

History on Trial
Episode 9 - Part One
The United States v. Iva Toguri D'Aquino
Researched and Written by Mira Hayward

Hi History on Trial listeners. Today's story will come in two parts. This episode will cover the lead up to the trial, and the second episode will cover the trial and its aftermath. Thanks for listening.

Prologue

Clark Lee and Harry Brundidge couldn't believe their luck. Out of all the reporters in Japan, they were about to break one of the biggest stories of the summer. It was August, 1945, only weeks after Japan's surrender in World War II, and Tokyo was flooded with journalists. All the reporters, Lee remembered, were going after the same three stories. They wanted to get an interview with Hideki Tojo, Japan's leader during the war. They wanted to describe the wreckage of Tokyo. And, perhaps most of all, they wanted to identify Tokyo Rose.¹

Tokyo Rose! The name conjured glamor, romance, intrigue. Tokyo Rose was famous all across the Pacific, from Alaska to Borneo, a legend amongst soldiers and sailors alike. For two years, as Allied forces fought their way across the ocean and islands, Tokyo Rose had kept them company. No matter how remote their ship or how wretched their conditions, Tokyo Rose had been there.

Her mythological status and far reach might make her seem supernatural, but it was simpler than that: Tokyo Rose was a radio host.

Throughout World War II, the Japanese Broadcasting Corporation, or NHK - short for *Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai* - had broadcast English-language propaganda radio programs throughout the Pacific. Many of these programs used a female broadcaster. As the war wore on, these broadcasters became legendary – and they were often grouped together under a nickname, Tokyo Rose. American press reports depicted Tokyo Rose as a racialized femme fatale, a seductive, exotic siren luring Allied GIs to abandon their cause.² The GIs themselves mostly had a less dramatic view of Tokyo Rose: many

¹ Masayo Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, trans. Peter Duus, (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., distributed in the United States by Harper & Row, 1979), 8. Information on Lee and Brundidge's August 1945 hunt for Tokyo Rose, unless otherwise cited, comes from Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan*, Ch. 1, "The Search for Tokyo Rose."

² Ann Elizabeth Pfau, chapter "The Legend of *Tokyo Rose*," in *Miss Yourlovin: GIs, Gender, and Domesticity during World War II* (Online: Columbia University Press, Gutenberg-e, 2008) and Duus, *Tokyo Rose*, 8-11.

thought she just was good company. She played popular music on her broadcasts, teased the men, and cracked jokes. Many GIs - instead of seeing Tokyo Rose as a propaganda pusher - thought that she boosted morale. The Navy even issued Tokyo Rose a tongue-in-cheek citation, saying “Tokyo Rose...has persistently entertained [the men] [and] inspired them to a greater determination than ever to get the war over quickly. Which explains why they are now driving onward to Tokyo itself, so that soon they will be able to thank Tokyo Rose in person.”³

Now that the war had ended, the press was determined to find the real Tokyo Rose – not to thank her, of course, but to get an exclusive interview with her. When Clark Lee, a reporter for Hearst’s International News Service, and Harry Brundidge, a writer at *Cosmopolitan Magazine*, arrived in Japan in August, 1945, they decided to team up and find Tokyo Rose first. The competition was stiff– on August 30th, a group of reporters burst into the NHK offices and began interrogating staff members there about Tokyo Rose’s real identity.⁴ The NHK employees claimed to have no idea what they were talking about. People began wondering if Tokyo Rose really existed. On August 31st, an article from the *Associated Press* claimed that she was real, but acknowledged that she was more than one person.⁵

Lee and Brundidge were beginning to get discouraged. They reached out to an old friend of Lee’s, Leslie Nakashima. Nakashima, an American of Japanese descent, had better luck at the NHK office. Kenkichi Oki, an NHK employee, confirmed that there were five or six women who had broadcast in English during the war from the Tokyo station. But Oki would only give Nakashima one name: Iva Toguri d’Aquino.⁶

Excited, Nakashima called up Lee and Brundidge to report his progress. Brundidge and Lee told Nakashima that they would offer \$2,000, or close to \$35,000 in today’s money, for an exclusive interview with Iva.⁷

When Nakashima visited Iva on September 1st, she was reluctant to give an interview. Her husband Felipe was also skeptical. But Nakashima told them that Iva’s name was already public - she was going to be the focus of press attention anyways, so why not get paid for it? And the d’Aquinis needed the money - postwar Japan was economically devastated, and the pay that Nakashima was offering was close to 300 times what Iva made in a month.⁸

³ Duus, 11.

