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Article

"Jihad Cool/Jihad Chic": The Roles of the Internet and Imagined Relations in the Self-Radicalization of Colleen LaRose (Jihad Jane)

Caroline Joan S. Picart

Tim Bower Rodriguez, P.A., 601 N. Ashley Drive, Suite 310, Tampa, FL 33602, USA;
E-Mail: cjpicart@gmail.com; Tel.: +1-850-459-0066

Abstract: The internet provides the means through which a "self-activating terrorist" may first self-radicalize through some imaginary or sympathetic connection with an organized terrorist network. Additionally, the internet allows such a self-activating terrorist to move into the stage of radical violent action. The internet serves both functions by providing the lone wolf with not only a rhetorical medium for self-justification and communication through the use of "monster talk" and its converse, the rhetoric about the "good citizen," but it is also a source for relatively inexpensive and more unpredictable technologies of mass destruction. Crucial to this analysis is the distinction between radicalization of thought and radicalization of action, as a theoretical rhetoric of radicalization does not automatically convert into a rhetoric of radical action unless there are catalysts at work. The internet, as well as imagined relations cemented by the rhetorics of "jihadi cool" or "jihadi chic," function as these crucial catalysts, galvanizing monster talk into monstrous action. The article focuses specifically on the case of self-activating terrorist Colleen LaRose to analyze how different factors—mental, psychological, social, and economic—interact with imaginative elements, such as surrogate father-mentor-lover relations for LaRose, and contribute to the formation of a self-activating terrorist, and what ultimately motivates and galvanizes her to move from a rhetoric of radical talk to a rhetoric of radical action, using Silber and Bhatt's model of radicalization as an initial heuristic. In the case of Colleen LaRose, the romance of "jihadi chic" or "jihadi cool" (the converse of the rhetoric of the monstrous "infidel" or "lone wolf terrorist") was an essential factor to her self-radicalization. It is this imagined status of "jihadi chic" or "jihadi cool" (that nevertheless must somehow have a look of "reality" or "authenticity" and command a response from its audience) that continues to be

a crucial component of the success of recruitment strategies of radical jihadi groups, such as ISIS.

1. Introduction: The Rise of Self-Radicalizing Terrorists in the U.S.

With the success of the crackdown on traditional terrorist cells, terrorism has evolved to generate "self-activating" terrorists. As noted in Europol's 2012 Report: "As a consequence of sustained military pressure, al-Qaeda core have publicly discouraged sympathizers from travelling to conflict zones in order to join them. It has instead promoted the idea of individually planned and executed attacks in Western countries without the active assistance of any larger organization" [1]. For example, in June 2011, Adam Gadahn, an American-born spokesperson for As-Sahab, al-Qaeda's media wing, was featured in an English-language video message, titled: "Do Not Rely on Others, Take the Task Upon Yourself". Here, Gadahn clearly advocates self-radicalized terrorist operations and suggests some ways to carry this out, exploiting possible openings in legal regulations regarding the ownership of firearms. "Let's take America as an example. America is absolutely awash with easily obtainable firearms. You can go down to a gun show at the local convention center and come away with a fully automatic assault rifle, without a background check, and most likely without having to show an identification card. So what are you waiting for?" [2] Additionally, al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), an al-Qaeda affiliate, using its online English-language magazine *Inspire*, has actively advocated "open source jihad", which is aimed at providing information to aid aspiring self-radicalized jihadists in planning and executing their attacks, without having to travel to traditional jihadist training camps or to operate in cells. Thus, the Fall 2010 edition urged self-radicalizing terrorism, under the guise of editorializing: "Spontaneous operations performed by individuals and cells here and there over the whole world, without connections between them, have put the local and international intelligence apparatus in a state of confusion, as arresting the members of the aborted cells does not influence the operational activities of others who are not connected with them" [3]. In an eerie foreshadowing of the Boston Marathon Bombings, the summer 2010 issue gave advice on how to make a pipe bomb using ordinary, easily obtainable materials.

That shift from organized terrorist network to self-activating terrorists (of which lone wolf terrorists can be seen as a subset) has been openly acknowledged by, for example, the Obama administration. On 15 August 2011—a little less than a month after 32-year-old Anders Breivik was charged with killing 77 people in back-to-back terrorist attacks in Norway—President Barack Obama opined that a "lone wolf" terrorist strike in the United States is more likely than a major coordinated effort like the 9/11 attacks by traditional terrorist cells. In an interview with CNN, the president declared: "The risk that we're especially concerned over right now is the lone wolf terrorist, somebody with a single weapon being able to carry out wide-scale massacres of the sort that we saw in Norway recently" [4].

Approximately six months later, U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano acknowledged the emerging security threat at a meeting of European security officials in Paris.

"There's been a lot of evolution over the past three years," she stated. "The thing that's most noticeable to me is the growth of the lone wolf, the single attacker in the United States or elsewhere who is not part of a larger global conspiracy or network" [5]. Finally, only days before the one-year anniversary of Osama bin Laden's death during the 1 May 2011 raid on his hideout in Pakistan, a joint intelligence bulletin issued by the Department of Homeland Security, the FBI and the U.S. Northern Command warned that lone wolf terrorists could use the date to avenge the killing of the former al-Qaeda leader because there was intelligence that indicated that terrorist groups such as al Shabaab in Somalia, northern Africa's al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and the Pakistani Taliban, had rallied for such action [6]. More recently, in November 2013, then-Attorney General Eric Holder said that his greatest fear was that of a lone wolf attacker acting on U.S. soil, such as the attackers involved in the Washington Navy Yard and Los Angeles International Airport shootings [7].

Thus, the value of analyzing the more recent evolutions of forms of terrorism, especially self-activating terrorists, of which "lone wolves" appear to be the most monstrously depicted in the American media, is of paramount importance. In popular parlance and even in policy-oriented media discourse, as illustrated above, there appears to be an essential conflation of "self-radicalizing" terrorism with "lone wolf" terrorism. Nevertheless, to analyze how lone wolf terrorists become what they are, one must first return to the task of attempting to characterize what lone wolf terrorists are. Beyond that provisional working description, this article moves into one case study of a fairly recent infamous American female self-activating terrorist, Colleen LaRose, and her movement across the various stages of radicalization, moving from radical thought to radical action very rapidly. This particular case study is mapped in a manner so as to describe key elements of LaRose's childhood and early formative experiences, her education, various psychological factors, ideological factors, the turning point from radical rhetoric to radical action, and very briefly, the denouement thereafter.

2. "Lone Wolf Terrorism": A Contested Term

The purpose of this section is not to formulate an absolute definition of "lone wolf terrorism". In the American media, it is the most heinously described form of self-radicalizing terrorism. "Lone wolf terrorism" is a contested term, and has affinities with two others: "leaderless resistance" and "solo terrorism" [8]; [9] (pp. 80–95); [10]. As Nesser notes: "There is no consensus regarding the definition of these concepts, something that constitutes an analytical obstacle" [11]. Given these difficulties, the purpose of this section is more pragmatic than academically analytic.

Spaaij [8]; [12] (pp. 854–870) defined lone wolf terrorism as: "… terrorist attacks carried out by persons who (a) operate individually, (b) do not belong to an organized terrorist group or network, and (c) whose modi operandi are conceived and directed by the individual without any direct outside command or hierarchy" [11]; [13] (pp. 1–11). Additionally, the term "lone wolf" is used by U.S. law enforcement agencies to refer to "individuals undertaking violent acts of terrorism outside of a command structure" [14]. Thus, the conventional wisdom is that although lone wolf terrorists may share ideological convictions or a philosophical identification with a terrorist group, lone wolf terrorists share these commonalities with terrorist groups, devoid of actual communication with these organized groups, and without command or direction from that group. Hence, the term is almost stereotypically commonsensical: A lone wolf operates in isolation from a pack. "While the lone wolf's actions are

motivated to advance a certain group's goal, the tactics and methods are conceived and directed solely by the individual, without any outside command or direction" [3]. As we shall later see, this apparent conventional wisdom should be at least nuanced, in relation to Colleen LaRose. This is not to say that the definition of lone wolf terrorism above does not apply at all to LaRose, but that LaRose's example helps us understand how the binary implicit in the term "lone wolf" needs to be problematized, in order to understand how in her case the shift from radical thought to radical action occurred.

Offering an even more complex schema, Pantucci offered a typology of lone wolf terrorists, grounded upon the means and context of self-radicalization, their tactics of engagement, and the framework of available support [15]. Pantucci's schema nuances the contrast between lone wolf terrorists and organized terrorist groups, but essentially maintains the binary between functioning as a lone wolf or operating within a pack. In Pantucci's schema, there are four categories: (1) the "loner terrorist" connected to the terrorist group merely superficially, by passively consuming terrorist information from the internet, or from other sources at large in society; (2) "lone wolf terrorists" who, although they may interact with a terrorist organization virtually in communications that show a command and control structure, operate individually in the real world; (3) "lone wolf pack terrorists" involving groups, rather than individuals, who self-radicalize, and then seek to join the jihad, but not for immediate operational purposes; and (4) "lone attacker terrorists" who are individuals who operate alone, but nevertheless have clear command and control terrorist groups—in effect, they are essentially one-man terror cells. As we shall later see, even with this analytic parsing, it is difficult to press Colleen LaRose, an aspiring assassin, into a simple mold. Nevertheless, one thing is clear: "lone wolves are not alone. They are linked, networked or communicated with through the internet" [15]. This is why the role of the internet, in relation to the self-radicalization of lone wolves, is of crucial import.

