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# The Case of Jihad Jane: Engendering and Embodying Power, Femininity and Access

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## Abstract

Since the aftermath of September 11, 2001 and before the emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) in 2013, there has been a small rising number of Americans, particularly white women embracing radical Islamic thought. The two known faces of female homegrown terrorists were Colleen LaRose and Jamie Paulin-Ramirez. Both identified themselves as “Jihad Jane” and “Jihad Jamie” respectively. Their physical appearances and images perplexed and shocked the public and provoked fear in the U.S. national security. Using legal documents and newspaper articles, this paper explores how these women manipulated their images to transcend traditionally defined roles and ideas about gender and race through their engagement with transnational terrorist networks that embrace the discourse of “West versus Islam.” Through content analysis, this paper analyzes how the “Jihad Jane” used her ‘femininity’ to create access, to empower herself and to deconstruct the ‘masculine’ and ‘racial’ models of terrorism.

**Keywords:** Gender Studies, Terrorism Studies, Content Analysis

## Introduction

On October 16, 2009, Colleen LaRose, a blonde hair, blue eye, middle-aged white American from a small town called Pennsburg in Pennsylvania, was arrested for “soliciting funds for terrorists online” and for “recruiting men on the internet to wage a violent jihad on South Asia and Europe, and women on the internet who had passports and the ability to travel to and around Europe in support of violent jihad.”<sup>1</sup> LaRose, who identified herself as “Fatima LaRose” and more commonly as “Jihad Jane,” had a social network profile that amplified her support for radical Islamic ideology. According to media reports, her family and neighbors knew very little about LaRose’s online activities or conversion to Islam.<sup>2</sup> LaRose’s arrest prompted further investigations of her virtual presence on YouTube and online forums such as *My Pet Jawa* and *RevolutionMuslim* where she claimed that she was “desperate to do something to help the suffering Muslims.”<sup>3</sup> LaRose used the internet to connect and recruit people to initiate a “violent jihad” across the globe. She was later indicted and accused of conspiracy in providing material support to terrorists who plotted the murder of Swedish artist Lars Vilks.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the indictment, LaRose was successful in recruiting another woman with similar physical features of her own: Jamie-Paulin-Ramirez, a young white mother from a small town in the Rocky Mountains, Colorado.<sup>5</sup> Like

LaRose, Paulin-Ramirez called herself, “Jihad Jamie,” but “announced to her family that she had converted to Islam.”<sup>6</sup> On March 12, 2009, Paulin-Ramirez was arrested in Ireland as part of an ongoing investigation into a conspiracy to commit murder, possibly Lars Vilks as the target. Later Paulin-Ramirez was released but was also indicted for the same terror plot to provide material support to terrorists overseas.<sup>7</sup> Due to their similar physical appearances and backgrounds, their arrests triggered a concern in U.S. national security in identifying homegrown terrorists.<sup>8</sup>

Today Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the U.S. According to a survey conducted by the Council on American Islamic Relations, about 20,000 people convert to the faith each year.<sup>9</sup> More significantly, the number of American women converting to Islam outnumbered men approximately four to one after 2001.<sup>10</sup> The rising interest of the Islamic faith in America could be described by the effects of September 11<sup>th</sup>, which drew more people wanting to understand the religion. Historically, there were Islamic political movements that grew in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, specifically for and by African American Muslims. These groups of believers in America formed spiritual movements such as the Nation of Islam in 1930, founded by Wallace D. Fard Muhammad in Detroit, and the Five-Percent Nation in 1964 founded by Clarence 13X in Harlem to challenge the economic, social and political oppressions, and systemic racism and to find ways to uplift their conditions and experiences as African American Muslims. The movements were focused on spiritual teachings and philosophies to support African American/Black Muslim communities. These political groups had spiritual roles in promoting civil liberties for Muslims and combating racism and economic exploitation in the U.S.<sup>11</sup> The American radical groups and movements have different agendas and political interests compared to the ones formed in Middle East such as Hamas in Palestine, Hezbollah in Lebanon or the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Though, they all aim to challenge their state authorities by varying degrees, the Islamic faith remains a central force to their causes.