⁴ Duus, 12.

⁵ Al Dopking, “None At All In Tokyo Knows Who Or Where Is ‘Tokyo Rose,’” *Associated Press*, August 31, 1945. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/1001419399/?match=1&terms=tokyo%20rose>

⁶ Duus, 15.

⁷ Duus, 15-16.

⁸ Duus, 16, 25.

So Iva agreed to speak with Lee and Brundidge. As the two reporters sat in their hotel room, awaiting Iva's arrival, they buzzed with anticipation. They had identified Tokyo Rose. They had gotten to her first. Now all that remained was seeing the woman behind the voice.

And then Iva came through the door. Whatever Lee and Brundidge had been expecting, she wasn't it. Instead of a glamorous siren, Lee and Brundidge found a tiny young woman. Iva was barely five feet tall. Years of malnutrition during the war made her seem even smaller. She wore her thick black hair in pigtails. The reporters thought she looked maybe twenty years old - in reality, she was twenty-nine. She had a forthright manner and, unexpectedly, a rather unremarkable voice.⁹

Things only got stranger from there. If Lee and Brundidge had expected to find a die-hard Japanese patriot, they could not have been more wrong. Iva, it emerged, was an American citizen. Her parents were both Japanese, but Iva herself had been born and raised in California. In fact, she barely spoke Japanese. Iva claimed that she had gotten stuck in Japan when the war broke out while she was visiting a sick relative there. She had been forced to do the radio broadcast job to survive, she said. She told the reporters that she was delighted America had won the war, and that she had always believed they would.

This didn't make for a particularly compelling story, Lee and Brundidge thought. When Lee published his first story on Iva, on September 3, 1945, he mentioned that, quote, "circumstances had forced her into broadcasting," but he also added a little drama by raising the question of treason. Iva, Lee wrote, "does not feel that she was a traitor to the U.S. for the job of trying to make American troops homesick."¹⁰ Iva had never even considered the question of treason - nor was she concerned about the question now.

In truth, the United States government also did not consider the question seriously. After briefly questioning Iva, the army let her go, and even asked her to participate in a film about her time as Tokyo Rose.

But things were about to take a drastic turn. Three years after Clark Lee and Harry Brundidge first interviewed Iva Toguri d'Aquino, she would be standing trial in San Francisco, accused of treason. In a shocking reversal, largely driven by public pressure and political motives, the United States Justice Department was pursuing Iva - and they

⁹ Duus, 21.

¹⁰ Information on Iva's early life, unless otherwise cited, comes from Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, Ch. 2, "From L.A. to Radio Tokyo."

were determined to convict her, no matter the illegal lengths they would have to go to do so.

Welcome to History on Trial. I'm your host, Mira Hayward. This week, the United States v. Iva Toguri D'Aquino.

ACT I

Iva Ikuko Toguri was the first American citizen in her family. Her father, Jun, came to the United States from Japan in 1899. On a trip back to Japan in 1907, he married Fumi Iimuro, but had had to return to America shortly after. The two spent the first years of their marriage separated by an ocean, with Jun only able to visit several times. Their first child, Fred, was born in Japan. But in 1913, Fumi and Fred were able to join Jun permanently in America, and thus their second child, Iva, was born in Los Angeles in 1916. In a fact that would seem too on the nose if you scripted it, Iva was born on July 4th.

Jun Toguri added Iva to his family register in Japan, which made her legally a Japanese citizen too. But in 1932, after Japan invaded Manchuria, he took the advice of Japanese American community leaders and removed Iva and her two younger sisters from the family register, making the three girls entirely American citizens. Iva and her sisters were *nisei* - a term for the American born children of Japanese immigrants.

