.S. As Alfred Tyrnauer noted in 1943, propagandists like Joyce and Robert H. Best specialized in the strategy of division and sought to incite "class against class, group against group, and all against the government."⁶⁷ Quoted in *The Christian Science Monitor* from February of 1942, then director of the Office of Facts and Figures, Archibald MacLeish proclaimed that propaganda from Germany, Japan, and

⁶⁶ C.J. Rolo, *Radio goes to war: The fourth front*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), 20.

⁶⁷ Alfred Tyrnauer, "Lord Haw Haw from America," *PIC* (1943): 23.

Italy sought to:

Divide the United Nations on religious grounds. To sow distrust and hostility between Great Britain and the United States by lying to each about the other and seeking to arouse the fear that each is intent upon dominating the other. To split the loyalty and support of the Dominions from Britain by persistently repeating the falsehood that the United Kingdom is letting the dominion armies do most of the fighting and take most of the suffering.⁶⁸

The *strategy of paralysis* was employed prior to 1941 mostly to discourage the U.S. from entering the war as it had in 1917, which ultimately contributed to Germany's loss of World War I. According to Frank Rybicki, the strategy of paralysis consisted of concentrated efforts to discredit the American mass media and the Roosevelt Presidency while "smearing the interventionists and praising the isolationists."⁶⁹ The strategy of paralysis also consisted of attempts to ease American minds about Germany's intentions, even as Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe forces stormed across Europe. Germany sought to reassure America that Hitler's motives were good and that the growing power of the Third Reich did not pose a threat to the U.S. mainland. Fred Kaltenbach, an American citizen turned Nazi broadcaster routinely defended German policy in Europe with declarations such as "both the German government and the German people have only the friendliest of feelings for the government of the United States, the home of so many American citizens of German descent."⁷⁰ Again, the strategy sought to ease tensions between Germany and America and persuade it to stay out of the European war.

The *strategy of confusion* consisted of slightly more subversive tactics such as puzzling

⁶⁸ Roscoe Drummond, "How Axis radio propaganda seeks to split united nations," *The Christian Science Monitor* (February 6, 1942): 6.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/513903057/fulltextPDF/9C13A5FF44D462APQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁶⁹ Frank Rybicki, *The rhetorical dimensions of radio propaganda in Nazi Germany, 1933-1945*, (Duquesne University, 2004), 74.

⁷⁰ Harold N. Graves, Jr., *War on the Short Wave*, (New York: The Foreign Policy Association, 1941), 35.

Allied audiences through purposeful misinformation designed to arouse suspicion and doubt. This occurred through such practices as delivering conflicting news reports of the same event, disputing claims of Allied victories, and planting suspicion in the minds of the public. As Frank Rybicki describes, German propagandists occasionally referred to a “Fifth Column,” which were German operatives in America working to disseminate propaganda messages. Among those messages were stories of British agents, working from within the U.S., plotting nefarious activities against the government. Although Francis MacDonnell notes that these subversive operations were “badly managed, low-priority,” they nonetheless established confusion as a potent Nazi propaganda strategy.⁷¹

As for the *strategy of alternatives*, the Nazis often employed what Rybicki describes as the “shotgun principle.”⁷² This tactic involved disseminating numerous arguments of an issue to reach consensus with a wider audience. In other words, a variety of differing views on a subject is likely to appeal to the political interests of more listeners. Secondly, according to Rybicki, Nazi propagandists often touted Germany as an alternative to American and British ideals. For example, Germany was often portrayed as a land ripe with cultural sophistication, an idyllic place “with peace-loving citizens devoted to family.”⁷³ The idea was to present a less threatening conception of the Third Reich while highlighting the cultural and artistic nature of Germany.

The fifth strategy, *the strategy of diversion*, was often used to confuse the enemy to deflect attention from something else. In his study, Rybicki explains that as the Wehrmacht prepared for future invasions after taking Poland, propagandists formed arguments and accusations to cast suspicion on Britain’s military intentions against Germany. The strategy

⁷¹ Francis MacDonnell, *Insidious foes: The Axis fifth column and the American home front*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 123.

⁷² Frank Rybicki, *The Rhetorical Dimensions*, 77.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 78.

worked by keeping public debate on matters unrelated to more nefarious activities occurring within the Third Reich.

The *strategy of terror* worked by enhancing the fog of war and by exaggerating the crippling effects of Axis military operations. This strategy often used embellishment in the extent to which Allied citizens were panicked or terror stricken over Axis military progression. For example, in one broadcast from William Joyce as Lord Haw Haw, he proclaimed that since the fall of France to the Nazis, “the psychological tension resulting from the imminence of the German *avalanche* is becoming *almost unbearable*.” Joyce continued by describing the “depression” and “despair” felt across Great Britain and that “*the worst kind of panic*” could be felt in the British Isles, which was “pervaded by a *mad, deep fear*.”⁷⁴

Radio propagandists often used subterfuge. Rybicki mentions broadcasts that were intentionally garbled electronically to convey a frightful sense of impending doom. Another situation saw Nazis running makeshift radio stations supposedly inside the borders of Poland and later Great Britain for the express purpose of spreading false information and exaggerated claims regarding Wehrmacht and Luftwaffe advancements.

Writer Walter Arm, in discussing German short-wave radio propaganda categories referenced five types as laid out by Joseph Goebbels and Adolf Hitler. These five categories included: “Anti-Bolshevism” (anti-Communist), “Anti-Semitism” (anti-Jewish), “Social problems” (pushing the great advances of German civilization in solving societal problems), “German military and moral power” (showcasing an undefeatable Reich military), and “England’s economic and political decline” (highlighting the decline of the British Empire).

⁷⁴ Ibid, 80.

These five categories were adhered to almost religiously among Nazi broadcasters.⁷⁵

Setting the Stage: Propaganda Anxiety Leading up to the Tokyo Rose Phenomenon

An editorial from December of 1937 accurately predicted the nation's sentiments of radio propaganda. In the article, it mentioned that:

Right after the World war it was said by military experts that the next war would be fought in the air, and this prediction has come true, but not in the way the experts expected. The war is being fought right now with radio waves instead of bombers, blimps and pursuit ships.⁷⁶

The article continued by adding a dire warning to Americans that “nightly the air waves are filled with propaganda, with practically no effort made to conceal it or disguise it.”

This article, along with others like it, conveyed a sense of how serious the American press felt toward unfettered Axis propaganda campaigns against the U.S. and Britain. The article went on to add that radio is a weapon best suited to dictatorial regimes bent upon spreading the seeds of mistrust among other nations. But this sense of dread towards propaganda had not always persisted.

During the First World War, propaganda messages in the form of newsreels and documentaries were popular viewing in cinemas across America. People paid to go see foreign propaganda. During the 1920s, as radio became prevalent in American homes, propaganda broadcasts were mostly negative. Perhaps much of this shift in how Americans perceived propaganda from 1918 to the early twenties came from research coming out of media effects studies.

The 1920s saw a media effects paradigm of the hypodermic needle view of mass

⁷⁵ Walter Arm, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, “Testifies U.S. writer ‘hoped’ Nazis would win,” June 13, 1947, 1D. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/138818691/?terms=walter%2Barm>

⁷⁶ “Air disarmament,” *Ironwood Daily Globe*, December 31, 1937, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/968447/?terms=blimps>

communication whereas researchers assumed media had direct and powerful effects on cognition and behavior. Social scientists such as Harold Lasswell and Walter Lippmann wrote along these lines, with Lasswell's work on wartime propaganda being instrumental in propaganda becoming a negative term.⁷⁷ Lippmann's *Public Opinion*⁷⁸ has been hailed as a foundational work from which agenda setting research sprang, and per one researcher, "a key intellectual influence in creating public apprehension about the role of propaganda in a democratic society."⁷⁹

The growing American anxiety with foreign radio propaganda can be seen from how the press covered it. This anxiety peaked in the years preceding American intervention in the Second World War, as the major Axis powers of Germany, Italy, and Japan increasingly invested in complex radio propaganda campaigns against American and British interests. These almost endless radio programs were carefully monitored and studied by American military organizations, social scientists, and the press. The United States, in fact, had several monitoring stations under the Foreign Broadcast Monitoring System with listening stations in Washington, D.C., Texas, Oregon and Puerto Rico, collectively capable of monitoring and transcribing up to a million words daily.⁸⁰

Growing fascination and consternation with radio in the American press as an instrument of propaganda can be traced along with its adoption as a popular entertainment format. As *Radio Digest* reported in 1930, many viewed radio as a "great boon to civilization and international amity" that will "be one of the first and most important weapons that will be brought into use in

⁷⁷ Harold Lasswell, *Propaganda technique in the world war*, (New York: Knopf, 1927).

⁷⁸ Walter, Lippmann, *Public Opinion*, (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1922).

⁷⁹ E.M. Rogers, *A history of communication study: A biographical approach*, (New York: Free Press, 1994), 236.

⁸⁰ *The Christian Science Monitor*, "Wide U.S. radio monitoring finds propaganda has pattern," April 21, 1942, 9.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/513825038/fulltextPDF/4CC22B83FE3B46EAPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

the event of war.”⁸¹ Another writer compared the potency of radio as a technological medium of the First World War as “a mere laboratory playtoy” compared to its use in the years leading up to the Second World War “until it has come to constitute almost the entire intellectual life of millions” whereas the human voice could be used to convey information more powerfully than the printed word due to its immediacy and ability to convey emotion.⁸²

Radio’s anticipated use as an instrument of political propaganda came as a shock to no one in the 1930s. The principal concerns being the lack of government oversight in America on usage of short-wave radios, the fact that America had more radio sets in use than any nation in the world, and censorship and the tight restrictions of other nations such as Germany on listenership of incoming propaganda.

As editorialized in a 1937 edition of *The Washington Post*, America faced a dilemma with how to deal with Axis propaganda when Germany, Italy, Japan censored American broadcasts through jamming and heavy licensing of radio set ownership.⁸³ America, the article reminded, had no such policies inhibiting the reception and listenership of Axis propaganda. Italians, according to the editorial, faced severe fines and long-term imprisonment for listening to contraband broadcasts while Radio Rome’s propaganda messages poured across U.S. borders with “absolute immunity to the perpetrators.”⁸⁴

By the late 1930s, a debate over how best to deal with Axis propaganda ensued with the Radio Committee of the American Newspaper Publishers Association weighing in on the matter

⁸¹Floyd Gibbons, “Whole complexion of fighting will all be materially changed by radio in the next war,” *Radio Digest* 24, no. 5 (March, 1930) 18.

⁸² John A. Prentice, “American radio and war propaganda,” *Direction* (February, 1941) 14.

⁸³ I. Geraci, *The Washington Post*, “Radio propaganda,” December 2, 1937, 10.

<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/150849664/fulltextPDF/EDA6A64E0A514566PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 10.

warning the American press that its fundamental task “is to guard against any encroachment upon American democracy by the Federal Government with radio as an instrument of political power.”⁸⁵ This in direct response to calls for American radio producers to use the nation’s broadcasters to propagate American propaganda and to more heavily regulate radio listening in the United States. Others believed the American government should have taken a more active role in combating enemy propaganda, such as a call to establish a “radio arm of defense” which would have countered common Axis messages of defeatism and mistrust by “preaching the freedom, the happiness, and the blessings of democracies to all parts of the world.”⁸⁶

The late 1930s and early 1940s also produced social science research geared at determining the effectiveness of enemy radio propaganda. One study subjected high school teachers to fictional propaganda broadcasts to see if the students recognized the program content as propaganda. According to the study, not one student failed to identify the broadcasts as propaganda in nature.⁸⁷ Knowing that education could diminish the effect of enemy propaganda, The University of Michigan developed the first course dedicated to teaching students how to recognize propaganda as well as how to produce it for foreign consumption.⁸⁸ Another study

⁸⁵ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Newspapers’ radio board sees threat in propaganda,” April 27, 1938, 2.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/514851121/fulltextPDF/668F528A804546E9PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁸⁶ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Radio propaganda urged for defense,” May 5, 1941, 7.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/513591348/fulltextPDF/271C6AFD009F4A01PQ/2?accountid=14472>.

⁸⁷ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Radio propaganda clear to pupils,” June 30, 1938, 15.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/514696648/fulltextPDF/ADEAA6DA71B64D8BPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁸⁸ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “New University of Michigan course studies radio propaganda at war,” January 20, 1943, 11.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/514113876/fulltextPDF/14C3EA89560E46A0PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

indicated that of the overall U.S. population, only between five to ten percent listened to only one foreign short-wave broadcast per month, with only around one percent listening regularly.⁸⁹ Other studies yielded similar conclusions. Yet apprehension regarding foreign short-wave propaganda persisted. The steady inflow of it from Germany, Japan, and Italy across North America and into Central America held the press' and thus the public's interest.

Theoretical Underpinning - The Femme Fatale and Siren

To more fully understand the legacy and timeless appeal surrounding Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah, and to understand the media interest surrounding these women, one must consider the mythos of the femme fatale. A careful examination of the femme fatale concept can provide insight into why the American media considered these five women a danger to soldier morale. Each of these women possessed a sexual allure about them (whether intentional or not), each captivated male audiences with their seductive voices, and each sought to manipulate the minds of these men through emotion and carefully crafted monologues. Unlike their male counterparts, they used their sexuality to sway the minds and hearts of their primarily male audiences.

The mythos of the femme fatale, who lures men to certain doom spans back centuries; however, the *femme fatale* name is most likely a nineteenth century invention, one associated with French literature dating in the mid 1800s.⁹⁰ The femme fatale is a concept of dangerous femininity constructed from literary, artistic, and cinematic imaginings. But it is the film noir genre of cinema from the mid 20th Century that the name is most closely associated and most

⁸⁹ *The Christian Science Monitor*, "Foreign radio propaganda held little effect in U.S.," June 30, 1941, 20.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/513658211/fulltextPDF/A0BD8BDCD4944D7BPQ/2?accountid=14472>.

⁹⁰ Elizabeth K. Menon, *Evil by design: The creation and marketing of the femme fatale*, (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006).

often referenced. The femme fatale is both elusive and hard to define. Her character traits vary from generation to generation, yet her appeal as a powerful feminine force who not only endangers the male protagonist but also threatens to rob him of his dominance is well known.⁹¹

To understand the femme fatale, one must look back at the origins of the concept and trace it forward. Eve, the mother of all human life in the Christian religion, is often considered the first femme fatale.⁹² Lilith, the first wife of Adam (prior to Eve) from Jewish mythology, also shares this distinction. Eve tempts Adam to eat the forbidden apple, and the resulting eviction from paradise dooms them both to a life of mortality and hardship. Lilith's refusal to be sexually subservient to Adam ends their marriage leaving Adam in despair. Whereas Eve is guilty of only temptation and disobedience of divine order, Lilith is portrayed as part demon, and seems to fill her days wandering "about at night time, vexing the sons of men and causing them to defile themselves [emit seed]."⁹³

Both Lilith and Eve share a fundamental trait among all femme fatales: they lead men astray to various grim outcomes. Lilith's abandonment of Adam leaves him alone without companionship. Lilith is further demonized by threatening to devour Adam's children (and thus her offspring) out of anger towards God. Eve causes Adam to live out the rest of his existence as a mortal man for his crimes against God. The Eve and Lilith story serve as powerful examples of the threat strong femininity poses to classical masculinity, as the first two females created by the hand of God seduce and damage a single male protagonist.

⁹¹ Early interpretations of the fatale female consisted of temptresses (often somewhat demonic) of the classical age in art and literature, "Vamps" of the silent screen era vampire films, and "dangerous dames" of film noir from the 1940s and 1950s.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Taken from online article *Lilith: Seductress, heroine or murderer*, found online at www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/people-cultures-in-the-bible/people-in-the-bible/lilith/.

Lilith is also recognized as perhaps the first feminist, as her refusal to sexually submit to Adam threatened his patriarchal dominance over her. According to Virginia Allen, “the central issue embodied in images of the femme fatale is precisely the issue of male sexual dominance.”⁹⁴ The femme fatale is always free of male domination, and she is always in control of her own sexuality despite constant attempts to dominate her. Allen continues by adding that this independence is also what makes her most lethal, in that:

The femme fatale destroys not only her lovers but their progeny, and attacks the very foundation of patriarchal society. By destroying not only the male but his posterity, she becomes an image of conflict: desire and fear—for both men and women, since the sexual freedom she represents both attracts and repels, and flies in the face of established societal norms.⁹⁵

Interestingly, many of the dark, seductive traits associated with Eve evolved over time. As Elizabeth Menon states “the common understanding of Eve as a femme fatale who caused mankind’s downfall through her voice and sexuality was not a notion put forward in the bible,” rather evolved “gradually through the writings of successive theologians.”⁹⁶

Moving beyond Eve, the nineteenth century is where the femme fatale concept evolved from French literature and classical paintings. As Virginia Allen has stated, “the nineteenth century invented the image” of the femme fatale, “the twentieth century its label.”⁹⁷ For the most part the femme fatale is undefinable. No single image of her exists as the ideal archetype. She is portrayed many ways from the demonic, child devouring Lilith to the sometimes diminutive, yet seductive heroine of film noir, but several defining characteristics can be established.

⁹⁴ Virginia M. Allen, *The femme fatale: Erotic icon*, (Troy, New York: The Whitston Publishing Company, 2006), 196.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 196.

⁹⁶ Elizabeth K. Menon, *Evil by design*, 18.

⁹⁷ Virginia M. Allen, *The femme fatale*, viii.

First and foremost is the fact that the femme fatale is always seen as a creature of seduction, using her voice and sexual charms to inflict some injury onto male lovers. She is the vixen who destroys marriages, the sultry dame of film noir who becomes entwined in a murder mystery, and the lover who usually lures the hero to his doom. She is the opposite of the “good girl” who stands firmly obedient to patriarchal societal norms.

Most contemporary understandings of the femme fatale come from German Weimar street films of early cinema and classical Hollywood film noir genre of the 1940s and 1950s. Film noir usually involves detective stories where a lone detective or private investigator unravels criminal activity somehow involving a mysterious and sultry vixen with whom he falls in love. The femme fatale’s motives are never clear, and she exhibits little regard for the welfare and fate of her male lover. Although she is not always a villain outright, her actions and mannerisms suggest deep motives that are never completely understood to the protagonist (and thus the audience). The male protagonist yearns for her and usually follows her blindly, either unconcerned about or unaware of his impending doom. As David Crewe defines her, she is the “mysterious and deadly spider woman”⁹⁸ who plays on men’s sexual weaknesses and masculine anxieties. She emasculates men by fostering an uncontrollable desire within them, thus robbing them of their better judgment and sense of self preservation. In this way, she renders her victims powerless to resist her charms while preying upon men’s sexual and emotional weaknesses.

According to Crewe, the femme fatale is always “duplicitous, deceptive, dishonest,” and she is further “enriched with an ambiguity, and unknowability, a sense of impossible distance.”⁹⁹ She is ambiguous because her motivations are never clear, and she is unknowable because she

⁹⁸ David Crewe, “Cherchez la femme: The evolution of the femme fatale,” *Screen Education* 80 (2016), 16.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

surrounds herself with mystery and deception. As Molly Haskell states, femme fatales are “not stock figures of good and evil but surprisingly mixed and vivid.”¹⁰⁰ She is often highly intelligent, devious, never completely revealing of her inner self, and she is always seductively charming. In short, she is never entirely what she seems to be.¹⁰¹

Perhaps what is most central to the concept of femme fatales is the idea that they often expose fundamental fears inherent in masculinity—the fear of losing control. Western society has historically been patriarchal. The idea of a strong, dangerous woman who usurps male control through cunning and sexual prowess runs against historically Western societal norms. In many ways, the femme fatale gives female characters (whether in literature or cinema) a sense of agency they previously did not have. As author Jans Wager stated, these “fatal women” move the plot forward, whereas previously women had only supporting functions to a dominating male lead. In other words, the actions and motivations of the femme fatale progress the story, and often the male protagonist plays off her instead of the other way around.¹⁰² This is especially true with Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah, whereas press coverage often speculated the motivations behind each woman’s betrayal of their homeland and reasons for siding with the enemy. The femme fatale controls men through emotional manipulation, and men allow themselves to be destroyed to possess the women they sexually desire.¹⁰³ This masculine anxiety toward a strong feminine presence, a woman who is “unapologetically sexual,” sternly career minded (and oftentimes wealthy) is as David Crewe describes, a threat not only to

¹⁰⁰ Molly Haskell, *From reverence to rape: The treatment of women in the movies*, (Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1974), 208.

¹⁰¹ See also: Helen Hanson & Catherine O’Rawe, *The femme fatale: Images, histories, contexts*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1-8.

¹⁰² Jans Wager, *Dangerous dames: Women and representation in the Weimar street film and film noir*, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1999), 54.

¹⁰³ James Maxfield, *The fatal woman: Sources of male anxiety in American Film Noir 1941-1991*, (Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 1996), 24.

“conventional masculinity but also the idealized nuclear family.”¹⁰⁴ This also explained why the press held an aversion to these female radio propagandists, because of the desire and fascination servicemen had listening to their voices in a predominately womanless world of combat life.

The Five Radio Propagandists as Femme Fatales

Unlike the classic mythos of the femme fatale, Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah did not lead men to their inevitable doom. American military personnel did not listen to them out of a sense of emasculation anxiety. Evidence suggests that military personnel and audiences in the U.S. listened out of a sense of fascination and for the entertainment value even though their radio programs were designed for persuasion by affecting soldier morale.

However, there are several strong connections linking these five women with the concept of the femme fatale. An argument can be made that they are a form of 20th Century sirens, perhaps the most lethal form of the femme fatale. Sirens are best remembered from Greek mythology, especially Homer’s *Odyssey*, where Odysseus and his crew encounter them in their travels. Sirens were mythical female creatures whose alluring voices and sexuality could not be resisted by mortal man, and any encounter with them would result in certain madness and death. Per author Griselda Pollock, the main allure of the Homeric sirens is aural not visual. Pollock goes on to add that Homer’s sirens are dangerous more so for their “vocal fascination” than their erotic visual appeal.¹⁰⁵ They are an “image of enchanting sound, not of sight.”¹⁰⁶ The sound of their voices and the music they create lures sailors to their deaths. Furthermore, as stated by Pollock, it is the sirens’ “musicality, and specifically their singing, that is, women’s lucid voices

¹⁰⁴ David Crewe, “Cherchez la femme,” *Screen Education*, 21.

¹⁰⁵ Griselda Pollock, “Ecoutez la femme: Hear/here difference,” *The femme fatale: Images, histories, contexts*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 19.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 11.

with the memory of the first voice heard without comprehending the words, the mother's voice, consuming their own beauty for their own pleasure that appears to present the danger" to any sailors that pass too close to their island.¹⁰⁷ The allure of the sirens' voices and the overpowering sexuality they represent must be resisted by any man who happens upon them or certain doom results. U.S. servicemen most often envisioned these women as exotic beauties, for they were unable to see their true appearances until after each war. Their imaginations enhanced the appeal and mystery each woman represented. The American press often wrote about this.

Again, sirens usually represent male emasculation anxiety and the loss of societal power. But the real danger of the sirens, according to Pollock, is the fascination men have with them, exemplified in the *Odyssey* where Odysseus orders his men to tie him to the ship's mast so that he can hear the seductive call of the sirens while his crew have their ears plugged with wax so as not to hear. This fascination with the sirens causes men to venture closer to the island, and thus the fascination is what ultimately is their undoing. As Pollock quotes Homer, the sirens projected their "ravishing voices out across the air" and that "the male body itself reacts by the pulsation of a sublimated sexual arousal to the lure of the voice promising this comfort of the return of the bosom of/offering all knowledge."¹⁰⁸

All five of the female propagandists analyzed in this study were known by their sultry voices, which were regularly broadcast *out across the air* in the form of short-wave radio signals, and the fascination audiences had with them exemplified their siren-like qualities. Whereas Homer's sirens used music to lure in unsuspecting sailors, female propagandists utilized music in between propagandistic monologues to hold the attention of and manipulate their male-dominated audiences. American military personnel often fantasized what each woman looked

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 20.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 24.

like, and the print media often speculated whether they were as physically attractive as they sounded. Ironically, as will be seen in the following chapters, most of these women did not visually live up to the expectations of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines once their identities became known. The media exploited this fact with articles referencing Rita Louisa Zucca's cross-eyed visual impairment, Mildred Gillars' older than expected appearance, and Iva Toguri's short frame, plain face, and rather unappealing constitution.

All five radio propagandists held yet another link to Homer's sirens. The sirens are *heard* and not *seen*, as Odysseus discovered in the *Odyssey*. Their songs pierced through the foggy night, echoing across the darkness to reach his unplugged ears. As Odysseus could not see the sirens whose music filled his ears, neither could U.S. servicemen see the radio sirens; therefore, they envisioned the women whose voices came across the radio speakers, which added even more to their mystery. Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah each broadcast deep from behind enemy lines (usually in the evenings), far removed from the audiences they sought to attract. Their voices, however, spread across the globe, within easy reach of anyone with a short-wave receiver. The servicemen would often conjure up images of sultry vixens, and as will be discussed, oftentimes the real appearance of these women rarely met their lofty expectations.

These negative interpretations of femme fatales, and at the extreme end the mythical sirens, can certainly be used to explain the mostly negative press coverage women radio propagandists received from the American media. But, as will be seen, there are also other factors involved in these negative portrayals such as societal norms regarding women in the mid 20th Century. Furthermore, these were enemy propagandists, who operated in a time of heightened American patriotism at home and in the press.

Summary

The power of radio as a propaganda medium has long been known. As discussed, World War II set the stage for broadcast propaganda on all fronts. Political radio transmission became a priority for governments wanting to maintain control of domestic public opinion and for foreign services geared to swaying attitudes abroad. The five women analyzed in this paper were tasked with lowering enemy morale and influencing public opinion on the American and British home front. The work they did set the stage for more modern propagandists like Muhammad Saeed al-Sahhaf, better known to U.S. forces and the American mass media as Iraq's Bagdad Bob from the second Gulf War.

CHAPTER 3 THE SIREN OF RADIO TOKYO

Background

Many factors contributed in considering why the national print media covered these women the way it did. During the early to mid 1940s, the idea of female propagandists holding powers of persuasion over American troops represented a new kind of mass communication threat, one unfamiliar to the public and the media. And it constituted a threat that could not easily be controlled or countered. Anyone with a shortwave radio set could potentially receive these broadcasts. U.S. forces often had little else available to them in the most remote jungles of the Pacific Islands where distant broadcasts often could not be received clearly.

As with Italian and German radio propaganda, the Japanese distorted the truth. The Japanese, however, often fabricated farfetched stories seen mostly as entertainment to Naval, Marine, and Army Air Forces personnel. Radio Tokyo made little effort in crafting believable, fact-based propaganda. For example, the Japanese would often manufacture imaginary battles in their nightly broadcasts such as one in which Radio Tokyo reported the loss of 30,000 sailors, “numerous aircraft carriers and hordes of planes.” Another broadcast listed American losses after one battle at almost one hundred vessels sunk or damaged with over 268 planes shot from the sky.¹⁰⁹ Yet another proclaimed the Japanese Imperial Navy destroyed the aircraft carries

¹⁰⁹ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “OWI presents study of greatest propaganda hoax by Tokyo Radio,” November 15, 1943, 11.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/514355083/fulltextPDF/E9D47817115D4285PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

Lexington, the Enterprise, and the Saratoga.¹¹⁰ American sailors aboard the Lexington received the news their carrier had been lost while sailing aboard her at sea. Radio Tokyo also made highly unbelievable threats against the American mainland such as one time late in the war when they declared the U.S. would soon be attacked by a piloted “transPacific balloon-bomb.”¹¹¹

Other Radio Tokyo broadcasts likened the War in the Pacific to a war with the Soviet Union in saying “the day the Okinawa battle finished must be recorded by future historians as the first phase of the Soviet-American war” and that such battles would produce a “dramatic turn of events” against the United States.¹¹² Oftentimes Japanese radio propaganda came across to U.S. forces as outright comedy, such as when Japan declared America to be a barbaric nation because of wrestling matches where “huge and horrible looking monsters, imported from distant lands are pitted good looking athletic American youths” and that Americans permitted *Tobacco Road* “to run eight years on Broadway, a play of incest and stuff.”¹¹³

Broadcasts such as these resulted in reporters often agreeing that Radio Tokyo was the “greatest morale builder” U.S. Naval Fleets had, where its “claims of non-existent victories at sea, is so screwy that it is defeating its own purposes.”¹¹⁴ Although evidence suggests mainland Americans did not find many of these programs particularly appealing, U.S. Armed Forces in the

¹¹⁰ International News Service, *The Fresno Bee*, “Lexington is in action as Tokio blares ‘She is sunk’,” January 22, 1942, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/25785905/?terms=tokio>

¹¹¹ Associated Press, *Alton Evening Telegraph*, “Report 4 new U.S. Navy units off Okinawa,” June 4, 1945, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/16880369/?terms=Okinawa>

¹¹² Associated Press, *The Morning Herald*, “Jap propagandist says Soviet-U.S. war to begin soon,” July 10, 1945, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/21784908/>
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/21784908/?terms=Jap%2Bpropagandist>

¹¹³ *The Hutchinson News*, “After all – by ELM,” December 2, 1944, 4.; The author of the article repudiated these claims quickly by pointing out that the Japanese love Sumo wrestling. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/1035490/>

¹¹⁴ International News Service, Ralph Jordan, *Santa Ana Register*, “Tokyo Radio called greatest morale builder in U.S. Fleet,” January 23, 1942, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/77211877/?terms=tokyo%2Bradio>

Pacific listened to the Radio Tokyo broadcasts with regularity.

Not all Japanese short-wave radio programs were innocuous and humorous, however. Like the Germans and the North Koreans and North Vietnamese of future wars, Radio Tokyo utilized the strategy of division through racial themes. For example, Radio Tokyo broadcasters often fashioned their broadcasts after civil rights issues across America not only to turn minorities against the U.S. Government but also to spread doubt as to America's intentions toward minority races worldwide. For example, shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Radio Tokyo announced that:

Despite the Bill of Rights, President Roosevelt knows there is no freedom and justice for all in the United States. Colored people and yellow people are 'not wanted.' They are only 'hewers of wood and drawers of water for their masters.'¹¹⁵

Likewise, the 1943 race riots in Detroit did not escape Radio Tokyo's attention, with propagandists declaring that "the world can well understand how inexcusable is the contrast which exists between America's actual performances, like the race war, and her hypocritical pretensions" and that the "Detroit riot demonstrates the true American attitude."¹¹⁶ If nothing else, broadcasts like these played upon the perception that America was a place of disunity among the races, and it also was designed to bring apprehension to minorities serving in the American military. Even though such broadcasts were directed at American servicemen, enemy propagandists knew the transmissions were being monitored by the U.S. Government and listened to by millions of Americans. In this way, the American populace became an important secondary target. Axis Sally Germany (Gillars) and later Hanoi Hannah often exploited this and addressed the American population directly in their broadcasts to servicemen.

¹¹⁵ Saul K. Padover, "Japanese race propaganda," *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Summer, 1943): 197.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, 198.

The female broadcaster known only as Orphan Ann, ironically, broadcast no such messages of division, and military personnel in the Pacific listened to her for the lighthearted jokes and popular music of the period. Due to events that occurred in 1945 shortly after the Japanese surrender and the U.S. entered mainland Japan, the woman who broadcast as Orphan Ann would forever become linked with a fictitious siren, one the GIs, Marines, and sailors referred to as Tokyo Rose.¹¹⁷

Tokyo Rose never existed. Servicemen referred to any female announcer on Radio Tokyo as Tokyo Rose. The woman who broadcast as Orphan Ann, however, at least in the eye of the American media, *became* Tokyo Rose after the war. She broadcast for a daily program called *The Zero Hour*, later renamed *The Pacific Hour* after Japan surrendered. The name of this woman, as the U.S. media would not discover until 1945, was Iva Toguri. Since Iva Toguri's life is well documented in other sources, most of this chapter will concentrate instead on the media's press reception of her broadcasts and how that coverage changed as the years progressed. However, her background needs to be briefly stated for the purposes of this study.

On July 4, 1916, Independence Day in the United States, Iva Ikuko Toguri was born in Watts, Los Angeles, to Japanese immigrants. Iva grew up to be a traditional American girl by any measure: watched movies regularly in the cinema, became a Girl Scout, took piano lessons, and even dreamed of going to medical school and becoming a physician. She attended college at UCLA and in 1941 earned a Bachelor's Degree in zoology. In July of 1941 at the age of 25, Iva Toguri sailed for Japan to temporarily care for a sick aunt who recently became deathly ill. She was unable to secure a passport prior to departure but carried with her instead papers granting her reentry into the United States.

¹¹⁷ Iva Toguri called herself Orphan Ann on air. She never used her real name, nor did she ever use the GI-concocted term, Tokyo Rose.

Unfortunately, Japan attacked Naval installations at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, setting off a chain reaction of events that would lead Toguri stranded in Japan with little hope of returning. American immigration officials repeatedly refused her entry into the U.S. due in part to not having a passport coupled with tightening travel restrictions regarding Japanese. Unable to return, Toguri lived with her aunt and uncle until Japanese investigators began harassing her for being an American citizen. She refused to renounce citizenship and asked to be sent to an internment camp until the war's end. The Japanese refused her request, and Toguri had to find work to survive. The months that followed severely strained Toguri both physically and mentally. She suffered from severe malnutrition to the point of being hospitalized for six weeks due to pellagra and beriberi. Finding work proved to be difficult because she did not speak Japanese. Toguri taught piano lessons to survive and eventually found work as a typist at the Domei News Agency. At Domei, she befriended American POWs and met her future husband, Felipe d'Aquino, a Portuguese National living in Japan. D'Aquino shared Toguri's pro-American views, and he occasionally loaned her money to pay her rent.

As fate would have it, Iva Toguri found employment at Radio Tokyo as a typist. Her job included preparing English-language copy for propaganda announcers to read over the air. While in this capacity, Toguri met Charles Cousens, Wallace Ince, and Normando Reyes, all Allied POWs forced to work at Radio Tokyo. Cousens previously worked for Radio Sydney and served as a major in the Australian military. Ince held the rank of captain in the U.S. Army while Reyes, a Filipino lieutenant, had been captured by the Japanese at Corregidor. Over the months that followed, Toguri secretly aided these prisoners by sneaking them food and medicines. Toguri later testified at her trial the shock she felt seeing how malnourished these men were and that she "did everything I could for the Americans," even spending over half her monthly income

bringing them needed things.¹¹⁸

The Japanese ordered Cousens, Ince, and Reyes to design an English-language propaganda program for Radio Tokyo to be beamed to U.S. forces in the Pacific. The program would be called *The Zero Hour* and would include a female disk jockey who alternated propaganda messages and popular American music. The Japanese goal of the broadcast included negatively affecting servicemen's morale and inducing homesickness.

Unbeknown to the Japanese leadership at Radio Tokyo, the three men worked to covertly "sabotage the Japanese propaganda effort through the use of on-air flubs, innuendo, double entendre, and sarcastic, rushed or muffled readings."¹¹⁹ Cousens, the ranking leader of the group, wanted a female that could deliver this innocuous version of propaganda but trusting enough to keep the truth from the overbearing Japanese management of Radio Tokyo. Naturally, Iva Toguri became the announcer, although reluctantly.¹²⁰

The Japanese gave her the name of Ann to broadcast under since the scripts labeled her ANN for announcer. Cousens embellished the name by expanding it to Orphan Ann. Whether this had anything to do with Toguri's childhood affinity to the film version of *Little Orphan Annie* is debatable. Cousens, Ince, and Reyes wrote the on-air character of Orphan Ann as playful, friendly, and always cheerful as to dilute the propaganda potential of the program. Toguri as Orphan Ann would address U.S. servicemen as "Orphans of the Pacific," which had an endearing quality to it when delivered by Toguri's cheerful, nonthreatening voice. Her first

¹¹⁸ Associated Press, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Ten years for Tokyo Rose: Fined \$10,000 in addition to prison term: Shows no emotion at sentence," October 7, 1949, 1. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/177793349/fulltextPDF/346290BE99204B6BPQ/3?accountid=14472>.

¹¹⁹ Brief Iva Toguri bio, accessed May 06, 2015, www.archive.org/details/TokyoRoseWorldWarIiJapaneseRadioPropaganda

¹²⁰ According to all biographical accounts, the Japanese compelled Toguri to broadcast for them despite her reluctance to do so.

broadcast came in the Fall of 1943. She playfully referred to fighting servicemen as Boneheads¹²¹ and sometimes “wandering boneheads of the Pacific Islands” and always followed the word “enemy” with an innocent giggle as to diminish its harsh meaning.

The War Years

It is hard to know exactly when the name of Tokyo Rose first came into the vernacular of servicemen. The name certainly predates Iva Toguri’s very first broadcast on November 13, 1943, as GIs usually referred to any female Japanese voice broadcasting propaganda as Tokyo Rose. Some reports credit the first use of the name as far back as December 11, 1941, shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. It was found in a submarine log book and included the entry, “Tokyo Rose introduced by a jiu-jitsu rendition of ‘Three O’Clock in the Morning,” followed by a line presumably from the female announcer saying, “Where is the United States Fleet? I’ll tell you where it is boys. It’s lying at the bottom of Pearl Harbor.”¹²² Other reports claimed soldiers stationed in the Aleutian Islands first coined the term. What is clear is that in 1943 many press reports surfaced regarding Tokyo Rose and her broadcasts on *The Zero Hour*. At first, many articles expressed humor, a little sarcasm, and outright fascination with this unidentified female who seemed to entice American military personnel.

It is likewise hard, if not impossible, to know which quotes from Tokyo Rose came from Iva Toguri. Only a few audio recordings and transcripts remain. Several women broadcast on *The Zero Hour* including Iva Toguri. Some estimates say around six female broadcasters, more recently the number has been reported as high as two dozen. This chapter attributes these quotes

¹²¹ Boneheads was Cousens’ idea, as it was Australian lighthearted slang for “dogface.”
Source: www.earthstation1.com/Tokyo_Rose.html

¹²² Jack Stevenson, *Nevada State Journal*, “Reno man seeks to unravel Tokyo Rose mystery: Iva d’Aquino: Was she a traitor or scapegoat?,” April 4, 1976, 30.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/78792332/?terms=Iva%2Bd'Aquino>

to “Tokyo Rose” and not necessarily to Iva Toguri; however, since Toguri ostensibly *became* Tokyo Rose in the American press in 1945, she is often held responsible for the broadcasts whether she had anything to do with them. One recording that does exist of an actual Iva Toguri broadcast contains the line:

Hello there, enemies! How’s tricks? This is Ann of Radio Tokyo, and we’re just going to begin our regular program of music, news and the Zero Hour for our friends—I mean, our enemies! [slight giggle]—in Australia and the South Pacific. So be on your guard, and mind the children don’t hear! All Set? OK. Here’s the first blow at your morale—the Boston Pops playing “Strike Up the Band!”¹²³

Undoubtedly, it can be argued that the GI-created caricature known as Tokyo Rose did more for U.S. servicemen’s morale than any other single entity in The Pacific Theater. The constant playfulness in her tone, the slight giggles between jibes, and her always friendly demeanor set Iva Toguri apart from the other female propagandists analyzed in the current study and other female propagandists at Radio Tokyo.¹²⁴ Ironically, however, these character traits of Orphan Ann aided in the media’s portrayal of her as a femme fatale, a radio siren whose sexual appeal to U.S. military personnel could not be denied. Her broadcasts became legendary, and the press’ continual attention enhanced her reputation not only among U.S. forces but also Americans back home. In fact, *Time Magazine* once referred to her as the “darling of U.S. sailors, GIs and marines all over the Pacific.”¹²⁵

The American press often made claims regarding her that can never be fully

¹²³ Can be found online at: www.earthstation1.com/Tokyo_Rose.html. This audio soundbite is perhaps the most well-known recording still in existence of Iva Toguri as Orphan Ann. Incidentally, Cousens instructed her to giggle every time she mentioned the word “enemy” to deemphasize the harshness of the word.

¹²⁴ Harkening back to the introduction, Cousens had instructed Toguri to always sound friendly and nonthreatening when she broadcast to U.S. forces. In this way, the propaganda value of *The Zero Hour* would be diminished even more.

¹²⁵ William L. Shirer, *The San Bernardino County Sun*, “By William L. Shirer,” July 29, 1945, 12. Reprinted from the New York Tribune. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/49445921/?terms=William%2BL.%2BShirer>

substantiated, such as various newspaper articles crediting her with the first use of the term “kamikaze.” *Collier’s Weekly* reported that in October of 1943, during a period of severe Naval losses for Japan, Rose warned American servicemen of a “Special Attack Corps” created in Japan for the express purpose of suicide missions.¹²⁶ As far as GI reaction, the press reported that:

The GIs credited her with having not only charm but a master mind. They said she heralded the arrival of new divisions in a Pacific theater by welcoming the commanding officers and others by name. They said she predicted new American landings with amazing accuracy.¹²⁷

Stories of Tokyo Rose’s legendary ability to procure inside knowledge of military matters heightened the nation’s interest in her. Questions about Tokyo Rose filled national headlines, especially from ex-servicemen later in the war who regularly listened to her while overseas. As one writer put it,

Where did she get recordings of last minute American music that hadn’t even broadcast on U.S. networks?¹²⁸ Where did she get information as to who was and wasn’t going home, what we had for dinner, where we were going and what kind of equipment?¹²⁹

Other press reports speculated that South American receiving stations would transcribe news information as it was broadcast from the U.S. and ship it immediately to Tokyo by way of a submarine network.¹³⁰

¹²⁶ Frank D. Morris and Jack Turcott, *Collier’s Weekly*, “Flying coffin corps,” June 9, 1945, 18. Accessed online at <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Colliers-1945jun09-00018?View=PDF>.

¹²⁷ William L. Shirer, *The San Bernardino County Sun*, “By William L. Shirer,” July 29, 1945, 12. Reprinted from the New York Tribune. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/49445921/?terms=shirer>

¹²⁸ Most press reports indicate that *The Zero Hour* played slightly older records and not the latest hits, so this statement is not substantiated elsewhere.

¹²⁹ United Press, *The Havre Daily News*, “Ex-servicemen want to know where ‘Tokyo Rose’ got her information,” September 14, 1945, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/11802698/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹³⁰ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “‘Tokyo Rose’ called to U.S. to stand trial for treason,” August 17, 1948, 7.

This uncanny ability of the female radio sirens to predict military movements represented a theme that ran consistent with all five women. The American press did not make such claims about male radio propagandists. To portray these women as somehow privy to military movements enhanced their mystery, making them even more enticing to U.S. soldiers and the American public in general.¹³¹

Reports such as these also established how the American press covered female propagandists. Coverage remained often complex with many dialectic themes running throughout the war years. Especially with Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, the American press often reported on them from a perspective of fascination and novelty, even if the coverage often tended to be highly negative in tone. The media also sought to diminish the notion of these women as serious propagandists while at the same time devoting print space to stories portraying them as devious sirens, whose propaganda messages often went from sexually alluring commentary to passages of foreboding warnings to U.S. forces.

In exploring how the American media's coverage of Tokyo Rose changed over time, coverage ranged from highly negative (femme fatale, siren, and enemy propagandist) to positive (friendly enemy, entertaining to U.S. troops). Regardless of Tokyo Rose's position outside of traditional gender roles in American society, she entertained troops and relieved boredom, and

<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/516150327/fulltextPDF/33CD662F976948E5PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

¹³¹ In the Aleutian Chain, a story circulated in the press regarding an Army general who left to go stateside. On board his plane, the general listened to Tokyo Rose, and she mentioned his name and told him to hurry home as his house just caught fire, which it apparently had. Another Tokyo Rose story involved the crew of a hidden Japanese submarine somewhere offshore. According to Rose, and reported by the American press, the crew came ashore one night, snuck into the American base's photo lab, and printed some photographs before heading back to the submarine. As with many of Tokyo Rose's stories, they were most likely false or highly exaggerated, but they nonetheless entertained U.S. forces. Source: Cpl. John M. Haverstick, *Yank Magazine*, "Alaska sweats it out," March 30, 1945, 11. Accessed online at <http://www.oldmagazinearticles.com>.

the press often filled newspaper space writing about this aspect of her. *The Zero Hour*, having begun in 1943, broadcast propaganda at a time where the American Navy and Marines were gaining ground in the Pacific. American victories in the Solomon Islands, Wake island, and even Guadalcanal necessitated Japan's propaganda efforts. In the United States, two grueling years of war both in Europe and the Pacific consumed the American media.

Collier's Weekly in April of 1943 ran an article about a submarine crew that stealthily sat within site of the Japanese mainland, silently waiting for shipping to cross its path. According to the article, the sailors handled boredom in the evenings by listening to Tokyo Rose, who compared American submarines to toys for the Imperial Japanese Navy to destroy at will. After the American submarine successfully sank a few targets, one sailor, as quoted in the article, said that "she began calling us the Black Panthers of the Pacific. We got a big kick out of her."¹³² Another article regarding American submarines quoted Rose as proclaiming, "Hello America... You build 'em, we sink 'em."¹³³ Quotes like these would have come across quite ironically to American audiences since the U.S. military had gained so much momentum against the Japanese Navy.

It followed that GI fascination with Tokyo Rose seemed to add an element of intrigue to the media's portrayal of her. The siren of the Pacific Campaign regularly predicted doom for American forces, yet her popularity among them continued to climb as the months wore on. The obvious fascination from the American media and public seems to contradict with the aversion both also shared with Tokyo Rose and the other enemy radio sirens. Perhaps the best answer one

¹³² Frank Gervasi, *Collier's Weekly*, "What our submarines are doing," April 3, 1943, 22. Accessed online at <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Colliers-1943apr03-00016>.

¹³³ United Press, Charles P. Arnot, *The Sandusky Register*, "American subs superior to any German U-boats," June 22, 1943, 3. Accessed online at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/4513620/?terms=American%2Bsubs%2Bsuperior%2Bto%2Bany%2BGerman%2BU-boats>

can provide to explain these opposing viewpoints is the novelty factor Tokyo Rose (and even Axis Sally) enjoyed. These women were outliers, unconventional propagandists, and most of all, they were women assuming public broadcasting duties in an otherwise male domain. They were also unique, and the American media wrote of the entertainment value of their broadcasts as well as expressed disgust in the treasonous nature of these women.