Between 2001-2013, a small growing number of American men and women embraced radical Islamic ideology by joining various terrorist groups interested in waging a “jihad” in the West.<sup>12</sup> According to the Council on Foreign Relations, there has been an increasing number of cases of Muslims involved in domestic terror plots, which “ranges somewhere between less than 2 million and upwards of 7 million (U.S. law forbids mandatory questions about religion on the U.S. census and polling and other estimates have produced a wide range in population number).”<sup>13</sup> However, studies have also found that cases Muslim-American terrorist plots have lessened and not as overgrown based on predictions of possible surges by the U.S. government officials.<sup>14</sup>

Though, the numbers may be small, it is of interest to explore the central question of the two Jihad Janes on the intersections of race, gender and citizenship: why would these American women join a transnational terrorist group? There may be several reasons why these women joined this transnational terrorist group: the internet served as an important medium to discover Islam and to find love in a network. Another factor to consider is the “shock” value since their public images clearly deviated from the fixed public perceptions of “Muslim terrorists.” For these two women, their images perplexed the public. As a result of their activities and arrests, they emerged as the dominant figures of female homegrown terrorists in the United States, particularly across U.S. media coverage in 2009-2011.<sup>15</sup> The shock factor attributed to the fact that they would be in the spotlight knowing that they were not the perceived as “typical Muslim terrorists” or “oppressed” Muslim women. Despite their profiles being classified as lone wolf cases, both women found love and connected themselves to a larger transnational network to plot a series of terrorist attacks where their “gender” became a paramount asset to the operation.<sup>16</sup>

By extrapolating from their cases, this paper analyzes how these two women transcended traditionally defined roles and ideas about gender, race and citizenship in the United States: how they empowered themselves by tapping into their femininity and race to subvert the masculine and racial models of terrorism; how their “bodies” and appearances gave them unrestricted access to domains and spaces where their male co-conspirators could not enter. By demonstrating their commitment to the cause, these women played an instrumental role that challenged the normative perceptions of the “oppressed” or “coerced” Muslim women being forced to join a martyrdom cause. This paper examines why such women embrace martyrdom and why they were drawn to transnational terrorist networks. Using legal cases and newspapers, the paper draws on the theoretical

intersections of race, gender and power through content analysis and explores how their cases and narratives disrupt and complicate the construction of terrorism through this “shock factor.” Throughout the paper, both Colleen LaRose and Jamie Paulin-Ramirez are categorized as “Jihad Jane” despite Paulin-Ramirez’s other alias as “Jihad Jamie” due to the fact that they shared very similar features and intentions and were drawn to the same networks.

### **Jihad Jane’s Femininity, Image and Power**

When both Jihad Janes revealed to their families that they converted to Islam, it became clear that neighbors, families and friends had no idea about their deep interest in the faith. Newspaper accounts documented their families’ surprise, shock and confusion of their conversion and arrest for suspicious activities relating to terrorism. Both women announced their conversions to Islam not long before their arrests. In 2009, Paulin-Ramirez enrolled in an online course about Islam and informed her mother that she became a Muslim. LaRose had converted to Islam a few years earlier than Paulin-Ramirez. La Rose became fascinated with Islam first when she met a Muslim man in a bar in Pennsylvania and then went on to various Muslim websites sites to learn more about the faith and converted “via instant messenger.”<sup>17</sup>

Following each woman’s arrest, the public reaction echoed shock and fear. According to various newspapers’ framing on these women, the “female terrorists received significantly increased levels of coverage in the press as compared to their male counterparts” and as a result, the women are framed differently in the media.<sup>18</sup> The arrest of an American white female terrorist drew in more media frenzy and public attention of her background as a Muslim white woman. This shock factor can play a critical role in understanding these white women’s interest in joining transnational terrorist organizations but also subverted and redefined U.S. national security policies.

Due to their appearances, “racial profiling,” as a tool to combat terrorism, was vigorously questioned and scrutinized. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> brought in waves of support from U.S. politicians and policymakers to use racial profiling as a counterterrorism tool.<sup>19</sup> However, the rise of American homegrown terrorists such as the Jihad Jane disrupted and altered the “image” of the terrorist, making it difficult to detect suspects and culprits. The profiles of LaRose and Paulin-Ramirez, blonde hair, white Caucasian women from small towns with no historical ties to Islamic terrorist groups, completely challenged and ruptured the normative perceptions of a Muslim terrorist as “the male- other” and as a “monster.” According to Jasbir Puar and Amit S. Rai, “Sexuality is central to the creation of certain knowledge of terrorism, specifically that branch of strategic analysis that has entered the academic mainstream as ‘terrorism studies.’ This knowledge has a history that ties the image of a modern terrorist to a much older figure, the racial and sexual monsters of the eighteen and nineteenth centuries.”<sup>20</sup> Their analyses suggest that the modern terrorist possess key descriptive constructs that has entered and remained in the discourse of terrorism: the Muslim and the terrorist are often linked together as a singular representation. Key descriptive constructs of a “terrorist” include the skin color (brown) and the male body; they are deeply embedded in the public mind due to events such as September 11<sup>th</sup> and the saturated media depictions of Islamic militancy.<sup>21</sup> The physical appearances of LaRose and Paulin-Ramirez did not resemble the monster-terrorist image at all.