3. The Rhetorics of Monstrosity and Coolness in Relation to Lone Wolf Terrorism and Its Development

The rhetorics regarding terrorism, especially in relation to lone wolf terrorists, are rich with "monster talk" [16,17]. Terms like "lone wolf", or "silver bullet" [18] form an implicit analogy between the "self-radicalizing" terrorist and the werewolf. Furthermore, the breadth of technological advances, and the porousness of borders, in relation to the internet, adds a further transmogrifying dimension to the characterization of the self-radicalizing terrorist [18]. It is important to understand the dynamics of these rhetorics of monstrosity, as they function in conjunction with their paired "others"—such as the rhetoric of "jihadi cool" or "jihadi chic", as we shall later see.

Clearly, the language then-President Bush's speech in the fall of 2006, in the aftermath of 9/11, set up much of the current rhetorical dynamics.

> The terrorists who attacked us on September the 11th, 2001, are men without conscience—but they're not madmen. They kill in the name of a clear and focused ideology, a set of beliefs that are evil, but not insane… They're driven by a radical and perverted vision of Islam that rejects tolerance, crushes all dissent, and justifies the murder of innocent men, women and children in the pursuit of political power. They hope to establish a violent political utopia across the Middle East, which they call a "Caliphate"—Where all would be ruled according to their hateful ideology [19].

By using such absolutist terms, the speech effectively divided the world into good (the U.S. and allies of the U.S.) and evil (enemies of the U.S., broadly termed "terrorists"). It also left little room for anything save an all-out campaign for the total destruction of those designated "evil"—a thoroughgoing militant rhetoric that mimed the violent fundamentalism of Osama Bin Laden [20]. "Rather than countenancing the possibility that certain of its actions might have fueled resentment toward it, it divided the world into good and evil"—effectively precluding any American actions not directed at absolute victory over terrorism writ large [21]. As early as 2006, predictions regarding a shift in recruitment tactics and the rise of self-radicalizing terrorists emerged: "Officials worldwide have been preoccupied for more than two years by a fear of terror groups consisting of 'self-starters'—men who become radicalized on their own and decide to conduct operations without the support of an extremist network or with only tenuous connections" [22].

Clearly, rhetorical forms impact and shape public policy and the way in which, in this case, self-activating terrorists or lone wolf terrorists are perceived—as a public menace. Lone wolf terrorists are perceived as particularly dangerous for a number of reasons: their ability to think outside the box; their looser affiliation with organized terrorist movements, making their movements harder to track, anticipate, or arrest; their decisions regarding the level of violence they wish to achieve are unconstrained by the desire not to alienate supporters; and their easy access to self-radicalizing material and technologies of mass violence [8,23].

This article draws, to some extent, from my prior work on the use of "monster talk" as a form of public preachment [16,17], but as applied specifically, for the purpose of conciseness and clarity, to the formation and radicalization of one American lone wolf terrorist, Colleen LaRose (Jihad Jane). Crucial to this analysis is the distinction between radicalization of thought and radicalization of action, as a theoretical rhetoric of radicalization does not automatically convert into a rhetoric of radical action [24]. In Colleen LaRose's case, the shift from a radicalization of thought to a radicalization of action entailed an abrupt shift rather than a gradual evolution, partially due to the dynamics of the rhetorics of "jihadi cool" or "jihadi chic". Arguably, the internet plays a crucial role in this galvanization of monster talk into monstrous action, [1] as it provides the means through which a lone wolf may first self-radicalize through some imaginary or sympathetic connection with an organized terrorist network. In addition, interaction through the internet allows a self-radicalizing terrorist to move into the stage of radical violent action, by not only providing the lone wolf with a medium for self-justification and communication, but also a source for relatively inexpensive and more unpredictable technologies of mass destruction.

Nevertheless, it is important to map exactly when, in the process of "self-radicalization", the internet comes into play. It is also important to track exactly what functions the internet takes on in this conversion of "monster talk" to monstrous action. This is necessary in order to avoid the impression that the internet is an uncontrollable source of a "phantom menace", but rather, is a communications network that serves multiple functions [26] (p. 121). Along an intersecting track, Thompson argues that social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, are effective tools for radicalization because of their ubiquity and reach, among other reasons; however, Thompson also argues that national security communities, by becoming more involved in social media, can potentially understand how

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[1] See, for example, ISIS's success at recruiting approximately 2000 Westerners, including 100 Americans [25].

radicalization occurs and implement effective responses [27]. While this article agrees with Thompson's position that the internet does play a crucial role in the movement from radical thought to radical action, it differs in emphasis and on asserting a clear cause-and-effect connection, as there are many other factors that come into play contextually. Like Borum, given the complexity of how radicalization occurs, this article prefers a pragmatic, multi-spectrum approach, seeing theories as potential tools to achieve a more sophisticated understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Quoting Cable *et al.*, Borum cautions:

> Rather than seeking some single model of activist recruitment and commitment, consisting of structural and/or social psychological variables…, analysts should assume that there are multiple models and then get on with the more useful work of specifying the conditions under which one or another is more appropriate [28,29].

Two senior intelligence analysts in the New York City Police Department, Mitchell Silber and Arvin Bhatt, developed a four-stage model to conceptualize the transition from radical thought to radical action [30]. The model was developed from performing a comparative case analysis of homegrown terrorist plots planned and/or enacted by terrorists in countries as diverse as Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada [30] (pp. 23–56), and within the U.S., in places as diverse as Portland, Oregon; Lackawanna, New York; and Northern Virginia [30] (pp. 57–82). This model has become "widely understood and accepted as the model for understanding and informing training and strategies for law enforcement officials in dealing with cases of terrorism" [31] (p. 44). Despite some issues associated with the model, such as the potential of reductively linking criminal behavior to racial and ethnic groups [32–34], Silber and Bhatt's model does provide a practical heuristic as a starting point for analyzing the transition from radical thought to radical action, as evidenced, for example, in the development of an FBI forensic psychologist's analogous four-step heuristic model of radicalization [35] (pp. 7–10). So although this article does begin by mapping LaRose's transition from radical thought to radical action using Silber and Bhatt's four-part model, it does nuance what appears to be a simple and linear process to describe a complex set of interacting factors.

Silber and Bhatt characterize the Radicalization Process in four stages: (1) Pre-Radicalization; (2) Self-Identification; (3) Indoctrination; (4) Jihadization [30] (p. 6). The first stage is the Pre-Radicalization Phase, in which individuals live "ordinary" lives, and usually have no criminal history. Then, something tragic acts as a catalyst, causing these individuals to become alienated or disassociated from general society. These traumatic, catalytic events could range from losing a job, undergoing a divorce, a tragic accident, or a death in the family, among others [30] (pp. 6–7).

Such traumatic events leave a void, which must be filled, either by seeking spiritual guidance, for example, or integration into a group. This finding of a new "home" constitutes the second stage, Self-Identification [30] (pp. 6–7). Although the forging of such new identities or memberships can be sought out in new physical spaces such as in mosques or schools, where radical imams preach, more often, the most typical venue these days is virtual, through the internet, where anonymity appears to provide a measure of security. Thus, self-radicalization occurs technically at this stage, when an individual begins to seek out jihadist websites, for the purpose of filling such a spiritual void through establishing imagined relations with a virtual community.

Nevertheless, it is usually interaction with members of a virtual community that cements stage three—Indoctrination [30] (p. 7). Social media serves to create a loose virtual community of radical mentors and likeminded extremists, who provide resources, support, and communication, thus furthering the individual's conversion to radicalization, and strengthening imagined ties to this loose, virtual community. Indeed, a May 2008 report by the Senate Homeland Security Committee concluded that the internet "play(s) a critical role throughout the radicalization process" because it is the principal medium through which potential self-activating terrorists can discover radical jihadi propaganda, become converted, and become connected with "the global Islamist terrorist movement" [36].

Once the individual's indoctrination has moved from radical rhetoric to the rhetoric of radical action, the individual has reached stage four—Jihadization, in which self-radicalized terrorists "accept their individual duty to participate in jihad and self-designate themselves as holy warriors or mujahideen," actively planning, preparing for, and executing terrorist attacks [30] (p. 7). As we shall see, although this four-stage model has a heuristic value in chronicling, and analyzing, how Colleen LaRose became a lone wolf terrorist, applying the model is not a simple, linear and reductive process. Depending on the complex interaction of particular factors at play, and the particular individuals involved, if full radicalization is achieved, the movement across the four stages can occur gradually and indiscernibly, or can entail sudden shifts—the latter of which seems to be the pattern in LaRose's case.

Rather than assuming a cause−effect connection between internet radicalization and terrorist action, it is important to plot the nature of the interaction between radicalization of action (monstrous action) and mere exposure to jihadi sites on the internet. One key issue this article raises is whether exposure to such radical jihadi sites, alone, is necessary or sufficient to catalyze terrorist action. Summarizing, for example, Sageman on the difference between American and European reactions to jihadi sites: American individuals "read and chat about the global jihadi terrorist ideology on the Internet, just like their European counterparts. Yet for most American Muslims, the terrorist message does not become a catalyst to terrorist action as it does for their European counterparts, since it does not resonate with their beliefs or personal experiences" [26] (p. 108). Another corollary question this article examines is whether there is a causal correlation between radicalization of action and several individual factors, such as structural or personality factors, social identity, among others. Nevertheless, the principal focus of this article remains the shift from radical thought to radical action, with the rhetorics of monstrosity and coolness being crucial factors. A parallel study could be Bartlett and Miller's inquiry into processes of radicalization that escalate into violence, as opposed to others that do not; Bartlett and Miller also cite the importance of thrill, excitement and coolness as factors that aid in the escalation to violent action [37] (pp. 1–21).