The Toguris moved frequently around Southern California while Jun searched for work, but by 1928, he had saved enough money to open a small store in Los Angeles. It was a happy childhood - Iva and her siblings attended school, helped out at their father's store, and tended to their mother, who had diabetes and high blood pressure. Jun wanted his children to assimilate to white American culture - though the Toguris occasionally spoke Japanese at home, and celebrated some Japanese holidays, Jun encouraged his children to speak English in public, observe American holidays, and play mainly with white children.

Iva grew into a sporty, outgoing, good-humored teenager. She wanted to be a doctor, and in 1934, she enrolled in Compton Junior College. After six months, she transferred to UCLA, where she studied zoology. She loved her course work, choosing to spend her school holidays out in the field on research trips with professors. She also loved college life, and attended football games and played tennis with friends.

After graduating in 1940, Iva planned to pursue graduate work in medicine. She started taking more zoology and premedical courses. The future seemed wide open for her. But in the summer of 1941, a letter changed everything.

That June, the Toguris received a letter from Fumi's brother-in-law in Japan. He wrote that Fumi's sister, Shizu, was gravely ill, and wished to see Fumi while she still could, after more than thirty years apart. Fumi herself was too ill to make the trip, so the Toguris decided to send Iva in her place.

Iva was not happy about this plan, but agreed to travel to Japan in July. Jun wrote to the State Department in Washington to apply for a passport for Iva. Unlike today, passports were not required for international travel at the time, but Jun wanted to make sure that Iva's documents were all in order.¹¹ However, as the date of Iva's departure grew closer, no passport arrived. Jun got in contact with the immigration office in Los Angeles, who told him that Iva could substitute a notarized certificate of identification for her passport, and then apply for a passport from the American consulate in Tokyo once she got there.

However, the passport requirements were about to change, in ways that would profoundly affect Iva's life. In November, 1941 the State Department declared that due to the advent of the war, all international travel to or from the United States after January 15, 1942, would now require a passport.¹² Iva's trip to Japan in the summer of 1941 would not be impacted by this change, but her planned return to America, scheduled for the spring of 1942, would be impossible without a passport. And despite the Immigration Office's recommendation, getting a passport while abroad would turn out to be extremely challenging

Ignorant of this change, Iva departed for Japan on July 5th, 1941, a day after her 25th birthday. Nearly three weeks later, on July 24, Iva disembarked at Yokohama, and met her uncle and cousins for the first time.¹³ Her mother's family was welcoming and friendly, but Iva felt ill at ease. "Japan impressed me as very, very strange," Iva remembered, "All the customs were strange to me, the food was entirely different, [the] apparel [was] different, [the] houses [were different]...I felt like a perfect stranger, and the Japanese considered me very queer."¹⁴ She was shocked by the poverty she saw in Japan. The country had been at war with China for four years at this point, and the economy was devastated. Food and other essential resources were scarce.

¹¹ National Archives, "Passport Applications, 1795-1925," Rev. November 2014, <https://www.archives.gov/files/research/naturalization/400-passports.pdf>.

¹² Foreign Service Institute, Office of the Historian, "Administrative Timeline of the Department of State: 1940-1949," United States Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/departmenthistory/timeline/1940-1949>.

¹³ Information on Iva's first year in Japan, unless otherwise cited, comes from Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, Ch. 2, "From L.A. to Radio Tokyo."

¹⁴ Duus, 51.

After years of speaking mainly English, her spoken Japanese was extremely rusty, and she could not read or write at all. Iva also had a hard time communicating with her family back in America. Tensions between Japan and the United States steadily increased over the summer and fall of 1941, although Iva was largely unaware of just how bad things were, because she could not read Japanese newspapers and her relatives tried to protect her from the news.

In early August, Iva went to the American consulate to apply for a passport. The consulate told her they would have to first verify her identity with the State Department in Washington, which could take some time. By November, Iva still hadn't heard anything from the consulate, and she was becoming increasingly homesick. At the end of the month, she made an expensive international telephone call and begged her father to buy her passage home. Jun, concerned about Iva's wellbeing, agreed, and said he would work on getting her a ticket. But when Iva's family contacted the steamship office, they learned that she would need a passport. Iva tried to speed things up at the consulate. The consulate told her to get a new letter of identification, but this paperwork would in turn require several other forms. Scrambling to get the paperwork together before the ship left on December 2nd, Iva encountered obstacle after obstacle. The red tape was insurmountable, and Iva missed the ship. And then, five days later, the Japanese attacked the US Naval Base at Pearl Harbor. All travel between Japan and America was immediately shut down.