However, their Islamic fanaticism and motivation to “kill” anyone who insulted the faith are similar to other terrorist groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda: these organizations are viewed as “two different heads of the same monster.”<sup>22</sup> They were both different from one another but they shared “the same fanatical obsession: ‘imposing a strict and distorted brand of Islam on all Muslims and bringing death to all who oppose him.’”<sup>23</sup> The two women also shared this radical view by using their femininity as the source of authority to plot their plans. According to the U.S. Justice Department, the Jihad Jane’s “blond hair and blue eyes would allow her to operate undetected in Europe, allegedly to carry out the attack.”<sup>24</sup> Moreover, LaRose used her “appearance to ‘sell’ herself as a potential ‘martyr,’ writing in an email to one of her co-conspirators that her physical characteristics would allow her to ‘blend in with many people.’”<sup>25</sup> In other newspaper accounts, images of LaRose wearing a white hijab or a black niqab were shown on front pages; these images of LaRose reinforced the features of femininity or ‘oppression,’ ‘mystery’ of the wearer.<sup>26</sup> For example, Palestinian women bombers, have been reported to wear a facial veil and covered “themselves from head to toe in dark brown, all enveloping robe at all

times,” because “they must appear unthreatening to Jewish bodies.”<sup>27</sup> The Jihad Jane must also appear unthreatening to the Western body but more importantly, veiled or not, the Jihad Jane’s physical appearance allows her to racially integrate herself in Western societies more easily. A remarkable point is the Islamization and “sexualization” of the terrorist: “Jihad Jane’s notoriety arises from being the ‘wrong’ racial body type for a Muslim terrorist. This [example] illustrates how Muslim terrorist trope is inscribed on a [male] brown body.”<sup>28</sup> The newspaper images of the veiled Jihad Jane can deceive the public by reinforcing this perception of an “oppressed” female victim, but the Jihad Jane actually exhibits more power and authority over her co-conspirators. By distorting the common visual representation of a terrorist, the women specifically LaRose, as claimed in an email exchange with a co-conspirator, could easily gain “access to many places (such as Sweden) due to [her] nationality and that her physical appearance would allow her to ‘blend in with many people’ which ‘may be a way to achieve what is in the [co-conspirator’s] heart.”<sup>29</sup> LaRose’s body serves as an agent of mobility but also as a white privileged one.

Both women could marry their co-conspirators to advance their causes; their citizenship can be seen as a “Western” or racial privilege, which underscore the constructions of racial identities and domination.<sup>30</sup> In another email exchange, a co-conspirator suggested to LaRose to get married so that he can travel to Europe; LaRose agreed to marry him and to obtain residency status in Europe.<sup>31</sup> For Paulin-Ramirez, she traveled to Ireland on September 12, 2009 and married her co-conspirator in an Islamic wedding. Her marriage was also documented in the Grand Jury Indictment.<sup>32</sup> The status of citizenship through marriage could support the male co-conspirators who lack such privilege. Through marriage, the Jihad Jane shared her power with male peers, but she retains her femininity that her peers lack as well.

Jihad Jane’s body is also essential to the martyrdom operation since her body can “generate less suspicion and is able to conceal explosives.”<sup>33</sup> According to Hassa on female suicide bombers, the female body is often associated with “menstruation, childbirth, heteronormativity, maternal sacrifice and the violated raped-woman,” however, the body of the Jihad Jane destabilized these normative ideals: her body is perceived as an agent of destruction and not as an agent of maternity or reproduction.<sup>34</sup> Because of her body, she has unrestricted mobility compared to her co-conspirators, and hence, her presence challenges the notion of “radical patriarchy” where “the [traditional] role of men is in public life; the role of women is in the home.”<sup>35</sup> The formation of “radical patriarchy” stems from the experiences of the Muslim terrorist, which will be explored later. The Jihad Jane’s unrestricted access deconstructs the traditionally defined gendered spaces as well.<sup>36</sup> According to Mark Juergensmeyer’s report on Islamists in Algeria, author of *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*:

Religious activists often have shown a certain paternalistic respect for women, as long as they remained in their place. During the 1991-92 Muslim uprising in Algeria, Ali-Behlahj, one of the Islamic front leaders said that a woman’s primary duty was to ‘bear good Muslims’; and Sheik Moghni, another Islamic Front Leader, complained about women working and taking jobs from men.<sup>37</sup>

The Jihad Jane disrupts the normative gender roles and spaces: her citizenship, body and mobility are privileges and assets, thus, making her invaluable to her co-conspirators.