Much of the press coverage in 1943 regarding Tokyo Rose involved *The Zero Hour's* main propaganda technique, using the soft, sensuous female voices to woo U.S. servicemen and enhance their homesickness and their thirst for popular American music. Many articles reported on GI reaction to the program, which quite contrary to Radio Tokyo's intent, quickly became extremely popular to soldiers, airmen, Marines, and sailors in the South Pacific. One article reported Rose's detailed description of the home cooking U.S. Marines on Guadalcanal were missing. The article went on to describe, using racially stereotypical language, that with Tokyo Rose,

The radio speaks in a tender, melting. The voice, it is plain from its sibilance and sometimes raw, sometimes blunted edges to it, comes from a strained thru big, buck teeth... Tokyo Rose, out of respect no doubt for her thorns, it sounds like the voice of a bad wolf honeyed up to be grandmaw and some of the fellows sit huddled around it, trembling and deliciously afraid like good Little Red Riding Hoods.¹³⁴

Ironically, the article went on to suggest despite the blatant propaganda, Tokyo Rose "is worth a man's time." Articles such as this one clearly showed not only the media's fascination with Tokyo Rose but its contempt for her as well. Describing Tokyo Rose's voice as "tender and melting" while proclaiming she has thorns and comparing her to the wolf in *Little Red Riding Hood* underscored the way the American media viewed these women. As with Homer's sirens of

¹³⁴ North American Newspaper Alliance, Ira Wolfert, *The Nebraska State Journal*, "Jap air force steering clear of Guadalcanal," June 29, 1943, 1. Accessed online at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/42100619/?terms=Jap%2Bair%2Bforce%2Bsteering%2Bclear%2Bof%2BG Guadalcanal>.

mythology, the “tender, melting” voices often came from deadly creatures whose ugly nature existed to destroy men and their noble intentions. The racist undertones illustrated the American media’s often negative portrayal of Asian femme fatales.

As a propagandist, Tokyo Rose regularly played loosely with the facts. Part of Rose’s allure to U.S. soldiers, aside from her vocal femininity, centered around *The Zero Hour*’s habit of grossly reporting false information. So much, in fact, GIs found it humorous. Likewise, the American press heavily covered this aspect of Tokyo Rose’s unfolding story. More than likely Rose’s unrealistic accounts of battles and her constantly unbelievable prognostications of American defeat not only added humor to the ongoing media narrative of Tokyo Rose but diluted her potency as a weapon of persuasion against U.S. forces. In short, the media most likely pushed these stories as a way of diminishing her as a weapon of enemy propaganda. “Everything she said is wrong,” one article reported in August of 1943. In fact,

She was so wrong that the boys were vastly entertained. They began to look forward each night to her broadcasts for laughs. Some day when Yanks get to Tokyo, they are going to look her up and thank her for the entertainment she unintentionally gave them.¹³⁵

Rose’s proclamations greatly amused servicemen.¹³⁶ Some articles pronounced her more popular than Bob Hope, Jack Benny, and Bing Crosby. Soldiers, Marines, and sailors were often quoted in articles about their predicted misfortunes. One Marine private remarked that,

she told about our unit being wiped out and there we were sitting around listening to our downfall. Her function was to destroy our morale and make us homesick, but instead we

¹³⁵ International News Service, *The Daily Times*, “Tokyo Rose’s talks entertain troops,” August 13, 1943, 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/84236833/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹³⁶ Another article recounted the story of Naval Lt. George Gay, a Houston native and one of three surviving members of Torpedo Squadron Eight, which caused significant damage to Japanese warships in the Battle of Midway. Gay’s reputation as a Naval hero spread throughout the fleet. Tokyo Rose referred to him as being a mere myth and not an actual person on *The Zero Hour*. Lieutenant Gay reportedly enjoyed that broadcast. Source: Associated Press, *The Galveston Daily News*, “Navy air hero shows up making Tokyo a liar,” October 13, 1943, 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/23461226/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

got a big laugh.¹³⁷

Journalist Charles Arnot reported that the “smooth-tongued Nipponese siren of the Jap propaganda air waves”¹³⁸ broadcasted triumphantly that the Japanese Imperial Navy wiped out an entire carrier task force fighting near the Marshal Islands in December of 1943. The task force actually sank two Japanese cruisers and four other warships in the area, and the men serving aboard the carrier enjoyed hearing Tokyo Rose tell her version of events. The article claimed this was the seventh reported sinking of that aircraft carrier by Tokyo Rose. One journalist, referencing the same incident, quipped that the carrier’s crew felt “pretty sorry for themselves” for having to listen “to Tokyo Rose at the bottom of Davy Jones’ Locker.”¹³⁹

Articles such as these further illustrate the point that the media’s fascination with Tokyo Rose (and thus her successors) included disseminating stories designed to demystify the sirens. In other words, the media sought to not only sexualize these women as alluring femme fatales out to destroy troop morale through uncontained feminine charms but also showcase them as failed propagandists whose over-the-top commentary entertained more than harmed American forces. As discussed, societal norms regarding women and their “proper roles” in society necessitated the media’s diminishment of Tokyo Rose as a serious propagandist. American society of the 1940s was not prepared to view women propagandists as equal to men.

Following a highly successful bombing mission of B-29s over Kyushu Island, which left aircraft manufacturing plants engulfed in pillars of smoke rising some fifteen thousand feet in the

¹³⁷ *The Edwardsville Intelligencer*, “Tokyo Rose’ on radio just joke to Marines,” November 2, 1943, 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/26463574/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹³⁸ United Press, Charles Arnot, *Valley Morning Star*, “Tokyo Rose provides entertainment for men on carrier she claims was blasted,” December 12, 1943, 5. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/53274179/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹³⁹ *The Danville Morning News*, “Tokyo Rose,” December 13, 1943, 5. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/89198822/?terms=%22Tokyo%2BRose%22>.

air, the press quoted the flights' group commander as stressing, "if Tokyo Rose says we missed the objective, Hirohito's ancestors ought to be turning back-flips in their graves tonight for shame."¹⁴⁰ The press pushed these humorous stories most likely due to the increasing optimism in the U.S. that Allied forces were slowly winning the war in the Pacific.¹⁴¹

As American Naval successes in the Marshall Islands, Saipan, and other South Pacific island campaigns mounted, the propaganda from Radio Tokyo also increased. In critiquing Rose's broadcasts, one article declared that:

It is nothing new for Allies fighting men in the Pacific to listen to the line of "horseradish" ground out by that smooth-spoken sob sister, Tokyo Rose. If the Japanese officials knew how much entertainment she afforded, they probably would take her off the air, or at least cut down on her allowance for records of sentimental American songs. Or maybe they would just get her a sponsor. Tokyo Rose has sunk the American Pacific fleet so many times that she probably has lost track of the number herself.¹⁴²

The article went on to add that Rose's propaganda became so exciting to servicemen that they hated to miss a single broadcast in fear of missing the best parts of whatever battle the U.S. Navy presumably lost on any day. "It is difficult to figure out even distorted logic for this chaos of lies," the article concluded. "But one cannot help feeling that the Japanese public will receive a shock when somebody tells them that everything isn't rosy in Tokyo."

As before, the article sought to discredit Tokyo Rose as a formidable propaganda

¹⁴⁰ Associated Press, *The Statesman Journal*, "B-29's assault on Kyushu Isle called success," October 26, 1944, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/80166267/?terms=B-29's%2Bassault%2Bon%2BKyushu%2BIsle%2Bcalled%2Bsuccess>

¹⁴¹ Incidentally, the night following the Doolittle raid on April 18, 1942, the crew of the USS Hornet, from which Doolittle's B-25s launched, learned of the bombing raid's success by tuning in to Tokyo Rose. According to news reports, Rose gleefully announced the bombing raid resulted in absolutely no damage but then called for immediate blood donations city-wide.¹⁴¹ Source: United Press, *The Morning News*, "Women in the news," August 31, 1945, 6. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/85601393/>.

¹⁴² John Beaufort, *The Christian Science Monitor*, "Tokyo Rose airs tallest tale that all's now rosy in Tokyo," March 21, 1944, 9. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/514412714/fulltextPDF/D9DCE7872BF64AFCPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

presence. This falls in line with the national press' mission to contain Rose and other female radio sirens as mere novelties and not potent political hucksters of enemy nations. The purpose, as stated previously, seemed more to demystify the Pacific siren to the American public than to publicize her merely for entertainment's sake. Through demystification, any power Tokyo Rose had over U.S. forces in the Pacific became diminished.¹⁴³

While U.S. Marines were already driving their war far inland on Saipan, Tokyo Rose reported the Japanese were gallantly stopping them from establishing a beachhead on the island. The battle-hardened leathernecks found such broadcasts not only laughable but relished the tunes she would play between the broadcasts such as "Springtime in the Rockies."¹⁴⁴ As with the other women analyzed in this study, the American press lampooned them for their sexuality, their gross exaggerations, and their musical selections. Any discussion of their intellectual acumen never took place; this level of critique was reserved for their male counterparts. These women were, for all practical purposes, sexual creatures out to destroy military morale. Tokyo Rose and her successors broadcast mainly to U.S. forces. Their soliloquies were directed at U.S. troops though heard stateside by short-wave listeners. The male propagandists, on the other hand, were mostly directed at the American mainland. The media often reiterated this fact and described them as little more than glorified DJs.

With regularity, *The Zero Hour* broadcast news items such as "14 hundred American

¹⁴³ In yet another reference to Rose's gross exaggerations, "she has stated many times that nearly every-known ship in the navy and practically every submarine in the United States service has been sunk. Some vessels have been sunk as often as three or four times, according to her statements." Source: *Ironwood Daily Globe*, "Keep register of servicemen," April 26, 1944, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/54559516/>.

¹⁴⁴ *Cumberland Evening Times*, "Not so clever: 'Tokyo Rose' broadcasts brings hearty laugh from Marine," October 3, 1944, 11. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/1866559/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

planes”¹⁴⁵ destroyed in air-to-air combat and that American casualties, for example on Saipan, numbered at around nineteen thousand. Journalists often chided her for such fictional battle accounts while praising her for the entertainment value and music all at the same time. As one article put it, “she will probably continue to be our most popular enemy until our bombers release her from the air.”¹⁴⁶

Propaganda lines such as these underscored the extreme fabrication of events Radio Tokyo broadcast during the latter years of the war. American forces scored significant victories in 1944 against a rapidly retreating Japanese military including The Marianas Turkey Shoot in June where the U.S. Navy downed some 220 Japanese aircraft, the Marine invasion of Guam, and Naval victories at Leyte in the Philippines. Furthermore, American B-29s began bombing mainland Japan in June of 1944. Hearing Tokyo Rose broadcast that Japanese forces were winning the war in the face of so many irreplaceable losses would have certainly entertained Americans fighting in the Pacific.

Most of the coverage regarding Tokyo Rose in the American press in 1944 remained focused on her overly embellished and often ludicrous account of battles and confrontations with Japanese troops. For example, Marines fighting on the Solomon Islands heard from *The Zero Hour* that they had all been wiped out by superior Japanese forces. The Marines, according to one article, pinched one another just to make sure they had not been wiped out.¹⁴⁷ Sometimes the Marines would even take Rose’s advice knowing warnings from her usually meant action ahead. For instance, in Guam Tokyo Rose once warned Marines to keep their guns oiled and clean

¹⁴⁵ *The Post-Register*, “Radio Tokyo woos Yanks,” August 16, 1944, 10.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/74611382/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ *Moberly Monitor-Index*, “Pacific natives prefer dimes to ‘folding money,’” October 4, 1944, 7. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/19591139/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

because a Japanese counterattack was imminent. Happily, as if in compliance, the Marines did just that, cleaned their guns. When the attackers came, the Marines repulsed them.¹⁴⁸ Ironically, the media generally did not acknowledge the value of intelligence that occasionally came from Rose's broadcasts. There again, Radio Tokyo made countless such predictions of imminent attacks and doom for servicemen.

The fourth of five research inquiries this study seeks to explore is how the American media responded to each woman propagandist. The press occasionally responded directly to Tokyo Rose. In an opinion piece written in December of 1944, the article begins by addressing Rose directly before recounting a recent series of Naval confrontations by Japanese forces. The "hard-punching" Aerial Squadron 66, the article stated, recently returned to the U.S. mainland after a very successful 10-month deployment in which it participated in "43 bombings and strafing attacks against your [Japanese] positions" in the Marshall Islands. The article directly addressed Tokyo Rose by reminding her that she reported the squadron's escort carriers twice sunk, and that its officers and crew's biggest regret came from the fact that the Navy didn't "receive word of the 'sinkings'" to issue them all "60-days survivors' leave."¹⁴⁹ By directly addressing Tokyo Rose, the American media lampooned her and even directly challenged the veracity of her propaganda. These types of responses also worked to further diminish the Pacific siren's appeal over U.S. forces by downplaying her legendary status as someone with advanced knowledge of military operations.

Another type of response included producing programming designed to cast doubt on Tokyo Rose's numerous versions of military campaigns. In response to the wildly fictitious

¹⁴⁸ *The Daily Courier*, "Notes from Pacific," October 21, 1944, 2.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/37865979/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁴⁹ Associated Press, *Amarillo Daily News*, "Tokyo Rose, you smell," December 2, 1944, 9. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/16365609/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

propaganda *The Zero Hour* reported, the U.S. Navy produced a documentary film of the American landings on Okinawa, which involved only sparse Japanese resistance. To illustrate Radio Tokyo's far-fetched version of actual events, the Navy began keeping audio recordings of her reports of the Okinawa landings to be edited into the film; the film's purpose being to show Tokyo Rose as a "colossal falsifier." The film would show American military advances juxtaposed against Tokyo Rose's slanted and fictional accounts of dramatic U.S. losses and victorious Japanese successes. According to the article, "to what purpose" Tokyo Rose "indulges in this sort of stuff isn't clear. If she announced Japan had surrendered no one would believe it until it had been confirmed by another source."¹⁵⁰ Much as director Frank Capra used Nazi propaganda footage in the seven American films, *Why We Fight*, the Navy's film efforts used Axis propaganda against itself to destroy its credibility.

There were attempts to field American announcers to compete with Tokyo Rose's broadcasts, but poor radio reception in the Pacific Theater from signals originating from the U.S. coupled with lukewarm listening interest of military personnel rendered these efforts mostly moot. An answer to Tokyo Rose came from Martha Wilkerson who broadcast to U.S. troops in World War II. The press barely covered her, however, but her nickname, GI Jill, could be heard over shortwave radio playing American tunes and reading letters from wives and girlfriends to soldiers stationed in the Pacific Theater.¹⁵¹ Another official answer to Tokyo Rose belonged to Carmen Ligaya, a Filipino guerilla leader who, with U.S. backing, attempted to dethrone Tokyo

¹⁵⁰ *Arizona Republic*, "Tokyo Rose broadcasts," April 9, 1945, 14.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/117104519/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁵¹ Sgt. James P. O'Neill, *Yank Magazine*, "GI Jill," December 7, 1945, 4. Accessed online at <http://www.oldmagazinearticles.com>.

Rose as the most listened to siren in the Pacific Theater.¹⁵² She failed in this endeavor.

Nonetheless, Tokyo Rose became so popular an attraction for servicemen by 1944 that some articles even suggested that she could win a radio popularity poll over anything else on the air, including American produced short-wave radio entertainment.¹⁵³ Some press reports quoted U.S. soldiers and Marines as preferring Tokyo Rose to any American “morale” broadcasts for a variety of reasons, including the entertainment factor of *The Zero Hour*, the musical selections, and as one article stated, “everyone is getting tired of the word ‘morale.’”¹⁵⁴ Other articles mentioned that GIs listened to Tokyo Rose primarily due to not being able to pick up any other stations.¹⁵⁵ The typical short-wave radio sets GIs had in the field were not powerful enough to pick up stateside broadcasts. Radio Tokyo broadcast from a powerful station and could be picked up with ease, even on remote Pacific islands. GIs in Korea and Vietnam faced the same difficulties; yet another reason why those radio sirens also enjoyed mass popularity with U.S. servicemen.

Occasionally the press even went as far as to call Tokyo Rose an unconventional “friend” of men fighting in the South Pacific.¹⁵⁶ Some journalists wrote that U.S. troops often expressed concern that Radio Tokyo would eventually be bombed or that someone might end up letting Emperor Hirohito know the propaganda value of his radio investment only served to entertain

¹⁵² United Press, *The Ogden Standard-Examiner*, “Beautiful Filipino girl wages radio feud with Tokyo Rose,” January 15, 1945, 2.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/27097782/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁵³ George F. Horne, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, “Tojo’s propaganda scores hit with Yanks—It’s entertaining,” March 28, 1944, 3.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/11386060/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁵⁴ *Deadwood Pioneer-Times*, “Untitled article,” December 12, 1944, 2.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/94147282/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁵⁵ *The Ogden Standard-Examiner*, “Sol’s... Weekly newsletter,” December 18, 1944, 5.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/27229009/?terms=weekly%2Bnewsletter>

¹⁵⁶ *The Daily Herald*, “‘Tokyo Rose’ is friend of men in the So. Pacific,” July 28, 1944, 12. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/44496735/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

American personnel and not demoralize them as planned. In fact, the American press often credited Tokyo Rose as being the biggest morale builder of the entire war for America's Pacific fighting men. Her broadcasts were so popular that at one point KYA, a popular radio station in San Francisco, received sponsorship and permission from the FCC and the Office of War Information to rebroadcast some of her programs stateside.¹⁵⁷

Perhaps one of the biggest yarns attributed to Tokyo Rose involved a Japanese pilot who took off from his air base and, disregarding his own safety, shot down several U.S. fighter planes on his own, managed to drop a bomb "squarely down the stack of a Missouri-class battleship," bombed the flight-deck of an Essex-class aircraft carrier, and upon his return home ambushed another eight U.S. fighters, downing most of them. After he landed, air crews discovered the pilot was dead; furthermore, he had been dead for at least three hours, or almost his entire time away. Tokyo Rose ended the recitation by saying, "His indomitable spirit carried him on to fulfill his glorious mission. Even in death the Japanese are superior to the cowardly Yankees. Such courage cannot be overcome!"¹⁵⁸ These stories helped to keep alive the legendary status of Tokyo Rose. Despite the media's best efforts at marginalizing her propaganda effect, she maintained a certain allure that captivated military personnel, at least enough so that they continually tuned in to her nightly broadcasts.

American forces reacted to Rose's exaggerated propaganda broadcasts in various ways. As the Pacific campaign progressed, and the U.S. Navy and Marines advanced ever closer to

¹⁵⁷ "'Tokyo Rose,' Other propagandists for Japs get U.S. radio 'Sponsor,'" *Variety* August 9, 1944, 1. [http://www.archive.org/stream/variety155-1944-08#page/n39/mode/2up.](http://www.archive.org/stream/variety155-1944-08#page/n39/mode/2up;); The rebroadcasts would include excerpts from *The Zero Hour* followed by commentary.

¹⁵⁸ Joe Creason, *The Atlanta Constitution*, "Tokyo Rose didn't know truth," September 1, 1948, 10. [http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1532705324/fulltextPDF/C9C8DE470C8D4643PQ/1?accountid=14472.](http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1532705324/fulltextPDF/C9C8DE470C8D4643PQ/1?accountid=14472)

mainland Japan scoring one victory after another, Tokyo Rose issued a series of threats, based on more exaggerated propaganda, warning the American Navy to call off its battlegroups and head back home. According to one article, Rose started off by claiming, “you are suicidal maniacs...”¹⁵⁹ Such threats came across as desperation especially considering the mounting losses Japan faced in the Pacific. Marines and sailors found humor in her diatribe and bombed a Japanese airfield, destroying it the very next day.¹⁶⁰

By 1944, the U.S. media consistently produced articles along the “favorite enemy” theme in regard to Tokyo Rose. At least for a while, the media seemed to abandon the femme fatale portrayal of Rose in favor of a more lighthearted portrayal. Consequently, Americans wanted to know more about the person behind the name. Many articles in 1944 began speculating about Tokyo Rose’s origin. Some articles, in trying to decipher the origin of her American dialect, surmised she may have been Hawaiian, perhaps even a graduate of the University of Hawaii.¹⁶¹ Interestingly, several articles referred to Tokyo Rose as being “Hawaiian-born” and educated. Her command of the English language certainly suggested American upbringing. A post-war

¹⁵⁹ United Press, Charles P. Arnot, *Nevada State Journal*, “Yank pilots laugh at Tokyo Rose warning, leave radios to shatter Jap bases, ships,” April 30, 1944, 14. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/75301872/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁶⁰ In another example, the flight commander of a group of B-29s, upon hearing Tokyo Rose broadcast that the U.S. had Superfortresses “lined up wingtip to wingtip” with no ability to reach them, ordered a surprise bombing raid over mainland Japan and took Japanese air defense gunners completely by surprise. For Marines fighting on Saipan, Tokyo Rose’s refusal to admit they had reached the island irked them. Yet regardless, Tokyo Rose, the self-described “favorite enemy,” still ranked number one in popularity, according to many press reports. Source: *New Castle News*, “Tokyo Rose irks Saipan Marines,” August 1, 1944, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/73087098/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁶¹ *Washington C.H. Record-Herald*, “‘Bud’ Mustine helps soften Saipan Island,” July 22, 1944, 8. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/87066696/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>; Also see: United Press, *Nevada State Journal*, Charles P. Arnot, “Yank pilots laugh at Tokyo Rose warning, April 30, 1944, 14. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/75301872/?terms=Yank%2Bpilots%2Blaugh%2Bat%2BTo%2Bkyo%2BRose%2Bwarning>.

article speculated she might have been born on the Hawaiian island of Hilo. The same article, ironically, suggested she might be from Wisconsin and the widow of an unidentified Englishman.¹⁶² Others suggested she had a somewhat vague Boston accent,¹⁶³ and that “sob sister Tokyo Rose” might have been “an American espionage agent who passed out valuable information during her blatant broadcasts to Pacific-based GI’s.”¹⁶⁴

Sirens as Powerful Propagandists

As discussed previously, the print media did not always portray Tokyo Rose with a lighthearted, playful tone designed to lampoon and diminish her propaganda value. It also produced rather scathing articles designed to expose her tactics against U.S. servicemen. This occurred more so with Axis Sally than Tokyo Rose, however, as will be seen in the next chapter.

Whereas Seoul City Sue and Hanoi Hannah would eventually be compared to Tokyo Rose as far as their propaganda style, the press often referred to Rose as “an oriental version of Lord Haw Haw,”¹⁶⁵ who relished mixing semi-truths with inaccuracies in his broadcasts to the British. Despite popularity among servicemen, the American press often derided Tokyo Rose in several ways including one reporter who compared her broadcasting style to that of a “seven-year-old girl,” whose broadcasts sought to bring about homesickness in lines like, “don’t you

¹⁶² United Press, *The Morning News*, “Women in the News,” August 31, 1945, 6.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/85601393/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁶³ *The Bend Bulletin*, “Veteran of South Sea island campaign visiting Bend home,” May 26, 1944, 5. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/101221677/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁶⁴ *The Berkshire Eagle*, “Comic strip may be telling story of ‘Tokyo Rose,’” September 5, 1945, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/30765470/?terms=Comic%2Bstrip%2Bmay%2Bbe%2Btelling%2Bstory%2Bof%2B%27Tokyo%2BRose%2C%27>

¹⁶⁵ Watson Fenimore, *The Atlanta Constitution*, “‘Tokyo Rose’ wilting—not hep any more,” October 5, 1943, 2.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/504216561/fulltextPDF/E792A0634130462FPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

wish you were back in 1941—maybe sitting on your girl’s front porch?”¹⁶⁶ Tokyo Rose would usually follow such lines with some sentimental musical numbers designed to enhance the nostalgia.

Male propagandists did not get compared to adolescents. The media saw them as enemy agents delivering political statements against the interests of the United States. Additionally, the media did not manufacture an air of mystery regarding male propagandists. They were seen simply as traitors to America. With Tokyo Rose and her colleagues, criticism often put them on the level of girls behaving badly in a man’s world. Yet servicemen relished Tokyo Rose for the entertainment value despite tactics designed to make them homesick and doubt their military missions. Soldiers would occasionally send her fan mail,¹⁶⁷ and other times Tokyo Rose would relay greetings from soldiers and POWs to their families back home,¹⁶⁸ all designed to soften GI morale and make them homesick.

The press wrote vigorously on the “Japanese siren’s” broadcasting goal to induce homesickness and a sense of nostalgia in American personnel. One article mentioned that,

Symbols discarded by Tin-Pan Alley forty years ago are used to create a receptive atmosphere for their propaganda. Much mention is made of the scent of honeysuckle twined around the front porch. “Mammy” themes and the “Girl I left Behind” are given strong play.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Associated Press, *The Galveston Daily News*, “Tokyo Rose’ diverts men on Guadalcanal,” October 3, 1943, 15.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/23458318/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁶⁷ International News Service, *The Courier-Gazette*, “Tokyo Rose almost got a fan letter from overseas,” August 18, 1944, 3.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/66263921/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁶⁸ *The San Bernardino County Sun*, “Harold Lundberg letter radioed by ‘Tokyo Rose,’” August 16, 1944, 13.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/48938919/?terms=Harold%2BLundberg%2Bletter%2Bradioed%2Bby>

¹⁶⁹ *The Times*, “Tokyo Rose,” August 29, 1944, 6.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/38870695/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

The same article also stated that the true essence behind Tokyo Rose is “distilled with inhumanity, craftiness, and brutality.” Another reporter wrote that “she stresses the fact that the overseas Yanks are missing the pleasures of home and she adds pointedly that she, personally, ain’t missin’ nothing.”¹⁷⁰ U.S. warfighters understood the intention of Radio Tokyo’s propaganda programs yet nonetheless enjoyed her broadcasts as pure entertainment.

The Zero Hour attempted to introduce homesickness in several ways, including selection of songs, especially aforementioned sentimental music, played for the express purpose of reminding GIs of romance, love, and homeland. Tokyo Rose often compared the conditions that GIs endured in the island-hopping campaigns to relaxing, happy evenings in the states to make soldiers reassess their motivations for staying in the fight. Occasionally, male actors portraying homesick GIs would come across Radio Tokyo with stories of the home life. One such broadcast, as reported in the U.S. media, featured the supposed voice of a soldier lamenting,

I sure wish I was back home. If I was working in a war plant, with a week’s vacation and a new car, I could go places. I could have a nice cold can of beer, I mean all the beer you want. Aw! the hell with the war. I bet that’s the way the folks feel back home. Can’t blame ‘em. Four years and getting nowhere; but don’t forget that we been at it just as long. The guys back home can go on vacation but you just try that here and see what you get... The only way to forget the war out here is to get a bullet in your brain.¹⁷¹

Virtually no evidence suggests any of this propaganda resulted in defections. Most of the military personnel laughed it off, others appreciated the regular references to home life, but the media often wrote from a position that these women presented a potential danger to soldier morale nonetheless.

Again, the dialectic narratives of female propagandists as fascinating novelty versus

¹⁷⁰ *Rushville Republican*, “Miscellany,” July 25, 1945, 2.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/87133782/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁷¹ William L. Shirer, *The San Bernardino County Sun*, “By William L. Shirer,” July 29, 1945, 12. Reprinted from the New York Tribune.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/49445921/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

dangerous sirens ran concurrent in the American print media. But the latter months of the war represented the beginning of a stark shift in how the media portrayed her. As Japan's looming defeat became more likely by the day, the press began shifting its coverage back to the negative. This shift continued through the end of the war and years following.

Toward War's End

As the war reached its latter stages, coverage of Tokyo Rose (as well as Axis Sally) turned increasingly negative. Perhaps this resulted in war fatigue and an increasing national interest in seeing Axis leaders brought to justice for consuming the world in a prolonged war of unprecedented destruction. The American press reflected this sentiment, especially with Nazi Germany totally on defensive. As the European war approached conclusion, attention in the press turned more to Japan, which remained a formidable threat, even while in retreat throughout the Pacific. Resentment toward Imperial Japan lingered in America because Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor forced America's participation in the war. This animosity and mistrust could be regularly seen in racialized cartoon portrayals of Japanese as well as through the policy of domestic internment.¹⁷²

The U.S. Army Air Force quickly utilized its most lethal bombers against mainland Japan. The B-29 Super Fortress was the largest bomber the U.S. had during World War II. It easily dwarfed the battle-hardened and venerable B-17 Flying Fortress. The B-29 could fly farther, higher, faster, and carry more payload than either the B-24 Liberator or the B-17. Plus, it had a pressurized cabin allowing more comfort to aircrews in thin air, unlike other American heavy bombers. The most famous B-29 of all time, the Enola Gay, would eventually drop the

¹⁷² More information can be found online at: <https://artifactsjournal.missouri.edu/2012/03/wwii-propaganda-the-influence-of-racism/>.

world's first atomic bomb on a live target, that being Hiroshima. But another well-known B-29 existed, and she became the first bomber to fly over the heart of Japan since the Doolittle raid in April of 1942.¹⁷³ Named the Tokyo Rose, she flew over Tokyo on three reconnaissance missions, taking photos of industrial centers later to be used in bombing raids over the city. According to press reports, the B-29 flew over Tokyo roughly 36 minutes on November 1, took photos, and left the area. Radio Tokyo "screamed frantically that U.S. planes were over the city," before adding that the planes fled Tokyo airspace before the Japanese could attack.¹⁷⁴ The Tokyo Rose bomber made two more reconnaissance flyovers on November 5th and 7th.¹⁷⁵

As B-29 bombers began routinely attacking targets in and around Tokyo, a cartoon appeared in the press showing B-29s dropping bombs in the center of Tokyo with caricatures of Japanese men (all illustrated with buck-teeth) flying skyward. The caption read "Tokyo Rose!"¹⁷⁶ Other newspapers ran a photo of a B-29 crew huddled around a short-wave radio, each man smiling, listening to Tokyo Rose's broadcast. The article stated that the crew would bomb a target and quickly head back to their airbase and anxiously await *The Zero Hour*'s version of the day's bombing mission, which more likely than not reported a disastrous run for U.S. bombers.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ United Press, Leslie Shoemaker, *The Times*, "Tokyo Rose mapped city for superfort attacks," November 24, 1944, 5.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/38873891/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ "Camera target: Tokyo," *Movie Makers* April, 1945, 125.

http://ia601704.us.archive.org/BookReader/BookReaderImages.php?zip=/19/items/moviemakers20amat/moviemakers20amat_jp2.zip&file=moviemakers20amat_jp2/moviemakers20amat_0135.jp2.

¹⁷⁶ Phoenix Republic and Gazette Syndicate, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, "Tokyo Rose!," December 5, 1944, 5. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/12379864/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁷⁷ International Soundphoto, *The Daily Notes*, "B-29 crew enjoys Tokyo Rose's version of raid," December 20, 1944, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/53841575/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

As the Army Air Forces ramped up B-29 incursions into Tokyo, more island-based air strips capable of supporting heavy bombers were created or existing ones upgraded. Engineers turned small airfields such as Aslito airfield on Saipan into ones capable of sustaining the takeoff and landing requirements of the large Super Fortresses. The press gleefully reported *The Zero Hour*'s reasoning why these newly constructed air bases had not been destroyed by the Imperial Air Force of Japan. According to *Yank Magazine*, the Japanese reported they were waiting for *all* incoming B-29s to arrive at their island bases before "wiping them out."¹⁷⁸ The press would eventually report that over 800 B-29s would drop upwards to 6,000 tons of ordinance over Japan within the first nine months since the first Super Fortresses began flying sorties over the beleaguered nation.¹⁷⁹

On a lighter note, The Army Air Corp utilized a B-29 for another type of bombing mission over Japan. It delivered new records to Radio Tokyo. After hearing Tokyo Rose complain on *The Zero Hour* that her phonographs were wearing out, a B-29 received a shipment of brand new records, the latest hits from the States, attached them to small parachutes, and released them directly over Radio Tokyo. Interestingly, servicemen reported hearing the new records playing on *The Zero Hour* the very next day.¹⁸⁰

By the final year of the Pacific War, the U.S. military began making equipment and broadcasting facilities available to counter Radio Tokyo. Services like the Pacific Ocean Network began broadcasting alternative material for GI consumption. The press, having gleefully reported on the Tokyo Rose phenomenon for years, now predicted her downfall thanks

¹⁷⁸ Sgt. Bill Reed, *Yank Magazine*, "Bombs to Tokyo," December 29, 1944, 5.

¹⁷⁹ *The Hartford Courant*, "The vise is closing," August 2, 1945, 8.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/552544081/fulltextPDF/22E9C4C38C704479PQ/2?accountid=14472>.

¹⁸⁰ United Press, *Daily Review*, "Tokyo Rose gets American service," August 4, 1945, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/73886255/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

to American alternatives being available.¹⁸¹

Despite the on-air competition and increasingly negative press, the final months of the Pacific War saw the U.S. Navy issuing Tokyo Rose a citation for entertaining U.S. warfighters over the years. The citation recognized her for meritorious service that ultimately contributed to the morale of U.S. warfighters serving in the Pacific Campaign. The press quoted the citation's text:

While the United States armed forces in the Pacific have been extremely busy capturing enemy-held islands, sinking Jap ships, and killing Japs and more Japs, Tokyo Rose, ever solicitous of their morale, has persistently entertained them during those long nights in fox-holes and on board ship, by bringing them excellent state-side music, laughter and news about home. These broadcasts have reminded all our men of the things they are fighting for, which are the things America has given them. And they have inspired them to a greater determination than ever to get the war over quickly, which explains why they are now driving onward to Tokyo itself, so that soon they will be able to thank Tokyo Rose in person.¹⁸²

The Navy's Tokyo Rose citation, while certainly satire, represented a unique example of the U.S. military recognizing in a positive way the work of an enemy propagandist. It stood in contrast, however, to the increasingly negative press coverage she received. It also hinted that perhaps the U.S. military had not been as concerned about Tokyo Rose's ability to demoralize U.S. troops as much as the American press seemed to.

Postwar Years

Years of fighting a losing war coupled with the detonation of two atomic bombs over the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9 respectively, Emperor Hirohito announced Japan's surrender on August 15, 1945. The official signing of the surrender occurred on September 2 aboard the U.S.S. Missouri in the presence of General Douglas MacArthur, now the

¹⁸¹ *The Decatur Daily Review*, "By the way," February 27, 1945, 6. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/88425405/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁸² Associated Press, *Ironwood Daily Globe*, "Tokyo Rose given citation by Navy," August 7, 1945, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/55056710/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

Supreme Commander of Allied Powers and in charge of Japan's postwar occupation forces. As the nation, and thus the world, recoiled from the ravages and strain of war, the American press maintained its interest in Tokyo Rose. The press turned its attention to discovering who Tokyo Rose was, and where she came from as American occupation forces were poised to enter mainland Japan.

Interestingly, Tokyo Rose continued to broadcast from Radio Tokyo. However, *The Zero Hour*, which had given GIs more laughter than “a dozen Donald Ducks,” ceased the day Japan surrendered. In its place, and still featuring all the familiar female voices, came *The Pacific Hour*.¹⁸³ The new program maintained much of *The Zero Hour*'s format, but the first episode spun Japan's defeat by not acknowledging any surrender rather touting its reconstruction period. Another article referred to *The Pacific Hour* as keeping “the siren's line of chatter” the same.¹⁸⁴ By this point, American servicemen largely recognized Iva's voice broadcasting as Orphan Ann as the most known voice on *The Zero Hour*, more so even than the other dozen or so female broadcasters that made up the Tokyo Rose myth. Although it is not made clear exactly why this is, one can speculate that her playful, innocuous propaganda messages helped with her popularity. It could also be that she named herself Orphan Ann.¹⁸⁵

Press reporting on Tokyo Rose varied greatly in the immediate aftermath of Japan's surrender and the prelude to Allied occupation. Some articles began negatively criticizing her as a traitor, a theme that grew more prominent as the months followed. Others nostalgically

¹⁸³ International News Service, *The Lincoln Star*, “Tokyo Rose' heard on new radio program,” August 19, 1945, 5.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/65277856/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁸⁴ Associated Press, *The Escanaba Daily Press*, “Faded Tokyo Rose returns to radio; same propaganda,” August 19, 1945, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/77526013/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁸⁵ Newspaper and magazine articles from the period do not state whether any other female broadcasters on Radio Tokyo and weekend editions of *The Zero Hour* used pseudonyms.

reflected on her entertaining broadcasts and how she remained popular with servicemen. In the United States, curiosity over the identity of the Tokyo siren reached its highest levels. Several articles featured an Army chaplain who wanted to locate Rose, place her in a cage, and tour the nation as a fund raiser for charity.¹⁸⁶ Another article indicated that the chaplain may have changed his mind about caging Tokyo Rose as she,

gave us a boost out there in Hawaii, and she does the same thing up in the North Pacific and the Aleutians. The Navy boys would like to thank her, and I'm sure the people in the States would like to see her.¹⁸⁷

Another article suggested that American servicemen entering Tokyo yearned to meet the “flower of propaganda” and that,

But there's not a seaman second class in all the American fleets in the Pacific—nor a doughfoot nor leatherneck on any of the farflung fronts—who has forgotten the taunting voice of Tokyo rose. We cannot describe her for you. Not any American has ever seen her. But we can guess, with the rest of the Allied world, what the mystery woman of the orient looks like.¹⁸⁸

The article then proceeded to give a very basic description of a petite, Oriental woman of Japanese descent.

Up until this point, Tokyo Rose existed only as a siren's voice over the radio, tantalizing U.S. troops with her alluring voice and playful nature. As American troops began entering mainland Japan, Americans and thus the print media wanted to discover the identity of the legendary Tokyo Rose, the siren of the Pacific. Years of *envisioning* Tokyo Rose brought about great anticipation to finally put a face to the charming and alluring voice. Press reports began speculating about the details of *The Zero Hour* and the women who announced for it. Some

¹⁸⁶ *Times Herald*, “Cage Tokyo Rose says Navy cleric,” August 20, 1945, 5.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/41284503/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁸⁷ United Press, *The Neosho Daily News*, “Would take Tokyo Rose on tour of U.S.,” August 23, 1945, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/1997655/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁸⁸ United Press, *The Danville Morning News*, “Women in the news,” August 31, 1945, 6.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/85601393/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

proposed that she consisted of four American-educated Japanese women between twenty and thirty. One reporter, Merrill Mueller of NBC, claimed to catch a glimpse of Tokyo Rose as he toured the Radio Tokyo building. He described her only as “a modest, nondescript little woman.”¹⁸⁹ Reporter Richard Johnston spent an afternoon with a Radio Tokyo host to explore possibilities of Tokyo Rose’s identity. Without even knowing he had identified her, Johnston listed Iva Toguri, along with his host identified only as Miss Sato, and someone by the name of Ruth Hayakawa as leading candidates.¹⁹⁰ Other articles quickly followed proposing that Toguri, one of five possible announcers, may indeed be Tokyo Rose.

As August 1945 gave way to September, American journalists anxiously searched to answer the Tokyo Rose identity question. One article stated that journalists had been “invading” the Domei news service in Tokyo practically demanding leads and answers.¹⁹¹ *Yank* magazine ran a story describing the mad rush of journalists hounding Radio Tokyo’s staff and further commented that “particularly every story was a rat-race of newspaper correspondents, photographers, magazine writers and assorted trained seals seeking ‘exclusives.’”¹⁹² As more information came to light about Iva Toguri, many quotes became attributed to her that she most likely never said. Examples included “Americans were just dopes to be fighting the Japs,” which per the American press, “she would say with a salacious intonation, their gals and wives were

¹⁸⁹ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “‘Tokyo Rose’ not one girl all all, she’s four Roses,” August 31, 1945, 2. From the Chicago Tribune Press Service.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/195934299/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁹⁰ United Press, *Tuscan Daily Citizen*, “Tokyo Rose was not just one girl,” August 31, 1945, 7. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/10614757/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁹¹ Associated Press, *Kingsport News*, “Newsmen ask to see ‘Tokyo Rose,’” September 1, 1945, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/68916958/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁹² Sgt. Dale Kramer, *Yank*, “The post-war search for Tokyo Rose,” October 19, 1945, 5.

having a grand time back home being unfaithful.”¹⁹³

By 1945, Americans and the Allied powers wanted justice against the Axis perpetrators of World War II. As Nazi heads were being tried at Nuremberg, and with the fall of Imperial Japan, Americans wanted the same type of justice brought to the Pacific Theater. Allied powers signed the Potsdam Declaration on July 26, 1945, promising the world *stern justice* to all war criminals in Japan.¹⁹⁴ This also came on the heels of anti-Japanese sentiment in the U.S., a nation exhausted from over four years of global war, one started by Japan in 1941.

Tokyo Rose could not be viewed as a war criminal, as no evidence suggested she ever harmed American prisoners of war or committed atrocities. But Americans wanted justice for years of war foisted upon them. Not only did Tokyo represent a dangerous woman who tried to diminish troop morale, the press viewed her as a possible American traitor who allied herself with a barbaric empire out to destroy Western values.

When Eighth Army military police arrived at the Bund Hotel in Yokohama on September 5, 1945, to arrest Iva Toguri, she had just completed a press conference for Allied journalists. She completed her final broadcast for Radio Tokyo as Orphan Ann just prior to the press conference. The arrest became a pivotal point in how the media portrayed her. Although the press coverage of Tokyo Rose had become increasingly negative since Japan's surrender, media fascination with the propagandist ceased, only to be replaced with a national desire to identify and arrest the American traitor. Iva Toguri's Tokyo Rose went from a source of good-humored entertainment for servicemen to an American traitor who deserved a treason trial and likely

¹⁹³ International News Service, *The Nebraska State Journal*, “Identity of ‘Tokyo Rose’ discovered,” September 2, 1945, 27. Accessed online at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/36969159/?terms=Identity%2Bof%2B'Tokyo%2BRose'%2Bdiscovered>.

¹⁹⁴ Richard M. Minear, *Victor's justice: Tokyo war crimes trial*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). The war crimes trial did not begin, however, until May 3, 1946.

prosecution. The press quoted her as saying she broadcast for experience, that she doubted keeping her American citizenship was a wise choice, and that she sat on the fence politically, not committing to either the Japanese or American cause.¹⁹⁵ It is doubtful Toguri actually made many of these claims, and the press occasionally seemed to be writing at times more on hearsay than actual fact.¹⁹⁶ Journalists hammered Toguri on a number of broadcasted quotes, including one where Tokyo Rose suggested that U.S. Marines were “forgotten men” of the Pacific. Toguri adamantly denied she ever made such a statement and indicated she did not stay at Radio Tokyo when other women announced on *The Zero Hour*.¹⁹⁷ However, the press reports now overwhelmingly continued to portray her as a traitor.

The increasingly negative press toward Tokyo Rose (and even Axis Sally) also underscored the building animosity regarding national traitors inherent in so much press coverage of the period. What had once been often fascination and humorous applause for Tokyo Rose during the war quickly turned to anger and condescension in the American press. It is not apparent exactly why this transformation took place so quickly. Perhaps it had to do with the sobering reality of a war just ended and the blood of young Americans shed across the North and South Pacific in vanquishing Hirohito’s Imperial Japan. The American public saw daily images of the war in cinemas and newspapers, and the colossal effort of securing Japan and rebuilding it confronted Allied nations. In short, the American public had grown weary of war and had no

¹⁹⁵ United Press, *New York Times*, “Tokyo Rose talks, M.P.’s arrest her,” September 6, 1945, 2.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/107288798/fulltextPDF/A38EA289453B44D2PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

¹⁹⁶ Iva Toguri maintained until her death that she was always a loyal American, and it is doubtful she made these claims. The current study found no articles that would have supported the notion that she had been undecided in her allegiance to the U.S.

¹⁹⁷ Biographical sources agree that Toguri did not remain at the station when not broadcasting and that she routinely sought to sever ties with Radio Tokyo.

tolerance for American-born Japanese traitors. Mounting pressure existed within the U.S. Government to prosecute American traitors, especially those connected with attempting to demoralize U.S. troops. This combined with the fact that Tokyo Rose transcended societal norms to place herself in a position of power over men in the battlefield greatly added to the mounting negativity toward her.

One of the questions floating around the media regarded the issue of Toguri's gender and how it related to treason. For example, an article suggested Toguri's fate should be no different than that of William Joyce, the British traitor known as Lord Haw Haw. The article concluded that, Iva Toguri "deserves the same kind of treatment, if she became a radio stooge for Japan, after receiving the benefits of an American education, she should pay the penalty awarded traitors."¹⁹⁸ Another editorial focused on the idea of summarily executing Iva Toguri should she eventually be found guilty of treason like the British did to Lord Haw Haw. The article also expressed concern that sympathizers of Toguri would argue for leniency. "Tokyo Rose will have sympathizers," the article stated, "where the British traitor could get none" due to gender. In addition,

She is a woman and we expect the sob sisters to gather around. We are not debating whether they ought to do so. But it would be a good idea to empathize the principle, irrespective of sex, that this democracy does not countenance treason.¹⁹⁹

Tokyo Rose, and even Axis Sally, represented the first women radio traitors of the electronic age. How the U.S. Government would handle them after the war ended became an important point of discussion in the national press. Other papers accused Iva Toguri of using her

¹⁹⁸ *Lubbock Morning Avalanche*, "What about Tokyo Rose?," September 11, 1945, 5. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/6311828/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

¹⁹⁹ *The San Bernardino County Sun*, "Hang a lady?," September 22, 1945, 12. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/49383847/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

American education to destroy the U.S. Government,²⁰⁰ and stories circulated about how Tokyo Rose would occasionally get jealous if any on-air competition suddenly began broadcasting. In short, the press began painting a bleak picture of Tokyo Rose, one where she looked petulant, motivated by fame, and actively engaged in treason.

In perhaps one of the most scathing articles of Iva Toguri, one column focused on her looming treason charges and speculated that she, like other American-born Japanese, shared a common disloyalty for the nation they called home. According to the article,

Tokyo Rose assumes her place alongside of the Nip aviators shot down by our forces and who were discovered to have been American-born and educated. And she joins also that galaxy of so-called “loyal” Japs in the Tule Lake concentration camp—6,000 of them—who foreswore allegiance to this country and asked to be repatriated to Japan. Perhaps, finally the Blubbering Brotherhood and Sobbing Sisterhood (those designations are borrowed) will admit their sympathies for these near-chimpanzees have been misplaced and that a Jap is a Jap whether in Tokyo or Los Angeles.²⁰¹

Describing female radio propagandists as a “Sobbing Sisterhood” set them in league with the “Blubbering Brotherhood” consisting of Lord Haw Haw, Lord Hee Haw, and Ezra Pound.

However, questioning her patriotism based upon ethnicity set her apart from Axis Sally. Tokyo Rose faced scrutiny over her Japanese heritage in a time where media constructions of Asian women consisted of the dragon lady stereotype. American popular culture of the early to mid-20th Century often portrayed Asian women as either docile, sensuous creatures in servitude positions (the Lotus Blossom) or quite the opposite, the treacherous, always scheming erotic women usually wielding power over men.²⁰² The dragon lady trope found its way in countless

²⁰⁰ H.J. McClatchy, *The Washington Post*, “Dual citizenship,” November 22, 1945, 6. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/151790734/fulltextPDF/13AC54D64B6B456EPQ/2?accountid=14472>.

²⁰¹ *Utah Republican Press*, “Like the leopard,” September 19, 1945, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/1757119/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²⁰² Prasso, Sheridan, *The Asian mystique: dragon ladies, geisha girls, & our fantasies of the exotic Orient*, (New York: Public Affairs, 2005).

films, fiction and radio dramatizations of the period. The American press often used this trope in how it defined Tokyo Rose, Seoul City Sue, and even Hanoi Hannah. American sentiment toward Asian Americans (Japanese in particular) became increasingly negative as the war progressed. Pearl Harbor remained fresh in American discourse, and the Japanese were often portrayed as vicious, blood-thirsty people.

