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The Tokyo Rose Case: Treason on Trial is a book on a mission. History professor Yasuhide Kawashima's thorough recounting of the life and trials - both judicial and metaphorical - of Iva Ikuku Toguri d'Aquino, an American citizen wrongly convicted of and imprisoned for treason for radio broadcasts she made in Japan during World War II, seeks at every turn to drive home the injustice of that conviction. Part of the Landmark Law Cases and American Society series and calling itself the first legal history of d'Aquino's case, The Tokyo Rose Case is an engaging, if imperfect, work, one that particularly academic and public law libraries should consider for inclusion in their collections.

In a series of cleanly organized chapters, Kawashima meticulously relates how d'Aquino came to be known as the infamous "Tokyo Rose", the popular but vague term for a Japanese female radio correspondent who supposedly disseminated Japanese propaganda over the airwaves during World War II. (There in fact was never any one woman positively identified as the Tokyo Rose; the term instead was applied by U.S. soldiers to a number of English-speaking Japanese female broadcasters.) He then takes the reader through a day-by-day account of her 1949 trial, the appeals that followed, and finally her pardon by President Gerald Ford in 1977 - making d'Aquino the first person in the United States to be pardoned for treason.

Adhering to the format of all books in the Landmark Law Cases and American Society series, formal citations are absent throughout the text in order to make the narrative more accessible for a wider audience. Instead, in a "Bibliographic Essay" at the end of the volume, Kawashima details the types and titles of the many primary and secondary sources, both legal and non-legal, on which he relied. Legal sources listed range from case law on treason to manuscript records of d'Aquino's trial to a wide array of law review articles. The Essay is a concise and useful starting point for anyone wishing to read more about d'Aquino's story, the topic of treason generally, or the experience of Japanese-Americans in the United States during World War II. (Regretfully, while the reader is told in an Editors' Preface that Kawashima accessed a number of Japanese language materials as well, these sources are not covered in the Bibliographic Essay.) While the book lacks an index, a detailed timeline aids the reader in following along with the many intricate aspects of d'Aquino's case.

The many compelling details presented in the book are, unfortunately, occasionally somewhat undercut by the author's writing style. Kawashima is clearly - and rightly - outraged by the events leading up to, throughout, and after d'Aquino's trial, all of which seemed to thwart her chances at fair treatment at nearly every turn. Yet his commentary on these events often grows heavy-handed, which is most noticeable by the time we reach the chapters recounting the trial. As an example, the author's individual statements on the trial judge's lack of fairness and apparently inherent bias toward the defendant are consistently strongly-worded, repetitive, and indignant, all of which only distract the reader from the overall narration of the legal events at hand. The reader is in fact warned ahead of time in the Editors' Preface that Kawashima "pulls no punches" in his treatment of this topic. But based on the thoroughness and strength of the many sources Kawashima consulted, and the liberal use of direct quotations from the many individuals involved in the Tokyo Rose saga, one sometimes wishes that he had more often let those sources speak for themselves.