Two days after Pearl Harbor, a man from the Japanese Special Security Police showed up at Iva's family's home. The officer told Iva that she needed to renounce her American citizenship. When Iva refused, the man left - but then returned every day for the next two weeks to continue to pressure her.

Iva was one of approximately 10,000 Japanese Americans who were stuck in Japan after Pearl Harbor. Many of them, like Iva, were *nisei*, second-generation Japanese Americans. It was extremely difficult for these people, who found themselves caught between two countries who were both suspicious of them. In Japan, they were pressured to give up their American citizenship by the military and the special police. It was difficult to obtain a ration card or get a job while still holding American citizenship, so many ultimately renounced that citizenship. Iva, however, held out.

Things were no easier for Japanese Americans in America. In February, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066. This Order authorized the removal of Japanese Americans - both foreign and American born - from any quote, "military areas," which came to be defined as the entire West Coast. This order was based on suspicion that Japanese Americans might collaborate with Japan. Between March and August 1942, more than 100,000 Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from their

homes and sent to prison camps, where conditions were horrible. The mass removal and incarceration of these people, two-thirds of whom were American citizens, was a sickening violation of their human rights and civil liberties, and is an enduring stain on American history.¹⁵

When Iva heard that her family had been sent to a prison camp in Arizona, she did not believe that such a thing could happen in America - she thought that the story must be Japanese propaganda.

In February, Iva had been delighted to learn that the Swiss consulate was organizing a repatriation ship for Americans in Japan. She applied for a spot, but when the Swiss consulate telegraphed the State Department to confirm Iva's citizenship, the Department replied that there were doubts about her status. These doubts are impossible to explain - Iva had been born in the United States and had never left the country for the first twenty-five years of her life.

Thanks to the State Department's inaction, Iva could not get on the ship. And things were only getting more difficult in Japan. The harassment by the military and secret police only intensified the longer Iva refused to give up her American citizenship. In June, she decided to leave her uncle and aunt's home, because she didn't want her family to suffer for their connection with her. Iva now had to pay rent at a boarding house - but the money that she had taken to Japan, which was only meant to cover six months, was fast running out. Struggling to make ends meet, she tried to find a job. It wasn't easy - no one wanted to hire American citizens. But after a three month search, Iva eventually managed to get a part-time position at the Domei News Agency. The late night schedule was miserable, and the pay was barely enough to cover her rent. By the time the next repatriation ship left in September 1942, Iva had exhausted her meager savings, and could not buy a ticket. It seemed that she was stuck in Japan.

But there was one silver lining of that difficult summer: in mid-July, Iva met a new hire at Domei named Felipe D'Aquino. Of Portuguese and Japanese descent, Felipe had grown up in Japan and attended Catholic schools, so he spoke fluent English. Iva was delighted to have someone to talk to, and the pair quickly bonded over their shared support for the American cause - something no one else around them agreed with. Once,

¹⁵ National Archives, "Japanese-American Incarceration During World War II," last reviewed March 22, 2024. This resource uses contemporary terminology including "internment" to reflect the terminology in the primary source documents. This euphemistic term has been rejected by modern scholars in favor of the more accurate term "incarceration." For more on this evolution, see Denshō's article "Terminology," (<https://densho.org/terminology/>) and the National Park Service's 2021 publication "Terminology and the Mass Incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II," <https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/terminology-and-the-mass-incarceration-of-japanese-americans-during-world-war-ii.htm#:~:text=By%20war's%20end%2C%20the%20United,dispersal%20in%20a%20benign%20light>.

Felipe even got into a fistfight with a colleague over pro-American remarks Iva had made.¹⁶

A year later, in June, 1943, Iva was hospitalized. She was extremely weak from lack of food and essential nutrients. The military police had at one point blocked her from getting a ration card when she continued to hold on to her American citizenship. Iva eventually recovered, but her medical bills put her in debt, and she decided to find another part-time job to pay back her bills.