Tokyo Rose became an easy target in that she, as a young Japanese female, was easy to locate, offered no resistance upon capture, and was well known to thousands of U.S. service personnel who regularly listened to her broadcasts. In effect, she became *the* voice of the Japanese propaganda arm, and in such capacity, the media portrayed her as an American traitor, a turncoat who denounced American values in favor of Japanese Imperialism. Axis Sally shared the same fate in the media's eye as well as public opinion.

In mid-September, the first official calls for a treason trial circulated through the press after comments made by United States Attorney Charles H. Carr suggesting that a civil trial be held for Iva Toguri even though the U.S. Army had not charged her with any crime.²⁰³

According to Carr,

the infamous woman—born here and educated here—used myriad artifices and devices to spread discontent and dissension among American troops. This should be a court action rather than Army court-martial proceedings.²⁰⁴

Carr's scathing article reinforced the femme fatale theme without even directly stating it by singling her out as an "infamous woman" who used her "artifices and devices" to persuade and demoralize U.S. troops. The femme fatale and siren themes resurfaced in many of the press

²⁰³ United Press, *The Washington Post*, "U.S. attorney seeks trial of 'Tokyo Rose,'" September 14, 1945, 15.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/151797392/fulltextPDF/5B068AE7F8D44C0EPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²⁰⁴ *Los Angeles Times*, "Tokyo Rose may stand trial here," September 14, 1945, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/159736226/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

reports of the post-war period.

Considerable attention surrounding Tokyo Rose's possible treason trial spread throughout the American print press. Questions raised included how many women comprised the mythical figure of Tokyo Rose and whether any of them currently had U.S. citizenship.²⁰⁵ Tokyo Rose mania in popular culture included the 1946 film, *Tokyo Rose*, starring popular Asian actress Lotus Young. Promotional material for the film included such lines as "how one Yank braved the heart of Jap headquarters to silence the most seductive traitress of all time—whose voice was a bullet aimed at the heart of every G.I." and "See what G.I.'s did to that notorious siren of the air waves!"²⁰⁶ The film, which included scenes where the Radio Tokyo siren routinely identified herself as Tokyo Rose, could best be described as fiction. The film portrayed Rose as a femme fatale by every measure, a dragon lady, complete with scenes of stressed airmen listening to her announce their aircraft's registration number as they headed to a target, reminding them that the Japanese knew of their coming and stood prepared. Young's portrayal of Tokyo Rose exemplified the classic Hollywood femme fatale characterization as she is portrayed with cat-like moves, a smooth, silky voice, and mysterious motivations. Other similar cinematic images of Tokyo Rose included numerous war bond sales film shorts such as *The voice of Truth* from 1945, which featured ship-board sailors listening to the purring voice of Tokyo Rose warning them of certain doom should they continue their mission. These femme fatale imaginings of Tokyo Rose (as well as Axis Sally) helped foster an intense desire in the U.S. to prosecute Iva Toguri for treason. The print media enhanced this desire through countless negative portrayals of her as a bad girl, a femme fatale radio siren who used her feminine charms to undermine America's

²⁰⁵ Iva Toguri was the only female broadcaster at Radio Tokyo who had American citizenship, which became another factor in her being singled out as "the" Tokyo Rose.

²⁰⁶ "Tokyo Rose," *Showmen's Trade Review*, February 9, 1946, 4. Accessed online at <http://mediahistoryproject.org/collections/>.

mission to defeat Japan, and an American traitor.

The Trial and Aftermath

The trial of Iva Toguri, legally known as D'Aquino v. United States, has been well documented in other sources, including books and dissertations. To avoid redundancy, this section will only briefly summarize the important aspects of the trial and how the media covered it. As for Toguri's legal troubles, they began the moment she submitted to an interview with two journalists, Clark Lee of the International News Service (INS) and Harry Brundidge of *Cosmopolitan* magazine. The journalists offered Iva Toguri two thousand dollars to secure the interview and attain a signed confession stating she was the one and only Tokyo Rose. Toguri also signed a contract agreeing not to talk to any other reporters until the story ran, as *Cosmopolitan* and the INS were to have exclusive first printing rights. Unfortunately, reporters from *Yank* magazine soon found Toguri and convinced her to tell her story to them as well, which nullified her agreement with *Cosmopolitan*.²⁰⁷ Iva Toguri never received the promised money, and she would forever be Tokyo Rose because of Lee and Brundidge.²⁰⁸ The confession would later be used against her in the trial. Iva Toguri also agreed to be in a short Navy-produced film in which a reproduced broadcasting booth was constructed, and she reenacted a Radio Tokyo broadcast for the cameras. In a way, Toguri sealed her own fate, not realizing the repercussions.

Toguri spent over a year incarcerated in Japan including six months in Tokyo's Sugamo

²⁰⁷ Edward Meagher, *Los Angeles Times*, "Discovery of Tokyo Rose turned out to be a flop," October 12, 1948, A5.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/159779029/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²⁰⁸ Lee and Brundidge's interview railroaded Iva Toguri, and biographers have stated that their intention was to tie her with the Tokyo Rose legend for their own benefit, as it would be a huge story. They needed a Tokyo Rose, and her gullibility provided them one.

prison even though the U.S. had yet to charge her with any crimes.²⁰⁹ Eventually, the U.S. extradited her to stand trial. The federal government indicted her on eight counts of treason, and the trial began in San Francisco on July 5, 1949. Of the eight counts, four concerned her broadcasts with Radio Tokyo, and the other four involved allegations that despite her consistent denials, she helped prepare propaganda copy for *The Zero Hour*.²¹⁰

The American press, predictably, followed every new development of the trial. The press mostly reported the trial objectively, but occasionally Toguri would receive descriptions such as “the chunky, black-haired Iva Toguri” or comparisons to how skinny she had become over the past year.²¹¹ Editorials and opinion pieces, however, mostly criticized her for broadcasting against U.S. forces, while a few wrote from a more sympathetic position. Oftentimes, negative press coverage involved the veracity of Toguri’s statements regarding her innocence. One reporter, in a rather scathing article, cited her as,

the greatest free-style liar (or liaress) that you or I or anyone else will ever know. When it came to hand-off-the-truth policy, she earned the honor of sitting in the Liar’s Hall of Fame directly on Baron Munchausen’s right, if not on his lap.²¹²

More amiable press reports reiterated the fact that Iva Toguri and her colleagues secretly aided U.S. forces through innocuous and entertaining propaganda almost as if they were

²⁰⁹ Jay Walz, *New York Times*, “Arrest of ‘Tokyo Rose’ ordered; San Francisco jury to sift case,” August 17, 1948, 1.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/108380595/fulltextPDF/F637541426EA43C7PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²¹⁰ Seymore Korman, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Tokyo Rose voluntarily helped Japs, U.S. charges,” July 7, 1949, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/196062138/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>.

²¹¹ Robert B. Cochrane, *The Sun*, “Thorns showing for Tokyo Rose,” May 5, 1946, 15.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/542853868/fulltextPDF/380B50C827D84D09PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²¹² Joe Creason, *The Atlanta Constitution*, “Tokyo Rose didn’t know truth,” September 1, 1948, 10.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1532705324/fulltextPDF/EBAD408438B47D6PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

“counterespionage” agents secretly working for the United States.²¹³ These articles, as did the defense, argued Iva Toguri had nothing to do with the script preparation and only read copy prepared by others and introduced musical numbers. Most editorials, however, wrote from a more negative position as indicated above. To a clear majority of the American media, Iva Toguri was an American turncoat who broadcast against her country for the enemy.

As the prosecution developed its case against Toguri, they began collecting witnesses, which included acquaintances of the Toguri family, U.S. servicemen, and officials of Radio Tokyo, anyone who could identify Iva Toguri or her voice as a broadcaster for *The Zero Hour*. The defense sought Toguri’s colleagues at Radio Tokyo, the former prisoners of war Cousins, Ince, and Reyes.

At the start of the trial, the prosecution claimed Iva Toguri willfully and without coercion attempted to demoralize U.S. servicemen through inducing homesickness, bitterness at their condition, and confusion as to battlefield successes and outcome of the war. The defense on the other hand, contended that Toguri broadcast only through necessity, fear of Japanese reprisal for noncompliance, and to aid the Allied cause through sabotaging what should have been a legitimate propaganda program. Many press reports speculated that the prosecution would have to fight public sympathy for Toguri, and the fact that veterans would recall her “voice as that of an old friend—an enemy, to be sure, in the formal sense, but an agreeable and amusing creature who brought some spice into long tropical nights of deadly monotony.”²¹⁴ The same article, incidentally, expressed that if the prosecution should find Toguri guilty of treason, she “deserves

²¹³ Gene Sherman, *Los Angeles Times*, “Secretly aided GI prisoners in Japan, Tokyo Rose says,” September 30, 1948, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/159778154/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²¹⁴ William H. Hessler, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, “An old acquaintance is up for treason,” August 19, 1948, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/103539311/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

the worst, not because of any damage she did, but because her motives were reprehensible.”²¹⁵

Even though Iva Toguri’s broadcast spread mostly cheer and entertainment to U.S. servicemen in the South and North Pacific, the treason trial against Iva Toguri captivated the nation. Many press articles carried erroneous information about her life, her work with Radio Tokyo, and the mythical femme fatale, Tokyo Rose. For example, one illustrated story portrayed Toguri as a disenfranchised, average college student who had very few friends, never seemed to fit in social gatherings, and became jaded by racial prejudice, so much so that she reacted by broadcasting enemy propaganda to American troops.²¹⁶ Press reports such as these often attributed quotes to Iva Toguri that she most likely never said.

As the trial proceeded, the defense went as far as to question Toguri’s American citizenship, which they said may have been forfeited when she married Felipe d’Aquino, a naturally born Portuguese citizen currently living in Japan.²¹⁷ If indeed her citizenship had been lost, she could not be prosecuted for treason. The prosecution successfully proved that Toguri remained a U.S. citizen, as she had unsuccessfully tried to get a new passport issued several times when she lived in Japan. At that time, her citizenship remained intact.²¹⁸

Chief prosecutor Thomas DeWolfe made a case that Toguri relished her job at Radio Tokyo, thought her position was glamorous, and hoped it would network her for possibly higher

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ *Kingsport Times-News*, “Untitled,” July 3, 1949, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/29436743/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²¹⁷ The same law caused Ann Wallace Suhr (Seoul City Sue) to lose her citizenship when she married a foreign national a decade later. It is not clear why this law did not affect Iva Toguri’s status as a citizen.

²¹⁸ Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times*, “Letters offered to show Tokyo Rose’s citizenship,” July 8, 1949, 5.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/160728084/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

positions in broadcasting.²¹⁹ DeWolfe produced witnesses including prison guards who testified that Toguri had signed autographs for them with Tokyo Rose written after her legal name.²²⁰ The prosecution also stated that Toguri lied when she claimed the Japanese forced her to broadcast as Orphan Ann.

As for the defense, head Defense Attorney Wayne Collins arranged for several key witnesses to take the stand on Toguri's behalf. These included Major Cousens, Captain Ince, and Lieutenant Reyes. The three men testified they asked Toguri to broadcast because of her unique voice and innocent presence. They claimed their goals included entertaining U.S. troops, thwarting the Japanese desire to disseminate potent propaganda messages, and pass along secret information such as weather conditions whenever possible. As Iva Toguri stated at the trial, "my purpose was to give the program a double meaning and thus reduce its effectiveness as a propaganda medium."²²¹ They also testified that she had provided aid and comfort to prisoners of war forced to work for Radio Tokyo. The defense even claimed that Iva Toguri, as Orphan Ann, would occasionally praise U.S. victories on air, somehow without the Japanese knowing it. They cited one such example when Orphan Ann played a snippet of "Stars and Stripes Forever" upon hearing the news that U.S. Marines had captured Saipan.²²²

²¹⁹ United Press, *Los Angeles Times*, "Tokyo Rose liked glamour, jury told," July 7, 1949, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/160727352/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²²⁰ *The Christian Science Monitor*, "Witness says Mrs. D'Aquino signed note as 'Tokyo Rose,'" July 7, 1949, 3. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/508066458/fulltextPDF/E87EA241E2284EAEPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²²¹ *New York Times*, "'Tokyo Rose' statement: interview with FBI agent is read at her trial," July 26, 1949, 18. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/105789662/fulltextPDF/293AF7FD28F84D3EPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²²² Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times*, "Tokyo Rose hailed U.S. victory, defense claims," July 13, 1949, 16.

Perhaps most importantly to the defense, Cousens testified under oath that he never heard Toguri say, nor did he write into any of his copy, some of the harsh things the prosecution claimed Toguri said on the air. Comments made by Tokyo Rose, and thus pinned on Iva Toguri, included the fact that GI wives were at home cheating on them and that many more Marines would die before the end of the war. Cousens maintained, and thus the press reported, she simply opened and closed the program and introduced musical numbers with a bit of friendly chatter interspersed throughout.²²³ The defense also claimed repeatedly that other female broadcasters announced on *The Zero Hour* including June Syuama, Ruth Hayakawa, Mieko Oki, and Mary Ishii.²²⁴ Complicating matters for the prosecution, veterans claimed they could not always distinguish the different female voices over short-wave radio. Reception quality varied depending upon location.²²⁵ In addition, the name of Tokyo Rose predated Iva Toguri's entrance on *The Zero Hour* by at least a year.

Press reports regarding the trial continued daily. Journalists reported anything pertaining to Tokyo Rose as the American public maintained strong interest. Sometimes stories reported from the trial bordered on the absurd. For example, several articles in early September of 1949 claimed five American Congressmen visited a Japanese prison where Iva Toguri remained

<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/165958576/fulltextPDF/7E3AB44F4B894DD3PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²²³ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "Rose given support by vet of Corregidor," August 19, 1949, 1.

²²⁴ Associated Press, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Tokyo Rose did no harm to GIs says U.S. major," August 19, 1949, 4.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/196164569/?terms=tokyo%2Brosehttps://www.newspapers.com/image/196164569/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>.

²²⁵ United Press, *New York Times*, "2D witness recalls a Tokyo Rose of 1942," August 30, 1949, 12.

<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/105949843/fulltextPDF/C1F3CFD286614A75PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

incarcerated and committed an act of voyeurism by secretly watching her bath.²²⁶ At times the trial seemed to play out like a fictionalized drama. Iva Toguri also had the backing of many Americans who, through the war years, read stories about how she entertained U.S. troops in the Pacific.

When the prosecution wrapped-up its case in late September, it argued that Iva Toguri, often referred by her married name, Iva d'Aquino, was an "arch traitoress" and a "female Benedict Arnold" who deserved prosecution to the maximum allowed by law.²²⁷ Press reports routinely mentioned that she either appeared very nervous during jury deliberations or showed no emotion whatsoever. The jury deliberated for four days before finally handing down a verdict. They found Iva Toguri guilty of only one out of eight federal charges of treason. The guilty charge involved a single line of propaganda Tokyo Rose broadcast on *The Zero Hour* in October of 1944. The broadcast occurred after the U.S. Navy lost several vessels in Leyte Gulf. According to the prosecution, Tokyo Rose stated, "Now you fellows have lost all your ships. You are really orphans of the Pacific. How do you think you are going to get home."²²⁸ Iva Toguri vehemently denied ever saying this. Ultimately, she received a 10-year sentence coupled with a \$10,000 fine for treasonous broadcasts against the United States.

²²⁶ United Press, *Los Angeles Times*, "Peek at Tokyo Rose bath by lawmakers related," September 7, 1949, 1. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/165977213/fulltextPDF/F58E5827706D4EA5PQ/1?accountid=14472>; see also Associated Press, *The Daily Capital News*, "Ex-GI says five solons peeped as Tokyo Rose bathed," September 7, 1949, 1. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>.

²²⁷ Associated Press, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Prosecution ends 'Tokyo Rose' case; To jury on Monday," September 24, 1949, 11. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/201417261/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²²⁸ *The Christian Science Monitor*, "Tokyo Rose found guilty of treason against U.S.," September 30, 1949, 11. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/508109484/fulltextPDF/7692ADEF7A0D419FPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

Public and media opinion largely convicted Iva Toguri. Americans wanted a conviction, and the U.S. Government demanded it. Although select editorials and articles were sympathetic to Toguri's plight, most remained steadfast in condemning her and her alleged efforts to betray the U.S. and demoralize American troops. As for the press at large, an American traitor had been served justice. Her gender, however, set her apart from others throughout history. With Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, female traitors now had to be dealt with legally.

Press reports canvassed American newspapers with commentary both in favor of, and against the verdict. For example, one editorial stated that "jurors saw not the harmless little radio program Tokyo Rose said she had, but concrete evidence that she was seriously engaged in trying to undermine the American war effort." The editorial also reminded readers of the harsh nature of the Japanese people and the atrocities of war committed in the emperor's name. It concluded that "In face of all the humiliation and suffering, could any American be excused for giving comfort to the enemy? Apparently, the jury had the correct answer when it decided 'no.'"²²⁹ Other editorials compared the Tokyo Rose case with that of Mildred Gillars, whose on-air personae, Axis Sally, and her resulting conviction shared many parallels. One even commented that Toguri's conviction exceeded her crime in that,

Thus, while it is appropriate that Tokyo Rose should be punished in some manner, hers seems a case that might well be included by-and-by in some general act of amnesty or oblivion. But that, of course, is also true of the persons sentenced to prison as conscientious objectors, many whom are still there.²³⁰

Perhaps one of the most critical articles of the Tokyo Rose verdict came originally from *Frontier Magazine* by author William A. Reuben. Reuben questioned the integrity of the verdict

²²⁹ *The San Bernardino County Sun*, "Editorial: Tokyo Rose," October 2, 1949, 30. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/49379380/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>.

²³⁰ *The Washington Post*, "Tokyo Rose," October 13, 1949, 12. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>.

by pointing out that an enormous disparity existed “between the legendary qualities attributed to ‘Tokyo Rose’ and the evidence that was produced inside the courtroom against Mrs. D’Aquino.” For example, Tokyo Rose never existed, as she was an amalgamation of many women, including Iva Toguri. Secondly, the trial highlighted a preponderance of evidence suggesting Toguri did not in any way attempt to negatively affect GI morale—nor did she inadvertently succeed in doing so. Even though the Ninth Circuit Court upheld her conviction after requests were made to appeal,²³¹ Reuben stated that the Court itself declared that recordings made of Iva Toguri’s broadcasts “showed no propaganda whatever; instead they consist of the introduction to music done in the manner of a night club master of ceremonies.”²³² Reuben concluded by adding that Iva Toguri’s conviction relied entirely on one single line that had been uttered in 1944 consisting of only 25 words. She had been cleared by both the FBI and the U.S. Army while still incarcerated in Japan in the late 1940s.²³³

Toguri’s ten-year prison sentence began on November 19, 1949. Shortly after her prison term began, and continuing for several years during her imprisonment, several articles came out all claiming to give readers inside scoops on Toguri and her trial. One article featured noted actor and entertainer Bryon Palmer who, during the war years, claimed to regularly converse with Tokyo Rose from a short-wave radio station in what the article jokingly described as “a most

²³¹ *New York Times*, “Tokyo Rose’s’ conviction upheld,” October 11, 1951, 18.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/112142821/fulltextPDF/A1FA248E78AA4279PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²³² William A. Reuben, *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, “Strange case of ‘Tokyo Rose,’” March 3, 1957, E4.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/148867857/fulltextPDF/7FF59FA3B8ED4E08PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²³³ Associated Press, *The Sun*, “Woman called Tokyo Rose hides on Pearl Harbor Day,” December 8, 1959, 8.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/539481239/fulltextPDF/6FA1C92DC2C24B28PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

romantic setting.” According to the article, Palmer would routinely chide Tokyo Rose by saying things like, “This is Station WXLE—your American Expeditionary Station at Eniwetok on the road to Tokyo,” in which she would reply “This is Tokyo Rose on the road to Eniwetok.”²³⁴ The only problem with the article, however, is none of the women at Radio Tokyo, especially those on *The Zero Hour*, ever referred to themselves as Tokyo Rose, and they could not have conversed with listeners over short-wave radio anyway.

Harry Brundidge, who along with Clark Lee secured the first—and ultimately legally incriminatory—interview with Iva Toguri, published an article in 1954 recounting his meeting with her in 1945. The article contained many factual errors such as attributing propaganda lines to Toguri that she never said as well as claiming she happily admitted to being the one and only Tokyo Rose prior to signing her “confession.” In the article, Brundidge made the claim that Toguri:

Sold out the country she really loved for the country (Japan) she really hated, for \$6.60 monthly and, by wartime conditions in Japan, a “soft” living. Instead of going to a munitions factory and sticking it out, she with no regard to consequences, elected to become America’s first woman traitor.²³⁵

Brundidge also claimed that Charles Cousens “taught Rose the trade, wrote her scripts, and began her sweet music and sour propaganda.”²³⁶ Why Brundidge wrote such a negative article about a woman whom he had once been so interested in having an exclusive interview with is not clear. It is possible Brundidge retained some lingering disappointment with Toguri stemming from her *Yank* interview, which invalidated the signed contract with him and Clarke Lee for exclusive rights to her first American interview as Tokyo Rose.

²³⁴ Steve Cronin, “The ham got results,” *Modern Screen*, January, 1954, 46. Accessed online at <http://mediahistoryproject.org/collections/>.

²³⁵ United Press, Harry T. Brundidge, “America’s first woman traitor,” *The American Mercury*, January, 1954, 39.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, 40.

Iva Toguri ultimately spent six and a half years in prison; she was released on good behavior on January 28, 1956. Visibly frightened and uncertain of her future, Toguri's words to the press as she left prison included "I am going out into the darkness."²³⁷ The now 39-year old Toguri wished to go back into private life and put the legend of Tokyo Rose behind her, but she had yet another hurdle ahead. No sooner than her prison term ended, the government deliberated over whether to expel her from the United States.²³⁸ Many press reports stated that she showed no remorse or repentance for her treasonous broadcasts.²³⁹ Toguri's father, ironically, referred to her as Rose when he led her away from the prison.

As Iva Toguri faced possible deportation, many editorials weighed-in with opinion both pro and con. As one editorial put it, deporting Toguri would mean "the first attempt in American history to denaturalize and deport a native-born citizen."²⁴⁰ The paper urged caution in any decision to expel her from the country. Other editorials warned that to deport a native-born American citizen who has already expiated a crime by imprisonment would set a dangerous precedent.²⁴¹ One editorial criticized the harshness of Toguri's treatment by the federal

²³⁷ Associated Press, *The Sun*, "Tokyo Rose finds her future hazy," January 29, 1956, 3. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/540707608/fulltextPDF/817921FA078B451DPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²³⁸ United Press, *The Hartford Courant*, "Tokyo Rose faces ouster," January 28, 1956, 1A. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/563498571/fulltextPDF/917030B48F3845E9PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²³⁹ United Press, *New York Times*, "Tokyo quits jail; shows no repentance," January 29, 1956, 41. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/113899914/fulltextPDF/16ACDF1DDA9E4157PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²⁴⁰ *The Hartford Courant*, "Should Tokyo Rose be deported?," February 4, 1956, 8. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/563567173/fulltextPDF/25B1A872C77B431APQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²⁴¹ *The Hartford Courant*, "The troubling aspect of Tokyo Rose," March 14, 1956, 14. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/563578923/fulltextPDF/9E7CD6A9FDE045D9PQ/1?accountid=14472>; see also *The Washington Post*, "Case for Tokyo Rose,"

government by adding the damages she caused GI morale “probably could be contained in a thimble.”²⁴² A more fitting punishment for Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, the article concluded, would be to make them perpetually listen to their own broadcasts for years to come.

American servicemen wrote on Toguri’s behalf as well. For example, one article from a Naval Seabee in World War II claimed that Tokyo Rose gave his comrades many evenings of enjoyment and laughter and that no one ever defected due to her broadcasts. The sailor stated,

She brought back many memories of home when they were needed most. I for one say she has been punished enough and I believe she did more good than she did harm. In fact, it was mighty good entertainment at a time when there was very little to laugh at.²⁴³

Many articles and editorials, however, were severely harsh in tone regarding the deportation of Iva Toguri. For example, one particularly scathing editorial bluntly stated,

Tokyo Rose is a convicted traitor who did her utmost in World War II to bring about the defeat of our armed forces. She deserved summary hanging. American justice (too soft as usual) gave her 10 years, reduced it to six for good behavior.²⁴⁴

The editorial went on to harshly add that “if American justice fails to deport the plague, it will fail to keep the faith of our dead sons.” Another proclaimed that whether Iva Toguri did any harm, the U.S. should not set a precedent of dealing lightly with treasonous citizenry.²⁴⁵ Clearly, national sentiment regarding Iva Toguri wavered from severely harsh to moderately supportive.

March 3, 1957, E4.

<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/148868048/fulltextPDF/458445FBA079490APQ/20?accountid=14472>.

²⁴² *The Atlanta Constitution*, “Tokyo Rose has paid for her broadcasts,” February 29, 1956, 4.

<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1554882677/fulltextPDF/89DA246002F64620PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²⁴³ Chester Trout, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Tokyo Rose,” March 19, 1956, 14.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/196799474/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²⁴⁴ *The Washington Post and Times Herald*, “Tokyo Rose,” February 10, 1956, 28.
Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>.

²⁴⁵ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Tokyo Rose,” February 9, 1956, 18.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/196583198/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

A guilty verdict of treason, subsequent prison sentence, and ongoing legal woes for the once popular radio siren had taken its toll on Iva Toguri. However, the media narrative did not stop here.

The final chapter of the Iva Toguri/Tokyo Rose saga revolved around changing American sentiments regarding women in society as well as a revised portrayal of Toguri in the press. The legal hardships Iva Toguri endured after the end of the Second World War directly resulted from a combination of factors: the American mass media disseminating misinformation regarding her, popular columnists like firebrand columnist Walter Winchell calling for her prosecution, and Clarke Lee and Harry T. Brundidge's Tokyo Rose confession. Ironically, the same press that helped convict Iva Toguri played a large roll in her eventual pardon.

For one thing, the 1950s saw yet another radio siren rise to fame in North Korea. The latter 1960s saw yet another in North Vietnam. Tokyo Rose, along with Mildred Gillars, no longer represented an anomaly, they were the progenitors of a new trend of propagandists, that being females praying upon the desires and homesickness of American military forces. In this light, the legend of Tokyo Rose no longer mattered in the American conscious as much as it did at the close of World War II. Secondly, compared to the propaganda of World War II's Axis Sally and coming from North Korea's Seoul City Sue and subsequently Hanoi Hannah of North Vietnam, the innocuous, playful propaganda of Iva Toguri's Tokyo Rose seemed almost trivial by comparison. Third, more information about Iva Toguri came to light in the years since her sentencing. All of this combined with the beginning of the second wave of American feminism caused the media, and thus Americans, to rethink the case of Iva Toguri.²⁴⁶

As the 1950s ended, the media kept the legend of Tokyo Rose alive with occasional

²⁴⁶ More on how the second wave of American feminism affected press coverage of these women will be discussed in Chapter 6, the Hanoi Hannah Chapter

articles throughout the 1960s. Many of the articles dealt with the federal government's quest for the \$10,000 fine Toguri owed. In 1968, the government seized two of Iva Toguri's insurance policies valued at around \$4,745.²⁴⁷ The action launched a new wave of interest in the Tokyo Rose legend. The U.S. had been embroiled in the Vietnam War since 1965, and a new siren broadcast propaganda like Tokyo Rose in Southeast Asia.

In the 1960s, the American press occasionally told humorous stories regarding Tokyo Rose including one where Marines serving in the South Pacific listened to a broadcast where she teased them for being in such drought conditions that they were rationed to one canteen a day for washing and drinking. According to the story, Rose claimed she wished there could be something done about the dry, almost intolerable heat the servicemen endured. However, no drought existed where the Marines were. In fact:

It had been raining for days. In at least one tent, the radio receiver was on stacked foot lockers to keep it dry, the listeners sat on cots with their feet curled up, and flood water swirled in on one side and out the other, wetting the canvas and the cots. Just as Tokyo Rose seemed ready to choke from thirst on her own story, the commanding officer's prized white tennis shoes floated by, jungle bound.²⁴⁸

The author then claimed that Tokyo Rose's broadcast kept the night from being "pretty glum."

Around the turn of the decade, the media's narrative of Tokyo Rose and Iva Toguri rapidly began changing. Stories regularly came out regarding her treason trial and how it may have been a gross miscarriage of justice. For example, of the 340 known broadcasts Iva Toguri made on *The Zero Hour*, only a small number, around thirteen, existed. Of those that did, none contained anything more than playful banter and introduction to popular musical selections, just

²⁴⁷ Associated Press, *New York Times*, "Tokyo Rose' fine is unpaid; 2 insurance policies seized," October 17, 1968, 20.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/118268372/fulltextPDF/DBB2B0CA9DCF4FFDPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²⁴⁸ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Unsuccessful siren," July 18, 1961, 16.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/197697819/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

as the defense team contended in the trial. Veterans of World War II began openly expressing support for Iva Toguri. One poll done for a graduate thesis and published in a *Christian Science Monitor* article indicated roughly 93% of Pacific War veterans felt *The Zero Hour* did not lower morale with 84% claiming the program to be entertainment.²⁴⁹

Probably the first call to pardon Iva Toguri occurred way back in 1956 when the press reported a petition backed by the Culticeward American Legion, composed of Pacific War veterans calling upon President Dwight D. Eisenhower to exonerate Iva Toguri.²⁵⁰ This and subsequent calls to pardon her all fell on deaf ears, because in the years immediately following her trial, the press, and the American people, did not feel it justified. But with the nation's changing sentiments on the matter, plus a newfound rethinking of Iva Toguri's situation in the American press by the early 1970s led to a new call for a presidential pardon, this one coming from the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), a thirty-thousand-member organization. JACL felt that Toguri's conviction resulted from a combination of factors including: racial prejudice, Anti-Japanese hysteria in the late 1940s, corruption surrounding the trial, and the media defining her as a traitor.²⁵¹ Interestingly, the media supported the request for Toguri's executive pardon. News reports came out from former jurors and trial witnesses who claimed to have been pressured to side against Iva Toguri. The proceedings, one article stated,

were marred by bribery, government obstruction, unscrupulous journalism, missing evidence ["lost tapes" and transcripts] mistaken identity, witness intimidation, violation

²⁴⁹ David Holmstrom, *The Journal News*, "By David Holmstrom," August 26, 1973, 28. Originally from *The Christian Science Monitor*.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/36239805/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²⁵⁰ Associated Press, *Cumberland Evening Times*, "Legionnaires ask Tokyo Rose be forgiven for broadcasts," February 15, 1956, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/1291320/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²⁵¹ United Press International, *Daily Independent Journal*, "Japanese-American ask a pardon for Tokyo Rose," February 4, 1976, 13.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/89348188/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

of constitutional safeguards, and racism.²⁵²

By 1976, Iva Toguri turned sixty years old and had for several years run the Toguri family gift shop in Chicago. She mostly stayed away from the press, granting occasional interviews considering the newfound media interest in her life's story. The press continued to report on the trial's corruption allegations, and some papers expounded upon the fact that Cousens, Ince, and Reyes all received either credit for their efforts to thwart the Japanese propaganda machine or in Ince's case, promotion to major, all for doing the same thing that sent Iva Toguri to prison.

Several articles produced interviews from former treason trial jurors who expressed remorse for the outcome of the trial but felt threatened at the time by government officials who routinely pressed them for a guilty verdict.²⁵³ According to one article, she was "pre-tried by the press and convicted before the trial."²⁵⁴ Another wrote that her conviction had been based on "perjured testimonies of two 'witnesses' who, 27 years later, admitted that they were coached by the prosecutor under severe duress."²⁵⁵ Yet another article quoted Toguri's estranged husband, Felipe d'Aquino, stating that his wife became a victim of postwar hatred prevalent in the U.S. at the time.²⁵⁶ Felipe d'Aquino also stated in the interview that his wife could not have been the seductive voice most GIs remember chastising them over the radio because his wife had a voice that sounded like "Molly's on the Fibber McGee and Molly show." "Believe me," he added, "Iva

²⁵² Linda Witt, *Chicago Tribune*, "Was Tokyo Rose ally or enemy?," February 23, 1976, B15. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/196828139/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²⁵³ *The Bridgeport Post*, "Tokyo Rose may yet be heroine; Jury pressed to find her guilty," March 5, 1976, 16.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/60553614/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Clifford Uyeda, *Los Angeles Times*, "Tokyo Rose," August 29, 1986, A16. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/173975014/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

²⁵⁶ *Chicago Tribune*, "Tokyo Rose 'just a scapegoat': Husband," March 23, 1976, B1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/197414882/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

was the furthest thing from a siren you could imagine.”²⁵⁷ Incidentally, Felipe d’Aquino remained barred from entering the U.S., and Toguri, stripped of her American citizenship, could not leave. By 1976, the couple had not seen one another for almost thirty years.

By the mid 1970s, lingering frustrations nationwide over the government’s handling of The Vietnam War, ongoing civil rights problems, a more radical feminist movement, and a pervasive anti-government mood swept over America.²⁵⁸ The nation still reeled from post-Watergate fallout resulting in the August 9, 1974, resignation of President Richard Nixon. Articles with titles such as “‘Tokyo Rose’ Was a Victim of War Hysteria,” “Tokyo Rose Still Suffers from Myth,” and “Let’s Forgive Tokyo Rose” graced newspapers all over the nation in the mid-1970s.²⁵⁹ A national momentum to pardon Iva Toguri spread throughout the United States. The same mass media that helped convict Iva Toguri now championed her cause. Editorials outright called for an executive pardon, and the Japanese American Citizens League continued putting pressure on President Gerald Ford to finally end her decades’ old struggle with the federal government. As an article in the *Christian Science Monitor* stated, “She doesn’t expect to be exonerated for her deeds. She just wants to end this lonely limbo which the law long

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ As will be discussed in the Hanoi Hannah chapter, by the 1960s and 1970s, the second wave of American feminism had successfully changed societal norms regarding women pursuing professions. Additionally, the propaganda work Iva Toguri did seemed innocuous when compared to Axis Sally and Hanoi Hannah.

²⁵⁹ United Press International, Leslie Nakashima, *Chicago Tribune*, “‘Tokyo Rose’ was a victim of war hysteria,” March 31, 1976, 22. Accessed online at <https://www.newspapers.com/image/31175611/?terms=Tokyo%2BRose'%2Bwas%2Ba%2Bvictim%2Bof%2Bwar%2Bhysteria.>; LA Times/Washington Post News Service, *The Newark Advocate*, “Tokyo Rose still suffers from myth,” March 31, 1976, 6. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/40377241/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>; H.C. Kibble, *Chicago Tribune*, “Let’s forgive Tokyo Rose,” April 9, 1976, A2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/197516173/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

ago consigned her.”²⁶⁰ *The Los Angeles Times* published a letter to President Ford from a former U.S. Marine and veteran of the Pacific Campaign, who appealed for a presidential pardon on behalf of Iva Toguri. The letter closed with the statement: “after all, it was only two years ago that you displayed your great courage by pardoning ex-President Nixon in the face of much public criticism.”²⁶¹

The pardon finally came on January 19, 1976, President Ford’s last day in office. The press celebrated Toguri’s pardon, which ended almost thirty years of hardship and turmoil for the Toguri family. The federal government reinstated Toguri’s citizenship. When asked by the press what her plans were now, Toguri, never one to say very much, simply replied, “to finish this day...”

Iva Toguri spent the remaining decades of her life working her family gift shop, granting occasional interviews, and trying to move past the hardships of the past, which included almost two years of incarceration in Japan, years spent away from America and her family, a broken marriage, a treason trial, subsequent prison term, and two and a half decades thereafter without a country or legal permanent residence. Her name never completely left the American press. To this day, articles still find their way into circulation, remembering the trial, the war years, and the legend of the mythical Tokyo Rose. Being that Independence Day was also her birthday, articles circulated whenever Toguri reached a new age-related milestone, such as turning eighty years old in 1996. “The story Iva wants to tell,” one 2003 article reminded readers, “is the story of the

²⁶⁰ *The Christian Science Monitor*, “Turning the page on Tokyo Rose,” December 13, 1976, 32.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/512006989/fulltextPDF/478205772CC5462CPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²⁶¹ Charles S. Hurley, *Los Angeles Times*, “Ex-Marine ‘fan’ asks pardon for Tokyo Rose,” December 12, 1976, 11.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/167202630/?terms=tokyo%2Brose>

heroism of the people who stood up for the truth... To the loyalty and courage of Iva Ikuko Toguri. She never changed her stripes.”²⁶² In the media’s eye, she went from an entertaining mythical figure named by lonely servicemen to a femme fatale traitor who wished to undermine GI morale to a patriotic elderly woman who, despite innumerable hardships and injustice, never lost her love for country.

Conclusion

Iva Toguri died in Chicago on January 26, 2006. The press eulogized her through nostalgic essays of her life and the epithet she never managed to shake, that of Tokyo Rose. One article referred to her as a “free, exonerated, exemplary American for more than five decades, but still imprisoned by myth.”²⁶³ Another jokingly stated that “the lessons of the woman called Tokyo Rose seem to be this: Be careful whom you hate, and even more careful about believing media loudmouths.”²⁶⁴ This was about Walter Winchell, whose regular firebrand columns set the stage for the mass media’s widespread condemnation of Toguri. In conclusion, the article went on to add, “the obituaries were kinder to her than they ever were to her old enemy and national smear-master, Walter Winchell.”

Tokyo Rose, and thus Axis Sally, presented a problem for the U.S. media and in American society in general. First and foremost, World War II presented Americans with a dilemma: how to deal with the idea of women in the workforce. More to the point, women in positions of power and influence over men. Women stepped in to fill the void of workers needed to keep the homefront and the factories producing greatly needed military machines running. But

²⁶² Erling Hoh, “Iva tells her tale,” *Far Eastern Economic Review* 166, No. 25 (June 26, 2003).

²⁶³ *New York Times*, “Iva Toguri, American,” September 29, 2006, A22.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/93110389/fulltextPDF/24617801FB764DD2PQ/14?accountid=14472>.

²⁶⁴ *McClatchy – Tribune Business News*, “‘Tokyo Rose’ - 90,” October 4, 2006, 1.

American societal norms demanded this be just for the duration of the war. Above all, women were expected to keep their femininity while employed in male-dominated roles because sooner or later, they would be reverted to familial duties.²⁶⁵ This protected male dominance in the workforce. Radio sirens like Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally threatened this natural order. They represented dangerous femininity, where women controlled male-dominated professions and held persuasive power over men. Furthermore, radio sirens were not seen as virtuous. They were *bad girls* and such capacity ran counter to 1940s ideas of what women in acceptable society should be.

Taking all this into context, the media constructed, over time, a very complex image of Tokyo Rose, as she presented the U.S. with a new type of political weapon, one using feminine charms against the most capable standing army in the world. The tone of coverage surrounding the legend of Tokyo Rose in the American press changed drastically over the years, more so than any of the other women analyzed in this study. She went from a mysterious and sultry sounding Japanese radio siren who could predict troop movement with stunning accuracy to a playful sounding female announcer who raised troop morale despite intentions to the contrary during the war. From there, coverage turned negative, portraying her as a Nipponese-American turncoat who attempted to help Japan win the war at all costs.

Ultimately, the person who would forever be branded with the epithet of Tokyo Rose, Iva Toguri, finally enjoyed a radically different American press in the late 1960s and early 1970s as an American patriot, a woman who sacrificed everything to help POWs and aid the war effort. As will be explored with Hanoi Hannah, this positive shift from traitor to patriot may also have been aided by the second wave of feminism in the U.S., as by the late 1960s and early 1970s,

²⁶⁵ Susan M. Hartmann, *The home front and beyond: American women in the 1940s*, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982), 23.

American societal norms regarding women and their proper roles had begun to change. Discourse centered less on whether women should pursue professions rather should they achieve equal pay and status. With the existence of Axis Sally, Seoul City Sue, and Hanoi Hannah in the American press, the novelty of an enemy female radio propagandist had worn off. The American press and public also recognized Tokyo Rose had not damaged U.S. troop morale in the Pacific theater. This coupled with new information regarding the life and struggles of Iva Toguri while in Japan facilitated this change in how the media portrayed her.

Interestingly, the Tokyo Rose name still conjures negative images of sultry and alluring female radio sirens in the American conscious, yet the female name most associated with it is regarded now as an American patriot, falsely accused of treason and becoming a victim of an overzealous American judicial system who needed a Japanese woman convicted for propaganda broadcasts against the U.S.

In conclusion, how the American press covered Tokyo Rose ultimately set the tone for how all female radio propagandists would be portrayed, including her contemporary, Axis Sally. Even as recently as the Iraq War, enemy propagandists would be compared to Tokyo Rose. The fascination the media and the American public had for Tokyo Rose manifested itself through two subsequent wars spanning three decades. As will be seen, the media compared Hanoi Hannah to Tokyo Rose. She became the standard by which all other radio sirens were measured.

CHAPTER 4 THE SIRENS OF AXIS EUROPE

Background (The Siren of Radio Rome)

The legend of Axis Sally involved two women. These two women had no direct connection to one another, yet they both shared the same GI invented name. Both were American-born and emigrated to Europe prior to World War II. The American press often confused the two women, misquoting one for the other. Much to the chagrin of the German Axis Sally, The Italian Axis Sally became popular in the American press and with servicemen in 1944, even being called the number one “feminine Axis radio propaganda star.”²⁶⁶ Though she became enormously popular for her sensuously sweet voice and entertaining banter, she had a rather short broadcasting tenure; however, she is often confused with Berlin’s Axis Sally, as both women broadcast under the same moniker during the same period.

As for Rita Louisa Zucca, born in New York City in 1912, her father owned a very successful restaurant, Zucca’s Italian Garden, and by all accounts, she enjoyed an upper-class lifestyle. She traveled often to Italy with her mother and had dreams of becoming a musician, specifically an opera singer.²⁶⁷ She moved to Italy in 1938 and renounced her U.S. citizenship in June of 1941. All contact with her parents ceased not long after. Some reports claimed Zucca renounced her citizenship to save her family’s assets from being expropriated by Mussolini

²⁶⁶ *London Stars and Stripes*, “‘Axis Sally,’” June 30, 1945, 5.

²⁶⁷ *Toronto Daily Star*, “Cross-eyed ‘Axis Sally’ in jug, where she belongs,” June 7, 1945, 1.

government. Nothing found for this study indicated she renounced citizenship out of anti-American sentiments.

Like Iva Toguri, Zucca worked as a typist prior to being hired by Radio Rome in 1943 to head a propaganda show aimed at U.S. and British forces now in Europe fighting German and Italian forces. Her first propaganda broadcast happened on February 22, 1943, a month of heavy German losses in Russia and Africa.²⁶⁸ Although Mildred Gillars, the German Axis Sally, predated Zucca in propaganda broadcasting, Zucca's programs were beamed out across the Mediterranean and across Italy. But her popularity spread quickly around the time Allied forces rushed to establish the Anzio Beachhead.

The War Years

On the morning of January 22, 1944, The Fifth U.S. Army and British units invaded the Italian coastline on a fifteen-mile stretch near the towns of Anzio and Nettuno. The amphibious invasion, codenamed Operation Shingle, met little German resistance and by nightfall, British and American forces had pushed roughly four miles inland. German defenders did not expect an invasion in the winter months and had not fortified the areas as they would later do along the beaches of Normandy. However, as the Allied invasion force secured a beachhead near Anzio and prepared to push farther North toward Rome, Adolf Hitler quickly ordered the "Anzio abscess"²⁶⁹ closed and began rapidly preparing for a swift counterassault. Fighting that ultimately occurred ranked as some of the bloodiest of the war.

For American soldiers engaged in the offensive, listening to Axis Sally became a nighttime tradition. Servicemen loved her musical selections and relished her soft, sensuous

²⁶⁸ *Mediterranean Stars and Stripes*, "'Axis Sally,' baby captured in Turin," June 8, 1945, 1.

²⁶⁹ More information about the Anzio Beachhead and the Italian Campaign can be found online at: <http://www.history.army.mil/brochures/anzio/72-19.htm>.

voice. Unlike with Iva Toguri, very few papers praised Zucca's attempts at entertaining servicemen, nor did the U.S. Navy issue her a citation. The most likely reason involved Sally's association with Fascist Italy, closely allied with Nazi Germany. Zucca, along with Gillars, did not face racial stereotyping as did Iva Toguri. The press saw them as less a novelty and more treasonous, especially with Mildred Gillars, for being Caucasian women turned against their own race and nationality. The press did, however, elaborate on her entertainment value, and many articles discussed the rapid popularity Axis Sally had among U.S. and British forces in the field. In fact, the Italian Axis Sally enjoyed great popularity among U.S. forces. She became so popular that the U.S. Army's 88th Division coined the nickname she gave them as their official moniker. During their push to break through the reinforced Gustav Line, the hardened German-held track consisting of 15 divisions between the Tyrrhenian and Adriatic seas, the 88th earned the distinction of being named the "Blue Devils" by Axis Sally, whom she claimed didn't fight like gentlemen and were "blood-thirsty cut-throats."²⁷⁰ The 88th wore blue cloverleaf patches as their division identifier, hence the description.²⁷¹

It should also be stated that many press articles confused the two women and their broadcasts, especially during the years of 1943-1945, as both women broadcast weekly. In addition, many aspects of both Axis Sally programs might have confused listeners and the press. One example comes from an article by famed war correspondent Ernie Pyle from May of 1944. Pyle, in describing Zucca's Axis Sally program, named *Jerry's Front Calling*, featured an "end man" named George, who participated in a regular feature of the program called "Sally and

²⁷⁰ Sgt. David Anderson, *Mediterranean Rome Stars and Stripes*, "'Spit and polish' occupation: The 'Blue Devils' settle down to policing, study, and drill," November 18, 1945, 4.

²⁷¹ For a description of the 88th and their brief association with Axis Sally, see: *Mediterranean Rome Stars and Stripes*, "'Blue Devils occupying disputed area," February 24, 1946, 13.