Mohamed Abdul Saddiq uses monster talk in fleshing out his theory of how lone wolf terrorists become what they are. He describes internet users who, through exposure to the contagion of radical jihadi sites and chatrooms, become "mindless automatons" [38] (p. 2). Rather than assume a framework in which "addicts" and "zombies" transmogrify into self-radicalizing terrorists solely by virtue of their exposure to radical sites, this project focuses on a specific case study of individual factors and motivations, rather than terrorist networks. Nevertheless, as this article argues, one crucial catalyst that converts a radicalization of thought to a radicalization of action is the rhetorical allure of jihadi cool/jihadi chic.

4. The Rhetorics of "Jihadi Cool" or "Jihadi Chic"

4.1. The Genesis and Evolution of "Jihadi Cool"

The terms "jihadi cool" or "jihadi chic" have been much used in the media of late, especially with the beheading of American photojournalist James Foley by "Jihadi John", identified by the British M15 to be former London rapper, Abdel-Majed Abdel Bary [39]. Mumbai-born British author Salman Rushdie expressed fears that the language of "jihadi cool," propagated through Twitter and YouTube, was seducing young British Muslims to join the "decapitating barbarism" [40] of ISIS (an acronym for "Islamic State in Iraq Syria", also alternatively termed "Islamic State in the Levant" or "Islamic State in al Sham"). [2] Rushdie defined "jihadi-cool" as "the deformed medievalist language of fanaticism, backed up by modern weaponry" and opined that "[i]t's hard not to conclude that this hate-filled religious rhetoric, pouring from the mouths of ruthless fanatics into the ears of angry young men, has become the most dangerous new weapon in the world today" [42]. In a similar vein, House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Mike McCaul (R-Texas) raised concerns about the sufficiency of the Obama administration's response to emergent threats from "the 'jihadi cool' subculture—young individuals influenced by the sophisticated propaganda campaigns of Muslim extremist groups such as the Islamic State and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula" [43,44].

The term "jihadi cool" was originally coined by psychiatrist and former CIA operations officer, Marc Sageman, to describe al-Qaeda's growing influence on the internet [45]. Despite the prevalence of monstrous metaphors pointing to an utterly foreign menace infecting or seducing American or British men, the concept of "jihadi cool" probably began with Adam Yahiye Gadahn, an American raised in a goat farm in Riverside County, who spent some of his teenage years with his Jewish grandfather in Santa Ana [46]. Gadahn left for Pakistan in the 1990s, and emerged around 2004 on propaganda videos as an English-speaking spokesman for Al-Qaeda [46]. Although Gadahn's early videos as "Azzam the American" were viewed as more "laughable" than "scary," these rough productions were nevertheless noted as among the first English-language radical jihadist propaganda efforts attempting to reach out to Western audiences [46].

Additionally, the slick website of Revolution Muslim became a precursor of what has evolved into the look of "jihadi cool." Over an 18-month period, this small New York-based organization peaked, until government officials arrested one of its leaders and shut down the website [46]. Revolution Muslim was created by three American converts to radical Islam, all of whom are serving prison sentences [46]. At the height of its popularity, the website was used by authorities to monitor the communication, recruitment and activities of aspiring radical jihadis [46].

With the shutdown of the Revolution Muslim website, *Inspire* magazine, an online publication run by the group al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula targeting English language speakers, moved in to fill the gap [47]. Described as akin to "the *Sports Illustrated* of jihad", this magazine has published articles such as that giving instructions on creating explosive devices, a copy of which was found in the backpack of one of the Tsarnaev brothers [46].

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[2] Rushdie, who migrated to New York, was the subject of a fatwa from the Ayatollah Khomeini in 1989 for his novel, *The Satanic Verses*, and had to spend years in hiding [41].

One of *Inspire* magazine's most recent productions, the *Lone Mujahid Pocketbook*, produced in Spring 2013, advertises itself as "A Step to [sic] Step Guide on How to Become a Successful Lone Mujahid" [47]. The issue clearly targets would-be American jihadis, and employs hip, fashionable language conventions as well as rap lingo to tantalize and inundate its audience with tips, strategies, and incitement to commit acts of terrorism. For example, the cover of that issue drew in its potential readers with the lines: "R U dreamin' of wagin' jihadi attacks against kuffar? ... Well, there's no need to travel abroad, coz the frontline has come to you. Wanna know how? Just read 'n' apply the contents of this guide which had practical 'n' creative ways to please Allah by killing his enemies 'n' healing the believers' chests" [47]. The contents reprise many of *Inspire's* first ten issues, such as "Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of your Mom" and the "Ultimate Mowing Machine" [47]. Deploying everyday items such as sugar, motor oil or pressure cookers, and systematically detailing tactical details such as different types of bombs, areas most vulnerable to a mass attack, and methods of maximizing mayhem, the issue seeks to convert its everyday audiences into radical jihadi warriors. "Mixing religious devotion with a desire to be cool in the MTV generation, the magazine offers an attractive picture for jihadi wannabes, perhaps inspired by the mass popular appeal of rapping gang-bangers who make gun violence 'cool'" [47,48].

Yet even *Inspire's* glossy and sophisticated manipulation of the media has been eclipsed by ISIS's deft deployment of social media, such as Twitter and Facebook, which feature items as diverse as graphic videos to T-shirts [49] featuring ISIS's logo, which is a black flag [46]. Former Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Michael Leiter acknowledged that ISIS "is using more social media than al[-]Qaeda ever did" [50]. Similarly, according to Staffan Truve, an analyst with Recorded Future, a non-governmental entity that monitors Twitter and other social media, in summer 2014 alone, more than 60,000 internet accounts expressed positive sentiments regarding ISIS extremists [51]. An even larger number can be extrapolated by multiplying that figure by an average account's tweets, combined with the group's deft use of other social media, inclusive of the Android app; Truve estimates that "hundreds of thousands of people are receiving the Islamic State message" [51]. The imagery Truve uses, in describing ISIS's carefully tailored global recruitment campaign, is reminiscent of a mythological hydra—cut one head off, and another blooms to rear its deadly head: "Every time a pro-IS Twitter account is closed, another one almost immediately takes its place" [51]. Furthermore, ISIS has taken "jihadi cool" to new merchandising extremes: it now features its own online clothing line run by a company, Zirah Moslem, which specializes in ISIS-themed T-shirts and hoodies, sold via websites in Indonesia, where it is legal to sell jihadi-themed products [52].

4.2. Explaining the Seductive Appeal of "Jihadi Cool"

How does one explain this upsurge of "jihadi cool" popularity? One factor appears to be the seductive appeal of being a "badass". As UCLA sociologist Jack Katz noted: "In many youthful circles, to be 'bad,' to be a 'badass' or otherwise overtly embrace symbols of deviance is regarded as a good thing" [53] (p. 80). Katz identifies three stages of aggression that a badass aspirant must undergo and become, in order to become initiated into the ranks of the truly "badass". First, he must be tough and morally impermeable—not someone who can easily be influenced by others. Second, he must appear alien—uncompromisingly "hostile to any form of civilization" and irreducible to anything

comprehensible to "native sensibilities," resulting in his presence or acts as "unnerving" [53] (p. 80). Third, and ultimately, to be a "badass" requires a genuine meanness, or spontaneous ability to engage in acts of violence, devoid of considerations of either utility or self-preservation; "badasses manifest the transcendent superiority of their being, specifically by insisting on the dominance of their will…" [53] (p. 81).

Perhaps the seduction of "jihadi cool" is simply the paradigmatic appeal of the "badass" given a jihadi mask. As Simon Cottee observes: "The paradigmatic badass is still with us, only now he doesn't have a gangster face; now he has a jihadi face. For the ultimate badasses are the caliphate-invoking, kafir-hating, sword-wielding men in black of Islamic State. This is in no way to glamorize the group. But it may be the key to understanding why some young men from the West give up everything to join it or affiliated groups" [54].

However, a second—and, to some extent, contrary explanation—is the success of promoting a romanticized notion of making one's mark on the world through adventure, linked with a promise of earthly pleasure—to which allure the badass is theoretically immune, with his imperviousness, toughness and meanness. This notion, the idea of a "five star jihad," appears to have two components: (1) the allure of celebrity and (2) the attractions of living in luxury while being "virtuous." Lorne Dawson, a University of Waterloo sociologist, theorized that "our celebrity-obsessed culture pushes youth to define who they are at ever earlier stages. There is this onus on kids to create themselves. They're trying to figure out 'how can I be special?'" [55]. This image of celebrity comes with stereotypes of necessary luxury. Hence, internet images aimed to recruit U.K.-born Islamic warriors showcased jihadis "lounging in a well-appointed home with laptops and game systems" [55]. For example, reading a Tumblr account of what young British jihadis can enjoy once they penetrate Syria's borders (through a bribe), gives one the impression they have achieved the (masculine) earthly version of paradise; not only do they enjoy houses with "5+ bedrooms with swimming pools, *etc.*" but also "junk food and sweets, training with a wide range of weapons, internet, phones, cheeseburgers lol [sic] pizza [not 'foreign muck like tabbouleh or hummus'], kebabs, markets, schools for children, classes for adults, shariah courts…" [56]. And if weapons, food, and Brotherhood were not enough, calls for fresh recruits throw in additional tantalizing hooks: "There are plenty of women here waiting to be married; waiting to bare [sic] the offspring of the army of Imam Mehdi by the will of Allah and there is honour for the Muslims here" [56].