In late August, Iva was hired as a typist at NHK. Her job was to type up the broadcast scripts and correct grammatical mistakes. There was quite a bit of work for Iva to do in this regard. NHK, like many other Japanese news agencies, had been co-opted into the war effort. The agency now produced propaganda under the command of Major Shigetsugu Tsuneishi. Tsuneishi had no propaganda experience, and he and his subordinates spoke limited English, so their broadcasts were littered with errors.¹⁷

To try to fix this problem, NHK began to hire native English speakers to serve as radio announcers.

Tsuneishi also forced prisoners of war with radio experience to participate in his programming. One of first POWs brought in was Major Charles Cousens, an Englishman who had worked as a radio announcer in Australia.

Cousens had initially refused to help the propaganda effort, and was subsequently shipped off to a brutal labor camp. Tsuneishi eventually brought Cousens back to Tokyo and threatened the man with death if he did not participate. Cousens reluctantly agreed to work at NHK.

He was soon joined by two other POWs, Norman Reyes and Wallace Ince, who had been similarly coerced with death threats. The men were put in charge of a program called “Zero Hour,” which broadcast every evening. The Japanese had conceived of “Zero Hour” as a way to lure Allied GIs into listening to more of their programming, so they told the POWs to make Zero Hour appealing to Western listeners. The POWs realized that they could use this premise to their advantage. As the historian Mayaso Duus writes in *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, the men, quote “ma[d]e “Zero Hour” into an entertainment program that would boost GI morale rather than destroy it. [They] did

¹⁶ Ronald Yates, “Tokyo Rose ‘just a scapegoat’: husband,” *Chicago Tribune*, March 23, 1976. <https://www.newspapers.com/image/382219407/?match=1&terms=d%27aquino>

¹⁷ Information on Iva’s wartime experience in Japan and work at NHK, as well as larger information on NHK, unless otherwise cited, comes from Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, Ch. 3, “Zero Hour.”

their best to downplay propaganda, reading objectionable news items hurriedly or in a joking tone of voice.”¹⁸ “Zero Hour” quickly became a hit.

In November, 1943, Tsuneishi decided to expand “Zero Hour”. The POWs were concerned that an expansion would dilute their control of the program, and thus their ability to sabotage the propaganda content. But Cousens had an idea.

When Iva Toguri had arrived at NHK in August, she had immediately tried to befriend the POWs, grateful to have more pro-American, English-speaking contacts. The men were initially suspicious, but once they realized how sincere she was, they became friendly. Iva had even begun smuggling in food, medicine, and warm clothing for the POWs. These items were gratefully received by the POWS, who lived in wretched conditions at Bunka Camp, a prison specifically for captured men working on broadcasts.¹⁹

When Cousens was ordered to expand “Zero Hour,” he decided to find staff who would aid in his sabotage efforts. He had to be careful with who he trusted - and in a station full of the enemy, there were few options. But that’s when he thought of Iva. He could bring her on.

And then he had an even better idea. They needed a new announcer for the program. The station had many talented female broadcasters. But Cousens didn’t want a talented broadcaster: he wanted a person with a *bad* voice, a comic voice, a voice that would do anything but sell propaganda. And Iva, whose voice would be described as “crow-like,” “rough,” and “hacking,” was just such a person.

Iva was reluctant to join “Zero Hour,” but once Cousens explained what he and the other POWs were trying to do with the program, she agreed to become an announcer.

Sometime in mid-November 1943, Iva Toguri sat down in front of a microphone at the NHK offices, and broadcast for the very first time. It was a broadcast that would help birth a legend - and haunt Iva for the rest of her life.

We’re going to take a little break now. When we return, we’ll pick Iva up in the broadcasting studio.

ACT II

¹⁸ Duus, 78.