George.” George turned out to be Karl Goedel, a German broadcaster.²⁷² A few press reports indicated that a man named Bruno also appeared on Zucca’s program. Mildred Gillars often featured male voices on her program as well, adding to the confusion. Pyle also stated that Sally’s show aimed at GI’s at the Anzio Beachhead came on around five or six times a day anywhere between six o’clock in the morning to around two the next morning. The GIs considered the news portion of the program to be funny and the music good. Another example of media confusing the two women’s broadcasts included an article that Sally’s program came on usually around eleven in the evening and reached its peak of GI listenership around the time of the 5th Army’s invasion of Italy. Zucca did not begin broadcasting until 1943, but Gillars had been broadcasting since around 1941. According to the article,

“Sally” used to tell the GI’s they were all wrong about the Germans, that the Germans were fighting a holy war against communism and the Jews. She reminded the GI’s of American girls they had left behind them. Why not surrender, or at least quit fighting and go home whole? As soldiers, fighting a useless war in a foreign land, they had everything to lose, nothing to gain.²⁷³

This propaganda message, as will be seen, followed Mildred Gillars’ line of thought, and she broadcast such discourse regularly. The article goes on to call the show *Jerry’s Front Calling*, which again belong to Zucca, not Gillars. Perhaps the confusion resulted in the fact that many soldiers fighting in the Mediterranean and soldiers fighting elsewhere may not have understood

²⁷² Ernie Pyle, *The Brownsville Herald*, “‘Axis Sally’ has audience of men at Anzio Beach,” May 2, 1944, 12. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/22537092/?terms=axis%2Bsally>; this article also ran in the May 4, 1944, edition of *Mediterranean Stars and Stripes*, page 4.; see also: Associated Press, *The Sun*, “Italian tribunal imprisons ‘Axis Sally’ for broadcasts, September 30, 1945, 7. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/542908268/fulltextPDF/A0927284EF414C0EPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²⁷³ Lee McCardell, *The Sun*, “Siren voice of ‘Axis Sally’ recalled as lure for GI’s,” August 29, 1948, 1. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/541929222/fulltextPDF/84F4E2FF922A409APQ/1?accountid=14472>.

there were two Axis Sally broadcasters, and therefore journalists may have misattributed certain broadcasts as a result. Also, both women played upon the name, which became a source of irritation for Mildred Gillars. It must also be noted that both programs might have been heard over short-wave by U.S. soldiers and journalists covering the Italy Campaign, even though Gillars' programs were beamed to other parts of Europe as well as North Africa and the United States. This mixing of both programs may have added to the confusion. Now that the Axis Powers had three radio sirens covering every major theater of operations in World War II, the U.S. media's coverage intensified.

As with Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally Italy (as well as Axis Sally Germany) wooed U.S. troops with her knowledge of military movements and intelligence.²⁷⁴ These stories added spice to the mystery surrounding each woman, raising the level of intrigue into just how these femme fatales obtained inside knowledge. One story recounted a B-26 crewman's experience listening to Axis Sally. According to the sergeant quoted in the article, their B-26 crew knew a month ahead of time where their next base of operations would be by listening to Axis Sally (presumably Rita Louisa Zucca on *Jerry's Front Calling*).²⁷⁵

For troops fighting along the Anzio Beachhead, the press reported Zucca's Sally as addressing military units by name complete with unit identification numbers, "welcoming men

²⁷⁴ Neither Axis Sally (Zucca or Gillars) utilized POW writers. Gillars did, however, exploit POWs in her broadcasts in the form of coerced interviews and mentioning them frequently on air.

²⁷⁵ If this did not fascinate the servicemen of his flight group enough, one day not long after a brand new, silver B-26 arrived at their air base. The very next day, according to the sergeant, Axis Sally directly addressed his flight groups by saying, "Hello, boys, you've got a nice new silver toy!" Source: *The Lincoln Star*, "62 missions furnish thrills for S.Sgt. Donald F. Campbell," November 28, 1944, 5.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/58387013/?terms=axis%2Bsally>
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/58387013/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

back from leave, telling them when they were going to the front lines,” and so on.²⁷⁶ In fact, the author adds, that high ranking military were so worried about Axis Sally’s effect on GI morale with her uncanny predictions that even Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower grew concerned. The last part served as a reminder to readers that these radio sirens, although fascinating, still represented potential threats to U.S. servicemen. Whether these stories mostly resulted from actual broadcasts or just hearsay from soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines is hard to say. But with each radio siren, the same stories came out of the media.

For Rita Louisa Zucca, however, her Axis Sally would soon be retired. German officials moved Zucca’s broadcasts from Rome to Milan for a time as Allied forces seized Florence and continued the push into the Italian capital.²⁷⁷ Since 1943, Zucca’s Sally maintained immense popularity with servicemen. She only ceased to broadcast for a brief period when Zucca gave birth to her son in December of 1944.²⁷⁸ Her final broadcast came on April 25, 1945, three days prior to Mussolini’s murder at the hands of Italian partisans and five days before Adolf Hitler committed suicide in his Berlin bunker. Zucca then went into hiding as U.S. forces liberated Italy from Nazi occupation.

As with Tokyo Rose, coverage of Axis Sally included objectification whereas the sexual nature of their broadcasts was covered in-depth. Axis Sally employed her siren-like qualities designed to undermine U.S. troop morale with sexual innuendo and an appeal to homesickness. Often the press would inject humor into the situation with Axis Sally and the U.S. troops on the

²⁷⁶ June Frank, *Mediterranean Rome Stars and Stripes*, “The trail of ‘Axis Sally’ grows hot in North Italy,” June 15, 1945, 8.

²⁷⁷ June Frank, *The Emporia Gazette*, “Yanks in Italy hot on trail of ‘Axis Sally,’ American traitor,” June 8, 1945, 4.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/10309876/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

²⁷⁸ The American press often reported the child as her “illegitimate child” most likely to a Nazi serviceman, possibly a German sergeant.

march to Rome, and the anecdotal stories the media told usually centered around Sally's sex appeal. The press frequently reported on Zucca's sensuous voice and the sexual appeal she had over GIs. "Axis Sally" one article reported,

Is a different proposition. Sally is a dandy—the sweetheart of the second AEF. She plays nothing but swing, and good swing!... She has a voice that oozes like honey out of a big wooden spoon.²⁷⁹

As will be seen, media coverage of Axis Sally, as it had been with Tokyo Rose, varied in its level of aversion toward these radio sirens. Referring to Sandy as a "dandy" and a "sweetheart" typified coverage more commonly associated with Zucca than Gillars. More likely it had to do more with Zucca's less threatening broadcasting style. Gillars often broadcast harsh recriminations against U.S. forces as well as the Roosevelt administration. The article's attempt to neutralize Zucca's Sally as an imminent threat to U.S. soldiers varies greatly from other coverage of the period. The article goes on to add that Sally broadcasts from Berlin, an obvious mistake by the author, because he went on to credit her with a signature sign-off line, "That's all boys, and a sweet kiss from Sally."²⁸⁰

As for her propaganda techniques, the article stressed that like Tokyo Rose, Sally often played upon servicemen's love for the home life and worked to instill homesickness in them. In fact, Axis Sally Germany also used this technique with regularity, which explains yet again why so many press reports often confused the two women. "Her theme," the article continued,

is home, sweetheart, and mother, with an implication at, "Soldier, throw down your gun and go back to the good ole' U.S."... Her favorite dish is to paint a warm, glowing

²⁷⁹ Winn Nelson, *The Lincoln Star*, "Pushbutton Periods," February 13, 1944, A28.
<https://www.newspapers.com/search/#ymd=1944-02-13&query=axis+sally&oquery=axis+sally+February+13%2C+1944>

²⁸⁰ Rita Louisa Zucca, and not Mildred Gillars, regularly ended her program with these words, a mistake routinely made with journalists. Zucca usually began each program with the greeting, "Hello Suckers!" Often, her signoff would be quoted slightly different as, "Goodnight boys, and a sweet kiss from Sally."

picture of a little nest in America that might be yours: of the waiting wife, the little ones, the log fire, the bubbling coffee pot.

“You’ll get back at all that when the war’s over,” she says dreamily, then hisses, “if you’re still alive.”²⁸¹

The article highlights the sarcasm, acid tone, and yet fascination that often comprised the media’s coverage of the radio sirens of World War II. The author’s choice of the phrasing such as “says dreamily” and “then hisses” illustrates the tone of coverage often seen with these women—fascination plus aversion. Often, media representations of Tokyo Rose and both Axis Sallies portrayed them as almost Medusa-like creatures, enticing soldiers to their liars only to devour them. This feeds back into Homer’s version of the siren whereas their desirable yet venomous calls were designed to lead passersby to doom.

Just as had occurred with Iva Toguri, the press searched for the woman behind the voice that had so tantalized servicemen since 1943. The American press, in objectifying Axis Sally, produced numerous articles speculating about her physical appearance and whether she lived up to servicemen’s expectations. One article featured a photograph of a “burlesque-stripper statue” that had once overlooked the waterfront of a small Italian town only to be “liberated” by GIs, given a standard issue helmet, and mounted as a figurehead on their LST (Landing Ship, Tank). The soldiers, the article states, called her Axis Sally.²⁸² The media often diminished these women through descriptions such as these. Comparing Axis Sally to a burlesque stripper and highlighting soldiers that did likewise demonstrated the media’s aversion to the treasonous nature of these women who seemed to do nothing more than use their sexual charms against the U.S. military’s mission against Nazi Germany. Such articles, however, utilized humor to lampoon radio sirens, despite the regular use of barbs and unflattering comments.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² *The Franklin Evening Star*, “Meet ‘Axis Sally,’” April 26, 1944, 4.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/83234884/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

Sometimes, the press' interest in Axis Sally's sex appeal resulted in highly inaccurate and often bizarre reporting. One article, titled "Sally's No Beauty" recounted a soldier's experience meeting the "Axis Liar" while held prisoner near Rome. The article featured the cartoon depiction of an overweight, very unattractive woman crooning over a microphone with a Swastika behind her. Per the story, the soldier described her as "definitely on the 'battle-axe' side, beefy around the arms and neck, and as stupid looking as her facts." Then came a description of the regularly heard George of her program as the typecast "brother to the ox."²⁸³ His description neither matched the appearance of Rita Louisa Zucca nor Mildred Gillars. The soldier went on to claim that her voice "is soft and her music is sweet" but for Axis Sally to believe American troops would fall for the propaganda she disseminated, she would have to be "pure Nuts, Nuts, NUTS with capital T's."²⁸⁴ Using soldiers' often over-the-top condemnations of radio siren's broadcasts further diminished their credibility as enemy propagandists. The continued attention the press paid to these women, however, ironically gave credence to their widespread appeal. The media, while working to lessen their credibility, kept their names alive in American discourse through continual coverage.

When the American press ran the first photographs of Rita Louisa Zucca, many accounts followed regarding her appearance in less than flattering forms, such as the often-quoted description that she was a "cross-eyed, bowlegged, sallow-skinned and ugly" woman.²⁸⁵ One article even described Zucca having a "crossed left eye, but slightly on the dumpy side."²⁸⁶ U.S.

²⁸³ *Mediterranean Naples Stars and Stripes*, "Mail Call: Sally's no beauty," July 1, 1944, 5.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁵ June Frank, *Mediterranean Rome Stars and Stripes*, "The trail of 'Axis Sally,'" June 15, 1945, 1.

²⁸⁶ Sid Feder, *Mediterranean Rome Stars and Stripes*, "'Axis Sally,' baby captured in Turin," June 8, 1945, 1.

soldiers used to dream of Sally as “an oomph girl,” per another article. “They had her figured as a tall, terrific, shapely brunette.” But instead they have gotten, the article proclaims, a woman who is “33 years old, dumpy, bandy-legged, sallow and with a fearsome squint.”²⁸⁷ The article then quotes a British soldier who, upon seeing Rita Louisa Zucca, stated, “Crokey! Is that the piece of cheese that made me sigh for home and sweetheart when we were lying in the mud in front of Casino?”²⁸⁸

Other descriptions portrayed Zucca as a short, ugly duckling that no-doubt would disappoint American GIs hoping she would turn out to be the exotic and sexy femme fatale she sounded over the radio. Nearly every press report listed her as cross-eyed. Her left eye tended to wander a little off-balance from the right, resulting in a cross-eyed appearance. Later descriptions of her changed to more flattering depictions such as,

Contrary to popular belief, Sally is not too tough to look at. She is five feet, four inches in height, weighs 130 pounds and, as one GI put it, “she is pretty stacked.” True, her left eye is inclined to wander, but that cooey, sexy voice really has something to back it up.²⁸⁹

The discrepancy in the press regarding her appearance most likely resulted in unreliable word-of-mouth depictions and hearsay, as well as poor image reproduction of the circulated grainy photo in the print media. These speculative imaginings of Sally’s appearance also served to diminish these women by objectifying them and distract away from any propagandistic arguments they made. For example, articles did not ponder the appearances of male propaganda broadcasters, and their true identities were never obscured. Women propagandists, however, tended to broadcast under pseudo names as not to be discovered.

²⁸⁷ King Features Syndicate, Inc., E.V. Durling, *Medford Mail Tribune*, “On the side,” October 31, 1945, 6. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/97354530/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Sgt. Bob Fleisher, *Mediterranean Algiers Stars and Stripes*, “Axis Sally’ merely ‘curious,’ not worried about fate,” June 9, 1945, 1.

Postwar Years

As the media and U.S. officials sought Rita Louisa Zucca, it became apparent that as the Nazis fled Italy against the onrush of advancing U.S. and Allied forces, they had not taken Zucca and her child with them. Zucca hid in various locations to escape detection. Several articles referenced her returning to a former residence to retrieve a bill from a local dentist who, supposedly, would be able to give away her location.²⁹⁰ Zucca's capture occurred in early June after the search widened. Military police from the U.S. Army's 4th Corps found her living in the cellar of her uncle's home in Turin.²⁹¹ As with Seoul City Sue described in the next chapter, Zucca's family confidently proclaimed she broadcast for the Axis Powers out of force and not willfully. The Zucca family maintained they were a family of patriots who bought war bonds and suggested perhaps Rita Louisa had been "flattered" into broadcasting for the Fascists.²⁹² They even suggested at one time that Zucca secretly aided U.S. POWs in Italy, though no proof of this ever surfaced in the press.²⁹³

The U.S. Army held Zucca in Turin and eventually released her because as a non-citizen of the U.S., treason charges could not be brought against her. She did, however, face an Italian military tribunal for treason in September 29, 1945, for sharing intelligence with the Nazis.²⁹⁴ The tribunal quickly found Rita Louisa Zucca guilty and sentenced her to four years and five

²⁹⁰ June Frank, *Mediterranean Rome Stars and Stripes*, "The trail of 'Axis Sally,'" June 15, 1945, 8.

²⁹¹ *Statesville Record and Landmark*, "Yanks find hide-out Axis," June 7, 1945, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/3255009/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

²⁹² *New York Times*, "Americans seize Axis Sally in Italy; Fascist broadcaster born here," June 8, 1945, 9. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/107273858/fulltextPDF/DF261EDC41B14E5CPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²⁹³ United Press, *Lubbock Morning Avalanche*, "'Axis Sally' now in Italy, not charged," June 14, 1945, 9. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/14628879/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

²⁹⁴ Associated Press, *The Brownsville Herald*, "Trial of Axis Sally to begin tomorrow," September 28, 1945, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/22883619/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

months in Italy's Mantellate Prison.²⁹⁵ Interestingly, Zucca testified in her own defense that the Nazis took her name and used it in the radio broadcasts, and she had no connection to it.²⁹⁶ The press covering the trial also indicated, through her own testimony, that she took the job to raise money for her "Italian lover" and that she never wrote the scripts, only read what the program writers presented to her.²⁹⁷

Rita Louisa Zucca made headlines again in August of 1946 when the Italian government released her after only serving nine months of her four-and-a-half-year prison sentence. According to press reports, a special court of assizes released her under "the amnesty of the republic."²⁹⁸ Other articles explained that her early release occurred due to incompetence of the military tribunal that convicted her. In other words, as one article stated, "the court declared her crime non-existent because of recent decrees granting political amnesty."²⁹⁹

Rita Louisa Zucca never again operated as a radio broadcaster. She lived an obscure life in Italy barred from reentry into the United States. She was mostly forgotten about, unlike the other two Second World War radio sirens, Iva Toguri and Mildred Gillars. Zucca died in 1998. Whether she ever saw her family again could not be determined by the press reports found. To

²⁹⁵ *Middletown Times Herald*, "Axis Sally found guilty by Italians," September 29, 1945, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/40219213/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

²⁹⁶ United Press, *The Pittsburgh Press*, "'Axis Sally' gets 4-Year sentence," September 29, 1945, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/147943988/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

²⁹⁷ Associated Press, *The New York Times*, "'Axis Sally' gets jail term in Italy," September 30, 1945, 25. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/107252282/fulltextPDF/95D25DA40E76436EPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

²⁹⁸ Associated Press, *The News-Review*, "'Axis Sally,' Pro-German singer, freed from prison," August 20, 1946, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/94844323/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

²⁹⁹ United Press, *The Neosho Daily News*, "'Axis' Sally is released," August 20, 1946, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/1938710/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

this day, stories of Rita Louisa Zucca's broadcasts are often confused with those of Mildred Gillars and vice-versa.

Conclusion

Zucca was an anomaly. She reached great popularity with soldiers in the Italian campaign with *Jerry's Front Calling*, and she along with Mildred Gillars made up the legend of Axis Sally. The American media did not always distinguish between the two women in its reporting, but Rita Louisa Zucca did not face the same level of scrutiny as Mildred Gillars. In fact, far more negative coverage occurred with Gillars. There are three primary reasons for this. First, Mildred Gillars broadcast for a longer period than did Zucca. Secondly, Zucca's propaganda, although certainly a concern for the media, did not reach the level of Gillars. As will be discussed, Gillars' propaganda broadcasts were far more vicious in attacking U.S. foreign policy. Zucca did not involve American prisoners of war as the subject of her broadcasts. Gillars became particularly despised in the press during her treason trial for her coerced broadcasts of American POWs. Third, once Zucca's photographs circulated in the media, her physical appearance did not resemble that of femme fatales popularized in literature and cinema of the period. Her crossed eye, small stature and innocent smile came across as less of a bad girl and more of a young woman most likely misled into broadcasting for the enemy.

Background (The Siren of Radio Berlin)

Axis Sally forced Arndt Pansy, a wounded American soldier in a German-held hospital, to answer questions over the air during her program. The weakened soldier answered with a whisper that he was being treated well. The article covering the incident referred to Axis Sally as speaking with "false sympathy" for the young man. Axis Sally then turned her attention back to the women of the United States. "And so, Mrs. Pansy," she began. "If you were listening tonight

you heard your son's voice. You also heard how difficult it was for him to speak... his coughing... and all... which, of course, was to result of his having got... this bullet in his throat."³⁰⁰ The author of the article described Axis Sally's strategy as "using all her charm, all a woman's tenderness and allure, to sap their [GI] morale, to send them into battle so ridden with doubts and fears that they would be ripe victims for death."³⁰¹

For broadcasts like these, Mildred Elizabeth Sisk became the most reviled of the five radio sirens. Understanding why requires an examination of her broadcasting style as well as how the press covered her. Born on November 29, 1900, in Portland, Maine, she later dropped Sisk for Gillars, after her mother's second husband, a dentist named Dr. Robert Bruce Gillars. She attended Ohio Wesleyan University in Delaware and began pursuing a stage career. Gillars did not graduate, however, and soon went to France in 1929 for six months to study and hoped to become an actress. She later moved to New York City and took bit roles in the theater, but never made a name for herself on the stage. Her struggles led her back to Europe and eventually to Germany in 1935 where she worked as an English instructor at a school in Berlin. This eventually led her to a broadcasting position at Radio Berlin.

Mildred Gillars was a complex figure. She could be temperamental, demanding, very eccentric, and often full of deception. She claimed to be the original Axis Sally and often expressed irritation toward Rita Louisa Zucca's use of the nickname.³⁰² Although the name Axis Sally came from U.S. servicemen, both Gillars and Zucca somewhat adopted it. Gillars did not

³⁰⁰ David Camelon, *The Atlanta Constitution*, "Sirens of treason," December 4, 1949, SM21. <http://search.proquest.com/libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1532739309/fulltextPDF/602CA5FAC51F4DB8PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² United Press, *Jefferson City Post-Tribune*, "'Axis Sally' taken; trial in States," March 20, 1946, 7. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/2823713/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

broadcast under the name of Sally, but she did capitalize on it nonetheless. Gillars referred to herself as Midge and sometimes Midge at the Mic. Occasionally, GIs referred to her as Olga.³⁰³ The exact timeframe of her tenure with Radio Berlin is disputed as press reports gave conflicting dates. However, most consider her broadcast dates to be from December 11, 1941, through May 6, 1945. This would have placed Gillars as broadcasting from right after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor through the end of the war in Europe. In so, she predates Rita Louisa Zucca at the mic by two years. Prior to 1943, Gillars mainly broadcast propaganda to the British Isles. Dr. Otto Koischwitz, who served in the foreign office of Radio Berlin, requested she begin broadcasting to American forces and the U.S. mainland. Koischwitz, himself a propaganda broadcaster, knew Gillars from her college days as he used to be a professor in the United States. The decision proved fateful, as Koischwitz and Gillars were romantically involved. Koischwitz became an obsession to Gillars, and in her treason trial after the war, she used her intense devotion for him in her defense.

Gillars oversaw numerous radio programs and special features through her years at Radio Berlin including cabaret-styled *Club of Notions* and *Smiling Through*, but her two most popular ones were *Home Sweet Home* and *Midge at the Mic*, and like the other sirens analyzed in this study, her propaganda techniques included making GIs homesick, insisting they could not win the war, and playing popular American music. Gillars often added additional layers to her propaganda such as fictional dramatizations in which she utilized her acting skills. She also routinely visited prisoner of war camps and interviewed American POWs for her broadcasts that the American press often excoriated her for. Ironically, research for this study could not produce any articles about her version of Axis Sally prior to 1943 and only very few from 1943 to 1945.

³⁰³ Ernie Pyle, *The San Bernardino County*, "Nickname broadcaster," August 10, 1943, 16. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/49448839/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

As with Rita Louisa Zucca and Iva Toguri, Mildred Gillars' voice became famously written about as much as the content of her messages. Her music selections, like Rose's, also entertained U.S. soldiers. As Ernie Pyle wrote, Axis Sally often spoke about the hardships at the battle front compared to the ease of domestic life back home to get the soldiers homesick and nostalgic, but GIs listened more to the American swing she played rather than the propaganda.³⁰⁴

Gillars' Axis Sally, unlike her Asiatic colleague, Iva Toguri, did not mince words when it came to broadcasting strong propaganda segments. For example, one undated broadcast transcript from a 1944 article quoted Axis Sally as saying,

Why do you Americans keep on fighting? You know you can't win! What fools you Americans are to be over here in the rain, mud, and cold, while someone back home is out in some nice cozy place with your best girl, and that's the girl who said she would wait for you until the end of time. New York is being heavily bombed by our pilotless bombs.³⁰⁵

Such propaganda lines came often from Gillars, and the press routinely covered them. Since no bombs ever fell on New York or any other American city during the war, the persuasive element of her diatribes fell mostly on death ears among the military ranks in Europe. The press, however, constantly reminded Americans through its coverage that Axis Sally was a Nazi agent out to demoralize soldiers and thus affect Allied progress.³⁰⁶ Mildred Gillars' harsh rhetoric, scathing criticisms, and bombastic approach to broadcasting earned her extra ire from the press. This contributed greatly to her never receiving changing sentiments as the post war years progressed. Plus, her unrepentant nature solidified her as the most hated of the five women discussed in this study.

³⁰⁴ Ernie Pyle, *Mediterranean Naples Stars and Stripes*, "The Roving Reporter," March 15, 1944, 2.

³⁰⁵ *Mount Carmel Item*, "Ladika tells of broadcast by 'Axis Sally,'" October 26, 1944, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/74900900/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³⁰⁶ As will be seen, Hanoi Hannah's propaganda tactics in Vietnam were more effective against soldier morale.

Postwar Years

Oddly enough, as indicated above, only a scant amount of wartime era news articles about Mildred Gillars' Axis Sally could be located. Most of the actual wartime reporting found had to do with Zucca's Axis Sally. It seems that most of the Mildred Gillars story, regarding press coverage, began after Germany surrendered in May 1945, and her identity became known. As with Zucca and Toguri, public curiosity about the person behind Gillars' Axis Sally grew in the states. Actress Shelly Mitchell played the voice of Axis Sally in the Robert Mitchum film, *The Story of G.I. Joe*, released in 1945. The film, based on the wartime articles of Ernie Pyle, featured a sequence where Axis Sally could be heard over the radio, urging U.S. soldiers to give up the fight as they quickly neutralized several German snipers.³⁰⁷

The U.S. Army captured Mildred Gillars hiding in Berlin in March of 1946. They quickly jailed her pending federal charges of treason. Interestingly, Mildred Gillars appeared to have lied about her age, as many press articles referred to her as being anywhere between 33 and 36 years old, when in fact she was 46 at the time. Articles described her as avoiding capture since war's end by using false names and purchasing food and needed supplies through the black market.³⁰⁸ As more information came available to the media, reports flooded in regarding how the military located Gillars. Several articles stated that her appearance gave her away, as she had jet black hair, and that a young German girl reported her often riding a subway.³⁰⁹ Ironically, many other

³⁰⁷ "Ernie Pyle's 'Story of G.I. Joe' will need strong-selling," *Film Bulletin* 13, no. 13 (June 25, 1945): 8.

³⁰⁸ United Press, *The Pittsburgh Press*, "'Axis Sally' caught in Berlin, identified as Maine girl" March 20, 1946, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/149685990/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³⁰⁹ International News Service, *The Washington Post*, "'Axis Sally' is captured; Maine native" March 21, 1946, 2. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/151871651/fulltextPDF/9D4148FA71AE4B15PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

reports described Gillars as having either gray or “silvery hair neatly coiffeured.”³¹⁰ Other articles told a slightly different story of her capture, one where investigators had sketches drawn of Gillars and her furniture, and these sketches circulated throughout an art district where eventually a coffee table known to belong to her sold through a local antique dealer.³¹¹

Initial articles portrayed Mildred Gillars as a woman who freely confessed broadcasting for Nazi Germany and expressed indifference at her capture and possible treason trial in the United States. Several reports quoted her as responding to reporters’ questions about her fate as “But it doesn’t matter. I have lost everything anyhow.”³¹² She also initially stated that she acted on her own free will and had nothing to regret regarding her treasonous broadcasts for Nazi Germany. She contradicted these statements in her treason trial.

Often, however, Gillars gave somewhat bizarre answers to reporters’ questions. For example, when asked where her family resided in the U.S., Gillars stated she did not know nor wished to know. Regarding the potential death sentence of convicted traitors, Gillars quickly retorted “I understand it is high treason. I’ve always liked to travel and seeking new adventure and I think death might be the most exciting adventure of all.”³¹³ By reporting Gillars flippant

³¹⁰ Associated Press, *New York Times*, “‘Axis Sally’ to face treason trial in U.S.” March 22, 1946, 5. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/107447833/fulltextPDF/8170D9BB2FB4EC0PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³¹¹ From a United Press article dating March 21, 1946, titled “Saucy Axis Sally confesses she’s up a blind alley.” The article is part of official FBI documents regarding Axis Sally archived at www.fbi.gov.

³¹² Associated Press, *New York Times*, “‘Axis Sally’ to face treason trial in U.S.” March 22, 1946, 5. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/107447833/fulltextPDF/E973EC93C5694D0DPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³¹³ United Press, *The Washington Post*, “Death appeals to Axis Sally, 36, as exciting,” March 22, 1946, 6. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/151841894/fulltextPDF/C70787EF5614961PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

remarks regarding her legal predicament and showcasing her as a somewhat unstable, unrepentant woman directly contrasts from how the media portrayed Rita Louisa Zucca. In doing so, the media constructed an image of Gillars as a heartless, often sociopathic personality. She also went as far as to blame her troubles on astrology, claiming that, “I know my astrological time has come... Danger has never interested me. Danger belongs in my astrological sign, Sagittarius.”³¹⁴ In light of these bizarre pronouncements from Gillars, press articles surfaced with interviews from former acquaintances and colleagues speculating about her mental state. For example, one article reported comments from Ohio Wesleyan University officials confessing that Gillars, as a student, “was ‘a completely undisciplined individual and noticeably eccentric.’”³¹⁵ Other former classmates described her as a somewhat odd student who “sat in her dormitory window and recited poems to the moon, sometimes by the hour.”³¹⁶

Of the three World War II radio sirens, Gillars most closely represented the classic femme fatale caricature. She maintained a mystery about her that beckoned more press coverage. As demonstrated above, the American press mostly reported about Mildred Gillars in highly unflattering ways. One article described her as a chain smoker of perhaps forty or more cigarettes daily and requiring a box of tissues constantly at her side to clear her eyes of smoke.³¹⁷ Several other articles reported that the Army released Gillars from detention around Christmas day in 1946, although she refused to leave the prison because she would otherwise not be able to have a

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ *The Circleville Herald*, “Axis Sally is identified as former Co-Ed at OWU,” March 28, 1946, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/90426524/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³¹⁶ United Press, *Los Angeles Times*, “Axis Sally may be Co-Ed who wanted big tasks,” March 29, 1946, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/159685619/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³¹⁷ *Mediterranean Rome Stars and Stripes*, “Nice legs, anyhow,” April 5, 1946, 4.

Christmas dinner.³¹⁸ According to at least one article, the Army wanted to release her due to being “too busy with its occupation duties to be concerned about alleged traitors.”³¹⁹ At this point, Mildred Gillars had neither money nor place to stay. Ironically, as a Radio Berlin announcer, the press confirmed that Gillars had become the highest paid German broadcaster and the second highest paid employee at Radio Berlin behind only the director general.³²⁰ By every account, the press constructed an image of her being somewhat a diva, defiant, overly ambitious, and certainly demanding. The fact that she had been financially compensated more than men, including broadcasting heavyweights as Lord Haw Haw (William Joyce) at Radio Berlin also stood in the face of societal norms regarding women in male dominated professions in the 1940s. As with the discussion of Tokyo Rose, Gillars represented what threatened male domination. She was commanding, placed in a position of power over men, especially her listeners—U.S. servicemen.³²¹ She actively sought to use her femininity and charms against the soldiers and airmen fighting against Nazi Germany.

As with the other radio sirens analyzed in this study, the press also objectified Mildred Gillars by producing stories concerned with her sexuality and appearance. Coverage of her physical appearance became the focus of many articles as Americans and soldiers alike wanted to know how the voice compared with her physique. The American press often wrote about

³¹⁸ Associated Press, *The Sun*, “‘Axis Sally’ gives reason,” December 26, 1946, 11. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/542806508/fulltextPDF/75E0408B62EB4D12PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³¹⁹ *The Escanaba Daily Press*, “Axis Sally tried for treason,” January 27, 1949, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/51026205/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³²⁰ United Press, *The Daily Register*, “Charges Axis Sally highly paid by Nazis,” January 25, 1949, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/8664624/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³²¹ No evidence suggests Gillars actively lowered soldier morale in any meaningful way, but the fact that she potentially *could have* made her powerful in the ranks of German propaganda broadcasting.

Gillars' sexually inclined voice, her sensuous appeal, and what sort of romantic mental images GIs had of her. As one journalist penned,

Olga has a come-hither voice, and she speaks straight American. Every night you'd hear the boys conjecturing about what she looked like. Some thought she was probably an old hag with a fat face and peroxide hair, but the majority liked to visualize her as looking as gorgeous as she sounded.

The most frequently expressed opinion heard aboard ship was that if they ever got to Berlin they'd like to first sock Olga on the chin—and then make love to her.³²²

The author's choice of wording exemplified the love/hate relationship the U.S. military had with these radio sirens. Axis Sally and Tokyo Rose represented an enemy that, oddly enough, entertained American troops. The inherent danger of their propaganda mostly escaped the notice of soldiers who spent more time envisioning their physical appearances than worrying about whether their morale could be affected. GIs gleefully listened regardless of Axis Sally's gloomy outlook on American military progress and the state of affairs at home. What she said did not matter as much as how she said it.

Male radio propagandists never faced this level of scrutiny. Most press coverage regarding them concentrated more on the veracity of their propaganda than anything else. Once Axis Sally's identity became known, the press particularly noted her lack of physical attraction, although some articles did refer to her as being attractive, slim, and shapely. Often, however, press reports remained unflattering regarding Gillars. For example, Headlines such as "Post-War Disillusion" and "'Axis Sally' is Not a Glamour-Gal" graced front pages of newspapers across the nation. One article mentioned that,

Young men who served in the North African and European theaters in World War II find it difficult to identify the pictures of Mildred Gillars with the voice of "Axis Sally."

When they were thousands of miles away from home they imagined that "Axis Sally," broadcasting from Berlin, was a lovely girl as glamorous and exciting as her

³²² Ibid.

voice... Mildred Gillars is a woman of around 50 with ordinary figure and features. Her pictures are not the pinups imagined by lonely soldiers in a foreign land.³²³

For the radio sirens of World War II, neither Tokyo Rose nor either Axis Sally met lofty GI expectations, and the American media played upon this with endless articles stating the fact. On some level, perhaps the media relished the fact that these women were not as they seemed; they were fakes, hired by the Axis to foil Allied progress yet failing in the attempt. The same article went on to predict that as television becomes more and more common in the U.S., propaganda sirens would need to be as attractive as they sounded to woo U.S. servicemen. Interestingly, the author of the article made two important assumptions. First, fielding the airwaves with female sirens would become a new standard in physiological warfare, and the advent of visual broadcasting would necessitate female propagandists that looked as enticing as they sounded to be successfully employed against soldier morale.

Another article, referring to the experiences of British soldiers fighting in North Africa and listening to Axis Sally, stated that:

When the music ended, a throaty woman's voice whispered words intended to stir longing and desire and homesickness in the hearts of those who listened. The voice talked of home and wives and sweethearts—and how foolish it was to fight the Germans.

It was a voice that tried to seduce and break the hard spirit of the Desert Rats so far from home.

Oh, they liked Axis Sally—those tough men of the desert. They liked her American brand of music and her warm voice that made them forget for a moment the cold winds of the desert night—just because it was feminine.³²⁴

The author's suggestion that the men listened to these women "just because" their voices were feminine stressed the loneliness these men felt serving far away from home. It underscored the

³²³ *The Decatur Herald*, "Post-war disillusion" August 28, 1948, 6.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/88576751/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³²⁴ Associated Press, Don Whitehead, *Lubbock Evening Journal*, "During African campaign British soldiers Pictured Axis Sally as Oomph gal of radio" August 28, 1948, 25.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/6366960/?terms=During%2BAfrican%2Bcampaign%2BBritish%2Bsoldiers%2BPictured%2BAxis%2BSally%2B%2B%2BDon%2BWhitehead>.

real power of fielding the airwaves with female voices. Each woman became known in the press for her siren like qualities, chief among them their soft, pleasing voices. These voices were to demoralize servicemen in ways that male propagandists could not. Their dulcet voices combined with the fact that they were “bad girls” made them more fun to listen to for U.S. servicemen.

The article then described soldiers’ disappointment when they discovered through the American press that Gillars was “a tired-looking, graying woman of ordinary figure and features who is nearing the half-century mark in age,” and that men all over the world would be taking down their “mental pin-up” pictures of her. Articles such as this reinforced the notion that their power as propagandists revolved less around their words and more on their appeal as women to male audiences hungry for female companionship.

The Treason Trial and Aftermath

While temporarily free of American custody, Mildred Gillars gave several perplexing interviews in which she sought to set the record straight. She adamantly maintained she never once became pro-Nazi, and she wanted nothing more than to return to the U.S. In one interview, she claimed to be completely apolitical and then, “in the next breath, she advocated ridding the world of all Jews and Communists.” She claimed that Jews and Communists sought to lead the world to damnation and that Hitler’s ideas regarding them “were and are correct.” After such radical statements, she often proclaimed to be American first and foremost.³²⁵ Mildred Gillars often gave conflicting answers to reporters. The media’s portrayal of her highlighted this duplicity. Whether Gillars answered ambiguously to maintain an air of mystery or simply because she was mentally distressed (or perhaps ill) cannot be known for sure. What is sure is

³²⁵ United Press, *The Neosho Daily News*, “Woman who tried to get GI’s to quit war hasn’t changed” December 30, 1946, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/1956360/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

that she often maintained a sense of drama in her interviews to the press. The press, in return, published a near endless stream of articles regarding her antics and the legal proceedings to initiate a treason trial in the United States.

By early 1947, the U.S. Government received hundreds of complaints from veterans regarding two things: protests against the release of Mildred Gillars and any possibility of her reentering the United States. War veterans flooded Congress with letters of disapproval in how it handled the Gillars case. One letter, for example, stated:

Last night, by radio, Walter Winchell made a statement on his program that all veterans of World War No. II should contact, either by letter or postal card, the Immigration Department in Washington, stating that they do not want Axis Sally to be granted admission to the United States of America. We veterans feel she relinquished her right of citizenship when she went to Germany to broadcast propaganda.

Another adamantly demanded that,

if this 'Axis Sally' isn't prosecuted to the limits of the law, and punished as she deserves, then surely those American Soldiers who went to their graves, directly and indirectly through her propaganda during the war, shall haunt us through our living days.

She currently is guilty of TREASON, and even now shows no repentance, surely she has a demented mind.

Another letter, addressed to the Department of Justice, stated that veterans of the war disliked how the U.S. Government handled the case and that "if this is another attempt to pull a 'fast one' we are interested in knowing the particulars." Some veterans even accused the State Department of adding salt to the wounds of veterans for allowing Gillars to go free and possibly reenter the country she betrayed. Many letters referenced firebrand broadcaster Walter Winchell such as one that stated, "there are too many men buried under crosses and stars to let her get away with it."³²⁶

The American press persistently followed this growing backlash of war veterans and the American public. As with the case of Iva Toguri, the American public as well as its mass media,

³²⁶ Every letter quoted above came from the Mildred Gillars case files archived by the FBI and found online at: www.fbi.gov.

had grown weary of war, and a national sentiment to prosecute Nazis and their affiliates resulted in renewed negativity toward Gillars. Several articles followed national petitions such as one filed by the American Legion, whose Syracuse Post 41 branch filed a 3,500-strong request against Gillars ever being allowed back into the country short of standing trial for treason.³²⁷ Several editorial pieces emerged recounting stories of Axis Sally's broadcasts during the Battle of the Bulge where she appealed for U.S. troops who were surrounded by mechanized German forces to surrender to where they would be treated honorably. Those that did surrender, one editorial commented, were rounded up and summarily executed by SS troops.³²⁸

On January 22, the Army rearrested Mildred Gillars while U.S. Attorney General Tom C. Clark issued a statement saying she would be taken back to the U.S. to stand trial for treason. Whether mounting pressure from veterans and the American public had anything to do with her arrest is not clearly known.³²⁹ Unlike Iva Toguri, Gillars did not have the mass support of World War II veterans; Veterans often petitioned for her conviction. Whereas Toguri presented herself as an innocent and patriotic woman and a hapless victim of circumstance, Gillars could be bombastic, eccentric, and unrepentant when it came to her association with Axis broadcasting. Toguri had redeeming qualities, mainly her harmless, playful demeanor between musical selections, her reluctance to be in the public eye, and her quiet, delicate nature. Gillars represented herself as an unapologetic Nazi sympathizer who broadcast propaganda for Radio

³²⁷ *The Post-Standard*, "Legion opposes return of Axis Sally: Comrades died due to her acts, petition asserts," January 16, 1947, 11.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/35931870/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³²⁸ New York Post, Dr. Daniel A. Poling, *The Vidette-Messenger*, "Americans All," January 21, 1947, 4. Accessed online at

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/45563537/?terms=Americans%2Ball>.

³²⁹ Associated Press, *The Sun*, "Army rearrests 'Axis Sally' in Reich on orders from U.S.," January 23, 1947, 1. Accessed online at [http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/542745735/fulltextPDF/3629CF9E87784C BDPQ/1?accountid=14472](http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/542745735/fulltextPDF/3629CF9E87784CBDPQ/1?accountid=14472).

Berlin willingly. Toguri did not project sex appeal, nor did she ever try and seduce POWs into interviews. Gillars, on the other hand, used sexuality often in both her broadcasts and directly to American POWs. The two women could not have been more different, yet the media defined their legacies as femme fatale radio sirens.

In response, the American press continued its brutal editorializing of Gillars. One article likened her to a Nazi virus and described her as continuing to spout anti-Semitic dialogue while suggesting that Moscow ought to be obliterated. If she deserved freedom, the editorial stated, “so did Dr. Goebbels.”³³⁰ Occasionally press reports once again confused the two Axis Sally broadcasters. More than one report stated that pressure from veteran groups stopped Rita Louisa Zucca from entering the U.S. when in fact they had stopped Mildred Gillars.³³¹ Other reports claimed that immigration officials monitored ships coming in from Europe for *any* Axis Sally who might be trying to sneak into the United States.³³² However, one Walter Winchell column stated that a group of “loony local politicians” in Stamford, Connecticut, were collaborating to bring Zucca back to the U. S., but Winchell did not elaborate on any particular details of the alleged plot.³³³

The U.S. Army transported Mildred Gillars back to the U.S. in mid-August 1948 to stand trial for her Nazi broadcasts against U.S. forces in Europe and North Africa. She traveled from Frankfurt to Washington, D.C., aboard a military C-54 Skymaster. According to press reports,

³³⁰ *The Mason City Globe-Gazette*, “The Nazi virus,” January 29, 1947, 14.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/38143301/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³³¹ Only one press report found while researching this dissertation stated that Rita Louisa Zucca wanted to return to the U.S. to see her family after her 1946 release from prison. But all veteran letters against Axis Sally returning to the U.S. found concerned Mildred Gillars.

³³² United Press, *The Evening News*, “Ships screened for ‘Axis Sally,’” June 5, 1947, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/60304860/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³³³ Walter Winchell, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, “Nightmares of a newspaper man—II,” June 19, 1947, 5A. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/103228060/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

she oddly replied, “When in Germany, do as the Germans do,” when asked by reporters how it felt to be headed back to the U.S. after so many years.³³⁴ Upon arrival, U.S. marshals whisked her away as the government located witnesses and prepared its case against her. The U.S. Government viewed Mildred Gillars as emotionally unstable and prone to hysterical behavior and, while sane, often seemed to lack control of her emotional outbursts.³³⁵ The Justice Department indicated the most potent program Gillars broadcast was *Home Sweet Home*, also her most popular program at Radio Berlin.³³⁶ On this program, Gillars would speak directly to U.S. troops about their dire circumstances, entice them with images of home, and she also made direct appeals to the wives and mothers of America to insist that they do their part to end the war for the men they love. In one such broadcast, the Siren of Berlin appealed to the women of America and explained her real reason for broadcasting to U.S. forces:

Yes girls, there is a reason and it's this: it's because I'm not on the side of President Roosevelt and his Jewish friends and his British friends because I've been brought up to be a 100 percent American Girl... (and then) Gee, girls, isn't it a darn shame; all the sweet old American summer atmosphere which the boys are missing just now.³³⁷

In another address to American women, she claimed,

They're coming in by the hundreds, these American boys, who day after day are flying over Germany in their terror raids trying to extinguish a whole race, killing ruthlessly

³³⁴ Associated Press, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “‘Axis Sally,’ departs from Germany for U.S. treason trial,” August 21, 1948, A8.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/196143816/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³³⁵ Taken from FBI documents found online at: www.fbi.gov.

³³⁶ United Press, *Dunkirk Evening Observer*, “Axis Sally to land in nation she hated this afternoon,” August 21, 1948, 2.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/56289787/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³³⁷ Associated Press, *The Hartford Courant*, “‘Axis Sally’ broadcasts played back: Defendant unmoved listening to voice at treason trial,” January 28, 1949, 3.

<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/561110125/fulltextPDF/A1D352C106744BC3PQ/2?accountid=14472>.

helpless women and children. I ask you American women if you brought up your boys to be murderers? Have you? Because that's what they are becoming.³³⁸

She also regularly played recorded interviews with American POWs on the program. Tokyo Rose never did this; neither did Rita Louisa Zucca. Addressing stateside women directly added to the negative press Gillars received. Gillars did so to not only affect troop morale but to weaken resolve at home by causing housewives, mothers, and girlfriends to doubt the war effort.

As the American press continued to cover the build-up to the treason trial, a few articles compared the legal plights of Iva Toguri and Mildred Gillars, both of whom faced treason trials in U.S. for doing the exact same thing. Some editorials reminded Americans that despite the heavy coverage of both women, "it must be recognized that now with the war behind, neither of these befuddled creatures seem particularly important."³³⁹ But the American public guided by the press continued to follow the story of Gillars' trial nonetheless. For one thing both women were considered American traitors. Secondly, Gillars represented the ideal *femme fatale*, the bad girl personae who sided with the most hated enemy (Nazi Germany) in the world. Gillars also became a fascinating figure, one whose temper tantrums and diva qualities became fodder for the media, which included drama such as Gillars unhappy with her defense team, and pleading for a delay in proceedings because of her health. At one point, Mildred Gillars even claimed that the U.S. Army had kidnapped her and brought her to America against her will.³⁴⁰

³³⁸ *The Sun*, "Court hears 'Axis Sally': Voice on recordings identified as that of miss Gillars," January 28, 1949, 5.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/541885370/fulltextPDF/56AD286813F84582PQ/3?accountid=14472>.

³³⁹ *The Hartford Courant*, "Rose and Sally," August 23, 1948, 8.

³⁴⁰ *The Washington Post*, "'Axis Sally' granted delay in hearing on treason charge," September 1, 1948, 1,11. Accessed online at
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/152061551/fulltextPDF/3879447D8AF841ACPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

Perhaps one of the most bizarre stories to come from the pre-trial period included press reports of a hoax Mildred Gillard perpetrated when she was eighteen years old. According to several articles, Gillars had gone into a newspaper office in Camden, New Jersey, and asked to place a want-ad to a would-be lover who recently abandoned her. The paper printed the plea letter, which indicated that Gillars, who identified herself as Barbara Elliott, could not live without the man. Local reporters considered the story a brilliant human-interest opportunity and followed “Barbara Elliott’s” case with follow-up stories. When the lover did not show, she wrote a suicide letter to be published specifying a time and place where she would jump from a bridge should he not answer. Police arrived at the bridge at the appointed time and took Gillars in protective custody to the local jail. When the lover finally showed up to claim her, Gillars admonished him for taking so long. The whole incident, the papers reported, had been a publicity stunt for a film titled *Unwanted Children*. Gillars and the would-be lover, both actors, were promised seventy-five dollars each for their participation.³⁴¹ The story added to the mystery of Mildred Gillars’ peculiar character. She made a particularly intriguing radio siren in that her antics and bizarre past illustrated a woman whose emotional state hinged on the unpredictable. The press never tired of covering her, and she never ceased providing them new material to cover.

Covering the Mildred Gillars trial offered no shortage of drama, and the American public remained interested in the proceedings. When the indictments came, prosecutors charged her with ten acts of treason ranging from August 1, 1943, through September 20, 1944. The prosecution claimed Gillars acted with intention of “weakening and destroying the confidence of the citizens of the U.S. in the administration of their government,” and that she did so through

³⁴¹ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “Hoax revealed in life of ‘Axis Sally,’” September 3, 1948, 4.

“securing recorded messages from American prisoners of war in Germany and using them to further German propaganda aims.”³⁴² Other charges in the indictment involved Gillars’ staple program, *Home Sweet Home*, and a radio dramatization she made titled *Vision of Invasion* in 1944, designed to instill fear in U.S. soldiers and doubt of an American victory stateside. *Vision of Invasion* involved an American soldier’s mother, played by Gillars, who dreams her son dies aboard a sinking transport barge in the English Channel during the invasion of coastal France. At one point in the program after the dream, the mother hears church bells ringing and asks why. The sober answer comes: “The dead bells of Europe’s bombed cathedrals are toiling the death knell of America’s youth.”³⁴³ Dr. Koischwitz wrote the audio dramatization, which aired shortly before Allied forces invaded the beaches of Normandy on June 6.