There are numerous accounts of young jihadi warriors posting "selfies" of themselves glamorously atop tanks and brandishing guns, or showing some heartwarmingly human aspect. One such internet celebrity is a Dutch national of Turkish descent, who engages in the armed struggle against the Syrian regime, called Yilmaz [57]. After the photosharing site Instagram closed his site, Yilmaz migrated to Tumblr, a blogging platform favored by jihadi warriors eager to boast of their feats in battle [57]. Some of Yilmaz's popular photos include one of himself tenderly cradling a Syrian toddler swathed in pink, and another of himself, immortalized in the quintessential warrior pose, dressed in a black jacket and camouflage, with one leg propped up and his rifle by his side [57]. Yilmaz's self-promotion paid off: not only did he develop a following among Syria watchers, but he also achieved a presence in international news when the *New York Times* blogged about him [57]. Like other Hollywood celebrities, he uses social media to make sure his fan base remains secure; he deploys the ask-and-answer forum platform of Ask.fm to answer fan questions about his grand adventure [58]. Hardly surprisingly, his success has spawned imitators—"Other jihadis emulated him, posting photos of themselves on

Facebook, Twitter, and other platforms looking happy and relaxed, pointing fingers in the air and casually slinging guns or other weapons" [57]. The ripple effects are clear, pointing to the power of jihadi cool. In an interview with Dutch TV show *Nieuwsuur* in 2014, where Yilmaz is shown leading new recruits in target practice in a bleak Syrian field, Yilmaz opined that "90 percent of [the recruits] have never even fired a bullet in their lives, let alone [fought] on an actual battlefield" [57].

4.3. Analyzing the Rhetorical Mechanics of "Jihadi Cool"

Very clearly, part of the reason why the "jihadi cool" message is so popular among particularly young men is its careful tailoring and understanding of its targeted audiences. A CIA report states that approximately 2000 Westerners have joined the ranks of the radical jihadi fighters in Iraq and Syria, with at least 500 from the United Kingdom and more than 700 from France [58]. Both the look and the content of "jihadi cool" were crafted principally by American radical jihadi converts like Anwar al-Aulaqi, a New Mexico-born Muslim cleric based in Yemen; Omar Hammami, an Alabama native who rose to become a senior commander in Somalia and starred in a rap recruiting video, which became an internet sensation, in which he led an armed group of fighters to a catchy musical beat; and Adam Gadahn, a native Californian who became an al-Qaeda spokesman and was charged with treason in 2006, among others [59]. "Can you imagine [Ayman al-] Zawahiri or [Osama] bin Laden doing a rap video? That is something that people without the same connection to America or the West would have a harder time pulling off," proclaimed David Kris, Assistant Attorney General for national security [59]. Both the ability to communicate in the American vernacular in a manner that appeals to the youth, as well as a command of what it takes to create an MTV aesthetic, are crucial components of jihadi cool's rhetorical persuasiveness. Videos created specifically for Western audiences try to depict jihad as a "Hollywood-like video game [51]." Quoting Patrick Skinner with the Soufan Group, a security intelligence services company:

> They make jihad seem cool, not over the top—beheading videos aren't recruitment videos—but they do do very slick productions, with music overlaid on top of very slick graphics, and they make it seem like a video game. They don't show the after effects. They'll show an attack or they'll show a killing, or they'll show shooting with explosions, and it's very Hollywood-like… [51].

Yet despite this imagined appeal to the virtual worlds of Hollywood video and MTV aesthetics, these "jihadi cool" videos attempt a connection to "reality" by humanizing the radical jihadi warriors. Hence, radical jihadi warriors are shown with cats and dogs [60], and with American products that would appeal to their young audiences, such as Nutella, a chocolate spread, and Skittles, a rainbow-like colorful candy [51]. The British citizen suspected of being ISIS's sword in the beheading of James Foley, Abdel Majed Abdel Bary, not only aspired to be a rapper, using curses for lyrics against a Western soundtrack, but also, in collaboration with his fellow British kidnappers, called themselves "The Beatles" [60]. One of the radical jihadi "Beatles", Abu Abdullah al-Britani, expressed his passion for Krispy Kreme doughnuts on Twitter while another radical jihadist in Syria posted a photo of himself drinking Red Bull [60]. The crossover between the realms of the imagined and the real (as culturally imagined and rhetorically produced) can be quite startling and can sometimes border on the hyperbolic and

humorous. For example, Ryan Mauro noted: "Another Islamic State's supporter's photo has a Batman-like image with an Islamic State flag on his costume. He recently tweeted that the Islamic State could defeat the Justice League, a team of comic-book superheroes including Batman and Superman" [60]. Thus, while appealing to the visual appeal of the imagined realms of MTV and Hollywood video, in order to be convincing, the aesthetic of the "real" must also coexist with the realm of the virtual (a feature of monster talk and its counterpart, the discourse of the good citizen).Both, however, are culturally imagined and projected. The irony of jihadi cool is that it deploys Western rhetorical tools to destroy the very culture that created them, and continues to buttress jihadi cool with this persuasive appeal.

Phrased slightly differently, jihadi cool's rhetorical power lies in a simple formula, hyperbolically magnified upon the collectively imagined stages of social media and the internet; to quote Christopher Dickey, a foreign editor of *The Daily Beast*, the formula that explains the power of jihadi cool is: "'TNT', which stands for Testosterone, Narrative and Theater" [58]. As Elizabeth Pearson observed regarding what she termed "Grand Theft Auto Culture": "Being a 'Jihadi' is not just about ideology; it's about status, as a man. Increasingly, a nexus is being recognized between the macho masculinity of British street culture and criminal gangs, and the behaviours associated with pathways to violent extremism…" [61]. Interestingly, many of the radical jihadi converts were initially neither overtly religious, nor openly political; many of them seemed "normal" to the point of being banal. But the rhetorical elements of jihadi cool seemed an irresistible siren's song. "Rap videos, romanticized notions of revolution and adventure; and first-hand accounts of the 'fun' of guerilla war. . . Are the latest tactics used by militant recruiters as part of what experts have identified as an, 'intensification or radicalization,' both in the United States and elsewhere" [62].

4.4. Jihadi Cool and Gender

Prior sections make clear the intimate connection between jihadi cool and the performance of masculinity. What of femininity, as it is clear that not only men, but also women, are subject to jihadi cool's allure? *Inspire* magazine, which is geared for a male audience has a female counterpart: *Al-Shamikha* magazine, which features articles like "Interview with a Jihadi Wife" and "Facing Destruction: Steps to Alleviate Your Pain and Ways to Reach a Cleaner and Better Path" [63]. The first article claims to be an "exclusive" interview with a jihadi wife praising her husband's martyrdom and dispensing an essential tip to living virtuously: "When walking, do not look left or right to avoid attracting sin" [63]. Magnus Ranstorp, Research Director at the Center for Asymmetric Threat Studies at the Swedish National Defense College, remarked: "By catering to women, al-Qaeda publications are underlining the operational role women play (in terrorist attacks), which is largely ignored, as well as their cultural role in this specific society" [63].

More recently, ISIS as well has pitched its recruitment towards young women, but principally as jihadi brides and mothers. For example, one such overt recruitment enticed women to join ISIS in the following way:

> You may wear your veils without being harassed, no woman is harmed here and if she is
> there is a harsh penalty as the woman's honour is not tampered with whatsoever, there are
> plenty of mujahideen desiring to get married who have some of the most loving and softest
> characters I have ever witnessed even though they are lions in the battlefield, there are

orphans here waiting for mothers to love them the way their parents would have. Come to the land of honour. You are needed here [56].

The recruitment tactics are also working on women, producing a surge in what has been called "jihadi girl power subculture", as "hundreds" of Western Muslim women have travelled to Syria to marry radical jihadi warriors, sending out a flood of messages via the internet [64]. That Western women, with all their freedoms, choose instead a more traditional lifestyle is a huge morale boost for the radical jihadi troops, argues Sasha Havicek, director of the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue [64]. Like the young men who convert, the young women are also young (in general, the demographic covers ages 15–22), and are also well versed in the use of social media such as Twitter, Tumblr and Kik [64]. And although they may pine nostalgically for some imagined version of the lifestyle of early Muslims, the language they use is extremely contemporary, replete with tech-savvy slang and emoticons, with a dash of Arabic religious terms spelt out in English letters—to flash their credentials as being "part of the gang".

Of course, there is intelligence that indicates contrary results. Federal investigators believe approximately 100 Americans, including women, have travelled to Syria to join radical jihadi groups, though this number is not certain [65]. According to these reports, some women are seduced into joining by the lure of becoming virtual Florence Nightingales, as nurses and medical assistants [65]. However, once they do join, they become virtual sex slaves [65]—much like Jamie Paulin Ramirez.

And though these women converts profess to be innocuous, posing no threat to national security, in their online posts, amidst the overwhelmingly domestic and apolitical tweets about washing and the beauty of the sky, are nuggets about the bravery of radical jihadi warriors, who are "real men," unlike the enemy troops—the Kafir [infidels] [64]. For example, Muhajirah Amatullah wrote regarding the ISIS warriors: "Thy [sic] sleep w/eyes open + chop heads off" [64]. Even more radically, Umm Hussain al-Britani, whom the British press identified as a 45-year-old Muslim convert Sally Jones, a one-time singer in a band, stated in her October Twitter feed that "taking female Kafirs [unbelievers] as slaves is ibadah [an act of worship]" [64]. Startlingly, it appears to be the women who prove to be staunch defenders of strict moral codes; a Twitter account, identifying itself by the handle "@irhabbyukhts" or "terrorist sisters" (an apparent attempt at irony), dedicates itself to the mission of naming and shaming jihadi men who flirt online with girls [64].