¹⁹ “Tokyo Bunka POW Camp, Radio Tokyo,” Center for Research: Allied POWs Under the Japanese, Roger Mandell Group, http://mansell.com/pow_resources/camplists/tokyo/tok-bunka/tok_bunka.html

Zero Hour came on air every night at 6:00 PM, Tokyo time. The program ran for an hour, always following the same schedule. First, music, then messages home from Allied POWs, then Iva's segment. Iva did not want to use her real name in her broadcasts, so Cousens suggested a nickname. He proposed Ann, short for "announcer," and later added "orphan," in a cheeky nod to the Japanese propaganda term for Allied sailors: orphans of the Pacific.²⁰ The name referenced the fact that, like these GIs, Iva, too, was stuck far away from home.²¹ Orphan Ann's portion of Zero Hour lasted 15-20 minutes, but it mainly consisted of music – Iva only spoke for 2-3 minutes, always reading directly from Cousens' scripts. The tone of her announcements was always playful: "Greetings, everybody!" went one script. "How are my victims this evening? All ready for a vicious assault on your morale."²² The vicious assault, in this case, being playing popular American music.

After Iva's segment came news segments, then more music, then a sign off. She would come into the NHK studio for two to three hours every evening to prepare for and broadcast the show, except for Sundays, when another female announcer replaced her. During the day, Iva worked as a secretary for the Danish consul in Tokyo. She had had to quit her job at Domei after getting into a vicious argument over the war with her Japanese colleagues there.

Iva became close to the Danish consul and his family, who generously shared some of their special diplomatic rations with her, including matches, soap, and sugar. Iva would trade these valuable items for food and medicine which she then smuggled to the POWs working at NHK. She also brought the POWs good news from abroad. Felipe D'Aquino, now Iva's boyfriend, had a job monitoring Allied radio broadcasts, and he would pass on reports of Allied advances and victories to Iva, which she would then share with the POWs, boosting their spirits. She took a significant risk in smuggling in these goods and information, but the danger did not stop her.

In late June, 1944, Iva's closest colleague at NHK, Charles Cousens, had a heart attack. He was sent to a POW hospital to recover. With Cousens gone, "Zero Hour" began to change. More and more Japanese staffers replaced the POW staffers. Iva, concerned with the more explicit propaganda content of the new "Zero Hour," tried to quit. But George Mitsushio, an American-born Japanese citizen and the new director of "Zero

²⁰ Information on Iva's wartime experience in Japan and work at NHK, as well as larger information on NHK, unless otherwise cited, comes from Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, Ch. 3, "Zero Hour."

²¹American Veterans Center, "Setting the Record Straight," *WWII Chronicles*, Issue XXXIII, Winter 2005, <https://americanveteranscenter.org/avc-media/magazine/wwiichronicles/issue-xxxiii-winter-200506/setting-the-record-straight/>.

²² Duus, 185.

Hour” told her, quote, “she had better reconsider whether she could quit a program directly under the control of the army simply for her own personal reasons.”²³

Unable to officially leave - and also needing the money that the job paid, especially once the Danish consul left Japan - Iva instead decided to miss as much work as she could. Using the American air raids as an excuse, she frequently skipped broadcasting sessions, and took weeks off at a time citing illnesses and family commitments. Her colleagues at the station resented her absences, and disliked Iva, who they saw as unfriendly and pro-American.

There was one bright spot amidst this turmoil. On April 18th, 1945, Iva and Felipe got married. Iva had converted to Catholicism in order to marry Felipe, and the pair were married in a Catholic ceremony. It was a beautiful day, marred only by a bombing raid that sent the wedding party running for shelter.

After her marriage, Iva became even more determined to quit “Zero Hour.” But after a week of absences, an army officer showed up at her door and ordered her to report to work the next day. Iva had heard from Cousins and the other POWs about the death threats from the Army when they had tried to resist helping with broadcasts.²⁴ Frightened of the consequences, she reluctantly continued her broadcasting work.

On August 15th, 1945, Japan officially surrendered. Iva and Felipe were overjoyed. But an Allied victory did not mean an immediate improvement in conditions. Much of Tokyo had been destroyed in the war, and food and other essential supplies were hard to obtain. When Iva was contacted by Clark Lee and Harry Brundidge with an offer of \$2,000 dollars for an exclusive interview about her radio work, she could not refuse. And the positive attention she got, with soldiers asking for her autograph, was fun at first.²⁵

But things quickly went awry. First, Iva never received her promised payment. It turned out that Brundidge had offered the \$2,000 dollars without first receiving the go-ahead from *Cosmopolitan* magazine. When he wired his boss to confirm the payment *after* his interview with Iva, the magazine refused. And then, the army came knocking. Iva was detained for questioning by the American Counter-Intelligence Corps on September 5th.