### **The Power of Sisterhood and Martyrdom**

What motivated Jihad Jane to participate in this martyrdom operation? There are multiple justifications why LaRose and Paulin-Ramirez joined the cause: both cases reveal several interesting points in the overt acts: on YouTube, Colleen LaRose stated that she is “‘desperate to do something somehow to help’ the suffering Muslim people.”<sup>38</sup> This type of sentiment can be identified as fear. Moreover, in an email exchange with co-conspirator, a resident of a South Asian country, LaRose exclaimed, “she also desires to become a martyr.”<sup>39</sup> Based on these testimonies, the Jihad Jane embraces the discourse of fear, which can be defined as “the pervasive communication, symbolic awareness and expectation that danger and risk are a central feature of the effective environment or the physical and symbolic environment as people define and experience it in everyday life.”<sup>40</sup> Like other extremists, the Jihad Jane justifies her actions by “construct[ing] a narrative that emphasize that [her] preferred way of life is endangered by some Other” and that she believes she needs to do something to save Islam or Muslims.<sup>41</sup> In a different email exchange between a co-conspirator and Paulin-Ramirez, the co-

conspirator wrote, “[T]he job is to [k]nock down some individual[s] that are harming Islam.”<sup>42</sup> It is certain that the Jihad Jane embraces Islamic fanaticism and desires martyrdom status; her desire to defend the “Islamic” community traces to similar radical ideology in the Palestinian context: Maha Abdel Hadi, a woman who joined Hamas, an Islamic resistance movement in Palestine, asserted, “Islam doesn’t forbid women to choose martyrdom. Women have the right to resist the occupation by any means they choose ... Women suffer from the Israeli aggression as much as our men.”<sup>43</sup> Similarly, these women felt the obligation to defend the Islamic community against people or specific groups oppressing Muslims.

In another email exchange, LaRose exclaimed, “It is an honour & great pleasure to die or kill for” the co-conspirator.<sup>44</sup> Her desire to be a martyr is heightened in the court documents, which depicts the Jihad Jane as an extremist. Furthermore, LaRose and Paulin-Ramirez are empowered by such ideology due to their privilege status; their roles have changed from ordinary blonde American women to violent global defenders of Islam. In the same email exchange, the co-conspirator directed LaRose to “kill [resident of Sweden, identified as RS#1, presumably Lars Vilks] in a way that the whole Kufar [non-believer] world get frightened.”<sup>45</sup> The need to shock, disrupt or terrorize the “world” or as they described it as “non-believer” is essential in understanding the rhetoric of the network associated with the Jihad Jane. This binary discourse of “believers” and “non-believers” is often embraced and channeled by radical Islamists; and the Jihad Jane also adopts this distorted reality and projects the discourse of fear. Based on this email exchange, radical Islamic thought and the martyr community are reinforced.

Furthermore, why do people, specifically women embrace martyrdom? According to Kubra Guletekin’s research on women’s engagement with terrorism, “people support martyrdom when three conditions come together: 1. Cultural standards such as belief system, symbolic descriptions and historical customs; 2. Legitimate authorities who promote violence; and 3. Communities who are considered victims and are mistreated by external enemies.”<sup>46</sup> For men, there are evidence to suggest that radical Islamists are willing to become martyrs, to sacrifice themselves to enter the Islamic paradise and be greeted by seventy-two virgins.<sup>47</sup> They desire to defend their territory from occupation, whether geographical or not. For women, some may want to become martyrs to achieve a gender equality or higher status in society. According to a report by the Israel Security Agency, “the main reason women were involved in terrorism was personal, but this motive existed alongside the nationalistic motive.”<sup>48</sup> Both men and women have served as suicide bombers for many different reasons. LaRose and Paulin-Ramirez were compelled to become martyrs because of their distorted perceptions of reality, intrinsic values and attachments toward Islamic fanaticism and more importantly, their desires to connect with others through the internet. In another terrorist analysis study, “group solidarity” provides motivations of individual female attackers, which is similar to number three in Guletekin’s research on community support. In the case of female suicide bombers, they tend to “kill themselves out a feeling of allegiance toward the terrorist group which plays an important role in their identity.”<sup>49</sup> In LaRose’s account, there were hints of depression and suicide attempts but both women did not mention any activities involving suicide bombing, or self-detonation. However, their collective identity is closely related to the collective identity of a female suicide bomber: both women’s motivations are closely aligned with the terrorist network, and group solidarity is formed to support the cause.