The trial began on January 24, 1949, at around ten o’clock in the morning with the defense stating that Gillars did not willingly broadcast propaganda messages against the Armed Forces of the U.S., and furthermore, that she offered aid and comfort to American POWs by allowing them to send messages to loved ones over her radio programs.³⁴⁴ In keeping with the femme fatale mythos, the defense also claimed through the course of the trial that Gillars’ obsession with the late Dr. Otto Koischwitz became so intense that he had a “hypnotic” influence

³⁴² International News Service, *Delaware County Daily Times*, “‘Axis Sally,’ Nazi radio queen, indicted for treason,” September 10, 1948, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/54102095/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³⁴³ Robert W. Ruth, *The Sun*, “A mistake to try ‘Axis Sally,’ Ex-boss says he advised U.S.,” February 1, 1949, 1.

<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/538340637/fulltextPDF/91C071B6B07E440BPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³⁴⁴ *The Washington Post*, “‘Axis Sally’s’ trial begins here today,” January 24, 1949, B1. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/152124783/fulltextPDF/CF5AEDE63B034833PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

over her, robbing her of free will.³⁴⁵ She even confessed that she never attempted escape from her Nazi overseers during her service at Radio Berlin because of her love for the professor.³⁴⁶ Gillars even went as far as claiming Koischwitz was her “destiny” and that she would have done anything, including collaborating with Nazis for him.³⁴⁷ According to several articles covering the trial, Gillars tearfully and somewhat puzzlingly proclaimed,

I believe people are the result of other human beings who have been in their lives and I feel that if Professor Koischwitz had not been in my life I would not be fighting for my life today.³⁴⁸

In this regard, the defense claimed, Mildred Gillars could not refuse Nazi requests to broadcast over Radio Berlin. This type of defense never occurred with male radio propagandists. Several articles speculated as to why Gillars would betray her own country for the Nazis. The most logical answer, according to at least one article: love coupled with the thwarted ambitions of “a girl” finally in “the world spotlight—and well paid for it in the bargain.”³⁴⁹ As with Toguri and Zucca, the American press looked for a romantic angle to the Gillars story, as 1940s sentiment towards women necessitated a femme fatale motive for a woman betraying her country. The two motives most likely associated with femme fatales: greed and love. In the case of Mildred Gillars, love came through absolute devotion to Dr. Otto Koischwitz, and greed in the form of

³⁴⁵ Philip Warden, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “Tale of home brings tears to Axis Sally,” January 26, 1949, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/195819418/?terms=axis%2Bsally>; Dr. Koischwitz died in the fall of 1944, much to the bereavement of Mildred Gillars.

³⁴⁶ Associated Press, *New York Times*, “‘Axis Sally’ ends story of her life,” March 2, 1949, 17. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/105744300/fulltextPDF/FACA7F2DDB7C4C08PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³⁴⁷ Associated Press, *The Indiana Gazette*, “Axis Sally rues love for Nazi propagandist” February 24, 1949, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/14243682/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

³⁴⁹ Malvina Lindsay, *The Washington Post*, “Roads to Treason: ‘Axis Sally’s’ tempters,” February 3, 1949, 10. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/152105955/fulltextPDF/DF9AF7F355495EPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

fame and power at Radio Berlin. Referring to Gillars and her female colleagues as “girls” diminished them, thus reminding the nation that propaganda and political persuasion remained a man’s domain.

In searching for reasons why American women would betray their country, the American press usually explored their associations with male lovers. With Iva Toguri, her husband, Felipe d’Aquino, became a source of occasional speculation as to why she would broadcast for the Japanese. With Mildred Gillars, her blind devotion to Koischwitz received much press attention. As will be seen, the same type of speculation occurred with Seoul City Sue and Hanoi Hannah. Mid 20th Century sentiment toward women necessitated finding a man responsible for their actions. As women, society simply remained reluctant to grant them the agency to commit such acts under their own accord.

Interestingly, Mildred Gillars’ reasoning for agreeing to broadcast for the Nazis changed throughout the trial. At one point she claimed to have done the broadcasts because her American passport had been taken from her, and the Nazis would not allow her to renew the passport and leave the country unless she cooperated with them.³⁵⁰ The prosecution, in response, claimed that she willfully accepted the broadcasting position with Radio Berlin, was paid handsomely for it, had received a replacement passport while at Radio Berlin, and actively took a leading role in weaving Nazi propaganda messages in her programs.³⁵¹ Gillars also claimed she never stated in any of her broadcasts that servicemen’s wives and girlfriends were back home cheating on them.

³⁵⁰ *The Sun*, “‘Axis Sally’ tells of oath to Reich,” January 24, 1949, 1. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/541885607/fulltextPDF/AC067620AB1A4714PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³⁵¹ Associated Press, *Portland Press Herald*, “Axis Sally goes on trial for life today,” January 24, 1949, 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/8772444/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

Later in the trial, however, she claimed she had made such broadcasts but only in the sense of “clowning.”³⁵²

Public interest in the trial remained high. Some press articles mentioned extremely long lines of people wishing every day to be allowed in the courtroom to catch a glimpse of Gillars.³⁵³ Newspapers across the nation filed daily trial updates. Most press reports of the Gillars trial remained neutral in tone, though most articles recounted bizarre outbursts and unusual stories that emerged from the proceedings. At one point, Gillars broke down in tears claiming the indictment violated her constitutional rights before launching into another outburst against President Roosevelt and his “Jewish friends.”³⁵⁴ In another instance, Gillars became violently ill, claiming she had eaten a bad pork chop, and fainted during the proceedings.³⁵⁵

The press reported many such outbursts, comparing her to the dramatic actress she yearned to become when she moved to Germany in the 1930s. Former American prisoners of war also testified for the prosecution in what could be considered some of the most damning testimonies of the trial. One American soldier recounted a visit by Mildred Gillars at a hospital where she interviewed him, promising not to include anything personal in her broadcasts, which

³⁵² Howard Dutkin, *The Washington Post*, “Axis Sally had U.S. passport when ‘stranded’ in Germany,” March 2, 1949, 11. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/152154377/fulltextPDF/4B69232BC49B4A08PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³⁵³ Associated Press, *The Atlanta Constitution*, “‘Axis Sally’ becomes star but cast in role different from dreams,” January 31, 1949, 17. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1534995497/fulltextPDF/11DC1AF3E9B84828PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³⁵⁴ International News Service, *The Atlanta Constitution*, “Axis Sally cries for ‘rights,’” January 28, 1949, 5. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1533180305/fulltextPDF/614830B5B012465CPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³⁵⁵ *The Baltimore Sun*, “‘Axis Sally’ collapses at treason trial” February 9, 1949, 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/216888392/?terms=Axis%2BSally'%2Bcollapses%2Bat%2Btreason%2Btrial>.

she of course immediately did.³⁵⁶ Others testified that Gillars often identified herself as a Red Cross worker to trick them into doing interviews.³⁵⁷

Another more bizarre testimony came from Michael Evanick, a former paratrooper who served time as a prisoner of war in a Paris camp. Mildred Gillars visited him in July 1944 for an interview. Per Evanick, Gillars sat down and opened her legs, without undergarments, and seductively exposed herself to the young man. She then asked him if he felt better being away from the front lines. As the press reported, Evanick quickly responded, “No ma’am. I feel 100% better fighting in the front lines where I get enough to eat.” Gillars became enraged and knocked over the microphone stand.³⁵⁸ This story, which appeared in newspapers across the nation, solidified the legacy of Mildred Gillars as a menacing woman, unstable, and capable of using strong sexual advances to get her way. This fit the femme fatale siren personae perfectly, and set her apart from the other radio sirens.

According to newspaper updates regarding the trial, American POWs occasionally verbally harassed Mildred Gillars as a show of defiance when she visited them for interviews. One U.S. soldier who spent time in a German prison camp remembered a visit from “Axis Sally” where upon her leaving, he and his buddies presented Mildred Gillars with a cigarette carton as a token of their appreciation. Gillars happily opened it only to discover it contained horse manure.

³⁵⁶ Associated Press, *The News-Palladium*, “Untitled article,” January 26, 1949, 13. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/21867987/>

³⁵⁷ *Chicago Daily Tribune*, “2 War vets testify Axis Sally called self a Red Cross aid,” February 8, 1949, 7. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/195830842/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³⁵⁸ Associated Press, *Los Angeles Times*, “Former POW tells of Axis Sally’s try to get him on Nazi broadcast,” February 11, 1949, 9. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/160541737/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

According to testimony, Gillars became enraged and promised the GIs would regret their action.³⁵⁹

Despite the push by veterans to bar her from reentering the U.S., some veterans did publish editorials in support of Gillars, such as one that claimed Axis Sally gave desperate GIs much needed humor and laughs during times of near-endless battle. However, in the editorial, the veteran indicated she broadcast from Rome, so most likely he confused Rita Louisa Zucca for Mildred Gillars.³⁶⁰ Another veteran wrote that Gillars' Axis Sally did more for soldier morale than "any American woman" broadcaster. In addition, as U.S. soldiers existed in a masculine world void of women,

her voice and radio personality were the essence of the femininity which we had left behind. Her musical program was the most pleasing on the air and the propaganda was recognized for what it is.³⁶¹

Many veterans voiced their negative opinions of Gillars, including veterans who had been wounded in combat. One article quoted a veteran stating he hoped Gillars received "the works" when sentencing time came.³⁶² The press reported that some POWs grew to despise Sally, whom they saw as an American willingly aiding the Nazis while those same Nazis tortured and summarily executed prisoners at will.³⁶³

³⁵⁹ United Press, *The Daily Register*, "Ex-commando tells of hate for Axis Sally, tells of camp visit," February 16, 1949, 6.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/8672459/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³⁶⁰ *The Washington Post*, "Axis Sally," January 28, 1949, 24.

³⁶¹ *Los Angeles Times*, "Spare Axis Sally—Pleads veteran," January 31, 1949, A4.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/160531794/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³⁶² *News-Journal*, "Vets want Sally to 'get the works,'" January 31, 1949, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/18767008/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³⁶³ United Press, *The Daily Register*, "Ex-commando tells of hate for Axis Sally, Tells of visit to camp," February 16, 1949, 6.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/8672459/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

The trial ultimately went on for seven weeks. Finally, in mid-March of 1949, both the prosecution and the defense rested their cases, and the jury began deliberations, which lasted fourteen hours. The verdict returned by the jury found Mildred Gillars guilty on one of the eight charges against her, just as it had with Iva Toguri. The guilty charge stemmed from her broadcast, *Vision of Invasion*, which warned of a mass slaughter of American troops should the invasion of France occur. National newspaper editorials across the nation weighed-in on the verdict, some supportive of Gillars, but most offering scathing criticisms of what they considered an American traitor. For example, one paper ran an article claiming that Gillars,

would have gladly pulled the switch that would have destroyed all Americans—if such a thing could have been possible. It should be easy for any American to pull the switch that would end the miserable career of Axis Sally.³⁶⁴

Some articles and editorials discussed the disparity between how men traitors are punished as opposed to women. For example, several editorials referred to the treason cases of Robert Best, Ezra Pound, and Douglass Chandler, who all received life sentences except for Pound, who was committed to an insane asylum. Iva Toguri and Mildred Gillars each received light sentences, and Constance Drexel, another accused female traitor, had her case dismissed entirely.³⁶⁵ One particularly scathing editorial regarding Mildred Gillars claimed she betrayed her country for love of a “Nazi bigshot” and accused her of doing her:

Silly best to wreck the allied war effort, and to bring about the triumph of Nazism throughout the world. If Hitler had won, she would today be enshrined as a minor Nazi goddess.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁴ E.S.W., *The Mexia Daily News*, “Another day,” January 31, 1949, 1.

³⁶⁵ Lewis Wood, *New York Times*, “‘Axis Sally’ tests treason penalty,” February 6, 1949, E4.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/105776834/fulltextPDF/1A2EA441B20E44F4PQ/1?accountid=14472>; See also: *New York Times*, “‘Axis Sally,’” March 11, 1949, 24.

³⁶⁶ *Abilene Reporter-News*, “Axis Sally gets hers,” March 12, 1949, 12.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/44976991/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

Another editorial warned Americans that it would be an “enormous miscarriage of justice” to forget the harm Gillars and her broadcasts attempted to do to the U.S. war effort, even though the Nazis failed at demoralizing servicemen in the process.³⁶⁷ Many articles shared this sentiment, urging Americans to look beyond the defense’s claim that Gillars’ broadcasts did no harm to U.S. troops and focus on the fact that the broadcasts *intended* to do precisely that.

Several articles offered at least some level of defense for Gillars, however. One writer, listed only as Don Quixote, wrote in *The Washington Post* that Americans had become so spineless that a “misguided woman speaking over a German radio” could cause such a stir as to warrant a trial for treason. The author went on to proclaim that:

What a spectacle for the world and the ages! A great nation quakes in the wind of a woman’s voice! Atomic warfare? Pouff. Germ warfare? Pouff again. Axis Sally? Now there’s something terrifying. Why not engage her to teach “our girls” how to charm Russian doughboys over the air and terrify Stalin.³⁶⁸

The author also illustrates how America in the 1940s saw these women, not as serious propagandists but as misguided “gals,” often committing acts of treason for motivations such as love. The press routinely dismissed these women as serious propagandists while at the same time, ironically, lamented over the potential power they wielded over servicemen.

On March 25, 1949, Mildred Gillars received a ten to thirty-year sentence plus a \$10,000 fine. Press reports indicated she, always one for dramatic entrances and exits, took the sentencing without flinching, and she maintained poise as she left the courtroom. The press continued its mostly negative critique of her sentencing with one article claiming her a despicable woman of

³⁶⁷ *The Hartford Courant*, “Axis Sally, traitor,” March 12, 1949, 8.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/561141960/fulltextPDF/5710C89401974D02PQ/3?accountid=14472>.

³⁶⁸ Don Quixote, *The Washington Post*, “Axis Sally,” March 19, 1949, 6.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/152191854/fulltextPDF/DFAE393F9F7B40EAPQ/23?accountid=14472>.

“fatuous posturings.”³⁶⁹ Another editorial described her as an “aging neurotic” who would be in prison long enough not to do any more harm to either the U.S.A. or mankind.³⁷⁰

Like Iva Toguri, Mildred Gillars headed to prison. During her years in prison, however, the press kept the Axis Story alive with occasional articles referring to Gillars, her past, and her days in prison. One article claimed she once hid under a bed while police searched her apartment when in hiding back in Germany.³⁷¹ Another told that authorities moved Gillars from District of Columbia’s Lorton reformatory, a minimum security prison for women because she too often had the “faraway look” in her eyes whenever she approached the unfenced prison boundaries.³⁷² Because of security concerns, officials transferred her to Alderson Federal Women’s Reformatory in West Virginia where she served the remainder of her sentence. Alderson, the article stated, not only had perimeter walls but also bars on the cells. There she occasionally met with Iva Toguri, although whether the two became friends or not is not known.³⁷³ In 1959, Gillars resurfaced in the press again after she rejected her own parole hearing.³⁷⁴ No explanation for Gillars’ action could be found in any press reports.

³⁶⁹ *The Courier-Journal*, “Mildred Gillars failed to catch the vision,” March 27, 1949, Sect. 3, page 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/110852398/?terms=Mildred%2BGillars>

³⁷⁰ *Lubbock Evening Journal*, “The Plainsman says,” April 13, 1949. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/7380965/?terms=Mildred%2BGillars>

³⁷¹ International News Service, *Cumberland Evening Times*, “Assignment: America: Mildred Gillars, U.S. Traitor, once hid from police under bed,” April 18, 1950, 9. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/961164/?terms=Mildred%2BGillars>

³⁷² *The Marysville Tribune*, “Maybe it was the competition from ‘Seoul City Sue,’” August 18, 1950, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/4298965/?terms=Maybe%2Bit%2Bwas%2Bthe%2Bcompetition%2Bfrom%2BSeoul%2BCity%2BSue>.

³⁷³ Both Gillars and Toguri mentioned their prison-time meetings occasionally in interviews later in life. There is no indication the two kept in touch once they served their terms.

³⁷⁴ United Press International, Fred Ferris, *New Castle News*, “‘Axis Sally’ prefers prison,” July 25, 1959, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/47217835/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

Mildred Gillars ultimately served eleven of her ten to thirty-year sentence and was released July 10, 1961. Now 60 years old, she served her sentence mostly at the Alderson reformatory in West Virginia. By all press accounts, she had been a model prisoner, becoming religious, and even served as backup organist for the prison chapel. Gillars' release sparked a new wave of press interest in her continuing story. Journalists often requested interviews, which Gillars mostly declined. She proclaimed in what interviews she did give that she planned to teach music at a convent and live a quiet, respectful life.³⁷⁵ She ultimately taught and lived at the Olentangy River Road School of the Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus in Columbus, Ohio.

According to the press, Gillars showed no repentance after her release, even stating in one interview a short time later that if she had it to do it all over again, she would despite the consequences.³⁷⁶ The press often covered Gillars' refusal to disavow her Nazi past. One newspaper editorial rebuked other papers that published articles sympathetic to Gillars by claiming:

At times, the American press is inclined to go sloppy and shed huge gallonage of maudlin tears over people better left ignored. Over a period of several weeks now, an area metropolitan daily has given the sugar coating treatment to Mildred Gillars, the "Axis Sally" of World War II.

Regarding Gillars' wartime actions, the article went on to state that,

This woman is a traitor pure and simple and deserves no tears, for she was regaled with far more than tears when she was given a mere 15-year sentence for an offense which is punishable by death in wartime if a court so desires.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Associated Press, *The Hartford Courant*, "Axis Sally is set free: Maine Ex-Actress Starred for Hitler," July 9, 1961, 1A.

<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/547480884/fulltextPDF/B1FF074D520A4CC8PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

³⁷⁶ Associated Press, *The Logan Daily news*, "Freed 'Axis Sally' says she would do it all over again," July 12, 1961, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/82356729/?terms=axis%2Bsally>

³⁷⁷ *The Kane Republican*, "No tears for Axis Sally," July 26, 1961, 6.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/50201968/?terms=No%2Btears%2Bfor%2BAxis%2BSally>.

Mildred Gillars never received the kind of journalistic and public reinterpretation Iva Toguri had later in life. As Toguri began receiving more positive and sympathetic press, especially in the run-up to her executive pardon, most articles on Mildred Gillars remained negative through the decades. The main reason for this is the fact that Gillars remained unapologetic for her willing association with Nazi Germany. Secondly, she continued to be the ideal realization of a femme fatale, the Nazi bad girl who had few redeeming qualities and acted in unexplainable, almost neurotic ways. Whereas Rita Louisa Zucca soon became all but forgotten about and Iva Toguri had a quiet, almost endearing quality to her, Gillars' representation in the media remained mostly negative.

As the years wore on, the American press occasionally ran stories on Mildred Gillars. These usually came in the form of “whatever became of” features, which included her new career as a music teacher at the Ohio convent.³⁷⁸ Interviews with convent staff painted a portrait of an older and perhaps wiser Gillars. She seemed well regarded at the convent, but the press mostly portrayed her as an unrepentant traitor. In 1973, a 72-year-old Gillars finally finished her bachelor's degree at Ohio Wesleyan University, the same college she had attended in her youth. Several articles were published about her educational attainment, but Gillars maintained her post-prison policy of rarely granting interviews to the press.

Even into the 1980s, stories appeared in national newspapers updating Americans on the whereabouts of Germany's Axis Sally. Stories of her youth, her years as a propagandist, her prison trial, and even anecdotal accounts from her childhood friends kept her name alive in the American conscious. Ultimately, Mildred Gillars lived into her 80s, dying at the age of 87 on

³⁷⁸ Richard Lamparski, *Detroit Free Press*, “Whatever became of...? Axis Sally,” June 8, 1969, 19A. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/98919670/?terms=Richard%2BLamparski>.

June 25, 1988. The press indicated she died from colon cancer. Gillars received burial in an unmarked grave surrounded by the tombstones of World War II veterans.³⁷⁹ The burial Mildred Gillars received underscored the continued negative reaction the press and Americans had for her. Despite living the final years of her life in relative obscurity, despite her work at a convent with children, Mildred Gillars died as she lived, under the shadow of her Axis Sally legend. She never found redemption in the American press.

Although the life's story of Axis Sally officially came to an end in June of 1988, just as with Tokyo Rose, America's interest in these two women never stopped. Occasionally new bits of information trickle out of the media such as one article from a former acquaintance who proclaimed, quite bizarrely, that Mildred Gillars broadcast for the Nazis to save the life of her fiancé, a German officer who had been imprisoned for vocally opposing Adolf Hitler.³⁸⁰ Whether any truth existed to the story is not known, nor did the identity of this rumored fiancé ever come to light. The story, however, became the only attempt at redeeming the reputation of Mildred Gillars, and it did so, predictably, by holding her devotion for a man as the reason for her treasonous broadcasts. This even though Gillars spent decades defending her work with Nazi Germany and admission to willingly broadcasting as Axis Sally. This also even though she became one of the highest paid broadcasters at Radio Berlin during her tenure as Midge.

Although the apparent anger and rage of editorials is long gone, Gillars is still seen as an unfortunate woman whose ambitions and poor judgment ruined her life and branded her a traitor. One article in 1994, for example, quoted a former Women Army Corps (WAC) officer who once

³⁷⁹ Richard Lucas, "With a sweet kiss from Sally," *World War II* 24, No. 5 (January/February 2010), 51, 49.

³⁸⁰ Mary M. Badders, *Columbus Dispatch*, "Life of 'Axis Sally' changed when she met up with nuns," July 21, 1988, 6A.
<http://infoweb.newsbank.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/resources/doc/nb/news/11B95F2FEC31BC68?p=AMNEWS>.

met Gillars describing her as “a drab, middle-aged woman with long, disheveled hair who had no idea or concern as to the seriousness of her activities.” The woman went on to say that Gillars “was an egomaniac who talked expansively about parties she had attended with her friends, Eva Braun and Adolf Hitler.”³⁸¹ Tying Gillars directly with Hitler further damaged her legacy, which already suffered greatly from her bizarre character and treasonous past. She is the only radio siren to have been directly tied with an Axis leader.

As with several of the other sirens analyzed in this study, Axis Sally often appeared in pop culture references such as several films. For example, Axis Sally’s voice appeared in the 1980 Lee Marvin World War II film, *The Big Red One* where GIs are listening to one of her broadcasts. More recently, the 2008 Spike Lee film, *Miracle at St. Anna* featured a scene where a highly attractive and seductive Axis Sally (presumably Mildred Gillars) addresses a black squad of “Buffalo Soldiers” over a truck-mounted PA system.

After the Second World War, the idea of a female propagandist continued to fascinate Americans and the press. It would not be long, however, before another war would bring yet another female radio siren to the forefront of America’s press. As the U.S. and its wartime allies rebuilt Japan and Germany, The Soviet Union rose as a global super power and a new adversary for Western nations, just as Mildred Gillars constantly warned during her hundreds of Anti-Communist broadcasts. A new balance of global power emerged that would continually pit the U.S. against The Soviet Union in a Cold War lasting well into the late 1980s. As Russian backed North Korea continually became an aggressor over the NATO backed South Korea, the result

³⁸¹ *The Plain Dealer*, “Catherine Samaha, escorted Axis Sally,” December 22, 1994, 9B. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/291658012/F8038C96EC7342FAPQ/1?acountid=14472>.

ultimately became the Korean War. This new war became the first hot war associated with The Cold War.

Conclusion

Mildred Gillars' unconcealed sexuality, uncertain motivation, erratic behavior, and unrepentant nature led to her condemnation by the American mass media more so than her World War II counterparts Iva Toguri and Rita Louisa Zucca. She would be forever portrayed as a traitor, the master manipulator who sold out her country for love and power. Her overtly sexual innuendoes to Allied POWs became fodder for the mass media. Stories of her temperamental nature, especially inside the courtroom, became widely circulated on front pages across the nation. Moreover, her transition from master propagandist to school teacher living in a convent did little to revive her reputation. Whereas Iva Toguri's Tokyo Rose ended up giving mostly harmless chitchat between songs, Gillars' Axis Sally became a truly notorious figure, one that received little redemption throughout the years and one that would often be contrasted with Tokyo Rose.

Unlike Iva Toguri, whose reputation had been tarnished by fictitious stories, false accusations, and misattribution of quotes spoken by a dozen other announcers, only Mildred Gillars and Rita Louisa Zucca were known by the name of Axis Sally, and both women publically recognized it. Gillars stood by her work, even claiming she would have done it all over again. Like Iva Toguri, Gillars also had the misfortune of broadcasting during the heyday of the film noir genre of cinema, where femme fatales became a 20th Century concept known for their dark associations, sexual prowess, and keen ability to lure heroes to their doom.

The media's portrayal of Zucca and Gillars paralleled that of Toguri in many ways. Most importantly, the media diminished their roles as propagandists through sexualizing them. Unlike

with male propagandists, these women were not featured for their intellectual arguments. Instead, the media focused more on their physical appearances, their sexual appeal to U.S. troops, and their associations with male lovers. Their potency as propagandists, according to the media, mattered less in what they said, rather the feminine charms in how they said it.

Ironically, however, Gillars propaganda broadcasts were not effective in damaging U.S. troop morale. Whereas Toguri worked to produce innocuous and harmless banter between musical selections, Mildred Gillars actively tried to demoralize troops and diminish female support for the war effort on the home front by addressing them directly numerous times in her broadcasts. No evidence suggests either of these two goals were met through Gillars' propaganda efforts.

As for how coverage of Gillars and Zucca changed over time, Zucca's broadcasting tenure did not last long enough to draw any conclusions. She received press coverage, but not nearly as much as Gillars. If anything, she is remembered only as part of the Axis Sally legend, as she rarely received press coverage outside of that capacity. Since she never stood trial in the U.S. for treason, her name has mostly been forgotten. To most people, however, Mildred Gillars was *the* Axis Sally. Yet the American media did not vary too greatly in how it covered her. Whereas changing national sentiments altered the tone of Iva Toguri coverage, Mildred Gillars would forever be marked as a Hitler aid, the popular voice of Radio Berlin, and a dark woman with mysterious motivations.

The United States did attempt to field an answer to Axis Sally in the form of an Allied propagandist, except this broadcaster did not aim her programs to U.S. servicemen, she broadcast specifically to Wehrmacht soldiers in German. Known only as Margaret, the Germans called her the "Amerikanische Glamour Girl." Margaret broadcast fifteen minute daily broadcasts to

German soldiers while disseminating American propaganda. Known for her jokes, Margaret attempted to woo Wehrmacht soldiers with the same soft, seductive approach as Nazi sirens did to U.S. soldiers.³⁸²

In many ways, Mildred Gillars is remembered much the same as Leni Riefenstahl has been. Until her death, Riefenstahl still battled negative press regarding her association with The Third Reich as a documentary filmmaker. Many parallels can be drawn between the lives of Riefenstahl and Gillars. Both were dancers, both failed to make superstardom as entertainers, and both did audio/visual work for the Nazis. Both lived the remainder of their lives being associated with their femme fatale alter egos (Axis Sally and The Devil's Filmmaker).³⁸³

³⁸² Joseph Israels II, *Collier's Weekly*, "The Wehrmacht's Yankee girl friend," March 3, 1945, 68. <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Colliers-1945mar03-00068>.

³⁸³ Leni Riefenstahl produced several documentary films for the Nazi Party, mostly surrounding Nuremburg rallies. Until her death, Riefenstahl battled a hawkish press and endless attacks on her character for becoming allied with Hitler. She was often referred to as The Devil's Filmmaker.

CHAPTER 5 THE SIREN OF RADIO PYONGYANG

Background

The tragic story of Tokyo Rose involved a young woman, caught in a dire set of circumstances, many beyond her control. The story of Axis Sally involved two women who committed willful acts of treason either for love or power. The story of Seoul City Sue is the most mysterious. She never received the amount of press coverage as her predecessors and her Vietnamese successor, Hanoi Hannah. Her tenure as an enemy short-wave radio propagandist lasted roughly only a month in the summer of 1950 during the onset of The Korean War. The American press mostly chided her performance as lackluster and lampooned her. Although U.S. soldiers and airmen listened to her, she never achieved the popularity that Tokyo Rose did. And before the summer ended, she vanished without a trace.

Many discrepancies existed in the wide coverage of Ann Wallace Suhr's life, making her an enigma not only to the press but to the soldiers who regularly listened to her. According to historian and Korean War researcher Paul Edwards, Ann Wallace Suhr "was just a small-town girl from Arkansas" who managed to leave "her mark on the Korean War as few others have."³⁸⁴ Edwards' words are especially profound when one considers the brief time during the three-year duration of the Korean War that Seoul City Sue existed. Conflicting accounts of her past and various associations blur her background considerably. Her life held as much mystery as, and if not more than, her short broadcasting career with Radio Pyongyang.

³⁸⁴ Paul Edwards, *Unusual footnotes*.

As more information came in regarding her background, the more mysterious a figure Ann Wallis Suhr became. Most contemporary sources on Suhr's life agree she was born in 1900 in Smithville, Arkansas, and was the oldest of six children. Edwards states that her parents died when she was a child, and she lived with one of her sisters in Oklahoma. Suhr later attended Southeastern State Teachers College (later renamed Southeastern Oklahoma State University) and eventually transferred to Scarritt College for Christian Workers, a Methodist college in Nashville, Tennessee, where she graduated in 1930. She soon found herself accepting a missionary position through the Southern Methodist Conference to serve in Korea as a teacher at a Methodist school. However, tightening restrictions by the Japanese government regarding foreign missionaries eventually led to Suhr's leaving Korea for Shanghai in 1938 to work for the Shanghai American School, China's largest international academic institution.

Here Suhr met and soon married Suh Kyoon Chul, who worked at the school as an administrator and known to have leftist political leanings.³⁸⁵ The marriage to a foreign national coupled with Suhr's living with him in his native country cost her American citizenship. Around 1939, Suhr tried to regain citizenship as well as an American passport for her husband, but the 1924 Immigration Act stymied her attempts. Also known as the Johnson-Reed Act, it put quotas and limits on immigrants from various nationalities from attaining entry into the United States. Ironically, the act excluded Asians from entering the U.S. to attain citizenship, especially ones of Japanese ancestry or origin.³⁸⁶

Paul Edwards writes that Suhr and her husband moved back to Korea because of not

³⁸⁵ A brief timeline of Ann Wallace Suhr's life can be found at <http://www.spokeo.com/Seoul+City+Sue+1>.

³⁸⁶ More information on the 1924 Immigration Act can be found here: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act>.

being able to return to the United States.³⁸⁷ Various press reports indicate that the couple may have remained in China. Although the details of Suhr's whereabouts around this time are somewhat sketchy, most American missionaries were leaving Korea as increased Japanese pressure on foreign workers coupled with worsening relations with Washington compelled them to do so. One article listed that she and her husband went to Shanghai in 1942 and,

Was interned by the Japanese after she had refused to leave her husband. When she was released she refused to return to the United States and registered as a Korean. She joined her husband in Seoul in 1946.³⁸⁸

According to Edwards, Suhr and her coworkers were interned by the Japanese after the invasion of Shanghai in the Chapei Civilian Relocation Center. Edwards notes that the Japanese used the relocation center to intern "foreign nationals of enemy countries." Her husband, being a Korean nationalist and not of American origin, did not receive internment. Suhr eventually rejoined her husband in Korea after the war, and according to Edwards, might have been swayed by his Communist leanings in the time prior to North Korea's invasion of Seoul. In fact, Edwards purports that Ann Wallace Suhr and her husband pledged loyalty to the North Korean government on July 10, 1950, just prior to the invasion. Interestingly, a newspaper article from October of 1950 stated that Suhr and her husband also pledged allegiance to Japan to remain in Korea shortly after the December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor.³⁸⁹ Most likely Dr. Lee Soo helped Suhr become involved with the Korean Broadcasting System.

³⁸⁷ This may be an error in Edwards' e-book, as a few paragraphs down he indicates the couple decided to remain in Shanghai.

³⁸⁸ Associated Press, *The Fresno Bee*, "Red radio's Seoul City Sue is identified as ExAmerican," March 9, 1952, 5B.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/25808571/?terms=Red%2Bradio's%2BSeoul%2BCity%2BSue%2Bis%2Bidentified%2Bas%2BExAmerican>

³⁸⁹ United Press, *The Mexia Daily News*, "Evidence mounts Ex-American is 'Seoul City Sue,'" October 3, 1950, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/10991807/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

Regardless of the truth behind the life of Ann Wallace Suhr, conflicting information regarding her past only added to the mystery. Rampant media speculation during the Korean War regarding where she hailed from painted her as an average mid-western American girl from a relatively stable middle class family. Her work associated with the Methodist church and children offered no hints as to why she ultimately became an enemy propagandist. The more the media revealed about Ann Wallace Suhr, the stranger the story of Seoul City Sue became. The background story of Mildred Gillars, for example, made sense, as she had been an emotionally unstable young woman with visions of becoming a famous entertainer. When this did not transpire, she found fame and notoriety as a Nazi propagandist. Iva Toguri had been stranded in wartime Japan and forced to work at Radio Tokyo to survive. With Ann Wallace Suhr, her past held no clues as to her eventual outcome.

The War Years

On June 25, 1950, ten divisions of Chinese backed North Korean troops poured over the divisionary line known as the 38th Parallel and began pushing South. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) had as its goal a reunification of North and South, separated after the end of World War II to divide communist held territory from the Republic of Korea (South Korea). The Truman administration, and thus the United Nations, quickly responded with a large military mobilization to confront the advancing North Koreans in what became known as The Korean War. The first U.S. combat unit to arrive was an advance force of the U.S. Army's 24th Infantry Division, known for their taro leaf identification badges. The 24th entered Korea ill-equipped and understrength to face the advancing North Korean army, which itself was supplied with Russian T-34 tanks and heavy artillery. Heavy fighting ensued resulting in large numbers of casualties on both sides. At one point, the 24th Division withstood almost nine hours against

three overwhelming North Korean divisions around the city of Osan in South Korea. Although the 24th slowed the enemy's advance, it sustained heavy losses and had to withdraw South to be resupplied and reinforced. The battered but strengthened 24th Division continued to engage enemy forces while other U.S. divisions such as the 25th and 1st Cavalry could arrive and join the fight.³⁹⁰

As fighting intensified, so did propaganda coming from Radio Pyongyang, the radio propaganda arm of the North Korean government. No sooner than the conflict began did Radio Pyongyang flood the airwaves with attempts to diminish the morale of U.S. forces. Overall, North Korean radio propaganda tactics resembled that of Radio Tokyo from the previous war. However, Radio Pyongyang, being controlled by a Russian-backed Communist government, did not regularly play popular American music of the day and relied more on diatribes and longwinded soliloquies to fill airtime.

Although the actual date is disputed, most probably on the evening of August 8, a little over a month following the beginning of hostilities, a different program came over the airwaves.³⁹¹ The program, heard on 890 kilocycles of the short-wave dial, began with a selection of martial music followed by a female propagandist who began by proclaiming "This is the true voice of the Korean people's government."³⁹² Another person heard that evening, a male, belonged to what the press reported as an "easily recognized" voice of an "American major who

³⁹⁰ A timeline of the Korean War along with statistics can be found at: http://www.koreanwar-educator.org/topics/brief/brief_history_pacific_stars_stripes.htm.

³⁹¹ Some news reports actually said the evening of August 7. The correct date is in dispute.

³⁹² *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "'Sue' no match for Rose, Sally," August 11, 1950, 5.

appeared to be broadcasting for the North Koreans under stress.”³⁹³ Although reports did not identify the major, the 558th Military Police Company quickly assigned the unidentified female propagandist a name. They called her Seoul City Sue. Where the 558th originated, the name may not be clearly known, but it is very possible it came from a popular song crafted by GIs fascinated with Korean cuisine and culture, especially the national dish of Korea: kimchee. Derived from the popular tune of *Sioux City Sue*, soldiers in Army clubs in 1950 would occasionally sing:

Seoul City Sue,
Seoul City Sue,
Nothing smells of kimshi
Like my Seoul City Sue.

According to historian Paul Edwards, the 317th Fighter Intercept Squadron would later fashion a similar song about Seoul City Sue with the lyrics:

Seoul City Sue, Seoul City Sue
Your hair is black, your eyes are too
I'd swap my honey-cart for you
Seoul City Sue, Seoul City Sue
No one smells of kimchee
Like my sweet Seoul City Sue³⁹⁴

Seoul City Sue's program ran about half an hour, and she quickly admonished U.S. troops for what she perceived as war crimes against the civilians of Korea. The print media immediately compared her to Tokyo Rose. In fact, several newspapers branded her the “Red Korean ‘Tokyo Rose.’” The papers quickly cited her excellent command of the English language and her slight, as-yet undefined accent. Sue's initial broadcasts established her as an ardent anti-Americanist, more in the vein of Axis Sally than the more innocuous and humorous Tokyo Rose.

³⁹³ United Press, *Dunkirk Evening Observer*, “Seoul City Sue broadcasts as Tokyo Rose did,” August 8, 1950, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/56350256/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

³⁹⁴ Paul Edwards, *Unusual footnotes to the Korean War*, (Osprey Publishing, 2013).

She chided U.S. troops for “promiscuous bombing of schools and strafing of farmers.”³⁹⁵ In what several papers described as her “honeyed tones,” she urged American forces to “return to your corner ice cream stores in the states.”³⁹⁶ *The New York Times* reported that:

Her voice drones doggedly through page after page of a detailed accounting of the number of bombs dropped, civilians killed and injured, with occasional references to “American imperialists” and “Wall Street invaders.” Unlike Tokyo Rose in World War II, she offers no music, no entertainment, no suggestions that the G.I.’s quit. She sounds bored.³⁹⁷

Another article chided Sue’s inability to affect soldier morale not only because of her lackluster performance as a propagandist but because America’s soldiers,

Have been brought up in a tradition of free speech, free press, free worship. We don’t have to shield them from the wiles of a thousand Seoul City Sues; they are quite capable of judging for themselves.³⁹⁸

Perhaps because World War II’s radio sirens had failed to demoralize U.S. troops, the media figured Seoul City Sue would fare no better in Korea. This radio siren did not employ popular American music to keep the attention of servicemen. Although the propaganda she broadcast sounded reminiscent of Axis Sally, her value as an entertainer certainly paled in comparison to her predecessors.

These quotes reveal the tone of coverage the American media would take for Seoul City Sue. Gone was the novelty factor that had been so prevalent with coverage of Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally. Seoul City Sue represented a continued enemy tactic of fielding attractive sounding female voices against U.S. forces. As before, Sue’s propaganda would be described in terms of

³⁹⁵ Associated Press, *The Portsmouth Herald*, “‘Seoul City Sue’ emerges as Tokyo Rose of Korea,” August 8, 1950, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/56545980/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ *New York Times*, “Missionaries say ‘Seoul City Sue’ is Ann Suhr, U.S. wife of Korean,” August 28, 1950, 3. Accessed online at <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>.

³⁹⁸ *Abilene Reporter-News*, “They hear Seoul City,” August 20, 1950, 18.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/45040303/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

her sexuality, identity, and possible appearance, and the media had yet another radio siren of mysterious origin to cover, a point of interest to American readers stateside. In place of novelty, the tone of coverage for Seoul City Sue consisted of nostalgia. Soldiers in Korea enjoyed Sue's broadcasts for many reasons including the fact that as in the past war, they had their own radio siren. Combat veterans of World War II serving in Korea reminisced about hearing Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, and new soldiers enjoyed the experience of listening to such propaganda for the first time. Coverage maintained a nostalgic tone for the entertaining days of Tokyo Rose throughout Seoul City Sue's broadcasting tenure, yet it remained sarcastically condescending at the same time. The press wrote amusing pieces on how the GIs of Korea needed their own version of Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally. One paper satirically declared that:

It must have been like old times to members of the MP company who picked up the first broadcast from north of the border to hear a sultry-voiced gal urging them to go back to their ice cream stores.³⁹⁹

In the opening week of Seoul City Sue's rather short broadcasting tenure with Radio Pyongyang, American newspapers concentrated on two main themes: the likeness to her predecessors, and the mystery of her identity. Tokyo Rose still resided in the public consciousness, as the previous fall Iva Toguri had been sentenced and convicted to ten years in prison for her propaganda activities with Radio Tokyo. American journalists seemed somewhat intrigued with this Korean version of "Tokyo Rose." As to her identity, it quickly became suspected that Seoul City Sue could be an American missionary "broadcasting at the point of a pistol," while being detained in Communist-held Seoul.⁴⁰⁰ The slight accent, the press soon reported, sounded mid-western. The woman's name and how she ended up broadcasting for

³⁹⁹ *The Portsmouth Herald*, "Seoul City Sue," August 16, 1950, 4.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/56549374/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁰⁰ United Press, *The News-Herald*, "'Seoul City Sue' airs propaganda," August 8, 1950, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/53455189/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

Radio Pyongyang in Seoul remained a mystery.

Sue's radio program ran from 9:30 to 10:15 each evening and featured little to no music. As with the initial broadcast, Sue mainly lamented American atrocities against Korean civilians and what she referred to as indiscriminate bombing campaigns by the U.S. Air Force. Two days into her broadcasts, the press began critiquing her work in comparison to her World War II predecessors. One article proclaimed that "'Seoul City Sue' has made her debut on the North Korean propaganda airwaves, and American GI's agreed she was a flop, compared to the sugary-voiced 'Tokyo Rose' of World War II."⁴⁰¹ Press coverage seemed to delight that this latest radio siren lacked the widespread popularity as Tokyo Rose. Her scathing criticism of American and United Nations servicemen combined with biting commentary of U.S. foreign policy placed her propaganda closer to Axis Sally than Tokyo Rose, whose innocent flirtation, popular music, and occasional school girl giggle greatly pleased troops. The American press wrote about this in detail, all designed to diminish her as a propagandist.

At least one article referred to her repeatedly as "Korean Katie," a lesser used name for Seoul City Sue also crafted by American GIs. According to the article, "Katie" seemed less interested in damaging American morale "as Tokyo Rose did with references to wives, sweethearts, cold beer and other comforts not found on battle fields."⁴⁰² Rather she seemed to concentrate "on reporting the alleged anger of church-going Koreans over the bombing of churches" while repeating the suggestion that American GIs should leave Korea and go back to their ice cream parlors.⁴⁰³ The "ice cream parlor" quote found its way in countless articles

⁴⁰¹ United Press, *The Baytown Sun*, "'Seoul City Sue' is a flop," August 10, 1950, 13. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/8239518/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁰² The author might have confused the tactics of Axis Sally with Tokyo Rose, as Iva Toguri's broadcasts were often humorous and not disruptive to morale.

⁴⁰³ Ibid.

regarding Seoul City Sue as it illustrated the quality of her propaganda broadcasts that sometimes came across more novice than skillfully crafted. North Korea did not have the large propaganda infrastructure as did Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. Often her arguments came across somewhat laughable, which probably did more to keep servicemen interested in the absence of popular music. As for the lack of music, another article mentioned that Seoul City Sue would need “a stack of the latest phonograph records from the USA before she can earn the hooper-rating⁴⁰⁴ Rose had throughout the Pacific War.”⁴⁰⁵ Another paper jokingly predicted that Seoul City Sue’s story would end up like Iva Toguri’s—a publically followed treason trial.⁴⁰⁶ In short, both the GIs and the press complained that Seoul City Sue, whoever she was, simply talked too much, didn’t play enough hit music, and came off as much too serious.

As with Sue’s predecessors, the sexual, alluring quality of her voice made headlines across the nation. The article predicted that the “slick-tongued Sue” would ultimately do little harm to GI morale and that the only significance to her broadcasting would be that “a new personality now joins the ranks of real and imaginary war-born characters.” This passage was an obvious reference to Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, all of whom the American media recognized Seoul City Sue as the successor of. Passages such as Seoul City Sue having “crawled out of the woodwork in North Korea” while “broadcasting to the Yanks some of the same tripe put out by Tokyo Rose during the last scrap” were common in August of 1950.⁴⁰⁷ With the novelty of covering a radio siren gone, the American press mostly produced scathing articles with some

⁴⁰⁴ The C.E. Hooper Company measured radio ratings during the “Golden Age” of the broadcasting industry. A.C. Nielsen acquired the company in 1950.

⁴⁰⁵ United Press, *The Waco News-Tribune*, “Seoul City Sue is total flop,” August 9, 1950, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/47933161/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁰⁶ *The New York Times*, “Seoul City Sue,” August 16, 1950, 28. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>

⁴⁰⁷ *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, “Seoul City Sue,” August 10, 1950, 8. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/23722162/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

journalists continuing with the nostalgic theme. The same article added that as Tokyo Rose provided humor and good music for U.S. troops during World War II, troops in Korea should expect the same from Sue. The GIs as well as the American press, in a way, seemed to be disappointed by Seoul City Sue's program, as they expected another humorous and sexy sounding female playing catchy tunes to break the boredom of military life.

One of the biggest criticisms found in early press coverage of Sue's broadcasts regarded how her program compared to *The Zero Hour* in terms of effect on soldiers' morale and entertainment value she provided. Speaking in terms of her sex appeal, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* proclaimed that even though "Korean Communists have introduced sex into their radio propaganda," Seoul City Sue's appeal on soldiers could not compare to that of Tokyo Rose. As Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally used their "honey voices" to appeal to the soldiers' and airman's domestic concerns such as the faithfulness of girlfriends and wives during their absences, Sue preferred instead to:

Give them statistics on communist production and election of "people's officers." She tells them about "American imperialists" and "American atrocities" and how the people's army is marching to victory.⁴⁰⁸

Ironically, articles such as this illustrated the media's seeming disappointment with Sue's propaganda style, as it did not attempt to place entertainment ahead of persuasion as did Tokyo Rose. The press seemed to lament that this radio siren was less sultry and sexually alluring than her predecessors. The irony in how the press covered Seoul City Sue was that journalists criticized her for not continuing with the same radio siren qualities that Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally were constantly excoriated for. Sue did not live up to the infamous standards her

⁴⁰⁸ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "'Sue' no match for Rose, Sally," August 11, 1950, 5.

predecessors set.⁴⁰⁹

Perhaps the most damning press criticism of Seoul City Sue's program regarded her unpolished broadcasting style and apparent difficulty in delivery. *The Pacific Stars and Stripes*, among others, criticized Sue for her flat delivery and amateurish inflections in presenting.

According to the article:

Apparently she doesn't see the script very long before she goes on the air because she makes many mistakes reading and sometimes has to go back and start a sentence or paragraph over.⁴¹⁰

The fact that Seoul City Sue's delivery style seemed to be somewhat erratic and contrived led some early on to believe she broadcasted against her will. As with Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, the media sought to find a justifiable reason why a young woman would commit treason.

Another article lamented that Seoul City Sue's talents were wasted on substandard scripts and lack of popular music. In fact, the article adds,

The quick and keen sense of humor and perspective which produced this tolerantly amused nickname for their siren-voiced broadcaster is assurance that any effect of their blandishments will be opposite from that intended by the reds.⁴¹¹

Most press coverage of the first few broadcasts acknowledged the sexual appeal of her voice, but the quality of her propaganda efforts paled in comparison to what GIs, sailors, airmen, and Marines enjoyed previously.