Fortunately, after a day of questioning, the Counter-Intelligence Corps, or CIC, released Iva. The army seemed satisfied - so much so that ten days later, a sergeant from the

²³ Duus, 92.

²⁴ Duus, 189.

²⁵ Information on Iva's 1945-1946 detainment, unless otherwise cited, comes from Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, Ch. 1, “The Search for Tokyo Rose.”

army's Intelligence and Education Section asked Iva to help him make a movie about her time as "Tokyo Rose," to entertain soldiers. Iva agreed, and gave soldiers on the film set her autograph.

But a month later, everything changed. On October 17th, four officers from the CIC appeared at Iva and Felipe's apartment. They told Iva that they needed to ask her a few more questions, and that it might take a little bit, so she ought to pack a toothbrush. Iva would not see her home again for more than a year.

The CIC officers escorted her to the military prison in Yokohama. No one told Iva why she was being held. She was not given a lawyer or allowed to contact anyone outside the prison. She was interrogated about her role in propaganda activities.

After a month, Iva was transported to Sugamo Prison, where the Allied forces were keeping Japanese war criminals. Her cell was six feet by nine feet. Iva tried again to ask for a lawyer, to know what charges she was being held on, to be granted a speedy trial – all constitutional rights guaranteed to an American citizen – but was denied. Masayo Duus notes the grim irony of the situation: outside the prison, quote, "The Americans were hard at work teaching the Japanese how to be democratic. Only two weeks before the CIC had arrested Iva without a warrant or an explanation, MacArthur's headquarters had ordered the abolition of restraints on political freedoms."²⁶

Over the course of her year in Sugamo, Iva was questioned by the CIC and the FBI. The contents of these interrogations were sent to the American Occupation's General Headquarters. In April 1946, an internal memo from the Army's Legal Section concluded that Iva had not violated any Articles of War, but recommended that her case be sent to the Justice Department to review if she had broken any civilian laws. The Army duly passed the file on to the Justice Department. Five months later, the Department reported that the evidence of treason was inadequate, and recommended that Iva be released. On October 6th, the War Department notified the military in Tokyo that Iva could be let go.²⁷ For some reason, she was not released for three more weeks. On the morning of October 25th, Iva was notified that she could go home that evening. Reporters gathered outside Sugamo to take pictures of her as she left.

Iva returned to an outside world even more barren than the one she had left. Felipe had been scraping by on his meager salary, but the couple was living hand-to-mouth. Iva decided that they should go to America right away. Felipe urged caution, saying that she should wait for press attention to die down. But Iva was resolved. In December 1946,

²⁶ Duus, 39.

²⁷ Information on the development of the legal case and on Iva's life, 1946-1948, unless otherwise cited, comes from Duus, *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*, Ch. 4, "The Tokyo Rose Witch Hunt."

she went to the American consulate and applied to be repatriated. The consulate once again confusingly told her that her citizenship was unclear. She would need to prove that she was an American citizen – despite having just been jailed for potentially committing treason against America.

Iva spent the next five months gathering documentation of her citizenship, then presented it to the consulate in May 1947. They warned her that the review might take months. Indeed, the Department of Justice only notified the State Department on October 20th that they had no objections to Iva receiving a passport.

Iva was by now pregnant with her first child, due in January. She hoped to return to America in time to raise her child there. The DOJ's approval should have sealed the deal. Unfortunately, news of Iva's potential return caught the press's attention, and all of a sudden, she faced a tidal wave of criticism. The powerful radio host and newspaper columnist Walter Winchell - who was, interestingly enough, a good friend to *Confidential* magazine, which we discussed in episode 5 – began a crusade against Iva. He told his millions of listeners that Iva was a traitor. The American Legion, a large veterans organization, joined his cause, though not all its members agreed with Winchell's conclusions about Iva.