The Grand Jury Indictment of Paulin-Ramirez reveals many sociological traits of group solidarity: in an email exchange between LaRose and Paulin-Ramirez, LaRose wrote, “Soon I will be moving to Europe to be with my brothers and sisters ... This place will be like a training camp as well as a home” and another reference shows that one of the co-conspirator explained that “Sister Fatima [LaRose] will be in charge of other sister care ... [W]e have already organized everything for her ... [W] are will[ing] to die in order to protect her no matter what the risk is.”<sup>50</sup> The notion of “sister care” relates to “feminine support,” where LaRose assumes leadership to support other women while the co-conspirator will give up their lives to safeguard the well-being of LaRose. This email exchange offers an interesting take of LaRose’s critical role in the network: her gender, race and citizenship are implied as privilege assets for this terror plot; she can also lead and support other women such as Paulin-Ramirez to strengthen the female or sister-group solidarity. This exemplifies another form of feminine power of the Jihad Jane: she has power over the male co-conspirators by leading the group. One apparent note is that the terrorist organizations tend to be all male-exclusive group. According to anthropologist Lionel Tiger:

The terrorism of Bin Laden harnesses the chaos of young men, uniting energies of political ardor and sex in a turbulent fuel. The structure of al-Qaeda-an all-male enterprise, of course appears to invoke small groups of relatively young men who maintain strong bonds with each other, bonds whose intensity dramatized and heightened by the secrecy demanded by their missions and danger of their projects.”<sup>51</sup>

This refers to the notion of “radical patriarchalism” which is often adopted by radical Islamists. The development and notion that terrorism is based on a masculine construction is defined by the conception of masculinity and the experiences of these terrorist, “Terrorists acts can be forms of symbolic empowerment for men whose traditional sexual roles – their very manhood - is perceived to be at stake.”<sup>52</sup> In most cases, such as the Palestinian context, men become martyrs to defend their community from occupation, as the trait of masculinity is closely tied to nationalism.<sup>53</sup> There are also traits that are associated with the constructs of masculinity: in the Arab context, they are “bravery, courage, willingness to sacrifice their lives to maintain honour and dignity,” while femininity is often negatively viewed as “economic and political dependence, weakness, empty talk and the inability to defend their honour and dignity.”<sup>54</sup> These sophisticated ideas of masculinity and femininity can reinforce the normative construction of terrorism as a masculine model. Furthermore, the notion of traditional roles of women in fundamentalism is perceived in other aspects. According to Helie, a researcher on gender and Muslim fundamentalism, all fundamentalisms have defined women as collective property in need of protection because: “To conform to the strict confines of womanhood within the fundamentalist religious code is a precondition for maintaining and reproducing the fundamentalist version of society.”<sup>55</sup> However, it is important to note that the Jihad Jane does not need protection and does not identify “her being” as a collective property.

This traditional notion is challenged by the Jihad Jane because she exemplifies the trait of “masculine femininity,” that is “combining genders and blending masculinity and femininity” since she “embodies certain specific ideas of ‘womanhood’ and ‘femininity’ while engaging in a brave fight for their [faith].”<sup>56</sup> The Jihad Jane’s “masculine femininity” is closely tied to Palestinian female suicide bombers who develop the trait of “Arab masculinity” that is defined as “constant vigilance and willingness to defend honor, kin and community from external aggression and to uphold and protect cultural definitions of gender-specific propriety.”<sup>57</sup> For these Palestinian women, they embraced “Arab masculinity” in relations to their Arab leaders against Palestinian resistance.<sup>58</sup> This cross-cultural development of sexuality is also noted in the case of the Jihad Jane: her co-conspirators are weak, and they desire what the Jihad Jane has. Despite being a woman, her place in the network destabilized this type of “male-group solidarity” since her role and trait of “masculine femininity” superseded her co-conspirators.