⁴⁰⁹ Seoul City Sue also monitored American armed forces short-wave radio broadcasts for material in her daily soliloquies. For example, one newspaper article criticized Sue's radio broadcasts and referenced an instance where she admitted to listening to popular sports broadcaster Sgt. Rollie Rowland's regular program. On Rowland's August 21 program, he personally responded to his famous listener by stating, "And now here is a special message for Seoul City Sue." Sgt. Rowland then followed the acknowledgement with a Bronx cheer in the form of a pronounced "Phffitt!"; Source: *Los Angeles Times*, "'Seoul City Sue' gets loud 'pffft'", August 22, 1950, 5. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>

⁴¹⁰ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "'Sue' no match," 5.

⁴¹¹ *The Terre Haute Tribune*, "Seoul City Sue," August 13, 1950, 4.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/85073529/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

Two important points need to be made regarding how the American print media covered Seoul City Sue. First and foremost, the media recognized the fact that with Sue, Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally were not just isolated oddities in radio propaganda history. Employing females in troop-oriented broadcasting now became a trend. Secondly, comparing Seoul City Sue to her predecessors stressed the futility in such tactics against American forces. Radio sirens from World War II had failed to effectively demoralize American troops, and Seoul City Sue surely would fail likewise, especially with her inherent deficiencies such as novice broadcasting skills and lack of entertaining musical selections. The media stressed these deficiencies with regularity.

As mid-August approached, fighting intensified as U.S. and NATO forces continued to slow, and in many cases, reverse the North Korean advance into South Korea. Until now, the U.S. continued fighting a defensive action; its main goal to push the Communists out of South Korea. Aided by other Army divisions including the 25th Infantry Division and select Marine detachments, the battered but still effective 24th repelled enemy troops from the Naktong Perimeter, a 140-mile long defensive line near the Southeastern edge of the Korean Peninsula.⁴¹² The battle lasted ten days from August 8 to the 18th and became known as the First Battle of Naktong Bulge.

As fighting increased, American forces gained the upper hand on the battlefield for the first time. The resupply of U.S. forces included mechanized units capable of destroying Russian T-34 tanks, which forced the American withdrawal in the onset of hostilities. On August 14, combined air assaults from the U.S. Air Force and Navy attacked targets inside Communist held Seoul. Carrier based aircraft destroyed ships in ports, locomotives, fuel trains, and parked North

⁴¹² More information including a timeline can be found at:
<http://www.history.army.mil/reference/Korea/kw-chrono.htm>.

Korean Yak fighters at Seoul's Kimpo airfield.⁴¹³ A night raid of B-26 Marauder bombers from the 5th U.S. Air Force found and destroyed the Radio Pyongyang transmitter tower with 200-pound fragmentation bombs. The resulting raid temporarily halted Seoul City Sue's nightly broadcasts. The raid occurred around nine o'clock in the evening, shortly before Sue took to the air.⁴¹⁴ The 50,000-watt transmitter Radio Pyongyang used for her broadcasts was, ironically, a repurposed Japanese short-wave propaganda station in World War II.⁴¹⁵

The media's coverage of the bombing resembled its coverage of the Air Force's attempts to knock out Tokyo Rose's transmission tower. Such raids entertained American audiences and increased troop morale as it reminded enemy nations that their propaganda centers were never out of the reach of the U.S. military. The night raid on August 14 somewhat renewed sagging interest in Seoul City Sue with newspapers immediately reporting the incident. Headlines like "Seoul City Sue Blasted Off Air"⁴¹⁶ littered the front pages of American newspapers across the nation. Quickly the details came in. A few days after the night raid, the press reported that an Air Force bomber crew, annoyed by Sue's propaganda broadcasts, took it upon themselves to locate and destroy Radio Pyongyang's transmission tower. Air Force Lt. Bud Galligher, navigator Lt. Ted Keesler, and gunner Sgt. Oscar Berg received credit for the tower's destruction. One paper quipped that the bombing was "the most explosive response a radio program has ever received from a listener. In fact," the paper added, "that's Sue's only chance of getting on the 'Hit

⁴¹³ United Press, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, "Tiny Tim rocket makes deadly bow to enemy," August 14, 1950, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/52900381/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴¹⁴ United Press, *Los Angeles Times*, "Bomb blasts 'Seoul City Sue' off air," August 14, 1950, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/160780180/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴¹⁵ The accompanying photo showed the destroyed remains of the broadcast building nestled between two large radio towers. *News-Journal*, "The voice of 'Seoul City Sue,'" August 16, 1950, 17. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/18917444/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴¹⁶ United Press, *Detroit Free Press*, "Seoul City Sue blasted off air," August 14, 1950, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/97428600/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

Parade.”⁴¹⁷

As Sue’s broadcasts berating the Army and Air Force continued, the First Cavalry Division introduced on August 21 a network of three radio stations designed to offer competing entertainment to American military forces by giving them “world and local news, hillbilly and swing music.”⁴¹⁸ The network would broadcast prior to Sue’s scheduled time and offer soldiers and airmen alternatives to Sue, who according to the article, “prefers to hew to the ponderous prose of Marxist dialectics instead of dishing up a generous helping of sex and music as her more sophisticated sisters used to do.”⁴¹⁹ The author went on to add that occasionally Sue’s broadcast would temporarily go out whenever air raid sirens rang out in Seoul, a sign that America’s effort against the North Koreans increasingly became an offensive one. In fact, taking back Seoul from the Communist North Koreans became the priority of many American GIs, even more so than pushing the Communists back across the 38th Parallel. One of the top reasons, according to one newspaper article, was that Seoul City Sue broadcast from there.⁴²⁰ Although servicemen enjoyed her broadcasts, they wanted to liberate Seoul from the North Koreans and catch Seoul City Sue. Not only did they yearn to see the woman behind the charming voice, they wanted to bring the war to a quick end. She had become the voice of the enemy, much as Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally had been.

In late August, North Korean forces attempted to flank the U.S. military in what was perhaps their heaviest offensive action of the war. Among U.S. forces involved in halting their

⁴¹⁷ *Janesville Daily Gazette*, “Radio chatter,” August 24, 1950, 12.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/10709768/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴¹⁸ United Press, *The Hartford Courant*, “American radios to compete with ‘Seoul City Sue,’” August 21, 1950, 4. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰ *The Atlanta Constitution*, “GIs in Korea have battle hymn—get back at ‘Seoul City Sue,’” August 26, 1950, 5. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>

advance and defending the Pusan Perimeter was the venerable 24th Division, which along with the First Cavalry among others, repelled the Korean advance. Fighting from the first of September through the 15th would become known as the Second Battle of Naktong Bulge.

The Woman Behind the Name

As with Iva Toguri, Rita Louisa Zucca, and Mildred Gillars before her, the press speculated greatly on the identity of Seoul City Sue. By mid-August, U.S. Army intelligence regarded Sue as a missionary from the United States, most probably from the Midwest, and perhaps even an American citizen based upon her excellent command of the English language. But not until around late August of 1950 did possible names began floating around the press.

General Douglas MacArthur issued a statement on August 25 regarding the possible identity of Seoul City Sue. Based on a Chinese Central News Agency report, MacArthur proclaimed that Sue was an American married to a Korean citizen and might have left the Southern United States around 1930 after she got married. The Chinese report identified Seoul City Sue as simply *Mrs. Sou*.⁴²¹ The report also claimed that “Mrs. Sou” previously taught Korean students English at a U.S. embassy in Seoul, and she might have also been a secretary for a Methodist missionary there. The same report indicated that the North Korean Communists might be forcing Seoul City Sue to broadcast for Radio Pyongyang, and that her life as well as her husband’s might be in danger. Based upon a rough description, Sue was around “40 and 45, about 5 feet 4 inches tall, with dark red hair.”⁴²² The report also mentioned Sue’s husband, later identified as Suh Kyoon Chul, had previously faced accusations of having Communist leanings. One newspaper article cited that Sue’s husband worked in the newspaper industry and previously

⁴²¹ United Press, *Los Angeles Times*, “Seoul City Sue U.S. citizen, Chinese report,” August 25, 1950, 2.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/160972182/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴²² Ibid.

signed a document swearing that he had no Communist ties. The article added that such public denial would most likely made him “highly unpopular in the Communist regime and his wife was probably forced to make the broadcasts.”⁴²³

The American press overwhelmingly reported that Seoul City Sue most likely broadcasted unwillingly, and on August 28, her identity finally became known. Newspapers reported that representatives from the Methodist Missionary Organization based in Tokyo identified the voice heard over Radio Pyongyang as Ann Wallace Suhr.⁴²⁴ According to several articles released that day, Ann Wallace Suhr’s sister-in-law, Suh Kyu Hyun, also identified her and reinforced the notion that the propagandist had been compelled to broadcast for the North Koreans. Hyun claimed that when the Communists invaded Seoul, Ann Wallace Suhr and her husband had been living with her. The North Koreans, per Hyun, treated Suhr “rough,” questioned her “intensely,” and forced her to leave.⁴²⁵ Another article quoted Hyun defending Suhr by stating the Communists,

Took her and her husband to the Seoul radio station downtown and I saw her only a few times after that. When I did see her she did not have much to say and looked very worn, as if she had been under a strain.⁴²⁶

One unnamed informant, however, would eventually float the idea that Suhr broadcast for the North Koreans not out of coercion but due to her “unfailing fidelity” to her husband, who by

⁴²³ *European Stars and Stripes*, “Army HQ identifies ‘Seoul City Sue’ as American woman,” August 26, 1950, 3.

⁴²⁴ Other spellings of her name include Ann Wallis Suhr and Anna Wallis Suh.

⁴²⁵ *The Circleville Herald*, “Eldery American missionary said to be ‘Seoul City Sue,’” October 3, 1950, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/89406541/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴²⁶ International News Service, *Tyrone Daily Herald*, “‘Seoul City Sue’ is identified as U.S. missionary” October 4, 1950, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/13290537/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

1950 joined ranks with the Communist Party.⁴²⁷ This assertion resembled the Axis Sally saga whereas Mildred Gillars claimed to have committed treason out of love. American women in the 1940s and 1950s did not have the agency to be possible traitors without being coerced or tricked into it by a man. The most commonly explored culprit behind the actions of these women remained hopeless devotion to men associated with the enemy. Felipe d'Aquino, Dr. Otto Koischwitz, and Suh Kyoong Chul all had rumored or proven association with the propaganda organizations their wives worked for.

Quickly, more information regarding Seoul City Sue and her background came forward in the American press. Others beside Suh Kyu Hyun presented testimonials in the American press regarding Ann Wallace Suhr, including a close friend from San Antonio. According to the article, Suhr's friend remembered her as "strongly idealistic" and "bitterly opposed to Communism."⁴²⁸ Other people came forward in the press including the man who allegedly outed Suhr's identity, an English professor named Lee In Soo. Suhr's own sister, identified only as L.L. Battles,⁴²⁹ also commented publically that Suhr was Seoul City Sue, and that she most likely broadcast against her will to save her own life and that of her husband.⁴³⁰ The descriptions of Ann Wallace Suhr included the fact that she once lived in China, was a secretary, a missionary, and that she somehow lost U.S. citizenship prior to moving to Korea. Some articles claimed American investigators searched her and her husband's house and found large quantities of

⁴²⁷ Bill Shinn, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "Seoul City Sue off Communist airways," March 10, 1952, 7.

⁴²⁸ United Press, *The Bonham Daily Favorite*, "Friend of Seoul City Sue denies she's Communist," October 4, 1950, 10.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/43370292/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴²⁹ Some articles listed her as L.F. Battles.

⁴³⁰ United Press, *The Capital*, "Seoul City Sue American-born ex-missionary, says intelligence," October 4, 1950, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/38577486/?terms=Seoul%2BCity%2BSue%2BAmerican-born%2Bex-missionary%2C%2Bsays%2Bintelligence>

printed Communist propaganda and various drafts of radio scripts, presumably to be used on her radio program.⁴³¹ The same sources indicated that the charge of treason most likely could not be “substantiated in any court” due to Suhr, for whatever reason, having lost her American citizenship.⁴³² As with Rita Louisa Zucca, she could not be extradited to the U.S. once caught. News reports varied in facts such as Suhr’s birthplace, with some articles claiming she hailed from Uvalde, Texas,⁴³³ while others claimed Smithville, Arkansas;⁴³⁴ Holdenville, Oklahoma;⁴³⁵ and Jessup, Arkansas.⁴³⁶ Reports indicated she lived in Arabia and was interned by the Japanese for eight months during WWII before moving to Korea with her husband. None of these articles, however, offered any other compelling reasons why Suhr would betray her country other than devotion to Suh Kyoon Chul. The reports were so varied, however, that very few conclusions could be drawn regarding Suhr and her association with the Communist North Korean regime. Seoul City Sue remained as mysterious in August of 1950 as she had been at the outset of her first broadcast.

Interestingly, most of the people interviewed for these articles spoke on Suhr’s behalf, including the pastor’s wife of a Holdenville, Oklahoma, Methodist church who claimed Suhr could never be disloyal to the U.S. Suhr’s sister, Mrs. Battles, claimed she and her husband ended up in Seoul because he could not abandon “his school for homeless boys” when the

⁴³¹ Ibid, 2.

⁴³² *Broadcasting*, “‘Seoul City Sue’ tentatively identified,” October 9, 1950, 33.
<http://mediahistoryproject.org/collections/>

⁴³³ *The Des Moines Register*, “‘Seoul City Sue,’” November 5, 1950, 10-X.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/128170759/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴³⁴ *Times Herald*, “Woman believes ‘Seoul City Sue,’ is her sister” August 30, 1950, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/41435042/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴³⁵ *Kingsport News*, “‘Seoul City Sue’??” September 2, 1950, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/68779612/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴³⁶ International News Service, *The Mount Pleasant News*, “‘Seoul City Sue’ remembered as beautiful girl” October 3, 1950, 3.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/30282384/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

Communists invaded. According to Battles, Suhr's husband devoted "all his time to the home for indigent boys."⁴³⁷ As the details regarding the background of Ann Wallace Suhr emerged, a more perplexing picture of the Seoul City Sue mystery came to light.

September 1950 began with the press circulating the first two images reportedly of Ann Wallace Suhr. Grainy photographs of an attractive, dark-headed Korean woman, for the first time, gave U.S. soldiers and the American public the first glimpse of the face behind the voice of Seoul City Sue. One photograph featured a headshot of Suhr alongside another woman the press identified as a Korean secretary who traveled with her.⁴³⁸ The other photograph showed Suhr in what appeared to be an older family portrait, perhaps taken in the 1930s. The lady identified as Suhr sat with her right hand on her cheek.⁴³⁹

The American press, always eager to objectify these women based on their level of attractiveness, reprinted the two photos all over the country. The photos also alleviated the curiosity of GIs as to whether Seoul City Sue's appearance matched her sensuous voice. Several articles confirmed Ann Wallace Suhr's attractiveness through interviews with Suhr's acquaintances and family. For example, one article quoted a coworker of Suhr's proclaiming her to have been "one of the most beautiful girls I ever saw."⁴⁴⁰ The same article, interestingly, identified Suhr as being born in Jessup, Arkansas, as well as having attended Hendrix College in Conway, Arkansas, before transferring to Scarritt College in Nashville. In addition, the article stated that Suhr probably lived with a brother-in-law in Cushman, Arkansas, for a period.

⁴³⁷ *Times Herald*, "Woman believes," 1.

⁴³⁸ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "Seoul City Sue?," September 3, 1950, 4.

⁴³⁹ *The Montana Standard*, "Seoul City Sue?," September 1, 1950, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/74852370/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁴⁰ International News Service, *The Mount Pleasant News*, "'Seoul City Sue' remembered as beautiful girl," October 3, 1950, 3.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/30282384/?terms=Seoul%2BCity%2BSue'%2Bremembered%2Bas%2Bbeautiful%2Bgirl>

Seoul City Sue and the 24th Division

As August transitioned into September 1950, U.S. forces continued to confront North Korean elements around Pusan in a series of bloody clashes. The First Provisional Marine Brigade contained enemy forces after days of fierce combat in The Second Battle of Naktong. In response, Sue's broadcasts became even more divisive against American troops, and the press' criticism of her became more vicious and sarcastic in tone. One article proclaimed that since GIs had a Seoul City Sue, "we presume as the war broadens we will have Formosa Fanny and Dandenelles Dotty."⁴⁴¹ Another explained that Sue was a "Lady Haw Haw" who spoke in monotone with an "icy voice" that "exudes the passion of a well boiled vegetable."⁴⁴² The author went on to add that he had no idea who she intended to impress or influence with her daily broadcasts of "spiel beats" and "dull stuff." A normal Seoul City Sue broadcast included such diatribes as "The dream of the entire peasantry is being carried out in the wake of the glorious advance of the people's army" and "the barbaric acts of the American imperialists pose a threat not only to the rest of the world, but to themselves."⁴⁴³ The press highlighted what sounded like an increasingly desperate propaganda effort against U.S. forces. As United Nations forces either advanced or staved off North Korean attacks, Seoul City Sue came across as increasingly hostile toward the United States.

Other journalists wrote that Sue's nightly scripted broadcasts routinely followed "certain stereotyped lines" such as criticizing American invaders, Communist troops winning the war by

⁴⁴¹ *The Wellsboro Gazette*, "Clipped Comment," September 6, 1950, 6.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/37144362/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁴² United Press, *News-Journal*, "Seoul City Sue flops on the air," September 11, 1950, 5.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/18940175/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁴³ United Press, H.D. Ouigg, *Lubbock Evening Journal*, "Seoul City Sue appeals to doughfoots with all the passion of a well-boiled vegetable," September 11, 1950, 19.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/6824257/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

“liberating many villages and ‘being loyal to the fatherland and their glorious general and leader, Kim Il Sung.”⁴⁴⁴ Interestingly, the same writer offered a slightly different hypothesis on whether Sue broadcasted under direct Communist threat:

Those who know Ann Wallis think differently. They believe that she is being well treated but that her husband is held as a hostage. She would do little to save herself, but if her husband were threatened with torture she would do her captors bidding.⁴⁴⁵

This effort to humanize Suhr as acting selflessly to save her husband furthered the notion that a man held ultimate responsibility for her betraying the United States. A young woman of her mid-Western, Christian upbringing could never, on her own, commit such treasonous acts. The article went on to reference the sporadic pauses in Sue’s weekly broadcasts as the “strain of war” in the form of U.S. and United Nations forces continued bombing of Seoul. GIs listened, the article proclaimed, “not so much to hear the extremes of Communist propaganda, as to detect any sign of her own weakening under the strain.”⁴⁴⁶

Amid the press’ sarcasm and scathing reviews, around the time that the UN and American forces began pushing the North Koreans back north, Seoul City Sue continually criticized the venerable 24th Division, which she previously declared had been “wiped out at Taejon.”⁴⁴⁷ The once battered and nearly defeated division managed to stay in the fight and played a key role in defending the Pusan Perimeter. By 1951, a year into military operations in Korea, the 24th Division had gone from an “ill-equipped, understrength, occupation-softened garrison outfit into a seasoned, veteran fighting force, considered the most potent of the United

⁴⁴⁴ *The Eagle*, “‘Seoul City Sue’ taught school in Texas before coming to Korea,” September 11, 1950, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/53109901/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 10.

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 10.

⁴⁴⁷ T/Sgt. James Saunders, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “24th Div gives lie to ‘Seoul City Sue,’” October 31, 1950, 2.

Nations divisions in Korea.”⁴⁴⁸ Conservative estimates placed a casualty ratio in the Taro Leaf troopers’ favor at 15:1 with over 127,379 casualties inflicted on the enemy.⁴⁴⁹ These numbers included over 38,000 enemy troops killed, over 61,000 wounded, and around 28,000 captured.⁴⁵⁰ The division, by 1951, had won two Presidential Unit Citations, with accolades from top military commanders, one of whom called the 24th the “greatest infantry outfit ever to walk on its own two feet.”⁴⁵¹

In August and September of 1950, however, Seoul City Sue made ominous threats about the impending doom of the 24th. For example, as the 24th pounded enemy positions along the Naktong River in mid-August, an offensive that gained them two thousand yards over the North Koreans, Seoul City Sue’s nightly broadcast promised that the “Red Army was out to inflict as many casualties as possible on this outfit.”⁴⁵² The next day, however, although the 24th took casualties, enemy soldiers took the brunt of “more than 200 air sorties of F-80 jets and P-51 fighters, throwing rockets and burning napalm and strafing with thousands of .50-caliber bullets.”⁴⁵³

Seoul City Sue made many attempts to discredit and demoralize the 24th Division including one broadcast where she utilized racial divisive propaganda like Hanoi Hannah. In the broadcast, Sue encouraged African-American soldiers in the 24th to abandon their positions and

⁴⁴⁸ United Press, William Burson, *Los Angeles Times*, “Victory division’s war glory grows,” June 24, 1951, 26.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/160749302/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ United Press, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, “‘Seoul City Sue’ wrong—U.S. 24th still in the game,” June 25, 1951, 3A.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/139785399/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁵¹ William Burson, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “Taro Leafers proudly outlive Commies’ prophecy,” June 27, 1951, 4.

⁴⁵² Richard K. Tucker, *The Sun*, “‘Seoul City Sue’ warns of doom, but GI’s attack just the same,” August 15, 1950, 1. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>

⁴⁵³ Ibid.

“rejoin their gangs around the ice cream stores.” She added that black soldiers were “no more than a slave to the American white man.”⁴⁵⁴ This new tactic of including American racial unrest in her broadcasts, though aimed primarily at U.S. soldiers, was also meant to be received in The United States. These broadcasts had two primary goals. First, Seoul City Sue meant to foment discontent and anger into African-American servicemen serving in Korea. Many of these soldiers undoubtedly already faced racial discrimination serving in the ranks. Such propaganda messages were designed to make them feel that their efforts in Korea were in vain, and that their real fight remained stateside in the ongoing struggle for civil rights. Secondly, the broadcasts were meant to cause unrest among minority populations in the U.S., whose continual struggle for racial equality often resulted in violence. In the 1940s, a series of race riots such as in Harlem, Los Angeles, and Detroit rocked the nation, and racial tension in the early 1950s set the stage for what would eventually become the Civil Rights Movement. As will be seen in the next chapter, Hanoi Hannah often used these tactics to some effect in demoralizing African American soldiers.

A *Pacific Stars and Stripes* article stated that Seoul City Sue paid the “highest tribute to its fighting power” in repeatedly singling out the 24th for threats of annihilation days after the division liquidated more than three thousand enemy soldiers in the Naktong River bulge. Seoul City Sue boldly claimed the Red Army intended to destroy the division, regardless of the war’s outcome.⁴⁵⁵ Men of the Taro Leaf division, the article claimed, grinned in response to the cavalier threats of the lady propagandist. Another *Pacific Stars and Stripes* article joked that Sue risked looking like “a big fat liar” if her reporting of the 24th’s decimation by North Korean troops didn’t eventually pan out. The article referenced a group of soldiers from the 24th listening

⁴⁵⁴ Frank Whishonant, *Pittsburgh Courier*, “‘Go back home!’ Seoul City Sue tells Negro GIs,” September 9, 1950, 1. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu>

⁴⁵⁵ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “Extinction due for 24th—Sue,” September 2, 1950, 2.

to Sue's broadcast at the bottom of hill 409 along the Naktong River. Sue proceeded to say that the battle had gone very well for the North Koreans that day and several prisoners had been taken from the 24th. Among the prisoners taken, according to Sue, was SFC Earl Easterling, a native of Pittsburg, Pa. Sue continued her reporting by giving,

most of Easterling's personal history, and all but asked him to put in a word for himself on her broadcast. Among those listening to the program at the foot of hill 409 was SFC Earl Easterling, Pittsburg, Pa.⁴⁵⁶

Easterling's experience listening to his own capture over the radio was not unique. Such became a standard tactic for Seoul City Sue. The North Koreans would collect items left behind on battlefields and send the information to Sue to be read over the radio. In fact, examples of the type became so common that in mid-September, eight soldiers in the 24th petitioned for Sue to win the National Liars Convention annual prize for the "biggest whopper." All eight had been declared dead at some point by Seoul City Sue. In the case of Joe Smith, one of the eight who petitioned for Sue to get the award, the propagandist declared that his dog tags were nailed to a wooden cross in Taejon, where he had been killed fighting days prior. Smith admitted that Sue may have been correct about that, as that's exactly "where he lost them."⁴⁵⁷ Also of the eight, Sue reported Sgt. James Conover, PFC Fred Wallace, and Cpl. Clifton Ross killed in action while fighting in Taejon. The three men rejoined their units where they intended "to keep pumping bullets into the Red ranks until they are pushed across the 38th parallel."⁴⁵⁸

In another incident, Seoul City Sue pronounced Private Walter Diehl killed in action in Taejon. Private Diehl wrote home to his family to assure them he was not only okay, but that he

⁴⁵⁶ Sgt. Allen Waters, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "Sue a liar?," September 4, 1950, 4.

⁴⁵⁷ Sgt. Ralph H. Jones, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "Biggest whopper," September 16, 1950, 2.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

never even went to Korea.⁴⁵⁹ Pvt. Antonio Apodaca recovered from battle injuries in a Tokyo hospital when he heard Seoul City Sue proclaim he had been killed in action. Apodaca lost his wallet after being wounded on the battle field. A year later, other Communist propagandists listed him as being in a prisoner of war camp, when he was actually stationed at Fort MacArthur in California.⁴⁶⁰ Bronze Star recipient Major George W. Allyn of the 24th Division who distinguished himself during heavy fighting in Taejon, wrote a hurried letter to his wife after he lost his helmet in combat, “warning her that Seoul City Sue might pull just such a stunt.”⁴⁶¹ Sue did just that and broadcasted Major Allyn’s death in the summer of 1950.

These propaganda tactics, reminiscent of Mildred Gillars’ Axis Sally using American POWs for her broadcasts, resulted in increasingly negative press. It also caused U.S. servicemen to cheer any prospect of Seoul City Sue’s removal from the airwaves. Although she did not receive the same level of press hostility as did Mildred Gillars, she nonetheless became vilified for her false reporting of soldiers’ fate. She did so to cause confusion stateside, as it exasperated grieving families worried about the safety of loved ones. It also worked to demoralize troops knowing their families would be exposed to Sue’s misinformation either over short-wave radio or in the press.

Postwar Years

A cartoon image ran in the papers on September 27, 1950. The cartoon showed a destroyed radio station control room with a smoking tank barrel sticking through a gaping hole in

⁴⁵⁹ *The Plain Speaker*, “Seoul City Sue wrong says soldier,” September 11, 1950, 20.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/138199606/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁶⁰ United Press, *The Mexia Daily News*, “Commies say GI prisoner; but he’s not,” December 21, 1951, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/11310823/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁶¹ *Democrat and Chronicle*, “War hero gets coast assignment,” April 27, 1951, 27.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/135423156/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

the wall. The caption read “Due to circumstances beyond our control, ‘Seoul City Sue’ will not be heard.”⁴⁶² The cartoon symbolized the fate of Seoul City Sue, whose broadcasts ended once United Nations forces entered Seoul. In fact, aircrews often relished the idea of destroying her broadcasting infrastructure. Air Force navigator Robert Kennedy considered himself an admirer of Seoul City Sue. In one article, he proclaimed that “Sue and I get along fine” and that whenever his aircraft’s navigation system malfunctioned, “I just tune in on Sue’s broadcast and stay on that signal to bring us right over the target area.”⁴⁶³ As much as servicemen enjoyed listening to Seoul City Sue, they relished taking her off the air as she was the propaganda voice of North Korea.

On September 15, the Marines and the Army under General MacArthur’s orders landed at Inchon and fought their way towards Seoul. They liberated the city on September 27 after fierce urban combat and returned power to South Korean President Syngman Rhee on the 29th. Sue stopped broadcasts a few days before the Red Army fled Seoul. As authorities searched for Ann Wallace Suhr, no trace of her could be found; she simply vanished.⁴⁶⁴ She would never again be heard over short-wave radio. For all intents and purposes, Seoul City Sue ceased to exist.

The American press continued to report about Seoul City Sue, mainly pondering what became of her and reporting anything that could be considered a lead. She did have an occasional imitator, however, such as an unidentified male voice heard over short-wave radio once or twice enticing American troops to leave Korea. One article quoted the mysterious voice as saying, “Why don’t you GI’s get out of here? Why don’t you quit shooting? You can’t hit anything

⁴⁶² *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “Somewhere in Seoul,” September 27, 1950, 4.

⁴⁶³ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “Sue’s program spots target for navigator,” September 18, 1950, 2.

⁴⁶⁴ Associated Press, *Southern Illinoisan*, “All traces lacking of Seoul City Sue,” October 2, 1950, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/78515097/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

anyway.” Another message by the same announcer welcomed the 49th Field Artillery battalion and the 17th Regimental Combat Team to Korea and then asked them to go back to where they came from.⁴⁶⁵ The announcements seemed almost comical to soldiers who heard them.

As the search for Ann Wallace Suhr continued, the question of treason often came up in news reports. In addressing the issue of treason, the Army admitted that since Suhr lost her U.S. citizenship, prosecuting her for treason would be highly unlikely. Army officials also released details about Suhr’s life including frustrations she had towards her American friends. Apparently, they did not support her marriage to a known Communist sympathizer. The mystery of why she broadcasted for the North Koreans, the Army concluded, might never be fully known.⁴⁶⁶

Although Seoul City Sue ceased as a broadcasting entity, her legacy has managed to stay alive, albeit through occasional press coverage and speculation based on rumors. Paul Edwards considers that Ann Wallace Suhr might have fled Seoul prior to the South Korean retaking and perhaps worked with her husband producing propaganda efforts using United Nations prisoners of war. Very little evidence substantiates this claim outside of a few rumors scattered through press reports. Edwards states that Suhr and her husband made occasional appearances at Camp Number 12 outside Pyongyang in some sort of prisoner indoctrination effort. Other press reports indicate that U.S. military officials searched Suhr’s home in Seoul and found propaganda material and drafts of radio scripts. *Collier’s* magazine ran a story in January of 1954 detailing the harrowing accounts of an American prisoner of war, Major David MacGhee, a radio operator

⁴⁶⁵ Associated Press, *The Independent Record*, “Male version of ‘Seoul City Sue,’” November 12, 1950, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/15414850/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁶⁶ Jim G. Lucas, *The Pittsburgh Press*, “Mystery of Korea: Whatever became of Seoul City Sue?,” June 12, 1955, 4.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/148900900/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

aboard a B-29 shot down in November of 1950. MacGhee recollected a day when a woman came into the camp, one whose “flat, nasal radio voice was familiar to thousands of UN troops in Korea. She was Mrs. Ann Wallis Suh, better known as Seoul City Sue.”⁴⁶⁷ MacGhee contended that she came to the camp to facilitate POW propaganda broadcasts.

Suhr did not have the staying power of Iva Toguri or Mildred Gillars as far as remaining in popular culture moving forward. Many factors contributed to this. First, she simply did not broadcast long enough to develop the level of notoriety and fame that Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally did. Her legacy never had a suitable ending in that authorities never found her; she never stood trial for treason, and it never became known why she broadcast for Radio Pyongyang. Secondly, the Korean War did not have the same global impact as did World War II. America and United Nations forces were not fighting a two-front war spanning half the globe. Hostilities were confined to Korea. Because of this, the media paid less attention to the potential danger to soldier morale Seoul City Sue posed. Third, Seoul City Sue became the only significant radio siren that came out of the war. She had no competition, and while soldiers enjoyed her broadcasts, her efforts at propaganda often came across as unskilled, badly written, and poorly executed. Fourth, while U.S. forces battled North Korea, it concurrently fought a much larger war, the Cold War with the Soviet Union, where espionage and information gathering took precedence over battlefield engagements. Seoul City Sue would ultimately be lost amidst more prominent issues in the press. Lastly, in the U.S., women had returned to homemaking duties after entering the national workforce to keep factories running during World War II. National discourse regarding the role of women in professional society, at least temporarily, subsided. It was not until the advent of the second wave of American feminism that women’s equality

⁴⁶⁷ Major David MacGhee, “In Korea hell camps: Some of us didn’t crack,” *Collier’s* (January 22, 1954): 88. <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Colliers-1954jan22-00082>

became a prominent national issue again in the daily press.

However, occasionally Seoul City Sue's name came up such as in a Zenith radio ad from 1975 offering to restore old radios, the kind used in Korea to "bring in Ann Wallace Suhr, better known as 'Seoul City Sue,' the seductive propaganda voice of North Korea."⁴⁶⁸ She is still remembered in occasional popular culture references such as the long running TV show, *M*A*S*H*, where she was referenced in at least three separate episodes, one in which Sue accuses Alan Alda's character, Hawkeye Pierce, of war crimes after he saves the life of a North Korean with an untested medical procedure.

Paul Edwards mentions that Larry Allen Abshier, a U.S. Army deserter, fled to North Korea in 1962 and met Ann Wallace Suhr in a department store in Pyongyang in 1965. Another deserter, Charles Robert Jenkins, also claimed to have met Suhr and presented information about her fate. In his autobiography, Jenkins claimed the North Koreans executed Ann Wallace Suhr in 1969 for being a double agent for South Korea.⁴⁶⁹

Conclusion

Seoul City Sue became an enigma to the American press. She never reached the fame of either Tokyo Rose or Axis Sally, yet her alluring voice tantalized U.S. troops nonetheless. The press at times seemed to lament that she never became another Tokyo Rose. The media seemed to regard her as a missed opportunity. She did not woo soldiers with popular music and sexual innuendo. Her propaganda broadcasts were mostly ridiculing in nature not unlike Axis Sally. Nonetheless, journalists routinely criticized her for propagandizing enemy messages against the

⁴⁶⁸ *The Akron Beacon Journal*, April 27, 1975, A5.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/153096939/?terms=seoul%2Bcity%2Bsue>

⁴⁶⁹ Charles Robert Jenkins & Jim Frederick, *The Reluctant Communist: My Desertion, Court-Martial, and Forty-Year Imprisonment in North Korea*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

United States.

The American press initially tried to portray her as Tokyo Rose's North Korean successor. Constant comparisons between the two radio sirens reminded Americans that yet another femme fatale turncoat had been unleashed upon the airwaves. The American media seemed to relish in the prospects of covering another female propagandist, even though the tone of most press articles regarding her remained highly critical. Predictably, the media tried to connect her broadcasts with a male lover to explain why she had renounced her U.S. citizenship and elected to work with the North Koreans. The focus of so much of the early press coverage regarding her dealt with her sexual appeal on U.S. troops. But Sue's untimely disappearance cut short any prospects of her being found and brought to justice. There would be no treason trial, no prosecution, no prolonged story for the mass media to cover. But her disappearance did add another dimension to the Seoul City Sue story, that being the recurring speculative updates on her whereabouts.

In relation to how the media's coverage of her changed over time, Suhr did not broadcast long enough for a developing and complex media narrative to form. The mystery surrounding Seoul City Sue was the media narrative in and of itself. Initially, press reports speculated that she broadcast against her will, yet this was never confirmed or debunked. In fact, to this day the mystery remains. Articles of mostly a nostalgic nature appeared in the years following her disappearance.

Lastly, the media never actually formed solid responses to Seoul City Sue. Her broadcasting tenure simply did not last long enough for her propaganda to be of any major concern to U.S. troop morale. No known American answers to Seoul City Sue were ever fielded outside the normal American and United Nations propaganda that would have occurred through

the Armed Forces Radio Network.

It may never fully be known whether Ann Wallace Suhr broadcasted enemy propaganda willingly or under duress. It may never be solved if she acted as a double agent for the South Koreans or survived beyond 1969. More evidence as to her fate might be locked away in North Korean vaults, but until such day that information can freely flow in and out of North Korea, the answers may remain purely speculative. One thing is sure, the American press seemed to relish covering yet another female enemy propagandist. Suhr seemed to be the symbolic progeny of Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally. The press had yet another American girl on their hands that seemed to betray the U.S., and if some rumors could be verified, she did it for love of a Communist sympathizer, like the case of Mildred Gillars. In the end, however, the next decade would see yet another female propagandist introduced in the American press while entertaining U.S. troops with baseless accusations, unbelievable stories, and popular American music. This new siren came from North Vietnam.

CHAPTER 6 THE SIREN OF RADIO HANOI

Background

The 20th Century produced two catastrophic world wars and a bloody conflict in Korea that lasted three years; however, the century still had one more long, protracted American war to give, and that centered around tensions in Southeast Asia. By the mid 1960s, the U.S. found itself embroiled in a rapidly escalating military conflict in Vietnam. Unlike the two previous wars, the Vietnam War occurred during the midst of the second wave of feminism where more radical views of women in society were being put forth compared to the domestic caregiver role of women in the 1940s. It also occurred during a period of civil unrest in the U.S. where counterculture movements, primarily among American youth, threatened deeply rooted longstanding societal norms. The era of civil rights struggles, flower power, hippies, and free love altered the “neo-Victorian” model of American society. As author Josephine Donovan has written, the era of Radical Feminism (beginning in the mid to late 1960s) identified male-domination as the “root of women’s oppression,” where American culture and thus Western ideology were deeply rooted in sexist thought.⁴⁷⁰ As traditional ideas of societal roles for women were being challenged and altered, the idea of another radio siren no longer carried with it the novelty of Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, or even the fascination of short-lived Seoul City Sue.

The American media seemed to take the propaganda element of Hanoi Hannah’s

⁴⁷⁰ Josephine Donovan, *Feminist theory: The intellectual traditions*, (New York/London: Continuum, 2008), 156.

broadcasts more seriously than her predecessors, especially later in the war. Less attention was paid to her “cooing” to U.S. forces than the arguments she presented, which often involved commentary on the growing anti-war movement and racial strife consuming American daily newspapers and newscasts. That is not to say the media did not objectify Hanoi Hannah; it often did, especially in the war’s early years. What made Hanoi Hannah different, however, was the quality of her propaganda, which went well beyond flirtatious banter, insulting troops and warning them of cheating spouses stateside.

Vietnam was as much a political war as a military one. Shortly after Lyndon Johnson defeated Barry Goldwater in November 1964, the United States committed forces to defend South Vietnam from an ever-increasing Communist north. Operation Rolling Thunder, a near continuous carpet bombing campaign began in early 1965 over North Vietnam. Before the year ended, U.S. troop strength reached two hundred thousand, and once again the American people found themselves reliant upon the mass media for information regarding the war.

To understand the motivations and tactics of Vietnam’s legendary radio siren, one must first consider the techniques of North Vietnamese propaganda and the events surrounding its production. Only then can one understand the impact and depth of the propaganda broadcasts from the one occasionally called the Dragon Lady, though more popularly known as Hanoi Hannah. As Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, and Seoul City Sue before her, Hanoi Hannah became popular with U.S. servicemen and a subject often written about with the American press.

The North Vietnamese produced numerous campaign efforts designed to reduce U.S. and South Vietnamese troop morale and seed doubt into the minds of the American populace regarding the possibility of an American victory. These campaigns included the mass dissemination of leaflets, and other printed materials, and most notably, radio. The central radio

propaganda machine controlled by the North Vietnamese was known as Radio Hanoi, later renamed The Voice of Vietnam. Radio Hanoi began broadcasting in September 1945, after the Democrat Republic of Vietnam formed under Ho Chi Minh while struggling against French occupation. The broadcasting facility utilized the most powerful station and transmitting tower in Asia, and it broadcast propaganda in several languages for worldwide consumption. When the U.S. officially introduced troops to the battlefields of Vietnam in 1965, Radio Hanoi began propaganda campaigns unseen by an adversarial nation since World War II.

Radio Hanoi produced well-coordinated and comprehensive propaganda campaigns during America's involvement in the Vietnam War. Chief among its tactics included portraying American military actions as acts of an imperial government under the leadership of a corrupt and mendacious Johnson administration. Radio Hanoi often reported on American air raids as deliberate targeting of innocent civilians, and a constant theme included laying direct blame on President Lyndon Johnson. For example, Radio Hanoi often questioned Johnson's efforts at procuring peace talks with the North Vietnamese government as deceitful acts of imperialism. One broadcast referred to Air Force bombings following a speech by President Johnson to host unconditional negotiations in hopes of securing a permanent ceasefire as a "blatant aggressive act of the U.S. imperialists" that had "fully exposed the deceitful peace allegation made by Lyndon Johnson."⁴⁷¹ The broadcasts' main theme often included seeding feelings of hatred among the population of North Vietnam to fortify their desire to run American forces out. The goal was to feed the "struggle against the U.S. imperialists, for national salvation, and, according to Radio Hanoi:

⁴⁷¹ Murrey Marder, *The Washington Post*, "Radio Hanoi blasts LBJ as deceitful," April 10, 1965, A1.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/142466732/fulltextPDF/4C72E1E40B9342D9PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

Deepening the understanding of the Vietnamese people of the new situation and tasks and incensing their hatred of the enemy to struggle more resolutely against the U.S. imperialists to win final victory.⁴⁷²

In 2015, the Vietnam Veterans Radio Network received a collection of one-quarter inch audio tapes containing Radio Hanoi broadcasts recorded from short-wave radio during the years of 1964 through 1971. The audio tapes gave a rare opportunity to hear the daily broadcasts of Hanoi's propaganda broadcaster. Radio Hanoi waged a propaganda campaign against American soldiers that relied principally on six tactics, which according to Vietnam Veterans Against the War writer, John Upton, consisted of:

- Reporting news from around the world critical of the war
- Combat reports including descriptions of battles and units involved
- Reporting American casualty lists including soldier names, personal information relating to not only the soldiers but their families
- Speeches and various writings from POWs and American deserters
- News and updates from anti-war groups both in America and worldwide (these include demonstrations and protests in America)
- Regular appeals to American soldiers to lay down their weapons and demand an end to military operations against the people of North Vietnam⁴⁷³

The War Years

The new Radio Hanoi program that began broadcasting on July 6, 1962, followed these propaganda tactics thoroughly and featured a silky-voiced female announcer who would quickly

⁴⁷² The Washington Post, Murrey Marder, *News-Journal*, "Viet reds start hate U.S. Week tomorrow," July 13, 1965, 5.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/46970526/?terms=Viet%2Breds%2Bstart%2Bhate%2BU.S.%2BWeek%2Btomorrow>.

⁴⁷³ From an online report by John 'Doc' Upton titled "Radio Hanoi tapes found in barn," Found at: www.vvaw.org.

become known as the Tokyo Rose of Vietnam. In fact, one of the first press reports about the unidentified woman labeled her as Vietnam's Tokyo Rose and only described her program as featuring "Soviet jazz bands and heavy doses of Communist propaganda."⁴⁷⁴ *The Pacific Stars and Stripes* quickly criticized her as a "renegade" American woman with a "honey-toned voice" whose traitorous broadcasts,

Now coos to U.S. servicemen in the Republic of Vietnam and to the Marines guarding Thailand. She broadcasts nightly from the Red-held Hanoi and says our cause is lost. Then she baffles them with U.S. secret military information only our authorities are supposed to know.⁴⁷⁵

The American media swiftly seized upon an opportunity to expose yet another propaganda siren, most likely an American turncoat broadcasting for an enemy nation. The article referenced other famous radio traitors such as Iva Toguri, Mildred Gillars, and William Joyce and proclaimed this new radio siren's fate would most likely mirror theirs. The article concluded with a scathing message to Hanoi Hannah:

No one knows yet who the lady is in Hanoi with the caressing quality in her velvet voice and her special sneer against America. But lady, 17 or 70, and like your sisters, sign off. You are wasting your time.⁴⁷⁶

Commentary referring to her voice as "velvet" while having a "special sneer" against the U.S. exemplified how the media usually attacked these radio sirens. With each woman, the media portrayed two conflicting versions: the dulcet and sweet voice combined with the seething hatred for America and its military mission. Requesting Hanoi Hannah to "sign off" and realize the futility of her propaganda aims referred to the ultimate failures of Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, and

⁴⁷⁴ *New York Times*, "A Tokyo Rose in Vietnam," July 7, 1962, 4.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/115951849/fulltextPDF/863C680BE17144D2PQ/2?accountid=14472>.

⁴⁷⁵ Henry J. Taylor, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "'Hanoi Hannah' has evil forebears," July 17, 1962, 8.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.* Incidentally, the July 1962 *Pacific Stars and Stripes* article is occasionally credited with coining the Hanoi Hannah moniker.

Seoul City Sue to demoralize U.S. forces.

In addition, the tone of the article can best be summed up as disgust and yet nostalgic fascination. This duality persisted in most articles regarding Hanoi Hannah as it did with Seoul City Sue. Disgust came in the form of negative editorializing about what the media perceived as yet another traitorous woman against the U.S. and its mission in Southeast Asia; at this point in the war, many in the press widely speculated that Hanoi Hannah was an American turncoat as were her predecessors. The fascination occurred through media's quest to find another Tokyo Rose, especially because Seoul City Sue vanished before she could define her legacy as a propagandist. North Vietnam offered American troops another "velvet" voiced siren with "caressing" vocal "qualities" used to tantalize, fascinate, and demoralize them.

Although most press reports compared Hanoi Hannah to her World War II and Korean counterparts, and many sexualized her, at least in the war's early years, most journalists seemed to recognize the propaganda coming from Radio Hanoi was somehow different. Hanoi Hannah gave deeper analysis to unfolding battlefield events than her predecessors. Her appeals to U.S. soldiers and Marines went beyond Tokyo Rose's playful prodding and Axis Sally's addresses to soldiers' wives and girlfriends. Hanoi Hannah offered what the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* referred to as a "just think it over" pitch. For example, Hanoi Hannah would often broadcast dire warnings to GIs reminding them that "many of your fellow GIs have been killed or wounded for a useless cause. Think it over."⁴⁷⁷ This wartime radio siren shunned the mistakes of her predecessors in favor of more cerebral discourse, but the media continued to expound upon her femme fatale characteristics. Evidence suggests through the print media, however, her radio propaganda initially did not adversely affect GI morale any more than Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally,

⁴⁷⁷ *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "Tokyo Rose, Hanoi style, rides airways again," July 8, 1962, 24.

and Seoul City Sue did.

Hanoi Hannah often compared North Vietnam's struggle against America to the American Revolution by making carefully crafted points designed to both confuse and disenfranchise U.S. military personnel. In another broadcast, she declared that,

It is an honor to die for a noble idea, in defense of one's fatherland and one's people... but is it not damn silly as you would call it to die for the insane ambitions and schemes of the Washington war-maniacs?"⁴⁷⁸

Such statement from Hanoi Hannah illustrated how adept she was in combining social issues in America with her broadcasts to U.S. soldiers. Mounting unrest in the U.S. toward the government's Vietnam War policies made these statements particularly powerful. Hanoi Hannah and Radio Hanoi counted on troops to absorb such propaganda considering stateside media coverage of the growing antiwar movement, the protests, and societal unrest in general. In that way, her weekly commentary would give soldiers a sense of isolation as they came to know their cause was an increasingly unpopular one.