As public pressure mounted, the Justice Department decided to re-review the case. Politics also played a factor in this decision. It was a presidential election year, and President Truman's popularity was down. His administration had been accused of being soft on traitors and communists. Pursuing the Tokyo Rose case could be a way, Attorney General Tom Clark seems to have thought, of toughening up the administration's image.²⁸

There was another point, too – the United States government had committed an unthinkable violation of human rights when it had incarcerated thousands of Japanese Americans. They had justified their actions by claiming that these Japanese Americans were security risks. However, no Japanese American was ever convicted of serious acts of espionage or sabotage.²⁹ By trying Iva, the government could try to retroactively prove Executive 9066 right.³⁰

²⁸ Duus, 114-116.

²⁹ National Park Service, "A Brief History of Japanese American Relocation During World War II," excerpted from *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* by Jeffrey Burton, Mary M. Farrell, Florence B. Lord, and Richard. Lord for the U.S. Department of the Interior's *Publications in Anthropology* no. 74 (1999), rev. July 2000, <https://www.nps.gov/articles/historyinternment.htm>.

³⁰ Duus, 142.

Harry Brundidge, who was now working for a newspaper in Nashville, also jumped back on the case. His career was going downhill, due in part to his alcoholism, and he wanted another scoop, so he traveled to Tokyo alongside a DOJ investigator to look into the case.

In the meantime, Iva was suffering a personal tragedy. On January 5th, she delivered her baby, a son, but he was stillborn. Iva and Felipe were heartbroken. Iva's physical health suffered, and she was bed-bound for much of the first part of 1948.

On August 26th, CIC officers again showed up at Iva's apartment in Tokyo. They arrested her again, this time on charges of treason, and sent her back to Sugamo prison. Iva told the press that she welcomed a trial, because it would finally be a chance to clear her name. She was confident that the truth would come out.

On September 9th, Iva was put onto a military transport ship bound for San Francisco. She arrived on September 25th, and set foot on American soil for the first time in seven years. When Iva and her escort arrived at the U.S. Commissioner's office, where she would be arraigned, an unexpected reunion occurred.

Standing in the office were Iva's father, Jun, and her younger sister, June. Like Iva, they had suffered during the war. The family had been forced into a prison camp. In May 1942, while at a prison camp near Tulare, California, Fumi Toguri's fragile health, pushed to the breaking point by the inhumane conditions at the camp, shattered, and she died. Iva had last seen her mother in the summer of 1941, and she would never see her again. She had not even had a chance to say goodbye.

The remaining Toguris had been sent to a prison camp at Gila River in the blazingly hot Arizona desert. In 1943, people incarcerated at Gila River were given the option of leaving the camp, on the condition that they moved to a new part of the country, away from the West Coast. The Toguris chose to go to Chicago. There, Jun had again become a shopkeeper.

Jun was horrified by his daughter's appearance. When he had last seen her, she had been a plump, bubbly 25-year-old. Now thirty-two, Iva was pale, drawn, and so skinny that her clothes nearly fell off her body. But still, Jun was delighted to see his beloved Iva. They hugged, and then Jun told her, "Girl, I'm proud of you. You didn't change your stripes. A tiger can't change his stripes, but a person can so easily."³¹

Iva was relieved to know that her family believed in and supported her. Jun would fight tirelessly on his daughter's behalf. He was not alone in this fight: for the first time since

³¹ Duus, 130.

Iva had been detained by the military police in the fall of 1945, she finally had a lawyer, Wayne M. Collins. Collins, a passionate civil rights attorney, had represented Fred Korematsu in his ultimately unsuccessful Supreme Court battle to have the Japanese-American prison camps declared unconstitutional. Collins offered his services to Iva for free, and would eventually even use his personal funds to cover some of the trial expenses.

On October 8th, 1948, a grand jury charged Iva with 8 overt acts of treason, with, quote “treasonable intent and for the purpose of, and with the intent in her to adhere and give aid and comfort to the Imperial Japanese Government.”³²

Though the prospect of a trial was frightening, Iva was confident. She believed that a trial would finally make her innocence clear to the public, and allow her to move on with her life. But she would soon find out that things would not be so simple.

In the next episode, we’ll cover the trial and its aftermath.

Thank you for listening to History on Trial. My main source for this episode was Masayo Duus’s book *Tokyo Rose: Orphan of the Pacific*. For a full bibliography as well as a transcript of this episode with citations, please visit our website historyontrialpodcast.com.

³² Duus, 133.