An additional explanation for their motivation is love. According to various newspaper accounts, the Jihad Jane was searching for love or as the newspaper calls it, “terrorist for the sake of love.”<sup>59</sup> Contrary to LaRose’s indictment, “she used the online sites to search for dates,” and she “flirted with people who commented on extremist videos she posted on YouTube.”<sup>60</sup> LaRose used her femininity to recruit men and women to plan a violent plot but she was also seeking love. For Paulin-Ramirez, she married her co-conspirator. However, it is believed to have been falsified in order to advance the terror plot. Both women had marriages and divorces prior to their engagement with terrorism. In the U.S. presses, their social lives, sexualities and narratives were carefully scrutinized to detect signs of anomalies. These character analyses and representations focus on the abnormal behaviors of the Jihad Jane by characterizing her as a “weak” woman searching for love; she is also depicted as “more depressed, crazier, more suicidal or more psychopathic than her male counterparts.”<sup>61</sup> That may be the case in some accounts, however, she channeled information and utilized her “masculine femininity” to subvert the law, and challenged the images and notions of terrorists and stereotypes of white, non-White Muslim women and men in America.

## Conclusion

Since the Jihad Jane’s arrest, their cases disrupted the perception and construction of a terrorist as a male-brown skinned Muslim figure. Their arrests were sensational because the public could not believe that American white women could join Islamic fundamentalist groups and plot a terrorist attack at a global scale. “the media

fetishizes female terrorists. This contributes to the belief that there is something unique, something just not right about women who kill.”<sup>62</sup> This paper demonstrates their extensive involvement and engagement with a larger transitional terrorist network, which placed them in a position of power. Through content analysis, the legal cases, newspaper accounts and transcripts of the Jihad Janes’ online conversations revealed that their gender, race and citizenship were assets and central to this terror plot; their physical features shocked the public, and theoretically subverted the ‘racial’ and ‘masculine’ models of terrorism.

This paper explores how the Jihad Jane ruptured normative expectations of gender roles, ideas and spaces. LaRose and Paulin-Ramirez played crucial roles in carrying out the terror plot. Their usages of femininity empowered their identity by demonstrating leadership, recruiting and marrying others to participate in a larger martyrdom operation. Their physical appearances and white privileged status as white women also destabilizes the system of “radical patriarchy.” The case of Jihad Jane is a reminder to U.S. national security that a terrorist, homegrown or not, can be anyone believing in anything, who can shatter normative and traditionally defined roles and identities in terrorism intelligence and societal expectations.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> LaRose was indicted and accused of conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and conspiracy to kill in a foreign country. See *United States vs. Colleen R. Colleen Rose*, Grand Jury Indictment, U.S. District Court for the Eastern Division of Pennsylvania, 4, March 2010, <http://intelfiles.egoplex.com/2010-03-04-LaRose-Indictment.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Urbina, "Views of 'JihadJane' Were Unknown to Neighbors," *New York Times*, 11, March 2010, accessed 11 March 2012, [www.nytimes.com/2010/03/11/us/11pennsylvania.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/11/us/11pennsylvania.html).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> In 2007, Lars Vilks, a Swedish artist living in Sweden who drew a series of drawings depicting the Islamic prophet Muhammad's head on the body of a dog. These images were reproduced in three Swedish newspapers to defend the freedom of expression and religion. See Patrik Jonsson, "Jihad Jane Alleged Target Lars Vilks: I have an Axe Here," *Christian Science Monitor*, 10 March, 2010, 1.

<sup>5</sup> See O'Connell, Vanessa, "For the Love of Islam," *The Wall Street Journal*, 12, March 2010, accessed 13, March 2012, <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052748704131404575118103199708576>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. This international case also involved two others: an Algerian man, Ali Charaf Damache, who identified himself as "Theblackflag," and a Pakistani man, Mohammad Hassan Khalid, living in Maryland. Both men have been charged to solicit funds to support terrorism, including plans of killing Swedish artists Lars Vilks. See Manuel Gamiz, Jr., "Two More Charged with Plotting Terrorist Acts with 'Jihad Jane,'" *Chicago Tribune*, 20

October 2011, accessed 14, January 2012, [www.chicagotribune.com/topic/mc-jihad-jane-new-arrests-20111020,0,6902015.story](http://www.chicagotribune.com/topic/mc-jihad-jane-new-arrests-20111020,0,6902015.story).

<sup>7</sup> See *United States vs. Jamie Paulin Ramirez*, Grand Jury Indictment, U.S. District Court for the Eastern Division of Pennsylvania, 4, March 2011.