Notwithstanding the similarities between the rhetorical appeals made to young Western men and women to convert, there is a strict gender demarcation that seems predominantly in place: the place of honor, for a man, is on the battlefield; for the woman, it is the home. (Virtuous) men fight and slaughter the enemy mercilessly; (good) women bear children, tend to domestic chores, and praise their men's feats on the battlefield. That distinction, as we shall see in the case of Colleen LaRose, was not as clear; she was neither young, of ideal childbearing age (in fact she was incapable of bearing children), nor technologically savvy. She did not shy away from flirting with Muslim men online, and in fact actively sought it. Nevertheless, the allure of jihadi cool clearly worked its magic on Colleen LaRose in her conversion.

5. The Self-Radicalization of Colleen La Rose ("Jihad Jane")

5.1. Pre-Radicalization: A History of Incest, Prostitution, and Drug Abuse

According to a Reuters special report, Colleen LaRose was born near Detroit in 1963 to parents who were heavy drinkers, and who divorced when she reached the age of three [66] (p. 6). The same report details a sordid past of incest and repeated rape; from 1971–1977, from the age of eight Colleen and her eleven-year-old sister, Pam, were raped repeatedly by their biological father [67] (p. 6). Her biological father, Richard LaRose, would approach their door at night with a bottle of lotion—a silent signal to the girls that it was time to undress [67] (p. 6). As Richard LaRose admitted, with no remorse, to a counselor at a runaway shelter, Colleen was only in the second grade when he began raping her, and he continued to victimize her until she ran away from home when she was 13 [67] (p. 6). Colleen survived the streets by prostituting herself [67] (p. 6). Subsequently, she became pregnant and suffered a miscarriage, which left her unable to bear children [67] (p. 6). In 1980, when LaRose turned 16, she married a man twice her age; subsequently, she arrived at a Memphis shelter, where her hollowed out eyes betrayed a history of cocaine and heroin use, and she was committed to a psychiatric facility for a few months [67] (p. 6). In 1986, Colleen, who by then was divorced from her first husband, and at the age of 23, married a second time [67] (p. 6). About eleven years later, in 1997, LaRose's second husband filed for divorce and LaRose, now 34, moved into a trailer south of Dallas. Five years later, in 2002, LaRose met Kurt Gorman, a radio antenna repairman, with whom she fell in love, and followed to Pennsburg, PA [67] (p. 4). Gorman was the breadwinner, and financed the cost of, when she expressed a wish for them, Colleen's breast implants—size DD's that came to dominate her 4-foot-11-inch frame [67] (p. 4).

Despite what seemed to be a stable relationship, Colleen's past had left deep imprints upon her psyche. In 2007, during a vacation at Amsterdam, Colleen got very drunk at a bar; inebriated, she became verbally abusive, leading her boyfriend, Gorman, to leave her at the bar. [3] Colleen, left alone, was approached by an attractive, Middle Eastern, Muslim man; she had a one-night stand with him [67] (p. 4). It was that fleeting sexual encounter that would forge the path to Colleen's eventual radicalization.

5.2. Identification/Conversion: The Importance of a Virtual Community

Although LaRose and Gorman made up and resumed their relationship, the one-night stand with the Muslim man in 2007 had sparked LaRose's curiosity about Islam. That curiosity grew to obsession. Unbeknownst to Gorman, when they returned from Amsterdam to Pennsylvania, Colleen began visiting Muslim sites, [4] and signed up for a popular dating site, *Muslima.com*, using Gorman's credit card to pay for access to these sites [67] (p. 4). When Gorman found out, she laughed it off as a mere whim [67] (p. 4).

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[3] LaRose had a documented history of being a "mean drunk." According to public records, she had brushes with the law in Pennsylvania, where in 2002 she faced charges of public drunkenness and disorderly conduct. In addition, she fought charges in South Texas, where she lived with Sheldon "Buddy" Barnum, the man she married at 16 [68].

[4] In a December 2007 internet posting located through an investigation by *The Washington Post*, a woman who called herself "Fatima LaRose," saying she lived in Pennsylvania, requested advice about how to bring an Egyptian boyfriend with whom she had been corresponding for more than a year to the United States for Christmas [69].

Nevertheless, she continued exploring Islam online, and met, virtually, a man in Turkey who served as a mentor. This mentor explained the Five Pillars of Islam, and *wudu*, the Muslim washing ritual. LaRose then ordered a Koran [67] (p. 4).

A few weeks later, LaRose found out that converting did not even require attending an actual mosque. All she had to do to convert was to recite the Shahada, a pledge to accept Allah as her only God, and the prophet Mohammad as his messenger. A few months after that fateful one-night stand in Amsterdam, LaRose typed the Shahada, and converted to Islam via instant messenger [67] (p. 4).

LaRose had a flighty personality, and shortly after she took the oath, she began to renege on her promises not to drink alcohol, and she did not make any attempt to visit a mosque, or learn how to pray. But since she was unemployed, and Gorman was away a lot, travelling in relation to his job, she had a lot of time on her hands. Other than taking care of her cats, Klaus and Fluffy, LaRose spent a good deal of time chatting with her sister in Texas, playing games online, flirting with men in chatrooms, eventually becoming obsessed with fantasy warrior stories, avidly consuming movies like *Spartacus*, *Braveheart*, *300*, and *Troy* [67] (p. 6). But alongside these fantasy and action films, LaRose was equally riveted by violent YouTube videos of Israeli attacks on Palestinians, and American attacks on Iraqis, especially those showing dead or wounded children [67] (6). It was the realism of these videos, and her ability to sympathize with especially the suffering of Palestinian children, which eventually proved crucial to her conversion.

By summer 2008, it was no longer enough simply to watch these videos. By June 2008, according to the indictment, "JihadJane" described herself in a YouTube posting as "desperate to do something somehow to help" suffering Muslims [69]. She began posting jihadist videos on YouTube and MySpace [67] (p. 6). She also began to use various aliases, including Jihad Jane, Sister of Terror, and Ms. Machiavelli [67] (p. 6). According to the indictment, LaRose allegedly also became a principal recruiter, targeting in particular European citizens who could travel freely; she screened for recruits, like herself, whose physical appearance would "blend in with many people," and whose movements would go undetected in Europe and the United States [69].

5.3. Indoctrination: The Significance of Communication with Mentors, Handlers and Co-Conspirators

By 2009, LaRose used primarily "Jihad Jane" as her online persona, and corresponded with self-avowed jihadists Eagle Eye, Black Flag, Hassan, as well as a woman who resided in Colorado, who seemed a kindred spirit—someone who is later to evolve into "Jihad Jamie" [67] (p. 6). Colleen did not have the technological sophistication to conceal her posts. Thus, she simply ceded remote control of her computer to Eagle Eye, who increasingly embodied, virtually, her fantasy Muslim man: wise, righteous, brave, and savvy about staying in the shadows [67] (p. 6). Eagle Eye claimed to have participated in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, in which terrorists killed 166 people [67] (p. 7). LaRose's confidence in Eagle Eye was so high that within months, she was volunteering, not simply to engage in a radical rhetoric for his jihad, but also to engage in a rhetoric of radical action.

5.4. Action/Jihadization: Pledging to Become a Martyr and Planning to be an Assassin

Initially, Eagle Eye's request for action was modest: Send money to her Muslim brothers and sisters. Using money Gorman had given her, she sent cash off to, among others, a Cairo cab driver who

wanted $450 to fix his broken taxi; she also attempted to aid a Somali man who aspired to start an online forum for an al-Qaeda cell, but soon found out that Western Union's services did not include cash transfers to war-torn Mogadishu [67] (p. 7).

By January 2009, jihadists overseas asked LaRose to become a martyr for Islam. She agreed. On 20 February 2009, LaRose pledged, via an online message, to use her white skin, green eyes and U.S. passport to "blend in with many people … to achieve what is in my heart" [67] (pp. 4, 7). On 7 March 2009, Eagle Eye asked LaRose to "marry me to get inside Europe"; LaRose agreed [67] (pp. 4, 7). Finally, in late March, LaRose's long-awaited mission arrived. On March 22, 2009, Eagle Eye directed LaRose to assassinate the Swedish artist Lars Vilks; Eagle Eye told her that she had to travel from Pennsylvania to Europe, find the political cartoonist who had blasphemed the Prophet Mohammad by placing the image of his face on top of the body of a dog, and to shoot him six times in the chest [67] (pp. 4, 7), to show that the shooting was premeditated, and not simply an accident [70] (p. 6). LaRose, despite an initial hesitation about foregoing her caretaking duties of her elderly mother and her boyfriend's ailing father, agreed and vowed that she would make killing Vilks her ultimate goal—even to the point of dying, while attempting to achieve this mission [67] (pp. 4, 7). While waiting for instructions from Eagle Eye, throughout the spring and into mid-summer of 2009, LaRose kept busy by continuing to post jihadi videos, anti-Zionist rants, and solicitations to raise money to support terrorists [67] (p. 7). On 8 July 2009, LaRose forwarded a message from Eagle Eye to Mohammed Hassan Khalid, a 15-year-old who posted it in a jihadist forum [67] (p. 4). On 10 July 2009, Ali Damache, known as Black Flag, messaged Eagle Eye that LaRose "wants to join you in the jihad field" [67] (p. 4). Ultimately, as she made no attempts to hide her movements online, in mid-July, an FBI agent knocked on her door; she did not answer it, and he left his business card [67] (p. 4).