Family also became a commonly used theme in Hanoi Hannah's broadcasts. Many of these early broadcasts asked soldiers to consider how families and spouses would be affected through their dying for a "useless cause." For example, in a special Christmas broadcast in 1962, she softly suggested GIs leave the battlefields and return home in time to celebrate Christmas with loved ones. The broadcast was accompanied with soft violin and piano music. One broadcast from March 19, 1965, typified Hannah's appeal to soldiers:

American servicemen, besides suffering from being away from your loved ones, what you are being forced to do in South Vietnam is bringing no credit to the American people or yourself. It only smears the U.S. flag and infringes upon the lofty ideals of the American revolution. If you love your country as an honest American citizen, you should

⁴⁷⁸ Associated Press, Rene-Georges Inagaki, *The Indiana Gazette*, "Reds using gal radio announcer," August 13, 1964, 5.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/15676949/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

refuse to act perversely and try to save your own life. Be useful to your people on American soil rather than die in a foreign land which has no relation whatsoever with your country's security. Just think it over.⁴⁷⁹

Hannah's continued "think it over approach" challenged servicemen to contemplate the morality of their actions as well as the possible consequences that awaited them should they continue to fight. These messages were designed to feed off coverage of the rapidly growing antiwar sentiment sweeping across college campuses in the states.

With each broadcast, the mystery of Hanoi Hannah grew. By 1964, it became apparent that more than one Hanoi Hannah existed. In fact, GIs named one of the female Radio Hanoi announcers Hanoi Hattie.⁴⁸⁰ Most listeners agreed by this time, however, that both Hannah and Hattie were not from the United States. Their command of English, while excellent, came across less conversationally American and more erudite and carefully crafted as if they learned English in the United Kingdom.

As mentioned in the introduction, Hanoi Hannah also broadcasted under the name of Thu Huong, which in Vietnamese means "Autumn Fragrance." Hattie introduced herself as Thu Mai, "Sister Love," and she soon became forgotten by the American press as her colleague became more popular.⁴⁸¹ Hattie never reached the fame or prominence of Hanoi Hannah, but soldiers and Marines found her voice appealing. Her propaganda messages aligned mostly with Hannah's. Both women gave daily reminders that U.S. servicemen were not safe in Vietnam, and that they should demand to be sent home. One article even referred to Hattie's voice as "sweet and tinkly,

⁴⁷⁹ *The Daily Independent*, "Hanoi Hannah," March 30, 1965, 4.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/48672090/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>.

⁴⁸⁰ *The Sedalia Democrat*, "Shades of Tokyo Rose," May 30, 1965, 2.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/75455554/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>.

⁴⁸¹ This statement cannot be verified, because it is very possible reports in the media may have confused quotes contributed between these two women. But one thing is certain, as the war progressed, Hanoi Hattie was mentioned less and less.

easy on the ears,” a line obviously meant to belittle her as a propagandist. According to the same report, Hattie broadcast twice a week on Mondays and Fridays. Also like Hannah, she directly addressed U.S. warfighters using scare tactics and prognostications of military defeats for the Americans. Excerpts include such lines as: “Who are you fighting for? For what purpose? Life is dear and aggressive war is dirty and damnable,” and “to be or not to be the accomplices of Washington’s mankillers? There is no other choice.”⁴⁸²

Most press coverage regarding Hanoi Hannah in the early period of America’s involvement of the Vietnam War, apart from objectifying her, remained negative. Aside from the normal articles referencing her ongoing sexual appeal, much of negative coverage centered around Hannah’s criticism of American leadership and its armed forces. For example, Radio Hanoi, and thus Hanoi Hannah would often give statistics on missing or deceased soldiers as examples of what awaited other soldiers. In an August 1964 broadcast, Hannah mentioned a missing Air Force pilot who did not return from a recent bombing raid. In the broadcast, she said,

A 26-year-old youth Alvarez has a wife and a family. Not long ago he still lived with his family in California. Before the stealthy attack, he was in Hong Kong, enjoying the pleasures in night clubs or drinking bars... Dispatched to the gulf of North Viet Nam and driven to commit crimes against our country, he is now our prisoner... You see, the lives of American youths, officers and men alike, are merely pawns, in the hands of the blood-thirsty millionaires. Their fate is really uncertain... Alvarez, however, is much luckier than seven of his comrades, because he still has the chance of meeting his wife again one day when Washington shows its willingness to stop all acts of aggression and provocations against the democratic Republic of Viet Nam.⁴⁸³

As Hanoi Hannah continued her scathing critiques of U.S. foreign policy, by 1964, antiwar

⁴⁸² Ed Maegher, *The Washington Post*, “Hanoi Hattie is on air, a latter-day Tokyo Rose,” July 9, 1964, A25.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/142213054/fulltextPDF/D279235B3925454FPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁴⁸³ Associated Press, Rene-Georges Inagaki, *The Indiana Gazette*, “Reds using gal radio announcer,” August 13, 1964, 5.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/15676949/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

sentiment in the United States continued to grow, making Hannah's broadcasts against U.S. foreign policy even more prominent. Organized protests and marches spearheaded by groups like the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) began appearing on college campuses across the nation decrying American military involvement.⁴⁸⁴ Civil rights protests and riots such as those in Rochester, Chicago, and Philadelphia added to the national unrest prevalent in 1964.

These "siren-calls," from Hanoi Hannah, as the press often described them, drew swift and negative responses from many journalists. One Air Force major general was quoted as saying,

the 'Hannahs' score zero in all of the broadcasting elements. Their technique is childish. Their plausibility is nil. They exaggerate our losses in multiples of 10. And their vitriolic messages don't infuriate troops. They amuse GIs.⁴⁸⁵

At no point did the American media refer to the propaganda techniques of male broadcasters as childish, which further underscored the attempt to lampoon and diminish these women as girls playing in a man's profession. The article went on to add that the two lady propagandists "interwave their corny dialogue with horrendous records, sultry-voiced invective and 'greetings' to the 'dirty imperialists.'" Another writer quoted Voice of America program officer, Vytautas Dambra, as calling Hannah's broadcasts "satanic" and that soldiers listening to her regularly would "end up drinking twice as much. He'll curse her, curse himself and curse the war."⁴⁸⁶ Dambra's words also illustrated the fact that despite regular attempts to diminish Hanoi Hannah in the press, she did have the potential to alienate and demoralize American troops.

⁴⁸⁴ More information can be found at: <http://www.history.com/topics/vietnam-war/vietnam-war-protests>

⁴⁸⁵ Roscoe Drummond, *The Kokomo Morning Times*, "Hannahs aren't top bananas," September 21, 1966, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32539220/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁴⁸⁶ Copley News Service, Denby Fawcett, *The San Bernardino County Sun*, "Hanoi Hannah plays on human emotions," October 31, 1966, A4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/60119392/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

Calling Hanoi Hannah's broadcast "satanic" and referring to her as a childish broadcaster reflected an increasingly hostile press. This hostility mirrored rising tension at home and in developments in Southeast Asia. By 1966, the U.S. actively engaged North Vietnamese forces in a war that became increasingly likely to be a protracted conflict.⁴⁸⁷ Operation Masher involved dozens of patrols designed to seek out and destroy Vietcong forces. These patrols often became negatively portrayed in the American media, especially on television, where film showing troops burning down Vietnamese villages ran often on the nightly news. Operation Masher alone would claim over two hundred American lives. Mounting casualties and an increasingly hostile public sentiment toward the war fostered an increasingly negative press toward Hanoi Hannah, which many still believed to be an American traitor. Hannah's more strategic propaganda style coupled with her regular analysis of political unrest in the U.S. made her unique in the chronicle of female radio propagandists. Not only did she employ full use of a sexually pleasing, siren-like voice, she increased her brazen attacks on U.S. foreign policy. The press routinely wrote about such attacks and any possible effects it would have on troop morale. For example, many articles explored the reactions from American servicemen regarding Hanoi Hannah's use of domestic anti-war protests. Various press reports wrote that soldiers were often "disgusted"⁴⁸⁸ with the anti-war movement; however, other articles described that servicemen would dismiss such tactics and "listen to her statistics, compare them to the ones they know to be true and then laugh."⁴⁸⁹ In short, Hannah's propaganda had substance, unlike Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, and Seoul City Sue. In response, the media usually reacted harshly through editorial pieces.

⁴⁸⁷ More information can be found at <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/vietnam/index-1965.html>

⁴⁸⁸ United Press, *Anderson Herald*, "American servicemen in Saigon react bitterly to war protest," October 15, 1969, 3.

⁴⁸⁹ Gordon Slessor, *Tucson Daily Citizen*, "Tucsonian Says: Boredom real foe in Asian combat," November 19, 1966, 10.

One particularly damning article regarding Hanoi Hannah came from columnist Leslie Lieber. Reporting for the Des Moines Register, Lieber commented that Hanoi Hannah and her lesser known colleague, Hanoi Hattie, would broadcast “the world’s worst assortment of records and alternately sweet-talking and threatening our GIs in an all-out effort to shatter their morale.”⁴⁹⁰ Lieber went on to add that music selections including “the toe-tapper called ‘The Celebrated Tractor Driver’” would be played preceding and following bouts of propaganda recitations. Some writers often recounted humorous stories involving Hanoi Hannah including one who described her attempt to predict American baseball championship teams on her program. The Washington Post’s Raymond Coffey described her as sounding more like a, “nagging, whining wife than the sultry, beguiling female she tries to be.”⁴⁹¹ Comparing Hanoi Hannah with her lesser-known Chinese counterpart, Peking Polly, Amarillo Globe-Times’ columnist Henry Taylor wrote “these Asian radio propagandists hiss at our American personnel in South Viet Nam like an adder.”⁴⁹² Another journalist compared Hannah’s broadcasts to the “sugar-and-honey” coated propaganda “bleatings” of Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally. He then referred to her as the “new-found lady friend” of the GIs currently serving in the “guerilla-infested rice paddies of Viet Nam.”⁴⁹³

The American press did not overlook the matter of Hanoi Hannah’s sexuality in its

⁴⁹⁰ Leslie Lieber, *The Des Moines Register*, “Hanoi Hannah,” February 13, 1966, 18. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/1639902/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>.

⁴⁹¹ Raymond R. Coffey, *The Washington Post*, “Hanoi Hannah: U.S. toll read to mournful music,” August 6, 1967, A25. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/143200226/fulltextPDF/DD03C2B8CCA4439PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁴⁹² Henry J. Taylor, *The Amarillo Globe-Times*, “Castro’s regime is still bitterly fought but without USA backing,” January 8, 1965, 22.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/29550425/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁴⁹³ *The Times Record*, “Hanoi Hannah,” September 1, 1965, 18. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/58828950/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

regular reporting of her broadcasts. They continued to sexualize her program thus deemphasizing her political arguments and intellectual prowess. Objectifying Hannah, as with Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, and Seoul City Sue, diminished her as a serious propagandist, a level of professionalism only reserved for men such as William Joyce and Fred Kaltenbach. Although many press reports indicated that Hannah mostly shunned the sexual innuendos and suggestive tones of Axis Sally, her sexuality nonetheless lay in how the GIs perceived her voice. The press, however, criticized her delivery nonetheless. For example, an article from January of 1966 suggested that Hannah mostly remained “all business” with no,

sex and sexuality. No reminders of Mom’s apple pie or mental sniffs of perfume on the girl every soldier leaves behind. Not on the People’s time. She comes on like a WAC sergeant.⁴⁹⁴

The article went on to mention that with Hannah, no small talk exists, “no intimacies and no nonsense.” This would seem to run counter to the argument that Hannah was a femme fatale, but to U.S. troops serving in Southeast Asia, they were attracted to her voice nonetheless. Hannah did not have to try to be sexually aggressive through innuendo (like Gillars) or giggly with playful jabs (like Toguri), or outwardly flirtatious (like Zucca). The tonal qualities of her delivery fascinated GIs serving in an almost womanless world of the military.

Some journalists disputed this, however. For example, an article on how Hannah also directed broadcasts at Australian troops described her as a woman disk jockey “who broadcasts nightly from North Vietnam with alternative threats and sexy suggestions.”⁴⁹⁵ The article went on to mention that her sensual voice had won many fans among U.S. and Australian personnel, and so did her music selection, which originally featured only Soviet jazz and Vietnamese pieces

⁴⁹⁴ Tom Tiede, *The Bristol Daily Courier*, “Hanoi Hannah a heartless hag,” January 1, 1966, 7. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/51740675/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁴⁹⁵ “From Tokyo Rose to Hanoi Hattie,” *Variety* July 14, 1965, 1 & 13.

but switched to popular rock and roll to further entice and entertain the troops. Her “sexy announcement” that opened each show, per the article, included the line, “Greetings dirty imperialists.”⁴⁹⁶ Another article reminded Americans that “soldiers will always listen to a woman’s voice, especially if it’s soft and Sexy.” The author went on to add that Hanoi Hannah was a “vocal sex bomb.”⁴⁹⁷ The article also mentioned that Hannah had yet to affect troop morale, and quotes one soldier as saying, “If she’s as sexy as she sounds, she can share my tent any night, but she’s gotta promise to keep her mouth shut.”

The assessment of Hanoi Hannah in the Australian press bore remarkable similarities to the American press. One paper, for example, referred to Hannah’s broadcasts as “a mixture of pop tunes, soft patter and feminine charm.”⁴⁹⁸ Another referred to China’s Peking Polly and Hanoi Hannah as “two almond-eyed Orientals” who were “sweet-talking young things who blast ‘American imperialism’ and ‘Yankee murderers’ and such.”⁴⁹⁹ Many journalists wrote along these lines, which included references to Hannah’s sexuality followed by biting criticism of her vitriolic propaganda.

As with Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, and Seoul City Sue, U.S. servicemen envisioned Hanoi Hannah as an attractive woman whose beauty matched her alluring voice. The press, always objectifying these women, produced countless articles speculating as to her physical appearance. In doing so, the media shifted the narrative to her feminine qualities and less on her intellectual

⁴⁹⁶ Another report referenced this sign-on with Hanoi Hattie. As mentioned above, it is quite possible the press confused these two women when reporting.

⁴⁹⁷ *Sunday Gazette-Mail*, “Parade’s special: Intelligence report,” October 2, 1966, 22. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/42507354/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁴⁹⁸ Graham Gambie, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, “From Graham Gambie,” July 11, 1965, 9. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/123934818/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁴⁹⁹ Tom Coffman, *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, “Propaganda wafted across Viet Nam,” November 24, 1965, 6. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/25498757/?terms=Propaganda%2Bwafted%2Bacross%2BViet%2BNam>.

arguments and social commentary, quite the opposite of how the media portrayed their male counterparts. Specifically, the media pondered the question of whether Hannah's appearance matched her alluring voice. Article titles such as "Hanoi Hannah: A Beauty or Hag?"⁵⁰⁰ dotted newspapers across the nation. One commented that GIs envisioned Hannah as a "luscious lotus blossom and others figure as being just a hazzled old hag with a wart on her nose."⁵⁰¹ The article also recited instances where GIs listening to Hannah gave cat-calls of glee when her voice came across the airwaves. Excited pronouncements such as "Talk to me sweetheart," "What a broad," and "what a cat," were common in evening camps when Hanoi's program came on. Such commentary painted Hanoi Hannah as a North Vietnamese gimmick. She, as with her predecessors, became objects of GI fascination and media amusement. The media, when not criticizing Hanoi Hannah for trying to lower GI morale, routinely printed soldier reaction to her broadcasts emphasizing their sexualized banter to illustrate how ineffective she was. This contradictory style of coverage ran consistently with all five radio sirens. The media presented them as dangerous femme fatales out to destroy the morale of servicemen while simultaneously presenting them as nothing more than radio gimmicks out to tease soldiers with feminine charms.

According to press reports, Hannah's original radio program ran fifteen minutes and included Vietnamese musical selections that few soldiers enjoyed hearing. On December 1, 1965, Hannah revamped her show to a half hour broadcast. She also began playing more popular American music, much to the elation of GIs and Marines. This occurred at a time when the U.S. temporarily halted its massive bombing campaign in North Vietnam in hopes of procuring a peace treaty. The cessation was disregarded by the North Vietnamese as a trick and they

⁵⁰⁰ *The Daily Times*, "Hanoi Hannah: A beauty or hag?," January 29, 1966, 7.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/83589202/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁰¹ Tom Tiede, "Hanoi Hannah a heartless hag," 7.

continued to infiltrate the South through the Ho Chi Minh trail despite American attempts to stop it. Most likely, the expansion of Hannah's program resulted in an intensified effort to capitalize on the realization that the Vietnam War would be, in Defense Secretary Robert McNamara's words, "a long one, that time is their ally, and that their staying power is superior to ours."⁵⁰²

Hanoi Hannah's longer program allowed her more time to tie her propaganda into events happening in the United States. She sought to use these events to demoralize U.S. troops by illustrating how isolated they were from the growing antiwar sentiment. In other words, the American citizenry became increasingly against their mission in Southeast Asia. The press wrote extensively about Hannah's expanded program. Describing her as having a "velvet voice," one article defined the new program as a mixture of music combined with Hannah reading news reports from across the U.S. critical of the war, and more recently, interviews from POWs as well as letters from dead GIs read over the air. Ironically, however, servicemen still enjoyed listening even though the revised program carried with it more propaganda. The article referenced one soldier commenting that Hannah "talks a lot of tripe—but she sounds okay as a doll."⁵⁰³ This despite exaggerated statements like Hannah declaring once that the North Vietnamese downed eight hundred American aircraft and slaughtered ten thousand U.S. soldiers in battlefield encounters.⁵⁰⁴ As with Tokyo Rose, many GIs would hear reports of battles lost during the day, battles the soldiers knew they had won.⁵⁰⁵

⁵⁰² <http://www.historyplace.com/unitedstates/vietnam/index-1965.html>

⁵⁰³ *The Christian Science Monitor*, "Hanoi Hannah' hikes propaganda," December 10, 1965, 12.
<http://search.proquest.com/libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/510768898/fulltextPDF/59A1BB4206914BE2PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁵⁰⁴ Tom Tiede, "Hanoi Hannah a heartless hag," 7.

⁵⁰⁵ *The Bristol Daily Courier*, "Brothers renew old ties—in Viet Nam," July 13, 1966, 8.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/9657454/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

The Oracle of Southeast Asia

As American troops sought out Viet Cong forces during Operation Masher in 1966, Americans back home saw combat with an immediacy never witnessed over nightly television news broadcasts. American B-52 bombers began widespread campaigns in North Vietnam with an intensity unseen since the Second World War. Americans learned through the mass media and Vietnamese propaganda that these aerial bombardments destroyed up to 20,000 acres of farmland, and U.S. troops had been accused of burning down isolated villages in search of Viet Cong guerillas. In addition, the peace movement in America regularly protested the war with countless thousands demanding an immediate end to hostilities and a rapid reduction of U.S. armed forces from Southeast Asia. Veterans of World War II and Korea staged protests in New York City burning their military discharge papers in a show of defiance for President Johnson's escalation of military operations in Vietnam. In the U.S., soldiers trained to resist enemy propaganda in a variety of ways including being subjected to hours of a mock "Hanoi Hannah" type broadcast using a fictitious radio siren named Brainwash Bonnie.⁵⁰⁶ This showed that the U.S. military took Hanoi Hannah's program serious as a propaganda instrument even as the American press often portrayed her as nothing more than a gimmick using sex to push her propaganda.

Radio Hanoi, and thus Hanoi Hannah, played on this growing American reluctance to support the war through propaganda designed to weaken GI's resolve. One of the tactics Hannah used was an uncanny ability, like Tokyo Rose, to predict military operations, and in some cases, this could be slightly unnerving to GIs. As writer and Vietnam War veteran Don North put it,

⁵⁰⁶ United Press International, *Los Angeles Times*, "All a game: Sultry voice adds misery to GI ordeal," February 21, 1968, A10.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/164983386/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

Inevitably, the stories of her insights and military intelligence grew with each telling and she was often credited with broadcasting Viet Cong offensives in advance and within hours of battle knowing the names and hometowns of dead American soldiers.⁵⁰⁷

For example, one article described U.S. soldiers' anxiety whenever Hannah singled out their base for an upcoming attack. "They announce that on such-and-such a date your base is going to be bombed," the article quoted a young soldier. "You hear it night after night and you start to get nervous... You start to think that something might really happen."⁵⁰⁸ A detachment of Marines on Hill 22 in Da Nang stood ready to ward off any attack because Hanoi Hannah forewarned them to expect one.⁵⁰⁹ Per the article, "the feminine propagandist warned two months ago over the North Viet Nameese radio that the rebels would attack Hills 22 and 41 outside Da Nang." The attack did come, and the article added that the Marines "still remembered her warning when a Communist human wave" stormed Hill 22.⁵¹⁰ Articles such as these underscored the irony of press coverage regarding Hanoi Hannah. The media often portrayed her as a harmless vixen of the airwaves and yet at the same time, a dangerous radio siren who could cause servicemen to worry about impending attacks and growing antiwar sentiments stateside.

As the war progressed, the media often took such stories and wrote to diminish their impact through humorous accounts of American troops listening to Hanoi Hannah. Some GIs and Marines, for example, had fun with these dire prognostications. For example, the *Pacific Stars and Stripes* ran an article about troop morale recounting an instance where Hanoi Hannah

⁵⁰⁷ Don North, "In search for Hanoi Hannah," accessed May 25, 2015, www.psywarrior.com/hannah.html.

⁵⁰⁸ Tom Coffman, "Propaganda wafted across Viet Nam," 6.

⁵⁰⁹ Although the article does not specify, these Marines were most likely part of the 7th Marines, who served on Hilltop 22 at the Charlie Company Combat Base at one point in the Da Nang region. More information can be found here: <http://www.marzone.com/7thMarines/Mp0001.htm>.

⁵¹⁰ United Press International, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, "Attack by Reds recalls warning by Hanoi Hannah," October 31, 1965, 19A. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/140497846/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

broadcasted to Marines that the Viet Cong would soon be “eating in Marine messhalls by July 1.” In response, “a group of hospitable Leathernecks made a sign for the door of their mess— ‘Welcome Hanoi Hannah.’”⁵¹¹ Soldiers from another military base told their cooks to fry up “a mess of liver” because they were expecting company after Hannah predicted the VC would be eating in their mess halls on July 4. According to one sergeant at the base, “when Hannah told us about the VC eating our chow we thought it was her usual bunch of malarkey.”⁵¹² The sergeant then recounted that he was half asleep when the first shells hit a short time later. Comedian Bob Hope also weighed-in on Hannah’s seemingly uncanny ability to predict U.S. action. In his article, Hope quipped that Hannah,

has been broadcasting with disconcerting accuracy the location and the time of our shows here. I think that’s how our escort officers find out where we are going—they listen to Hannah and take names.⁵¹³

In another article by Hope, one dealing with his stay aboard the hospital vessel, U.S.S. Sanctuary, he indicated that he could not report the exact location of the ship, but if curious readers wanted “her exact longitude and latitude you’ll have to tune in to Hanoi Hannah.”⁵¹⁴

Hannah and a Cartoon Soldier Named Terry

American comic strips also played into the Hanoi Hannah phenomenon in a way they had not done previously with other female propagandists. As Hanoi Hannah’s legend and notoriety became more widely known, these comic strips fed into the media’s portrayal of her by stressing

⁵¹¹ Sgt. Frank Waldrop, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “A sign of good morale,” November 7, 1965, A3.

⁵¹² Karl R. Edgerton, *The San Bernardino County Sun*, “George airmen praise Marines in Viet Nam,” July 28, 1965, C1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/60565073>.

⁵¹³ Bob Hope, *The Odessa American*, “Hanoi Hannah lists time for Hope’s show,” December 27, 1965, 1A.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/66928665/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵¹⁴ King Features Syndicate, Bob Hope, *Anderson Daily Bulletin*, “Ship most loved doll in Vietnam,” December 23, 1967, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/18447001/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

many of the traits she became associated with. These include Hannah's seemingly oracle-like ability to predict military actions with stunning accuracy and her hard-hitting stance against "imperialist" American actions in Southeast Asia. These comic strips also served to demystify her by appropriating her legend as a comic character where battle-hardened GIs confronted the North Vietnamese radio siren and defied her with heroic actions against the Viet Cong.

Hannah made frequent appearances in a long-running comic strip called *Terry and the Pirates*. Created by cartoonist Milton Caniff, the strip began running in 1934 and centered around Terry Lee, a globetrotting young man who travels with his companions across Asia. Terry served as an Air Force major in Vietnam. Hanoi Hannah and her mysterious knowledge of military movements became a focal point in the comic strip from January through March of 1965.

In one episode, Terry and his commanding officer listen to Hanoi Hannah's broadcast for hints as to what the North Vietnamese know of his plans to secure a new airbase. Hannah, whom the brigadier general describes as a "Dragon,"⁵¹⁵ comes over the speakers declaring, "Hey Yankee pilots! 'Hanoi Hannah' calling... Where will your wives be tonight while you wait for death in the boondocks?"⁵¹⁶ The next edition begins with Hanoi Hannah continuing to berate the Air Force pilots. Terry asks the general who this mysterious woman is and refers to her as yet another Tokyo Rose.⁵¹⁷ The next day's issue picks up with Terry, still meeting with the general,

⁵¹⁵ Most likely, the general is referencing the stereotype of femme-fatale Asian women, sometimes referred to as Dragon Ladies. In fact, one of Terry's archrivals was an Asian woman named Dragon Lady.

⁵¹⁶ *Abilene-Reporter News*, "Terry and the Pirates," January 10, 1965, 10. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/45166191/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>; incidentally, Trinh Thi Ngo never referred to herself as Hanoi Hannah. She did not even know about the name until years later.

⁵¹⁷ *Abilene-Reporter News*, "Terry and the Pirates," January 11, 1965, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/45166598/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

describing Hanoi Hannah as “just another sexy-voiced, radio propaganda gimmick.”⁵¹⁸ The general acknowledges Terry could be right but voices his concern for officer morale nonetheless. Two issues later, the general and Terry talk about potential Viet Cong actions against the airbase, and the general replies that Hanoi Hannah “seems to know what’s up. The Viet Cong get the word from her broadcasts, so you find out and let Ol’ Snapper know. I hate not being an insider.”⁵¹⁹ The general is obviously referring to Hanoi Hannah’s legendary ability to know military plans before he does.

In yet another issue, Terry discovers the VC are moving artillery pieces in the jungle a short distance from the airbase. He reports the information to the general who agrees the artillery presents an imminent danger to the air base, but exactly how and when the VC would strike remains a mystery. Once again, the general quips, “want to bet ‘Hanoi Hannah’ knows?” Hannah then comes across the radio warning the men of a massive attack and begins singing, “By dawn’s early light, Yankee fools will have to fight...”⁵²⁰ In the next issue, Hannah coos, “...by the rockets’ red glare, let the Yankees beware...” The general turns to Terry and quips that Hannah “write’s a miserable parody,” and that she “overdoes the psychological warfare bit.”⁵²¹ The general’s statement reflected the American media’s overall assessment of Hanoi Hannah as a rather poor propagandist. The truth, however, could not have been more different. Such a statement would have reflected the propaganda efforts of Mildred Gillars’ Axis Sally more so than Hanoi Hannah. Whereas Mildred Gillars often produced overly dramatic propaganda that

⁵¹⁸ *The Evening Standard*, “Terry and the Pirates,” January 12, 1965, 12.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/27806957/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵¹⁹ *Idaho State Journal*, “Terry and the Pirates,” January 14, 1965, 28.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/15854555/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵²⁰ *Florence Morning News*, “Terry and the Pirates,” February 21, 1965, 39.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/68619133/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵²¹ *The Daily Reporter*, “Terry and the Pirates,” February 22, 1965, 17.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/16847555/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

occasionally bordered the absurd, Hanoi Hannah eschewed such tactics in favor of hardline monologues condemning U.S. foreign policy.

Terry and the Pirates featured many references to Hanoi Hannah, usually regarding her knowing the enemy's battle plans as well as details of U.S. military movements. Another comic strip, *Steve Canyon*, occasionally featured Hannah as well. *Terry and the Pirates* creator Milton Caniff also developed *Steve Canyon*, a comic strip that ran from 1947 through 1988 ending not long after Caniff died. The comic centered around Steve Canyon, an adventurer and world traveler who served in the military as a colonel during the Vietnam War. In one issue, Canyon and his chopper crew land in a field for the express purpose of tuning in to "our girl." Hanoi Hannah then comes on and begins her daily diatribe against U.S. forces,

And this is Hanoi Hannah speaking! Dear homesick Americans... I shall now play "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny" for Major Donn of Lynchburg! He and his tired and battle-weary helicopter crews... will be sitting around listening—while he is being briefed on your next unpleasant job. Too bad those rear-echelon troops in the city will be kissing the cute dolls at the cafes...sighhh... instead of you, you grim, dirty—and doomed dopes who did not burn your draft cards...⁵²²

Another issue has Colonel Canyon contemplating whether the Viet Cong already know his plans. He jokes to his staff assistant, "Hanoi Hannah will probably give us the word!"⁵²³ The comic strip portrayed Hanoi Hannah as a beautiful Asian woman sitting in a darkened studio in front of a microphone saying, "Hello lonely Americans! This is your friend to the North. Tonight we in the Democratic Peoples Republic feel especially sorry for you! How very desperate your leaders have become..."⁵²⁴ Hannah then accuses the Americans of murdering a group of school kids after an Air Force bombing run at a nearby military airfield.

⁵²² *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, "Steve Canyon," January 27, 1966, 26.

⁵²³ *European Stars and Stripes*, "Steve Canyon," May 25, 1968, 15.

⁵²⁴ *The Salt Lake Tribune*, "Steve Canyon," May 26, 1968.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/13207705/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

Comic strips such as these accurately referenced elements of the Hanoi Hannah legend from her seemingly uncanny ability to know inside military information to her routine commentary regarding the American anti-war movement. Although Trinh Thi Ngo never referred to herself as Hanoi Hannah, she did regularly tease servicemen with certain doom should they continue fighting in Vietnam. She did not, however, do so in an adolescent or overly exaggerated manner as the comic strips portrayed. By all accounts, Hannah retained a certain air of dignity in her broadcasts, as if adhering to a strict code of professionalism. Many newspaper articles referenced her as maintaining a serious, business-first demeanor in her broadcasts. The American press, however, played upon the dragon lady stereotype to construct Hannah's cartoon representation. Her femme fatale qualities were greatly exaggerated for the comic strips.

Trinh Thi Ngo mentioned in interviews later in life that she did not propagandize that soldiers' wives and girlfriends were stateside cheating on them as did Axis Sally. In a 1995 article, Trin Thi Ngo remarked that,

We never talked about things such as, 'When you are here, your wife at home is doing some bad things.' We think it is not honest... Nor did we need to. The truth about growing American public opposition to the war was powerful propaganda by itself.⁵²⁵

However, some soldiers did recall hearing these types of broadcasts, especially when they were called out by name and told their wives had been unfaithful. George Hart of Boston recalled a time when Hanoi Hannah mentioned his wife had left him. According to Hart, he received a *Dear John* letter in the mail a few days later.⁵²⁶ Whether coincidence played a part in this may never be known, but it did cause some soldiers to question just how entrenched in American

⁵²⁵ Associated Press, Kathy Wilhelm, *The Salina Journal*, "Psychological warrior: Years after Vietnam War's end, Hanoi Hannah continues to lure Americans," March 29, 1995, 6. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/209567/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵²⁶ Don North, "In search for Hanoi Hannah," accessed May 25, 2015, www.psywarrior.com/hannah.html.

military intelligence the North Vietnamese were.

Responding to Hanoi Hannah

Hanoi Hannah, despite what the press wrote about her, remained a solid hit with U.S. servicemen throughout the war. The soldiers of Vietnam had their popular radio siren as did GIs of both World War II and Korea. The United States, however, wanted to find a worthy competitor. Two names stood out among female broadcasters of the period. One was Patty Krause, a San Diego native and veteran USO star who began broadcasting for the Armed Forces Network Radio in late 1967. The press universally hailed Krause as America's answer to Hanoi Hannah and never failed to refer to her as glamorous and attractive Brunette.⁵²⁷ Krause's half hour daily program featured popular American tunes, requests, and she even read letters from the U.S. addressed to American soldiers.⁵²⁸ Krause's tenure at the microphone did not last long, but she did ultimately receive a Defense Department medal for outstanding civilian service in the Vietnam Conflict.⁵²⁹ The American press occasionally referred to her as Saigon Patty.

The other, and perhaps more popular "American answer to Hanoi Hannah" came from Hollywood. On December 19, 1966, Armed Forces Radio launched "a blonde, green-eyed weapon" to combat the popular siren of Radio Hanoi.⁵³⁰ Chris Noel, then girlfriend of actor Burt Reynolds, was already a rising film and television star when she agreed to join the Armed Forces

⁵²⁷ United Press International, Gay Pauley, *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, "She's our answer to Hanoi Hannah" December 24, 1967, 4B.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/100688478/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵²⁸ Associated Press, Linda Cover, *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, "'Patty' parried Hannah" June 25, 1969, 1C.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/27875482/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵²⁹ Associated Press, *The Escanaba Daily Press*, "Watersmeet man awarded medal" March 22, 1969, 5. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32038056/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵³⁰ Associated Press, *Rushville Republican*, "U.S. to combat Hanoi Hannah, Red broadcaster, with cute blonde" November 17, 1966, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/83315652/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

Radio. The press described Noel as “mini-skirted 5-foot-6 and 115 pounds, with a slightly husky voice and a wide-eyed look that makes her girl next door one moment, woman of the world the next.”⁵³¹ Unlike Patty Krause, however, Chris Noel recorded her program, titled *A Date With Chris* in a Hollywood studio, and the tapes were quickly flown over to Saigon for evening broadcasts. The hour-long program aired daily usually starting around nine in the evening.

The American press wrote heavily about her sexuality, her vocal delivery, and the fact that she would undoubtedly put an end to Hanoi Hannah’s popularity. Like her enemy counterparts, Noel and others fielded by the U.S. Government were themselves objectified to present them to U.S. forces as sexy, charming, and worth a man’s time. The only difference is press covering Noel remained always cheerful, stressing her positive and desirable traits. One journalist described her voice as “dripping the magic of moonlight on the Mekong,” and would readily compete head-to-head with the “nightly effusions of Hanoi Hannah, a propaganda pussy cat who purrs anti-Americanisms in between awful musical doses of Strauss waltzes and atonal Vietnamese singing.”⁵³² The media did not write about Noel’s intellectual acumen or the quality of her broadcasts regarding any discussion she might give. It focused instead on the very same things it criticized Hanoi Hannah and her predecessors for, their sexual qualities and siren-like voices. Other articles introduced Noel as a “sex kitten,”⁵³³ while proclaiming she would introduce records to GIs in her “sultriest, sexiest voice”⁵³⁴ and have no problem besting Hannah in the air-to-air combat of the sirens. *The Pacific Stars and Stripes* introduced her as a former

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Associated Press, *The San Bernardino County Sun*, “Down with Hanoi Hannah,” December 19, 1966, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/61276412/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵³³ *Detroit Free Press*, “Sex kitten arrives to combat Reds,” December 19, 1966, 12D. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/97550920/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵³⁴ Jim Shaw, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “Blonde bomber takes to air,” December 13, 1966, 6.

beauty pageant winner with the measurements of “36-23-34.”⁵³⁵ Her “kittenish costume” another article mentioned,

suggests a go-go girl out for kicks in a square world, slightly breathless with excitement, communicates moonlight on the back porch, chocolate sundaes at the corner drug store and the girls they (soldiers) left behind.⁵³⁶

The press made it clear Chris Noel supported both the war effort and servicemen. One interviewer asked Noel what she thought of her on-air competition, Hanoi Hannah, after hearing a couple broadcasts. Noel quickly responded, “first of all, I couldn’t even understand her.”⁵³⁷ Her broadcasting efforts, while popular with U.S. servicemen, did not dethrone Hanoi Hannah as a radio sensation. The North Vietnamese did, however, place a ten-thousand-dollar bounty on Chris Noel at one point to silence her.⁵³⁸ It is doubtful the North Vietnamese would have felt threatened by the broadcasts of Chris Noel and Patty Krause. Reports of such a bounty could have been fictitious and disseminated by the media to make it seem as if Noel and Krause’s broadcasts were being taken serious by the enemy. It could have been started by the North Vietnamese to further demoralize U.S. troops who might believe the threats.

Hannah’s Hippies

In keeping with Vietnam Veterans Against the War writer John Upton’s six tactics used by Radio Hanoi, Hannah’s program adhered to each one. The exact times of Hannah’s program varied per news reports, but often, the press reported Hanoi Hannah coming on at 1:00 p.m. and again at 11:00 p.m. Some reports indicated the same show would be repeated at least thrice daily.

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Associated Press, Hugh A. Mulligan, *The Anniston Star*, “Chris joins Big Red One,” December 31, 1966, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/115683629/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵³⁷ Susan Dibble, *Pacific Stars and Stripes*, “‘Hannah’ no competition: Chris,” December 31, 1966, 7.

⁵³⁸ Claudia Gary & David T. Zabecki, “The Vietnam interview: A date with Chris Noel,” accessed May 25, 2015, www.historynet.com/the-vietnam-interview-a-date-with-chris-noel.htm.

Regardless, nearly every broadcast began with her greeting American soldiers followed by a guest speaker and perhaps a reading or two from American anti-war protestors or protest groups.⁵³⁹ Music interspersed with bits of propaganda followed. Hannah also read daily casualty reports, isolating each “American death by adding his rank and address, following Stalin’s theory that one death is a tragedy while millions of deaths are statistics.”⁵⁴⁰ The program usually ended after the daily casualty readings.

By late 1965, one of Radio Hanoi’s most effective techniques in affecting GI morale involved reporting growing anti-war efforts in the United States. Principal among Hannah’s regular sources of information was an organization known as Radio Stateside, commonly attributed to the work of two California men, Steve Fischer and Joe Epstein. Radio Stateside, occasionally referred to as Liberation Radio, began recording messages from anti-war protestor groups in the Los Angeles suburbs of Watts and shipped them regularly to Hanoi to be read over Hanoi Hannah’s program. This unprecedented collaboration between Americans and enemy broadcasters quickly became the ire of the U.S. Government and soldiers serving in combat zones in Southeast Asia. Hanoi Hannah made contributions from Radio Stateside a regular part of her show. If anything, this collusion between stateside American citizens and Radio Hanoi represented the most potent propaganda effort of any of the five radio sirens. With Radio Stateside, Hanoi Hannah had an active communication network with antiwar protestors that would eventually include American celebrities and even a few U.S. senators. This elevated Hanoi Hannah to a serious radio propagandist, the likes of which the U.S. had not seen in

⁵³⁹ The expanded timeframe of Hannah’s show to thirty minutes allowed for more in-depth analysis of events in the United States as well as guest speakers.

⁵⁴⁰ Copley News Service, *The Amarillo Globe-Times*, “Hanoi Hannah spouts perfumed propaganda to US GIs,” July 14, 1966, 28.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/29962957/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

previous wars.

Many newspaper and magazine articles editorialized on Hannah's ties with the anti-war movement in the United States. Rumors circulated that Hanoi Hannah imitators were broadcasting anti-war propaganda within the United States reminiscent of what came from Radio Hanoi.⁵⁴¹ Yet Radio Stateside continued to be a point of interest for U.S. journalists. One article quoted a broadcast of Hanoi Hannah introducing Radio Stateside's recording: "It gives me much pleasure to present your fellow Americans bringing you the news that you want to hear, but are still in the dark about."⁵⁴² The segment then features the recorded voices of Epstein and Fisher proclaiming,

Hi guys. This is radio stateside attempting to tell our buddies, the GIs, what's really happening in Viet Nam and here. And that what you are doing is possibly not being supported by the United States... Now get this, guys. The right for liberty is really here at home. Do you think that by burning house and killing children that you are putting an end to the war? Lay down your arms. Go on a hunger strike. Disassociate yourselves from this murder and hate... Come home and fight prejudice and poverty in your own country instead of the sweat and heat of a land thousands of miles away.⁵⁴³

Not only did Radio Stateside contribute content to Hanoi Hannah's program, its propaganda messages practically mirrored hers in almost every respect. Like Hannah, they made the case that U.S. soldiers were actively involved in an increasingly unpopular and possibly illegal war against innocent civilians. Secondly, the real fight for U.S. soldiers was in ending racial bigotry and societal unrest at home. These points had been made by Hanoi Hannah countless times in her daily diatribes against the U.S. Government.

Regular recordings of influential Americans opposed to the war also became standard fare as well in Radio Stateside's broadcasts. One article referenced a recording made by Simon

⁵⁴¹ Patricia Young, *Clovis News-Journal*, "Even U.S. has Hanoi Hannahs," June 28, 1971, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/1952494/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁴² *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*

Casady, who served as president of the California Democratic Council, a political lobby claiming around seventy thousand members. The article describes Casady having control of “quite a few million votes” who believed “it takes more courage to tear up a draft card than to fight a war in Viet Nam.”⁵⁴⁴ Hanoi Hannah even included names and addresses of organizations provided by Radio Stateside for GIs to write to discover how they could disassociate themselves from the war. One such organization was the Central Committee of Conscientious Objectors located in Philadelphia. These organizations urged soldiers to desert or apply for conscientious objector status, return home and help fight, in their words, to liberate the United States. Radio Stateside commentators would routinely parrot Hanoi Hannah’s assertions that the war could not be won and that American soldiers continuing to fight stood a chance of being tried for war crimes. As with Hannah’s broadcasts, Radio Stateside harshly condemned the Johnson administration and what it considered to be the “puppets” of South Vietnam.

The American press reported negatively on these organizations and routinely ran feature stories on various elements of Radio Stateside’s leadership. One article featured a 27-year-old activist named Ronald B Romsey, who called himself a “super patriot” whose main duty included appealing to GIs “to reconsider the position they are in. We appeal as fellow Americans concerned about the lives being lost and coffins being shipped home.”⁵⁴⁵ Ramsey indicated the tapes were recorded in Watts, shipped to a post office box in Quebec, then forwarded to London, on to Prague, and finally to Radio Hanoi where Hanoi Hannah would use them in her daily

⁵⁴⁴ Fulton Lewis Jr., *Lebanon Daily News*, “U.S. leftists supplying Hanoi Radio with propaganda tapes,” January 12, 1966, 4.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/5335370/?terms=U.S.%2Bleftists%2Bsupplying%2BHanoi%2BRadio%2Bwith%2Bpropaganda%2Btapes>

⁵⁴⁵ Philip Fradkin, *Los Angeles Times*, “U.S. troops urged to quit: Sent tapes to Hanoi, ‘Super Patriot’ says” February 9, 1966, 3.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/161154497/?terms=U.S.%2Btroops%2B urged%2Bto%2Bquit>

broadcasts. Many of the recordings urged American soldiers to drop their weapons and come home alive and well. Hanoi Hannah and Radio Stateside seemed to feed off one another in content and scope of arguments presented.

The effectiveness of Radio Stateside's campaign is hard to gauge based upon press reports of the period. Some articles referenced soldiers slightly dismayed by the American recordings against them, while other articles dismissed any notion of harm to soldier morale. For example, one article mentioned a five-minute daily segment by Hanoi Hannah titled *Program for the GIs* where some of Radio Stateside's material could be heard. The article claimed that:

Neither the broadcasts by Hanoi Hannah nor the new series of letters to the troops over the clandestine Liberation Radio seem to have much effect on American morale. The broadcasts are not widely listened to by Americans. When they are, they are largely treated with derision. So far as is known, there has not been a single case of American defection in the Vietnam War.⁵⁴⁶

Radio Stateside remained Hanoi Hannah's only direct connection with the anti-war movement in the United States. The collusion between the two would have most likely affected soldier morale, especially knowing that a growing number of American citizens did not support their service and sacrifices in Southeast Asia. Perhaps the press avoided heavy reporting of disenfranchised soldiers as to diminish Hanoi Hannah's power as a propagandist.

The press did, however, cover some instances of soldier morale being affected. As massive protests across the U.S. gave Hannah and Radio Hanoi plenty of material to propagandize with, several newspapers quoted one soldier saying, "you should hear Hanoi

⁵⁴⁶ John Hughes, *The Christian Science Monitor*, "GIs deride 'Hanoi Hannah,'" August 31, 1965, 1.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/510742490/fulltextPDF/8E0AFC77FAC14AA6PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

Hannah. All she's using is those hippies and the demonstrators against the war."⁵⁴⁷ Another article claimed Hannah's coverage of "anti-Americanism of 'peace marchers' and draft-card burners"⁵⁴⁸ seemed to infuriate some soldiers. Several press accounts did reiterate the fact that some morale loss in soldiers occurred because of the American anti-war movement, especially when Hannah used American protestors in her broadcasts. Most press reports, however, did not. One article quoted an American soldier as saying, "The demonstrations aren't helping the United States—even if the demonstrators might be right."⁵⁴⁹ Another article criticized a February 1968 UCLA speech by famed pediatrician Dr. Benjamin Spock regarding the atrocities of American soldiers in Vietnam. The speech, according to the article, quickly made its way over to Hanoi where Hannah rebroadcast it for U.S. soldiers to hear.⁵⁵⁰

These quotes illustrate that when the media did admit Hanoi Hannah adversely affected soldier morale, it also chastised the American antiwar movement for providing Radio Hanoi with material. Much of the press' ire against Hanoi Hannah's propaganda during the latter 1960s involved Radio Stateside and those supporting efforts to discredit the work of American military forces. Newspaper editorials often lampooned the demonstrators referring to them as Hanoi Hannah's "stateside peacenik patsys" that constantly picked on U.S. servicemen.⁵⁵¹ Others dismissed Hannah's use of anti-war demonstrations as not affecting soldier morale, citing that

⁵⁴⁷ Associated Press, *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*, "Anti-war demonstrators best friends Hanoi Hannah has, Texan at war claims," February 12, 1969, E7.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/14451291/?terms=Anti-war%2Bdemonstrators%2Bbest%2Bfriends%2BHanoi%2BHannah%2Bhas>

⁵⁴⁸ Roscoe Drummond, *The Kokomo Morning Times*, "Hannahs aren't top bananas," September 21, 1966, 4. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/32539220/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁴⁹ *Nevada State Journal*, "Eddie Fisher visit to Viet: My greatest trip," January 6, 1966, 13. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/78941513/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁵⁰ *Arizona Republic*, "Calling the turn: 'Humor depends on timing,'" February 8, 1968, 6. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/16763623/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁵¹ *The Winona Daily News*, "Watches auto stocks decline," January 8, 1967, 20. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/43560037/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

Marines, for example, mostly found the broadcasts laughable. According to one article, the “boys listen to her statistics, compare them to the ones they know to be true and then laugh them off.”⁵⁵²

By December 1969, Americans began to realize the Vietnam War had reached a state of quagmire. President Johnson’s peace talks did not come to fruition, and fighting continued on all fronts between American forces and North Vietnamese aided by Viet Cong guerillas. Considering the darkening national mood regarding Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson declined to run for a second term and ended his political career. In January, Richard Nixon inherited the Vietnam War and all its complications, and Radio Hanoi had a new enemy to propagandize against. According to reports in the media, Nixon had no intentions of being the first American president to lose a war.⁵⁵³ He publically stated that any withdrawal of U.S. forces in Vietnam must first be preceded by the removal of Communist forces from the area coupled with South Vietnam’s ability to defend its own borders. Predictably, North Vietnam rejected these demands. Hanoi Hannah followed Nixon’s inauguration with a dire statement. She confidently proclaimed the growing anti-war movement in the U.S. would in effect give Nixon “his first taste of the kind of massive anti-Vietnam war demonstrations that drove his predecessor into political oblivion.”⁵⁵⁴

⁵⁵² *Tuscon Daily Citizen*, “Tusconian says: Boredom real foe to Asian combat,” November 19, 1966, 10.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/18210197/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah%2B%2BBoredom%2Breal%2Bfoe%2Bto%2BAsian%2Bcombat>

⁵⁵³ Jack Anderson, *The Delta Democrat Times*, “Nixon keeps talking ‘hawk’ in his private conversations,” October 6, 1969, 4.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/22208492/?terms=Nixon%2Bkeeps%2Btalking%2B%2Bhawk%2Bin%2Bhis%2Bprivate%2Bconversations>

⁵⁵⁴ United Press International, *The Bridgeport Post*, “Hanoi Hannah sees Nixon following LBJ,” October 14, 1969, 36.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/60808688/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

Many soldiers looked upon the peace demonstrators unfavorably. Others may have appreciated the effort to end the war but worried the peace movement may prolong it. Some evidence suggests this might have been the case. For example, after the North Vietnamese launched a counteroffensive action during the holiday of Tet in 1968, the bloody battles that followed resulted in, by all accounts, a loss for North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces. Thus, morale for North Vietnamese hit an all-time low. The United States had sustained less than ten thousand casualties at this point in the war. Some reports suggest a peace negotiation could have been achieved after the failure of the Tet Offensive, but constant American media reports of growing anti-war sentiment in the U.S., and a CBS broadcast by Walter Cronkite erroneously proclaiming the campaign a defeat for U.S. forces emboldened Hanoi. According to a recent article,

These distorted reports were inspirational to the NVA. They changed their plans from a negotiated surrender and decided instead, they only needed to persevere for one more hour, day, week, month, eventually the protestors in America would help them to achieve a victory they knew they could not win on the battlefield.⁵⁵⁵

Press articles sprinkled various quotes from battle-hardened GIs regarding their reactions to the protests. Many soldiers felt the anti-war movement made the situation harder on them. A few even wished they could have been involved in the protests.⁵⁵⁶ One special forces soldier, however, publically stated that Hanoi's broadcasting of the anti-war movement did harm soldier morale, especially the prisoners of war. The soldier served time in a prisoner of war camp, and he and fellow prisoners mostly laughed off Hannah's assertions that the U.S. populace increasingly did not support the war effort until she broadcast recorded anti-war speeches from

⁵⁵⁵ "Tom Hayden and Jane Fonda," accessed June 1, 2015, www.war-stories.com/pow-hayden-rowe-1965.htm.