<sup>8</sup> See Jerome P. Bjelopera, "American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat," *Congressional Research Service*, 15, November 2011, 83-84. In addition to LaRose and Paulin-Ramirez's case, two other women were convicted of providing material support to al-Shabaab in Minnesota on October 20, 2011. Al-Shabaab, a terrorist organization in Somalia is a separate network from the Jihad Jane's case. But this case also exemplifies the growing number of female homegrown terrorists. See Federal Bureau of Investigations, "Two Minnesota Women Convicted of Providing Material to al-Shabaab," 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011, accessed 23, February 2013, <http://www.fbi.gov/minneapolis/press-releases/2011/two-minnesota-women-convicted-of-providing-material-support-to-al-shabaab>.

<sup>9</sup> See Haddad Yazbeck, Yvonne. Jane Idleman, Smith. Kathleen M, Moore. *Muslim Women in America: The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006, 42.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> See Brian R. Farmer, *Radical Islam in the West: Ideology and Challenge*. U.S.: McFarland, 2010, 90.

<sup>12</sup> Brad, Knickerbocker, "Jihad Jane Joins Growing lists of American Terror Suspects," *Christian Science Monitor*, 12, March 2010, 1.

<sup>13</sup> Toni Johnson, "Threat of Homegrown Islamist Terrorism," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 30, September, 2011, accessed August 1, 2014, <http://www.cfr.org/terrorism/threat-homegrown-islamist-terrorism/p11509>

<sup>14</sup> See Charles Kurzman, "Muslim American Terrorism in the Decade Since 9/11." Durham, NC: Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> According to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs in the Senate of the United States, homegrown terrorism is defined as "the use, planned use or threatened use of force or violence by a group or individual born, raised or based and operating primarily within the United States ... to intimidate or coerce the United States government, the civilian population of the United States or any segment thereof, to further enhance of political and social objectives." Dragan Simeunovic, "Homegrown Terrorism in the United States and in the EU." *Review of International Affairs*, 62 no. 1141 (2011): 8. For an extensive review and analysis of U.S. press coverage on the Jihad Jane narrative, see Maura Conway and Lisa McInerney, "What's Love Got to Do With It? Framing 'JihadJane' in the US Press," *Media, War and Conflict*, 5 (2012): 6-21.

<sup>16</sup> The Jihad Jane cases are identified as lone wolf cases – a lone wolf is an individual "acting out of his or her own motivation without long-standing or direct connections to terrorist organizations or networks." However, I argue that both women connected themselves to a larger crime network to plot their terrorist acts. The rise of homegrown and lone-wolf terrorists were perceived to be on the rise, but it is difficult for the FBI to detect lone-wolf terrorism suspects. See Massimo Calabresi, "Why Jihad Jane Case is a Win for the Patriot Act," *Time Magazine*, 11, March 2010, accessed 20, January 2013, <http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1971245,00.html>

<sup>17</sup> See Tom Leonard, "Blond-haired 'Jihad Jane' Plotted Terror Attacks," *The Telegraph*, 10 March, 2010, accessed 10 August 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/northamerica/usa/7415724/Blond-haired-Jihad-Jane-plotted-terror-attacks.html>.

<sup>18</sup> See Maura Conway and Lisa McInerney, "What's Love Got to Do With It? Framing 'Jihad Jane' in the US Press," *Media, War and Conflict*, 5 (2012): 19.

<sup>19</sup> Daniel Nasaw, "Jihad Jamie: Racial Profiling Under Scrutiny After Second White Islamist Arrested," *The Guardian*, 14 March 2010, accessed 10 January 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/mar/14/jihad-jamie-islam-terrorism-us>.

<sup>20</sup> Puar, and Rai. "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," *Social Text*, 20, no. 3 (2002): 121.

<sup>21</sup> The images of Muslims are internalized as "terrorists" and they are recognized and perceived as such in the virtual world. See Raymond Pun, "Digital Images and Visions of Jihad: Virtual Orientalism and the Distorted Lens of Technology," *CyberOrient*, 7 no. 1 (2013), accessed 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013, <http://www.cyberorient.net/article.do?articleId=8391>.

<sup>22</sup> Puar and Rai, "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production of Docile Patriots," 119.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Calabresi, "Why Jihad Jane Case is a Win for the Patriot Act."