On 17 July 2009, acting on instruction from Eagle Eye, LaRose called the FBI agent back in an attempt to find out what they knew about her; she repeatedly lied to the FBI, denying that she visited jihad websites, solicited money in support of terrorism, or called herself Jihad Jane [70] (p. 2). LaRose also asked Mohammed Hassan Khalid, a 15-year-old honor student and Pakistani immigrant, who lived near Baltimore, approximately 150 miles away, to help delete her incriminating posts. Khalid complied, asking the jihadi forum administrators to delete all of Jihad Jane's posts because "she is being threatened by the FBI" [70] (pp. 2–3). Events moved rapidly, thenceforth. On 18 July 2009, Eagle Eye, the al-Qaeda operative in South Asia with whom LaRose corresponded online, boasted of his bomb-making prowess to Black Flag—the pseudonym of Ali Damache, an Algerian living in Ireland [70] (p. 3). On 19 July 2009, Damache declared to Khalid that "we have already organized everything" for LaRose's jihad and that "we are willing to die in order to protect her no matter what the risk is" [70] (p. 3). On 22 July 2009, Khalid replied, in response to Damache, "If the strikes are successful, I hope to see new videos" [70] (p. 3), revealing the importance of the internet to forging the desired legacy of the planned mission.

On 1 August 2009, around the time LaRose purchased her own bargain ticket to Amsterdam [70] (p. 2), LaRose continued her correspondence with fellow Muslim convert, Jamie Paulin Ramirez, a Colorado woman considering an invitation from Damache in Ireland to join them in dedicating their lives to jihad [70] (p. 4). Like LaRose, Ramirez was also a Caucasian, blonde American woman drawn to Muslim men [70] (p. 4). LaRose boasted to Ramirez that she would soon be in Europe, at a place that she envisaged as both a home and training camp, and encouraged Ramirez to join her. Ramirez

responded positively, and both women affirmed, to each other, their identities as self-radicalized terrorists [70] (p. 4). Jihad Jane wrote: "When our brothers defend our faith [and] their homes, they are terrorist. Fine, then I am a terrorist and proud to be this." Ramirez (a.k.a. "Jihad Jamie") responded in kind: "That's right… If that's how they call it, then so be it. I am what I am" [70] (p. 4).

Prompted by her handler−mentor, in early August 2009, LaRose stole two passports from her Pennsylvania boyfriend—one was valid, the other was expired—as well as several birth certificates [56] (p. 6). For safekeeping, again following instructions from her handler, she mailed one of them to Khalid in Maryland and subsequently bought the one-way ticket to Amsterdam for 23 August, on her own initiative [70] (p. 4). On 7 August 2009, Damache (a.k.a Black Flag) emailed an unidentified contact in Eastern Europe: "The job is to knock some individuals that are harming Islam." He also elaborated that he was structuring a "planning team," "research team," "action team," and "finance team" [70] (p. 4).

In response, on 11 August 2009, Eagle Eye advised Damache to "keep a low profile" and shave his beard [70] (p. 4). On 20 August 2009, a sudden tragedy struck: in Pennsylvania, the father of LaRose's boyfriend—one of the people Colleen helped care for—died of a heart attack [70] (p. 4). Nevertheless, LaRose did not hesitate. On 21 August 2009, LaRose emailed her al-Qaeda contacts: "I will be away from here in a couple of days" [70] (pp. 4, 6). Within hours, an FBI agent knocked on her door, and this time, LaRose answered. During this second interview with the FBI, LaRose admitted to visiting Muslim websites online as a recent convert in search of more information about her new faith; she also admitted that some of her views had angered others online [71] (p. 2). However, she again denied raising money with al-Qaeda or having any connection with terrorists [71] (p. 2). She equivocated on whether she intended to visit the Netherlands, saying she was thinking about it, but that a death in the family in the meantime was the most pressing reality because his funeral was the next day [71] (p. 2). The agent then asked for a way to stay in touch, and LaRose gave him her cell number, asking him to give her until next week [71] (p. 2).

Immediately after the funeral of her boyfriend's father on 22 August, 2009, she extracted the hard drive from her computer and stored it in a box [71] (p. 2). She collected $2,000 in cash and packed three suitcases [71] (p. 2). LaRose convinced an acquaintance to drive her to the airport, and deceived her boyfriend and her mother into thinking she was leaving to accomplish a quick errand and would return soon [71] (p. 2).

On 23 August 2009, acting in keeping with instructions from Eagle Eye, her al-Qaeda handler in South Asia, LaRose hid her computer hard drive and flew to Amsterdam [69] (p. A01); [71] (p. 3). There, in keeping with her vision of a training camp, she expected to meet a jihad leader, a man known only as Abdullah, and train to become the assassin to kill Lars Vilks—the Swedish artist who had dared to blaspheme the Prophet Mohammed [69] (p. A01); [71] (p. 2),. Elated at assuming her new identity, LaRose dressed in full hijab, and eagerly awaited Abdullah at the appointed mosque [71] (p. 3). He was supposed to teach her the ways of Islam, and to train her, as a prized recruit, and thus enable her to fulfill her mission [71] (p. 3). To her surprise and disappointment, none of her grand visions materialized. Not only did she wait for an hour outside the mosque with her luggage, covered from head to toe, before it began to rain, but also it was another woman who came to meet her, not Abdullah [71] (p. 3). When she did meet him, Abdullah hedged, dodged, and equivocated until LaRose could no longer contain her frustration and impatience, and she became convinced he was nothing but a poseur [71] (p. 3).

Probably to appease her, Abdullah suggested she meet up with Black Flag in Waterford, Ireland [71] (p. 3). LaRose packed her bags [71] (p. 3).

In September 2009, in Waterford, Black Flag (Ali Damache, an Algerian who grew up in France, and had extensive experience of selling perfume and cosmetics at the women's section of a Paris department store [71] (p. 4)) finally met his two prize recruits: LaRose (Jihad Jane) and Ramirez (Jihad Jamie) [71] (p. 4). LaRose arrived a few days ahead of Ramirez and Ramirez's son; on the day she arrived, Ramirez married Damache [71] (p. 4). With little direction, in order to track her intended target, LaRose signed up to become part of the artist's virtual community [71] (p. 4). To create a new Gmail account, she typed in the false name, Sally Jones [71] (p. 4). However, being inexperienced at stealth online, and acting on initiative rather than instruction, LaRose typed in the number 48174—the zip code for a childhood home in Romulus, Michigan [71] (p. 4). Although Damache gave LaRose a key to come and go as she pleased, to fulfill her mission, Ramirez had no such privileges: she was given no key, and Ramirez's sole tasks were to remain at home cooking,cleaning, and as she was later to conclude, serving as a sexual slave [71] (p. 4); [72] (p. 3).

Despite LaRose's disillusionment with finding Black Flag to be an ordinary man—a man who was chronically unemployed, and who spouted verses from the Koran to justify whatever he wanted to do—Larose appeared to be steadfast in her determination to fulfill her mission [71] (p. 4). On the last day of September 2009, she wrote again to Eagle Eye, claiming that it would be "an honor and great privilege to kill" the blaspheming artist, and proclaiming that "only death would stop her" and that she was "so close to the target" [71] (p. 4). Ironically, she had neither acquired the training she needed to be an effective assassin, nor was she in Sweden, within striking distance of her intended target. But she was back on old virtual territory: the Islamic dating site, *Muslima.com* [71] (p. 6).

Nevertheless, two weeks after such a vehement affirmation of her intended suicide mission, in keeping with her flighty personality, LaRose abandoned her plans to assassinate her intended target. The disavowal of her mission, in LaRose's account of it, was triggered by her epiphanic encounter with another Muslim woman, sitting with this woman in a delivery truck outside a grocery store, where the woman's husband was shopping [71] (p. 6). LaRose asked the woman what she thought of Damache, and the woman responded that she thought that Damache had deluded her, a lost soul. The woman, also staunchly Muslim, advocated non-violence, in contrast to Black Flag and Eagle Eye. This woman said it was possible that Vilks deserved to die, but if so, that decision was up to Allah, and not Damache, to decide [71] (p. 6). LaRose's doubts concerning men like Abdullah and Black Flag—who seemed iconic, heroic, romantic online, but in person, chauvinistic, tentative, and tied to pedestrian tasks like finding enough money to pay the light bill—along with her newfound admiration for this woman and her homesickness, convinced her to reverse her resolve [71] (p. 6). LaRose called her boyfriend, Gorman, using her new Irish mobile number, and he urged her to return, saying that her mother was terminally ill [71] (p. 6). LaRose retrospectively (and illogically) claimed that her abandonment of her mission was meant to be a temporary hiatus, in deference to the need to care for her ailing mother [71] (p. 6). Even if taken at face value, these statements do not fit well with what she did next: she visited the FBI website, and in the send-a-tip section, let FBI agents know that she intended to return home [71] (p. 6). She later said she did what seems like a self-defeating move because she had hoped the FBI would finance her flight home [71] (p. 6). When the FBI did not respond to her tip, she called her faithful boyfriend, who again financed her ticket home [71] (p. 6).