⁵⁵⁶ United Press International, *Anderson Herald*, "American servicemen in Saigon react bitterly to war protest," October 15, 1969, 3. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/25323192/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

American senators.⁵⁵⁷ Vice President Spiro T. Agnew addressed the growing anti-war sentiments in April 1971 when he condemned statements by “leading members of the United States, prestigious columnists and news commentators, academic figures,” and “some church organizations.”⁵⁵⁸ Agnew declared that such damaging remarks were as demoralizing to servicemen as if they had come directly from Hanoi Hannah. One columnist even suggested Radio Hanoi saw the growing anti-war base as a “fifth column” in America to be exploited as propaganda. Additionally,

a Yank in his foxhole may laugh off a Lord haw-Haw, a Tokyo Rose, or a Hanoi Hannah—but it chills him to the very marrow to read that the same brand of hooey is being paddled by ‘respectable’ citizens at home.”⁵⁵⁹

North Vietnamese captors subjected American prisoners of war to Hanoi Hannah broadcasts daily. Prisoners regularly heard Radio Hanoi from their cells oftentimes as the only source of news from the outside world. Many prisoners would later recall Hanoi Hannah broadcasts such as one from November 8, 1966, claiming:

The Vietnamese people highly value the protest movement of the American people. We praise the American peace champions who courageously turned the courts which were trying them into forums to condemn the war. We praise the American journalists and writers who, in defiance of repression and threats, valiantly exposed the crimes of the Johnson clique in Vietnam.

Another broadcast from January 23, 1966:

We were deeply impressed by the successful march on Washington during the Presidential inaugural day to welcome the victory of the South Vietnam National Front

⁵⁵⁷ Associated Press, *The Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, “Rowe cites harm in antiwar statements,” November 13, 1969, 6G.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/28003508/?terms=Rowe%2Bcites%2Bharm%2Bin%2Bantiwar%2Bstatements>

⁵⁵⁸ United Press International, *The Daily Herald*, “Declares Agnew: Negative criticism undermines morale, adds to GI’s burden,” April 1, 1971, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/6733284/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁵⁹ Morrie Ryskind, *The Argus*, “Concord and Haiphong,” April 23, 1972, 14.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/37727315/?terms=Concord%2Band%2BHaiphong>.

for Liberation and demand the withdrawal of all American troops. We extend to you a sincere thanks. We hope that we would further coordinate our activities in Vietnam.⁵⁶⁰

Several press reports emerged late in the war that American POWs were forced to listen to Hanoi Hannah two, sometimes three times a day. They routinely heard about the growing anti-war movement sweeping across the U.S.

Hanoi Hannah, Racial Propaganda, and Hanoi Jane

Radio Hanoi did not stop with only propagandizing anti-war protests. The Siren of Hanoi, like Seoul City Sue before her, effectively used racial propaganda as well. Radio Hanoi's racial propaganda came in two forms. First, early in the war, Radio Hanoi utilized African-American Korean War deserters who had been living in various parts of Asia. One such man was identified as Clarence Cecil Adams, who regularly made appearances on Radio Hanoi urging black troops in Vietnam to give up fighting and would cite racial turmoil in the U.S. as reason enough not to fight for the Americans. The African American newspaper, *The Chicago Defender*, published an article on Adams recalling stories of how his all-black unit in Korea suffered mistreatment due to race. He also equated the Vietnamese struggle for freedom to that of blacks struggling for equality in America.⁵⁶¹

Secondly, Hanoi Hannah often used American racial tension in her propaganda broadcasts. An article from March 1965 quotes Hannah as saying:

In these days, your Negro compatriots, including some of your own relatives, are being savagely suppressed by the authorities of the state of Alabama for demanding voting

⁵⁶⁰ *The Sunday News and Tribune*, "Reds counting on demonstrations to help win war," June 7, 1970, 7.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/34913846/?terms=Reds%2Bcounting%2Bon%2Bdemonstrations%2Bto%2Bhelp%2Bwin%2Bwar>

⁵⁶¹ United Press International, *The Chicago Defender*, "Negro Defector is Viet 'Tokyo Rose,'" August 14, 1965, 13.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/493129668/fulltextPDF/2E37292D7F774C66PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

rights. U.S. Negro leader Malcolm X, a resolute fighter for the freedom of Negroes, was assassinated on February 21 while addressing a Negro rally in Harlem. Reverend James Reeb, a white minister who supported the Negro struggle, was brutally murdered in Selma. Meanwhile your government has dispatched 3,000 more Marines in South Viet Nam in an attempt to intensify and expand its aggressive war... Be courageous in refusing to participate in firing at and killing the South Viet Nameese people, because that is a complete contradiction of the ideal of freedom cherished by your people.⁵⁶²

Along with including the antiwar movement in her broadcasts, Hanoi Hannah constructed potent propaganda messages that did have an adverse effect on soldier morale, especially African American soldiers serving in Southeast Asia. The most important element to these broadcasts was its veracity, as it tied actual events to her propaganda. Much as Frank Capra had done with his *Why We Fight* series in World War II, Hanoi Hannah used the American press against itself. Capra utilized Nazi film and sound recordings to showcase the danger of an Axis Victory. Hanoi Hannah showed African American soldiers what was happening in their absence by exposing them to racial injustice often reported in the press.

Hanoi Hannah's broadcasts also utilized another racial propaganda tactic. Several times she equated Vietnamese people with "colored" people of the U.S., setting up the argument that Vietnam was a "race war" in which "bad white men are shooting good colored North Vietnamese."⁵⁶³ Many times the broadcasts on Radio Hanoi were highly exaggerated, such as when one announcer told of riots between police and black and Puerto Rican protestors in which the police napalmed a Puerto Rican neighborhood leaving scores of mothers without children.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶² *The Daily Independent*, "Hanoi Hannah," March 30, 1965, 4.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/48672090/?terms=Hanoi%2BHannah>

⁵⁶³ William S. White, *The Atlanta Constitution*, "Red Chinese push race propaganda," January 11, 1966, 4.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1612064700/fulltextPDF/7C530ED659CC46C0PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁵⁶⁴ United Press International, *The Argus*, "Play on GIs emotions: Viets use psychological warfare," September 11, 1967, 8.

In another instance of intensified racial propaganda, an unidentified announcer proclaimed that “the hope, the inspiration and example the Vietnamese people have given to oppressed people throughout the world is also inspiring the Black Liberation Army of the United States... Black people realize that they are fighting the same enemy on a different front. The only battlefield for black people is America, from Harlem to Watts. The only army relevant to black people is the Black Liberation Army.”⁵⁶⁵

Hannah’s use of America’s racial turmoil in her propaganda broadcasts set her apart from her predecessors. Although Seoul City Sue had used similar tactics, Hanoi Hannah’s efforts were far more concentrated and involved the use of American defectors. Furthermore, societal unrest in the U.S. barely resembled the overall peace and complacency of 1950’s America. The ongoing Civil Rights movement, a growing backlash against the Vietnam War, especially on college campuses, combined with the prelude to the radical feminist movement of the late 1960s gave Hanoi Hannah plenty of material to choose from. Instead of making up baseless accusations and overly embellished accounts of societal unrest as did Seoul City Sue, Hanoi Hannah skillfully tapped into growing national tension in the U.S. and crafted shrewd monologues for her radio program.

As societal unrest intensified in the U.S., so did Hanoi Hannah’s propaganda efforts, especially as it involved the antiwar movement. Most of the articles on Hanoi Hannah after 1966 dealt with either Hanoi’s ties to the peace movement in the U.S. or the concentrated use of racial propaganda found on her program. Very little evidence suggests racial propaganda affected black troop morale despite the daily onslaught of these types of broadcasts; however, one article published in 1973 mentioned that at least some black soldiers were affected by the broadcasts. An African American Marine affirmed that the constant barrage of racial propaganda caused a

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/37919755/?terms=Viets%2Buse%2Bpsychological%2Bwarfare>.

⁵⁶⁵ *The Sun*, “Radio Hanoi has message especially for Negro GI’s,” August 16, 1969, A2. <http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/539112320/fulltextPDF/29DBFA2116744F4CPQ/1?accountid=14472>.

few black soldiers to disobey orders from time to time, and many agreed that Hanoi Hannah was right in her assessment of racial conditions in the U.S., but overwhelmingly African American soldiers disregarded the propaganda.⁵⁶⁶ Although Hanoi Hannah's broadcasts only adversely affected few soldiers in Vietnam, her propaganda efforts would ultimately be seen as more formidable than that of her predecessors.

Hannah's use of racial and societal tensions against U.S. servicemen went well beyond what Seoul City Sue and Axis Sally had done, but she would be most remembered for her collusion with antiwar protestors. Perhaps the greatest American asset Hanoi Hannah had did not come from the fields and jungles of Southeast Asia, nor did it come from the great protests of Chicago or New York City. Ironically, it came from Hollywood. In 1972, anti-war activist and actress Jane Fonda went to Hanoi and met with North Vietnamese officials to publically denounce the aerial bombing of dykes by the U.S. military. After touring the area and being shown select sites, Fonda made a statement declaring that no military targets existed at the location and furthermore, the U.S. Air Force purposefully bombed civilians.⁵⁶⁷ Fonda went on to participate in at least ten broadcasts over Radio Hanoi from July 14 through July 22 denouncing military actions in Vietnam.⁵⁶⁸ In those ten broadcasts, Fonda accused the U.S. of deliberately bombing civilian targets such as the dykes and a hospital destroyed by a Naval air bombardment, presumably from an aircraft carrier in the Gulf of Tonkin. She visited prisoner of war camps and reportedly showed American POWs footage she claimed proved the U.S. deliberately bombed

⁵⁶⁶ Justin Bavarskis, *The Pittsburgh Press*, "War made young black more militant," May 11, 1973, 17. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/147841427/?terms=Justin%2BBavarskis>

⁵⁶⁷ Associated Press, *The Robesonian*, "Fonda—'Hanoi Hannah,'" July 14, 1972, 2. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/43328626/?terms=Fonda—'Hanoi%2BHannah'>

⁵⁶⁸ United Press International, *Independent*, "Actress subpoena bid fails" August 11, 1972, 1. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/25978667/?terms=Actress%2Bsubpoena%2Bbid%2Bfails>

the dykes.

Senator Fletcher Thompson went public rebuking Fonda's claims, calling her accusations propaganda that was "soothing to the ears of the enemy and designed" to undermine U.S. resolve.⁵⁶⁹ Thompson referred to Fonda as another Hanoi Hannah and suggested treason charges be brought against her. Fonda responded with defiance claiming she had done nothing illegal and that actions by the Nixon administration in prosecuting the war violated the Nuremburg rules of war, and that "every American citizen" had a legal basis "and a moral right to resist what is being done in our names."⁵⁷⁰ Jane Fonda's actions quickly set off a firestorm of negative criticism in the American press.

Hanoi Hannah wasted no time utilizing Jane Fonda's visit to her advantage, much to the ire of the U.S. Government and servicemen. Hannah regularly referred to American citizens such as Jane Fonda and former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark, who made a broadcast over Radio Hanoi a short time following Fonda's visit to North Vietnam. The story became front page news across the nation, and in several instances, the press called Fonda "Hanoi Rose," and more prominently, "Hanoi Jane," the former obviously a combination between Hanoi Hannah and Tokyo Rose.⁵⁷¹ As for Fonda and Clark, the press excoriated them. One article condemned their visits to Hanoi and called upon the U.S. Government to do anything in its power to "stop the use

⁵⁶⁹ Nick Taylor, *The Atlanta Constitution*, "Thompson blasts Jane's 'propaganda,'" July 26, 1972, 21A.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1556619448/fulltextPDF/A69707BE70C74442PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁵⁷⁰ United Press International, *Kingsport Times*, "'Hanoi Jane' says she'd be glad to testify in Congress" August 11, 1972, 1.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/75365475/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁷¹ *Ibid.*

by dissident Americans of Radio Hanoi as a propaganda tool.”⁵⁷²

Postwar Years

In November of 1972, President Richard Nixon won reelection despite being involved in a highly unpopular war with seemingly no end in sight. Mounting pressure to withdraw from Vietnam finally led to a peace agreement signed in Paris going into effect on January 28, 1973. The final U.S. troops, in a force that had recently been reduced by seventy thousand, pulled out not long afterward. In effect, America’s direct military involvement came to an end. Despite surviving several bombing attempts to destroy Radio Hanoi, and despite many ups and downs during the war for North Vietnamese forces over the years, Hanoi Hannah and her colleagues at Radio Hanoi remained at the mic. However, U.S. fighter pilots did destroy Radio Hanoi’s transmission tower using laser guided bombs dropped from F-4 Phantoms on December 21, 1972. But Radio Hanoi quickly utilized a backup location, sent Hanoi Hannah there, and she kept broadcasting. By all accounts the Phantom pilot risked his life and plane to hit the target, which Washington knew would be a morale booster for U.S. servicemen.⁵⁷³ The press reported the Phantom flew so low that it “ran three red lights and a stop sign on its way out of town.”⁵⁷⁴ This story ran across the nation, as had stories of Tokyo Rose’s and Seoul City Sue’s towers being bombed. Such stories could be seen as payback for years of propaganda broadcasts against the U.S. and its fighting servicemen.

With American troops gone, Hanoi Hannah ceased to exist. The woman most

⁵⁷² *Poughkeepsie Journal*, “Comforting the enemy,” August 15, 1972, 4.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/114656153/?terms=Comforting%2Bthe%2Benemy>

⁵⁷³ United Press International, *El Paso Herald-Post*, “Marines break wall of Hue’s fortress,” February 22, 1968, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/68496857/?terms=Marines%2Bbreak%2Bwall%2Bof%2BHue's%2Bfortress>

⁵⁷⁴ Paul Dean, *Arizona Republic*, “Arizona aircoops,” November 2, 1973, 33.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/117894273/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

remembered as the voice of Hanoi Hannah, whose real name was Trinh Thi Ngo, eventually moved to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly known as Saigon), with her husband who served as an officer in the North Vietnamese army. How many other women broadcast over Radio Hanoi, and where they ended up is not known. Thus started a new era in the American press' coverage of Hanoi Hannah and the legend she left behind. Unlike radio sirens Iva Toguri, Mildred Gillars, Rita Louisa Zucca, and Ann Wallace Suhr, no discussion of treason manifested in the media. Trinh Thi Ngo was not an American citizen and therefore did not violate any U.S. laws.

Major Terry Lee, the heroic figure from *Terry and the Pirates* who regularly featured broadcasts from Hanoi Hannah also ceased to exist in 1973. Due to a decline in readership, fewer newspapers carrying the comic strip, and the announced retirement of the strip's illustrator, America no longer relished Terry's adventures in Vietnam. Terry's decline in popularity could also be related to the anti-war movement and Hanoi Hannah, as public opinion in 1973 did not favor fictional military heroes. As one article put it, "the fighter pilot is no longer the glamorous, reckless defender of the free world against all comers. He's now the cold-blooded professional dropping napalm on women and children."⁵⁷⁵

As more and more American POWs came home, stories began appearing in the press about life in captivity and how the prisoners knew only what Hanoi Hannah told them about the war. What information they did receive came from newly arrived prisoners. Nearly all the press reports regarding American captives in North Vietnam included references to Hanoi Hannah.

Despite the fact that Trinh Thi Ngo no longer broadcasted propaganda for Radio Hanoi, Hanoi Hannah remained very much alive in popular culture. She has been featured in numerous films and television productions. In 1979, for example, actor Hal Holbrook starred as American

⁵⁷⁵ *Progress Bulletin*, "'Terry and the Pirates' retiring," February 22, 1973, A6.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/74657502/?terms=Terry%2Band%2Bthe%2BPirates>

POW Jeremiah Denton in a TV movie based on Denton's seven-and-a-half-year captivity. *When Hell Was in Session* featured a scene where Hanoi Hannah, over the prison's PA system, announced, "You all know Jeremiah Denton. Well, fellows, his conscience got the best of him and he just voluntarily confessed all his war crimes."⁵⁷⁶ Another film featured Hanoi Hannah in a prisoner of war drama. *The Hanoi Hilton* opened in 1987 and featured many scenes where Hanoi Hannah's voice could be heard coming across PA systems placed around the prison camp. The film also featured several references to "Hanoi Jane" and the growing anti-war protests in the United States.⁵⁷⁷ Also in 1987 came director John Irvin's *Hamburger Hill*, which centered around extremely bloody combat fighting in Vietnam. Several scenes included GIs listening to Hannah's broadcasts, enticing them to give up the fight and go home. The same year saw the release of the popular Robin Williams' film, *Good Morning Vietnam*, featured Hanoi Hannah's voice in select scenes.

Hanoi Hannah never left the public consciousness and remained in popular culture beyond just the American cinema and press. People placed bets on racing greyhounds named Hanoi Hannah.⁵⁷⁸ Her name routinely found its way into popular literature, and in 1973, musician Roger McGuinn, included a song titled *Hanoi Hannah* on his debut solo album. According to one press review of the album, "'Hanoi Hannah' is a bluesy tale of a love affair

⁵⁷⁶ Tom Dorsey, *The Courier-Journal*, "Holbrook is compelling as a prisoner in Vietnam," October 7, 1979, H1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/109455969/?terms=Holbrook%2Bis%2Bcompelling%2Bas%2Ba%2Bprisoner%2Bin%2BVietnam>

⁵⁷⁷ Marsha McCreadie, *Arizona Republic*, "Imprisoned by overkill: 'Hanoi Hilton' inspires flight," April 23, 1987, F3.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/123740924/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁷⁸ *The Palm Beach Post*, "Dog racing," November 15, 1968, 24. See also: *Florida Today*, "Orlando dog racing," March 2, 1968, 5B.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/125185785/?terms=Orlando%2Bdog%2BBracing>.

‘over there.’”⁵⁷⁹ Hannah also made an appearance in the popular 2004 video game, *Battlefield Vietnam*. In one of the game scenarios, Hannah can be heard blaring away propaganda messages across a public-address system as American and Viet Cong soldiers fight in a town square.⁵⁸⁰

Throughout most of the Vietnam War, the identity and description of Trinh Thi Ngo remained very much a mystery. Ngo and the North Vietnamese government only granted a couple of known interviews to Western journalists. One came in 1967 from a former CBS reporter who met Ngo in August at the Radio Hanoi building. His description of her most likely fit the mental image of many GIs in that she was a “slender brunette, five feet tall, 100 pounds with large, liquid, dark brown eyes.”⁵⁸¹ The article went on to describe her as every bit as graceful as she sounded over the radio, and that she maintained a serious and professional work ethic. Another interview with Ngo appeared in 1968 and described her as a “cheery housewife who wears baggy trousers, rides to work on a bicycle and worries about her children.”⁵⁸² Beyond a sprinkling of information here and there, not a lot of information on the woman behind the legendary name existed until well after the war ended.

In the 1990s, the American press found renewed interest in the legend of Hanoi Hannah. In 1994, several interviews came out with a then 65-year-old Trinh Thi Ngo. As with Tokyo Rose, public perception about the Vietnam War, war veterans, and the turbulent protests of the late 1960s and early 1970s had changed. The nation had moved on. Interviews featuring Ngo

⁵⁷⁹ Tom Von Malder, *The Des Plaines Herald*, “Playback,” July 20, 1973, 3.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/71966358/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁸⁰ Hanoi Hannah’s lines in the game were written for the game and voiced by an actress and not quotes from actual transcripts.

⁵⁸¹ David Schoenbrun, *Democrat and Chronicle*, “Hanoi Hannah woos GI’s with old formula,” August 30, 1967, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/136597148/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁸² Reuters News Agency, James Pringle, *The Salt Lake Tribune*, “Here’s the inside dope on Hanoi Hannah,” September 30, 1968, 7.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/10343047/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

Americans.⁵⁸⁵

These articles, some appearing as recently as 2015,⁵⁸⁶ answered many questions Americans had regarding Hanoi Hannah. For example, Americans learned that Ngo eventually had a daughter she named Thu Huong, and she befriended actress Jane Fonda and other American dissidents who traveled to Hanoi to protest the war. The articles also illuminated the answer to another mystery, one perhaps of most interest to Vietnam veterans and American intelligence officials: Where did Hanoi Hannah get all her information on U.S. military matters and knowledge of casualties? Writer Don North interviewed Trinh Thi Ngo in 1991.⁵⁸⁷ In his interview, Ngo admitted that her intelligence reports and knowledge of American troops came from:

US Army Stars and Stripes. We read from it. We had it flown in everyday. And we also read Newsweek, Time and several newspapers. We could also intercept the AP and UPI wires and of course we had the news from our Vietnam News Agency and we rewrote it. We had many sources of news. We took remarks of American journalists and pit it in our broadcasts, especially remarks about casualties...high casualties.⁵⁸⁸

Ironically, Hanoi Hannah received her information from the same press that regularly marveled as to how she knew so much about military movements. This realization removed some of the mystic surrounding her legend. She was not an oracle, and neither did she receive information subversively from within the military ranks.

Other key players in the Hanoi Hannah saga received renewed media interest in recent years as well. For example, several feature articles appeared on Chris Noel, the famed “answer to

⁵⁸⁵ Kathy Wilhelm, *The Advocate-Messenger*, “‘Hanoi Hannah’ at 65 as compelling as ever,” March 29, 1995, B7.

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/137988123/?terms=hanoi%2Bhannah>

⁵⁸⁶ “Powerful propaganda: Vietnam journalists’ role in war,” accessed May 6, 2015, www.dailymail.co.uk.

⁵⁸⁷ Don North, “In search for Hanoi Hannah,” accessed May 25, 2015, www.psywarrior.com/hannah.html.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

Hanoi Hannah.” These articles told the inside story on her time with the Armed Forces Radio and what eventually became of her, which included running a homeless shelter for veterans and remaining active in causes helping them.⁵⁸⁹ Actress Jane Fonda publically apologized for her verbal attacks on U.S. soldiers in 1988 on an episode of *20/20* with Barbara Walters, sparking a new wave of media interest regarding “Hanoi Jane” and Hanoi Hannah.

Hanoi Hannah became the last notable radio siren of the 20th Century. It is doubtful her legend will ever fade away. As Don North has written, Hanoi Hannah’s voice and broadcasts are “part of the loud soundtrack for the Vietnam War.”⁵⁹⁰ Hannah’s voice became part of the Vietnam War experience for tens of thousands of military personnel. She will forever be associated with the war just as Tokyo Rose is with World War II. Like Tokyo Rose, the American press reevaluated its portrayal of her in the decades following the war. For the male short-wave radio propagandists of World War II, however, no such revisionism occurred.

Although the legend may never fade away, Trinh Thi Ngo, the last of the surviving five radio sirens, passed away at the age of 87 on September 30, 2016.⁵⁹¹ The news of Ngo’s passing came from her Voice of Vietnam Radio Network, the official state-run radio station of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. The press covered her in very much the same way it had for the past two decades. She was seen widely as a patriot to her native North Vietnam who never held personal grudges against the U.S. or the men who fought in the Vietnam War. Writer and former ABC News reporter Don North stated in an NPR interview that Hanoi Hannah struck him

⁵⁸⁹ Claudia Gary & David T. Zabecki, “The Vietnam interview: A date with Chris Noel,” accessed May 25, 2015, www.historynet.com/the-vietnam-interview-a-date-with-chris-noel.htm.

⁵⁹⁰ Don North, “In search for Hanoi Hannah,” accessed May 25, 2015, www.psywarrior.com/hannah.html.

⁵⁹¹ There is some dispute about her actual age, as some news articles quoted her age to be 85.

“mainly as an intellectual” who did not come across as “a strident propagandist at all.”⁵⁹²

Finally, after seven decades, the media recognized one of the five radio sirens for their intellectual acumen, a position up until now had only been reserved for male propagandists.

Conclusion

Trinh Thi Ngo’s passing ended an era that began with Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally as far back as 1941. Hanoi Hannah’s legend is that of the most effective radio siren of the 20th Century. Whereas Tokyo Rose enjoyed the distinction of being the most known, the most covered, and even most praised of the women propaganda broadcasters, Hanoi Hannah became the most successful. She was also the longest lasting, as she broadcast through the entirety of U.S. involvement of the war, and she never stood trial for treason. Of all five women analyzed in this study, she stood alone in not being an American traitor.

Ultimately the media’s tone regarding the legend of Hanoi Hannah and Trinh Thi Ngo improved as time progressed. Coverage became more favorable as American sentiments regarding the war changed. Where once it tried to diminish her work with Radio Hanoi and any effect it had on American troops, the postwar media began nostalgically remembering her as a patriot to her own country and a woman who held no grudge against the U.S. but admired it. Whether Hannah’s association with Radio Stateside had any significant effect on citizen morale loss in the U.S. is not possible to say.

The legend of Hanoi Hannah became an important topic for the American print media because she represented the latest in a string of women radio propagandists beginning with Tokyo Rose. Not until the 20th Century had such powerful and famed propagandists been

⁵⁹² Anthony Kuhn, “‘Hanoi Hannah,’ Whose broadcasts taunted and entertained American GIs, dies,” NPR.org, October 6, 2016, Accessed on November 8, 2016, <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/10/05/496662815/hanoi-hannah-whose-broadcasts-taunted-and-entertained-american-gis-dies-at-87>

women, and even as the novelty wore off with Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally, the media never lost its fascination with these radio sirens. None of them were particularly successful at their work, but Hanoi Hannah at least tapped into societal issues in the United States. Her reporting of the Civil Rights movement, the anti-war movement, and commentary on American foreign policy irritated Americans, incited the press to editorialize against her, and evidence suggests her broadcasts somewhat disenfranchised at least a small number of U.S. troops. Hannah not only had staying power, she openly defied the U.S. Government and never faced repercussions. Being that she never held American citizenship, no laws of treason applied to her.

As mentioned, the press and the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Network offered direct responses to her. Female announcers took to the air to compete against her, and the press often covered these American and Australian women to help popularize them. In the end, however, Hanoi Hannah never lost the affection or listenership of U.S. forces. They loved her alluring voice, and they laughed off much of her propaganda.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that we remember the women radio propagandists more so than the men. The mass media rarely brings up Lord Haw Haw, Lord Hee Haw, or even Robert Best. When 20th Century radio propagandists are mentioned in the press, it is almost always Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, or Hanoi Hannah. If this study has done nothing else, it has shown that female propagandists are remembered more so than their male counterparts for three primary reasons. First, there is the novelty factor. World War II's Tokyo Rose and Axis Sally were the first women used as propagandists against large numbers of U.S. servicemen. These women utilized the mass medium of short-wave radio in a unique way, using feminine charms to exploit male weaknesses such as pent-up sexual frustrations, loneliness, and homesickness. Although the novelty factor subsided by the time of Korea and Seoul City Sue, a sense of nostalgia seemed to develop in press coverage. U.S. servicemen in Korea now had their own version of Tokyo Rose to enchant and amuse them nightly. When the Vietnam War escalated and Hanoi Hannah's voice filled the airwaves, a sense of nostalgia resurfaced but political unrest in the U.S., the second wave of feminism, and an increasingly unpopular war sentiment resulted in the media taking Hannah more seriously as a propagandist, though she still faced much of the same objectification and negative criticism the other women did.

Second, we remember female propagandists because the American press characterized them as the femme fatale/siren. Because these women represented "bad girls" at a time when women in American society were expected to be "virtuous" homemakers and caretakers, having

these rogue female enemy agents broadcasting propaganda provided a high level of media fascination. As journalist David Camelon stated about Axis Sally,

But never before had there been there been such a calculated, cynical betrayal of all that was good in womanhood as that practiced by the Axis powers—Germany and Japan—and the traitorous women who served them.

The Axis nations knew that nothing could wring a man’s heart on distant, lonely battlefields like a woman’s voice, speaking of home and love and peace. So they used the voices of women—traitorous American women—to try to lure Americans to destruction.⁵⁹³

Camelon’s comments underscored the negative sentiments in the press regarding these women, whose actions and propaganda efforts against American soldiers sharply conflicted with societal norms about women in professional society. Furthermore, film noir cinema and pulp fiction filled with femme fatale characters, were popular in American popular culture in the 1940s and 1950s, adding to the nation’s interest in “bad girls.” As Bram Dijkstra asked, “what could be more intriguing than to watch a woman, safely isolated from the audience, revert publically to the ‘savage’ source of her being?”⁵⁹⁴ This falls in line with Virginia Allen’s contention that “far from the least contribution to the popularity of the femme fatale is the common human conviction that evil is always more fun than virtue.”⁵⁹⁵ As author Karen Burroughs Hannsberry has stated, as with the bad girls portrayed in film noir cinema, they were often seen as “beautiful women without mercy.”⁵⁹⁶ This captured male attention, especially that of lonely soldiers isolated from the comforts of society. It also captured the attention of the press, who reported on

⁵⁹³ David Camelon, *The Atlanta Constitution*, “Sirens of treason,” December 4, 1949, SM21.
<http://search.proquest.com.libdata.lib.ua.edu/docview/1532739309/fulltextPDF/602CA5FAC51F4DB8PQ/1?accountid=14472>.

⁵⁹⁴ Bram Dijkstra, *Idols of perversity: fantasies of feminine evil in fin-de-sièc le century culture*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 246.

⁵⁹⁵ Virginia M. Allen, *The femme fatale*, 185.

⁵⁹⁶ Karen Burroughs Hannsberry, *Femme Noir: Bad Girls of Film*, (Jefferson, North Carolina & London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1998), 2.

these women much more frequently than their male counterparts. The 1940s and 1950s saw the film noir genre become popular in American cinemas, and the idea of femme fatales fascinated moviegoers. Employing femme fatales as radio sirens tapped into this fascination in a way that using male propagandists could not.

In short, “bad girls” seem to stir the public’s imagination more so than good girls. This can also be used to explain why the various American-hired female radio broadcasters such as Patty Krause and Chris Noel never reached the same level of listenership as Tokyo Rose, Axis Sally, and Hanoi Hannah. The soldiers, airmen, sailors, and Marines preferred the dark, mysterious, and unidentified femme fatales to the “good girl” images of American-backed broadcasters. Plus, the American mass media has historically held a fascination with traitors, especially female traitors. They hold the public’s imagination in a way that men cannot. Perhaps this is because propaganda and treason is associated as a male characteristic. The idea of women betraying their country seemed more sinister because women in the mid 20th Century were expected to be virtuous and consumed with domestic duties and care giving.

Third, the potential power these women propagandists posed over U.S. forces because of their feminine charms and alluring voices captivated the American press. All five women broadcasted directly to U.S. forces whereas the male propagandists tended to broadcast to the American continent.⁵⁹⁷ These women, as seen by many in the American press, represented a potentially serious threat to troop morale. Perhaps it had to do with the fact that the classic femme fatale has always usurped male domination, thereby rendering him subjectable to her will. As scholar Mary Ann Doane writes, “the femme fatale is an articulation of fears

⁵⁹⁷ This does not mean, however, that U.S. forces did not hear these male propagandists, but neither the troops nor the media shared the same level of fascination with them as they did the female propagandists.

surrounding the loss of stability and centrality of the self, the ‘I,’ the ego.”⁵⁹⁸ Doane’s statement correctly explains the idea of fielding female propagandists to an overwhelmingly male audience. Throughout all three wars, the U.S. military worried about the possible control siren-like voices would have over servicemen. Harkening back to Homer’s *Odyssey*, where Odysseus remained bound to the ship’s mast to avoid overwhelming temptation to seek out the sirens, American servicemen fantasized over the physical attributes of the voices they heard. Like Odysseus, servicemen *envisioned* these women. Servicemen wrote home about them, and they routinely discussed them around fellow GIs. Very few servicemen defected due to these femme fatales. But that does not mean their broadcasts were not entirely fruitless in lowering GI morale.

Perhaps these five women captured the essence of the fatale woman through their broadcasts to U.S. servicemen. They were certainly picked to become broadcasters due to the potential power their voices might have over a predominately male audience. Each woman had vocal qualities that charmed, excited, and captivated their male listenership. Ironically, the soldiers, airmen, Marines, and sailors cared more for how the women sounded than the content of their messages.

It must also be noted that of these five women, their legends were often constructed from numerous female broadcasters such as the case for Tokyo Rose and Hanoi Hannah where the statements of many female broadcasters often became attributed to Iva Toguri and Trinh Thi Ngo. The same can be said of Axis Sally, where two women who never physically met broadcasting from two different nations shared the same title. Servicemen and the American press often confused the two women when writing about the latest pronouncements from Axis Sally. Although American GIs and thus the press could not differentiate the individual voice, but

⁵⁹⁸ Mary Ann Doane, *Femme Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1991), 2.

Iva Toguri, Rita Louisa Zucca, Mildred Gillars, Ann Wallace Suhr, and Trinh Thi Ngo became legends in the American consciousness.

The male propagandists, however, did not suffer this confusion. No one mistook the propaganda work of Ezra Pound with other Italian propaganda broadcasters. Likewise, the press did not confuse Robert Best with other Nazi announcers at Radio Berlin. Each man stood separately in the writings of American journalists. The courts held each man accountable for his own statements unlike Iva Toguri, who went to prison for a statement she most likely never said.

Summary of findings – Four Primary Research Inquiries

The first concept for analysis listed in the introduction concerned how the American press covered each of the five women propagandists. As seen from the previous chapters, the press had both a fascination as well as an aversion to these five women. Fascination came in the form of covering radio sirens, women whose main purpose was to demoralize American troops. In this capacity, they were dangerous weapons used by the enemy in ways that the U.S. Government could not control. They represented a nonconventional threat to troop morale, one that played on men's fears of domestic trouble at home as well as their loneliness and anxieties. The media's aversion to them resulted from the power they potentially could wield over American forces engaged in combat zones, far away from their families and homes; they were seen traitors to the American way of life.

The second concept explored in the study involved how this coverage changed over time. As has been shown, with Tokyo Rose and Hanoi Hannah, changing national sentiments as well as continual media interest in the topic led to a softening of national attitudes regarding these two women. Tokyo Rose went from an American traitor and radio siren to an American patriot who, against all odds, managed to aid POWs and thwart Japanese propaganda with harmless banter.

Hanoi Hannah went from a highly caustic radio propagandist who regularly tied her broadcasts into political events occurring in the U.S. to what the media would eventually portray as a woman who served her nation honorably. The two women who portrayed Axis Sally had no national rethinking as the years progressed. In fact, the American media did not cover Gillars with much vigor after her prison term ended. The reason for this omission is not exactly clear. On one hand, she allied herself with Adolf Hitler, perhaps the most despised man of the 20th Century. Like Leni Riefenstahl, her association with the Nazis doomed her reputation in ways from which she could never recover. That, combined with her steadfast refusal to disavow her work for the Nazis ensured a lifelong association with negative press. Gillars' overt sexual personae, especially around American POWs in captivity added to her reputation as a femme fatale, perhaps the best example of such out of the five women studied.

Seoul City Sue did not exist long enough for the media to develop a changing narrative. She did, however, leave behind a legacy of mystery. To this day, no one knows the full reason why Ann Wallace Suhr renounced her U.S. citizenship and worked for an enemy government against the United States. Her fate is still unknown. But during the time she broadcasted for Radio Seoul, the U.S. media seemed almost eager to have another Tokyo Rose on its hands, and for a while at least, American troops had an alluring female voice to both love and hate. As has been stated, Seoul City Sue has been mostly forgotten aside from the odd mention every now and again in historical articles.

Third, in relation to how the media responded to each woman, these responses came in the form of directly addressing the propagandists in the press, and the fielding of American female announcers for on-air competition. The two most known of these female announcers were Chris Noel and Patty Krause, who broadcast to U.S. forces in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam

War. Despite their best effort, they could not supplant Hanoi Hannah's popularity with servicemen. The United States never offered an answer to any of the five enemy sirens that proved more popular for U.S. servicemen. The seductive nature of the femme fatales, combined with their keen understanding of what music U.S. soldiers wanted, maintained their popularity throughout each conflict.

Fourth, this study sought to analyze how these five women have been kept alive in the press and popular culture. Tokyo Rose soared to such fame and notoriety that her legend greatly outlived the woman associated with the name, Iva Toguri. Like Axis Sally, popular culture such as books, films, and even video games have kept these legends alive. Seoul City Sue, for the most part, has been forgotten in the American press aside from an occasional mention and reruns of *M*A*S*H*. The legend of Hanoi Hannah, which officially ended when Saigon fell, is still the subject of news articles and pop culture references from time to time.

It should also be discussed how media coverage of male radio propagandists compared to that of women. Ironically, males received less negative press overall and fewer papers covering their broadcasts during the war; however, they fared much worse than their female counterparts regarding sentencing when treason trials ended. All the major male propagandists received either lengthy sentences, life sentences, or in William Joyce's (Lord Haw Haw) case, death. Mildred Gillars received the longest prison term for the female propagandists, and she only served slightly over eleven years. It is hard to account for this discrepancy. The press, it would seem, cared less in covering male propagandists yet openly supported the harsher sentences each man received. Leniency in sentencing when regarding female traitors perhaps had more to do with mid 20th Century societal norms in dealing with women. As women had yet to enjoy equality with their male counterparts in professional society, and since propaganda was widely regarded

as a male domain, national sentiment overall against harsher treatment of women meant lighter sentencing. The American press portrayed most of the five women as having betrayed the U.S. out of hopeless devotion to lovers and for fame. Male propagandists were treated as more serious professionals and did not face objectification as did the women. Even during the late 1960s, when the second wave of American feminism began, Hanoi Hannah faced being sexualized, although not to the degree her predecessors were.

Another and perhaps more striking difference in how the media portrayed male propagandists versus female ones involved how each received criticism. For example, male propagandists such as Fred Kaltenbach and William Joyce were criticized for the arguments they made, their positions on American foreign policy, their anti-Semitism, and their attacks on U.S. leadership, particularly President Roosevelt. Female propagandists were sexualized, their arguments seen as less important than how they “cooed” to U.S. forces. Their femme fatale qualities garnered more press attention than any political arguments they made. For example, Mildred Gillars often broadcast the same propaganda points that Joyce and Kaltenbach made. She attacked the Roosevelt administration and Jews with equal vigor, yet she is most remembered as a sultry vixen of the air whose sexual charms were not lost on U.S. forces. Hanoi Hannah was the most politically astute of the five women. She tied her propaganda messages to the political and civil turmoil in the United States. She routinely played American anti-war movement messages on her program. The U.S. media did acknowledge this with many articles to the effect, but first and foremost she was a radio siren, whose feminine powers most attracted soldier listenership. Despite the nation’s best attempts at dethroning her popularity, Hanoi Hannah never lost the interest of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines.

Male propagandists did not see the kind of modern-day revisionism that occurred with

Iva Toguri and Trinh Thi Ngo. Most of the male propagandists have been virtually forgotten in the American press, but when an article does emerge, it usually follows the same negative tone as from decades past. Journalistic portrayals of Iva Toguri and Trinh Thi Ngo in today's press bear little resemblance to the traitorous themes from the 1940s and 1970s respectively. Basically, the American public and press has largely forgiven these female enemy propagandists. The same public and press virtually disregards the male propagandists. These men have never, nor likely will ever, hold the level of media fascination that their female counterparts did.

Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Inquiry

Perhaps the main limitation of the study involves the danger of misrepresenting national sentiment regarding these five women based upon how the media portrayed them. As Dianne Bragg stated in her 2013 dissertation, newspapers often reflect the concerns of the communities in which they are disseminated.⁵⁹⁹ The assumption made in this study is that press coverage often reflected national sentiment, because the press constructed the legacies these women are remembered by. Secondly, without solid statistics on short-wave listenership regarding these five women, it is impossible to know how many people in the U.S. either regularly or occasionally heard their broadcasts. No standard exists in monitoring the ratings of international short-wave programs, so the data simply does not exist. Most Americans most likely received information on these women's broadcasts strictly through the mass media. The current study assumes these radio sirens were heard often in the United States. Whether this assumption is accurate is hard, if not impossible, to determine.

As noted in the introduction, this study was limited by lack of available original broadcasts from the five women propagandists. No recordings of Seoul City Sue could be

⁵⁹⁹ Dianne M. Bragg, "The Causes of the Civil War: A Newspaper Analysis," (doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama, 2013), 28.

located save for several reels of audiotape in a library archive that are no longer playable.

Luckily, enough transcripts were found within news articles of the periods in question to provide an understanding of the propaganda techniques of each woman. Although thousands of newspaper and magazine articles were found for this study, countless others surely exist that were not located for analysis. Many of these articles might have provided more information that could shed new light on the lives and careers of these women, specifically with the fate of Ann Wallace Suhr, who vanished from the public eye in 1950.

Females as radio propagandists is an understudied subject in communication history. Much can still be learned about their tenures as propagandists, possible effects on the morale of U.S. troops as well as the popularity these women had with them. More study should be done in the differences in how men and women were treated both in the press as well as the judicial system. Clearly, this study shows that the women fared worse in media portrayals but better by far in the legal system. Male propagandists received either life sentences for treason, extended sentences, and in at least one case, capital punishment. More work needs to be done on tracking down surviving recordings of the five women and preserving them. Where recordings are not available, studies could be generated over transcripts of broadcasts to see how much their messages varied from war to war.

Finally, research should be conducted on how the U.S. anti-war movement aided and even colluded with Radio Hanoi in its anti-American propaganda. More research should be conducted on the Radio Stateside organization and how it organized propaganda efforts for Radio Hanoi's use. Throughout the course of researching this study, several articles referenced additional clandestine shortwave radio organizations and Fifth Column efforts that helped both the American and anti-American causes during World War II, although little if any historical

research has been done in this regard.

In conclusion, the U.S. did not enter a war again until 1990 when it evicted Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi army from Kuwait. Once again, propaganda radio networks worked to undermine soldiers' morale. The only exception is the Iraqis used a man, named Baghdad Bruce by coalition forces.⁶⁰⁰ Other wars will certainly follow, as did the war in Afghanistan and the second war in Iraq. Other propagandists will broadcast biased facts, made-up facts, and over exaggerated facts in the form of propaganda to U.S. military personnel.

In the 21st Century, however, propaganda comes in many electronic forms, not just terrestrial short-wave analog radio signals. In the ongoing war on terror, the internet has supplanted radio as a major propaganda delivery vehicle. Terrorist groups like ISIS and Al-Qaeda have utilized the internet in the form of propaganda websites and YouTube videos for the purposes of recruiting and message dissemination. Twenty-four-hour cable news networks also aid in the dissemination of propaganda messages with virtually nonstop soundbites and coverage.

In the internet age, however, enemy propaganda no longer solely targets men. The U.S. military is more diverse regarding gender, and women now serve alongside men in combat units. More likely, using female radio broadcasters to demoralize American soldiers is a thing of the past. However, women are still used in propaganda. Of the many reasons given for defeating terrorist organizations is the liberation of women in jihadi strongholds such as Afghanistan and parts of Iraq. As writers Torbjörn Bergström and Inga-Bodil Ekselius have stated,

The theme of much propaganda for the war against terror is that the West must help to liberate oppressed women in Muslim countries. This was a major factor for legitimising

⁶⁰⁰ Peter Copeland and Michael Ross, *The Pittsburgh Press*, “Troops turning in to ‘Bozo from Baghdad,’” August 23, 1990, 1.
<https://www.newspapers.com/image/146374116/?terms=Troops%2Bturning%2Bin%2Bto%2B%27Bozo%2Bfrom%2BBaghdad>

the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan. Thus, feminism became an entrenched underlying argument for the war.⁶⁰¹

Enemy forces such as ISIS routinely use women in propaganda. Videos and photographs of women jihadists are designed to show solidarity with their male counterparts on the battlefield.⁶⁰² A fundamental difference between these propaganda efforts and ones from the mid 20th Century, however, is that ISIS and other terror groups target not only U.S. forces but the Western world in general. Instead of weakening U.S. soldier morale, such propaganda campaigns are designed to weaken resolve in Western nations against fighting.

One final idea should be expressed. In the post 9/11 world, America has moved beyond the second wave of American feminism. No longer are national conversations being held about a woman's right to work. The idea of gender equality in the modern era precludes another Tokyo Rose or Axis Sally. Women are more apt to be equal producers of propaganda in contemporary times than in decades' past.

⁶⁰¹ Torbjörn Bergström & Inga-Bodil Ekselius, "War on terror in the name of feminism," *Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research*, Published on January 25, 2012, <http://www.genus.se/en/newspost/war-on-terror-in-the-name-of-feminism/>.

⁶⁰² One classic example of this type of enemy propaganda can be found here: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/the-most-dangerous-isis-propaganda-yet-jihadi-brides-with-m5s-fighters-relaxing-and-children-playing-10121653.html>.

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