<sup>25</sup> Conway and McInerney, Lisa, "What's Love Got to Do With It? Framing 'JihadJane' in the U.S Press," 12. See also *United States vs. Colleen R. Colleen Rose*, 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Frances, Hassa, "Discursive and Political Deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers/Martyrs," *Feminist Review*, 81 (2005): 26.

- <sup>28</sup> Neil Gotanda, "The Racialization of Islam in American Law." *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 637, no. 1 (2011): 193.
- <sup>29</sup> *United States vs. Colleen R. Colleen Rose*, 4.
- <sup>30</sup> See Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1993).
- <sup>31</sup> *United States vs. Colleen R. Colleen Rose*, 4.
- <sup>32</sup> See *United States vs. Jamie Paulin Ramirez*.
- <sup>33</sup> Lindsey A. O'Rourke, "Behind the Woman Behind the Bomb," *New York Times*, 2 August 2, 2008, A15.
- <sup>34</sup> Hassa, "Discursive and Political Deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers/Martyrs," 24.
- <sup>35</sup> Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 200.
- <sup>36</sup> See Judith, Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York, Routledge: 1990).
- <sup>37</sup> See Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 200.
- <sup>38</sup> See *United States vs. Colleen R. Colleen Rose*, 3. In addition, the usages of social media networks strongly suggest Jihad Jane's adoption of the fear discourse: "In a mediated world where extremist's discourse to populations not only comes through the news but also is distributed via social networks, internet websites and blogs, this pervasive sense of dread comes fully equipped daily with the urgency "to do something about it." See R. Bennet Furlow and H.L., Goodall, Jr., H.L., "The War of Ideas and the Battle of Narratives: A Comparison of Extremist Storytelling Structures," *Cultural Studies <=> Critical Methodologies*, 11, no. 3 (2011): 220-221.
- <sup>39</sup> See *United States vs. Colleen R. Colleen Rose*, 3.
- <sup>40</sup> R. Bennet Furlow and H.L., Goodall, Jr., H.L., "The War of Ideas and the Battle of Narratives: A Comparison of Extremist Storytelling Structures," 220-221.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> See *United States vs. Jamie Paulin Ramirez*, 3.
- <sup>43</sup> Qtd in Hassa, "Discursive and Political Deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers/Martyrs," 32.
- <sup>44</sup> *United States vs. Colleen R. Colleen Rose*, 3-4.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>46</sup> Kubra Gultekin, "Women Engagement in Terrorism: What Motivates Females To Join In Terrorist Organizations," *Understanding Terrorism: Analysis of Sociological and Psychological Aspects* (Pennsylvania, IOS Press: 2007): 171.
- <sup>47</sup> Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 199.
- <sup>48</sup> Rosemarie Skaine, *Female Suicide Bombers* (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2006): 62.
- <sup>49</sup> Lindsay A. O'Rourke, "What's Special about Female Suicide Terrorism?" *Security Studies* 18 (2009): 705.
- <sup>50</sup> See *United States vs. Jamie Paulin Ramirez*, 3.
- <sup>51</sup> Qtd in Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007): 56.
- <sup>52</sup> See Juergensmeyer, *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 199.
- <sup>53</sup> Hassa, "Discursive and Political Deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers/Martyrs," 36.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup> Anissa Helie, "Women and Muslim Fundamentalism," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28 (1993): 2455.
- <sup>56</sup> Francíková analyzes the story of Kateřina Marsálova, a female soldier who supported and challenged the notions of the ideal woman by drawing on Judith Halberstam's theory of "female masculinity" and Mimi Schipper's notion of "masculine femininity." Like Marsálova's story, the Jihad Jane's narrative offers similar accounts of embodying gender transgression in the context of deviating from gender and social norms. See Dasa Francíková, "The Queer Story of Kateřina Marsálova: The Female Soldier, Ideal Woman, and Masculine Femininity," *Gender and History* 24, no. 2 (August 2012): 359.
- <sup>57</sup> Anat Berko, Edna Erez and Julie L. Globokar. "Gender Crime and Terrorism: The Case of Arab Palestinian Women in Israel." *British Journal of Criminology* 50, no. 4 (2010): 672.
- <sup>58</sup> Hassa, "Discursive and Political Deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers/Martyrs," 37.
- <sup>59</sup> Conway, and McInerney, "What's Love Got to Do With It? Framing 'Jihad Jane' in the US Press," 12. See also *United States vs. Colleen R. Colleen Rose*, 16.
- <sup>60</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>61</sup> Ibid. 18.
- <sup>62</sup> Ibid.