Although Damache pleaded with LaRose to be patient, LaRose remained steadfast in her determination to return home, allegedly to take care of her mother [71] (p. 6). According to LaRose, Damache, along with an unannounced husky friend, drove her to the airport; she initially feared for her life [71] (p. 6). Nevertheless, she eventually arrived, unscathed, in Philadelphia via plane on 15 October 2009 [72] (p. 2). She did not resist when FBI agents arrested her, and readily chose to confess [72] (p. 2). Agents asked her for the reason she returned to the U.S., and she stated concern for her mother, who, according to Gorman, was terminally ill; it turned out that that Gorman had simply been cooperating with the FBI, and that was simply a ruse to encourage her to return home [72] (p. 2). But when one agent asked her if she had simply chickened out from her mission, her bravado flared; she insisted that Eagle Eye's men in Holland and Ireland had moved too slowly for her, which made her feel "let down", and that if the FBI let her go, she planned to execute a suicide attack against U.S. soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan [72] (p. 2).

The outlines of the rest of the story can be quickly sketched. Initially, news of LaRose's arrest was withheld as agents investigated the plot against Lars Vilks [72] (p. 3). On 26 October 2009, Jamie Paulin Ramirez, the Colorado woman who had arrived in Ireland six weeks earlier, realized partly because of LaRose's urging that it had been a mistake to travel there, marry Damache, and join his jihad [72] (p. 3). On 9 March 2010, Irish police detained Ramirez and Damache, among others, for questioning [73] while in the U.S., officials released news of terror charges against LaRose, and the FBI searched the home of Mohammed Khalid [72] (p. 3). Despite Khalid knowing of LaRose's confession, and his possession of her boyfriend's current passport, on 22 November 2010, the now 17-year-old Khalid, wrote, in a jihad forum, that he had daydreamed about "martyrdom operations" at his high school [72] (p. 3). Ironically, on 15 December 2010, Khalid found out that he had received a prestigious full scholarship to John Hopkins University for the 2011–2012 academic year [72] (p. 3).

Finally, on 1 February 2011, LaRose pled guilty to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, conspiracy to kill in a foreign country, lying to the FBI and attempting identity theft [72] (p. 4). Similarly, on 8 March 2011, Ramirez pled guilty to conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists [72] (p. 4). On 6 July 2011, the FBI quietly arrested Khalid, and Johns Hopkins University later rescinded Khalid's admission and scholarship [72] (p. 4). On 20 October 2011, three weeks after Khalid turned 18, he, together with Damache/Black Flag, was indicted on conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists [72] (p. 4), [67].Ultimately, on 4 May 2012, Khalid pled guilty to the conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists [72] (p. 4), and was sentenced to five years in prison on 17 April 2014. Earlier, on 6 January 2014, LaRose was sentenced to ten years [74], and on 8 January 2014, Ramirez was sentenced to eight years [75].

6. Summary: Colleen LaRose's Self-Radicalization

A detailed analysis of the various factors, with respect to mapping the role of the internet in relation to the radicalization of Colleen LaRose reveals the following.

First, although Colleen LaRose/Jihad Jane/Fatima LaRose was not part of a traditional terrorist cell, she also did not operate utterly alone; neither was she completely devoid of any support or infrastructure. Nevertheless, she was a self-activating terrorist and, compared to Jamie Paulin Ramirez, had a high degree of autonomy; thus, some experts classify LaRose as a lone wolf terrorist [23] (pp. 235, 248).

Although LaRose did not receive the promised assassin training from an unknown al-Qaeda operative, Abdullah, she was part of a network controlled principally by Black Flag or Ali Damache, and virtually by Eagle Eye. Within that small group, she occupied some prominence and leadership as a recruiter for Black Flag's jihad, as evidenced in her ability to convince Jamie Paulin Ramirez to marry Black Flag, and join in his cause. Unlike Ramirez, who was kept restricted to a domestic role, LaRose comparatively occupied a more prominent, masculine post—probably in part because she was past the traditional childbearing age, could no longer bear children, in addition to her history of incest and prostitution. Furthermore, she successfully convinced Mohammed Hassan Khalid to delete traces of her radical posts, to keep a stolen passport in his possession, and also to aid in her campaign to support terrorism financially. According to the LaRose indictment, in July 2009, Khalid, in his online solicitations, pledged to forward any money raised to LaRose, as the main conduit to terrorists. "I know the sister and by Allah, all money will be transferred to her. The sister will then transfer the money to the brother via a method I will not disclose" [76]. As Weimann argues, again using a metaphor as an analogy to drive home a rhetorical point: "In nature, wolves do not hunt alone: They hunt in packs. So, too, with the lone-wolf terrorists: there is a virtual pack, a social network, behind them. They may operate alone, but they are recruited, radicalized, taught, trained and directed by others. They seem to be alone and yet there are social ties linking them to others…" [3].

Second, far from being difficult to track, LaRose's numerous communications online made her movements and her intended actions easy to track, as much as they enhanced her virtual (and imaginatively honed) image as a dangerous woman. By summer 2008, LaRose was an avid poster of jihadist videos on both YouTube and MySpace; although she did not create these videos, her choice of them, as well as the manner in which she chose to represent herself online, enabled her to craft an image of herself that partook of the jihadi cool glamour, in a gender-bending way. Her pseudonyms online included not only the well-known "Jihad Jane," but also "Ms. Machiavelli" and "Sister of Terror." Ironically, part of the reason why LaRose's posts were out in the open was because of her ignorance in hiding such posts; whenever she wanted to ensure the secrecy of her chats with Eagle Eye, she simply ceded remote control of her computer to Eagle Eye [66].

Ultimately, in LaRose's case, a detailed analysis of the facts of her jihadization, or her transition into the fourth stage of radicalization, reveals that mere exposure to radical sites online, although necessary for her conversion from a radical rhetoric to a rhetoric of radical action, was not sufficient for this shift to occur. Rather, key elements to catalyzing LaRose's radicalization appear to be principally grounded in: (1) pre-existing mental issues, partly due to trauma caused by incest, rape and prostitution as well as a history of drug abuse; (2) a persistent longing for an idealized romance; and (3) a romanticized notion of "jihadi cool"—the seeds of which were planted during her pre-radicalization phase.

As the first sub-point, the mental scars left behind by LaRose's traumatic history of incest, sexual abuse, and prostitution are well documented, and appear to have been a factor in a reduced sentencing, in addition to her cooperation with authorities after her arrest [77]. LaRose potentially faced a sentence of life in prison, but prosecutors agreed with the defense that LaRose had suffered abuse prior to becoming radicalized. As a basis for the downward adjustment, officials quoted the *2012 Reuters Investigative Report*, which has been used extensively in mapping the chronology of LaRose's self-radicalization in this article. This authoritative report "described LaRose's troubled life before she converted to Islam: Childhood rapes by her biological father, teenage prostitution, heavy drug use and

failed marriages. LaRose said that her father's sexual assaults, confirmed by confidential court records, began in second grade" [78]. LaRose blamed principally her father for her inability to sustain stable relationships and to become a viable member of society. "I have done all kinds of bad things. I was rebelling because of what he did and because my mother did nothing to help us" [78].

This first set of factors leads to the second sub-point—LaRose's eternal quest for an exotic, fantasized "perfect mate", which, after a one-night stand with a Muslim man, led her to become vulnerable to manipulation by men like Eagle Eye and Black Flag. This marked LaRose's shift into the second or Self-Identification Stage. The first set of factors led to LaRose's view of herself as an outcast—someone who did not fit in with most "normal" American citizens–subsequently contributing to her ability to identify with the plight of Palestinian children, especially those wounded in battle. It outraged her that most Americans seemed indifferent to their suffering, and that many American children (unlike herself, as she saw herself as being isolated) had been shielded from such traumatic events. LaRose recalled one of the key incidents leading to her eventual self-radicalization. She was sitting on her couch in Philadelphia, watching footage of the fighting on al-Jazeera: "I was crying. I could hear the kids outside playing and laughing, and I remember thinking to myself how unfair that all those children were dying and no one here knows or cares" [79].

From there, it seemed natural for LaRose to fill that brokenness or void with virtual male mentors and abstract "brothers." LaRose quickly became extremely attached to her jihadist handlers. "I talked to them so much online I just felt they were strong brothers and they were religious. I felt love for them. I loved my brothers so much, when they told me something I would listen to them no matter what" [79]. LaRose's conversion to Islam—her entrance into the third phase, or Indoctrination—signaled to her the first time she belonged somewhere and that she was someone truly significant to a community, and as such, a celebrity in her own right. To her, conversion meant "that I was finally going to be some place where I belonged. I've survived through a lot of things that rightfully should have killed me. … I always thought there was a purpose for me to be alive. And when I found out about Islam I thought this is what I have to do, this is why I've lived so long" [79]. This pattern holds true with jihadi cool's allure of promising its recruits the fulfillment of an identity of both ultimate meaning and stardom within that virtual community and with that, dictating a mode of action—characterizing LaRose's entry into the fourth stage or Jihadization. However, the manner in which she talked about her relationship, in particular, with the unnamed individual who called himself Eagle Eye resembles the description of someone hypnotized or rendered zombie-like by a more powerful presence: "I did whatever he told me. I was in a trance." In the end, ironically, this idealized relationship bore a dark kinship to the relationship she had with her biological father, and from which she had attempted to flee.

Jeffrey Simon comes up with several sociological reasons why, in general, there have been very few female lone wolf terrorists: (1) women tend to be more risk-averse than men [23] (pp. 128–130); (2) to be mobilized into jihadization, many women need the affective and social connections (e.g., the death of a loved one),; "women are socialized to be interdependent and attuned to relationships, whereas men are socialized to be autonomous, independent, and self-reliant" [23] (p. 130); (3) paranoid schizophrenia and antisocial personality disorders tend to be less common in women than men [23] (pp. 131–132); (4) women are less likely than men to kill a stranger [23] (pp. 132–133); and (5) when women do kill by themselves, it is usually more emotional and impulsive than premeditated [23] (pp. 133–134). In the case of LaRose, in terms of her history of paternal sexual abuse and her search for exotic male

mentor−lover figures, perhaps the most significant are the fifth and the second. LaRose was consistently impulsive and emotional from the moment of the onset of her radicalization (sparked by her one-night stand with a Muslim man), to her acceptance of her suicide mission under the influence of increasing indoctrination, as if under a proverbial spell wielded by Eagle Eye and Black Flag, and also to her sudden decision to abandon her mission in favor of returning home, allegedly to take care of her reputedly terminally ill mother. Lacking stability in affective and social connections in real life, LaRose sought to fill these via her secret virtual life, and it is these connections that spurred her, rapidly, into jihadization.

In some senses, in terms of her real life, LaRose was not very different from the iconic male lone wolf terrorists who preceded her, such as Tim McVeigh, Ted Kaczynski, and Eric Rudolph. Like LaRose, all of these men had life experiences and conditions that made them essentially loners and incapable of forming close human relationships, especially with women [80] (p. 74). Kaczynski's case is even more complex, given his contemplation of the possibility of becoming a woman [73] (p. 48). Like LaRose, they all yearned to be a member within a group with status [80] (p. 42). All of them turned to their own versions of highly rigid ideologies to fill the void of not belonging [80] (pp. 75−76).

One thing that appears to be unique to LaRose is a function of what Simon called the "Technological Wave," in which technological advances democratized access to the internet for a variety of uses. According to Simon: "Technology is there for all to take advantage of, offering any group or individual the opportunity to compete in a world of terrorism. We can see technology's influence in all aspects of terrorism, from the rapid growth in the use of technology by governments and militaries for surveillance, detection of weapons, counterterrorist operations, and other purposes to its use by a wide variety of terrorists" [23] (pp. 133−134). Riding the Technological Wave, even with her lack of expertise, LaRose was able to generate and sustain relationships with a loose virtual community of both mentor−handlers and recruit−followers, even if only temporarily, filling that void.

There is another significant difference between LaRose as compared to McVeigh, Kaczynski and Rudolph: whereas all three men sought to preserve their individual safety, LaRose threw herself headlong into danger, practically begging to die in the name of Allah. Unlike LaRose, McVeigh parked his bomb-bearing Ryder truck outside the Murrah Federal Building, using a five-minute fuse [80] (p. 77), clearly intending to give him plenty of time to escape unscathed from its explosive effects. Also unlike LaRose, Kaczynski never placed himself in a position to be injured despite his construction of bombs that would kill and maim many innocent civilians [80] (p. 77). Finally, also unlike LaRose, Rudolph never placed himself at risk during his bombings; he used "a timed fuse or command detonated bombs in each of his strikes to ensure his safety" [80] (p. 78). One explanation for this difference, to some extent, may be found in the rhetorics of "jihadi cool."

The rhetorics of "jihadi cool", a recent recruitment tool, resembles, in medium and message, more the MTV commercialization of popular music than the traditional sermons in mosques. A random internet search for "jihadi rap videos" reveals scores of videos with "thumping bass lines and forced rhymes about beheading non-Muslims and making them pay for the indignities they have leveled against Islam" [81]. The intended audiences for these videos appear to be young people who harbor resentment and are bored, seeking thrill and adventure. These recruits "might not be theologically devout or even have a sound religious foundation, but they are using this new jihadi cool to justify criminal acts of terrorism," stated Arsalan Iftikhar, a human rights lawyer, and the former national

legal director of the Council on American−Islamic Relations [81]. Experts on this topic think that although religion may be a factor in signing up, it is ultimately the allure of being "cool" as warriors who wield deadly weapons. Christine Fair, a professor at Georgetown University specializing in these kinds of religious movements, opined that jihad chic is not that unusual. "We have ethnographies where they actually ask militants what drew you to this movement," she said. "The top three were motorcycles, guns, and access to women. You had to go pretty far down the list to get to religious motivation" [81].

As applied to the case of LaRose, given her housebound and isolated lifestyle, as well as her obsession with fantasy action films with a warrior theme, it is hardly surprising that jihadi cool appealed to her. In some senses, LaRose managed to break free of the strict masculine warrior—feminine domestic demarcation. Nevertheless, stripped to its more basic elements, LaRose's motivations and ultimate role were still harnessed to the domestic. In her case, the top reason for becoming radicalized was probably access to Muslim men who seemed to embody the ideals she sought in a lover-mentor-surrogate father figure. Becoming a trained assassin and dying for Allah were probably secondary, as evidenced in her reversal of resolve. Experts reinforce this idea by alleging that LaRose trolled the internet while she was housebound, acting as a caretaker for her boyfriend's father. Signing up for a Holy War was attractive precisely because it gave her a significance and identity that more greatly resembled the fantasy action figures she imaginatively identified with, and gave her a cause and virtual community to which she could devote her life and finally belong. In that sense, LaRose, Jamie Paulin Ramirez, as well as all jihadi "wannabes" are similar: suffering from lives of alienation and profound emptiness, they sought a strict system of belief that could ostensibly provide them with absolute boundaries [82]. "Just putting my human hat on, I don't think it is remotely remarkable that Jihad Jane happened," opined Professor Fair, who is also a fellow at West Point's Combating Terrorism Center. "In fact, if you sort of think about misfits—I'm a social misfit so I feel somewhat uncomfortable saying this—the Internet is one of the best places for social misfits to reside," she continued. "They can be whomever they want to be, so I am just surprised we haven't had more Jihad Janes" [81].

Fair's remarks remind us that there is no single deterministic pathway to radicalization and there is no "general terrorist" profile. As Taylor cautions:

> It would be extremely difficult to identify predictors of potential terrorists from this picture. Very many people share the kinds of attributes that can be identified. The reasons for this may be that there are, perhaps no special causes of terrorism, in the sense of a common class of explanations… Rather a complex set of circumstances, dependent upon the chance occurrence of events within facilitating contexts, represents the individual's causal story; each individual, perhaps, having a different and unique one [83] (p. 139); [84].

7. General Conclusions: Jihadi Cool, the Internet, and Other Factors in the Self-Radicalization of Colleen LaRose (Jihadi Jane)

A detailed analysis of the case of Colleen LaRose reveals that although contact with particular sites and mentor figures were necessary for her transition from radical thought to radical action, the mere proliferation of radical jihadi sites on the internet alone was not sufficient for her radicalization.

In LaRose's case, there were many pre-existing factors that primed her rapid transition, using Silber and Bhatt's four-stage model of radicalization, from radical thought to radical action. Among these factors were: trauma from childhood rape and incest, and prostitution. Thus, although contacts with radical jihadi sites and thus forging connections with an imagined virtual community were important, there were other factors that had to be in place to facilitate LaRose's rapid integration into an imagined community of cool and righteous "Holy Warriors"—a shadow virtual community spawned by absolutist rhetorics of monstrosity that shaped public policy in reaction to 9/11 that in turn mimed fundamentalist rhetorics. In Colleen LaRose's case, the following factors can be identified: (1) pre-existing mental, psychiatric, or structural factors; (2) the condition of being a misfit unable to integrate effectively into society; (3) personal grievances conflated with perceived group resentments and imagined empathic identification; (4) the search for a fantasy lover-mentor; (5) the rhetorics of romanticizing the jihadi cool image. All of these factors were magnified by the imaginative relations enabled and concentrated by the internet, leading to increasing risk-taking behavior, rapidly transforming "monster talk" to monstrous action. Although many other factors have to be in place for misfits to transmogrify into lone wolf terrorists, as evidenced in the case of Colleen LaRose, interaction on the internet can intensify imagined relations with a virtual community and embellish the rhetorics of jihadi cool, catalyzing the movement from radical thought to radical action.

Indeed, this article acknowledges the power of the rhetorics of jihadi cool, which has considerable imaginative appeal and has now become fashionably, and arguably uncritically, mainstream—ambiguously splicing the countercultural with the trendy.[5] Sites not necessarily linked to radical jihadi causes can promote the slick and hip image of the countercultural jihadi cool look. Sadly and humorously, it is not uncommon for teenagers to post images of themselves with firearms to look "cool"—which is given a pernicious twist by an implied affiliation with radical jihadi groups. For example, David Souaan, a student at Birkbeck College, London, accused of allegedly joining radical jihadi forces in Syria, claimed that he simply posed for pictures with guns simply to look "cool". Despite the tragic complications in LaRose's case—perhaps given the description of herself as virtually "hypnotized" by the seemingly worldly, wise, and authoritative presence of men like Black Flag—she was, sadly, not too different from Souaan in her response to the sirenic appeal of the rhetorics of jihadi coolness.

Acknowledgments

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5   For a strongly worded caricature of how "jihadi fashion" has become mindlessly mainstream, see [85].

imagined/imaginary played in the self-radicalization of Colleen LaRose, as evidenced in the rhetorical power of monster talk and jihadi chic or jihadi cool. I thank Jonathan Frauley for the invitation to submit an article, three anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments, and Kevin Borschel for his professional assistance with formatting. Finally, I dedicate this article to the Picart, Terrell, and Rivera families, and especially my beloved husband, Jerry Rivera.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest. The views expressed in this article are purely the author's and do not reflect the firm's position.

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