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**GREAT WAR, FLAWED PEACE,  
AND THE LASTING LEGACY  
OF WORLD WAR I**

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NATIONAL  
HISTORY DAY

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# SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN HAWAI'I

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**GUIDING QUESTION:** How did the media, the U.S. military, the U.S. government, and racial and ethnic ideologies impact the ruling in the Massie Case in Hawai'i following World War I?

## AUTHOR

Pualeilani Fernandez  
Hilo Intermediate School  
Hilo, Hawai'i

## WHY?

The U.S. military expanded its footprint in Hawai'i after World War I. This activity is designed to help students gain an understanding of how the expansion of militarism and American imperialist ideologies impacted racial and ethnic groups in Hawai'i.

## OVERVIEW

Using both primary and secondary sources, students analyze how the U.S. military's expansion into Hawai'i, a legacy of World War I, impacted the Massie-Kahahawai case, one of the most infamous cases in Hawai'i's history.

## OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this activity, students will be able to

- › Analyze primary and secondary sources related to the Massie-Kahahawai case; and
- › Draw conclusions as to the social, political, and cultural factors that influenced the decision.

## STANDARDS CONNECTIONS

### CONNECTIONS TO COMMON CORE

- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- › CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

## DOCUMENTS USED

### PRIMARY SOURCES

Map, *Hawaii-Our Greatest Defense Outpost*, *San Francisco Examiner*, 1938  
David Rumsey Historical Map Collection  
<https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY-8-1-221096-5505177:Hawaii-Our-Greatest-Defense-Outpost#>

L. Simpson, "Hawaiians Must Be Punished!," February 1, 1932  
*Brevities*  
<https://willstraw.com/united-states-broadway-brevities-1930-1935/#jp-carousel-1873>

"Fortescue-Massie Defendants Held Guilty of Manslaughter,"  
April 29, 1932  
*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*  
Newspapers.com (276118196)

Peter Levins, "Guilty Verdict Climaxed Honolulu Honor Slaying; Four Then Given Freedom," May 8, 1932  
*Daily News*  
Newspapers.com (415026055)

## SECONDARY SOURCES

Michael Hannon, "The Massie Case"  
University of Minnesota Law Library  
[http://moses.law.umn.edu/darrow/trialpdfs/MASSIE\\_CASE.pdf](http://moses.law.umn.edu/darrow/trialpdfs/MASSIE_CASE.pdf)

"Lust in Paradise," December 28, 1931 (excerpt)  
*TIME Magazine*  
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,753207,00.html>

## MATERIALS

- › Massie-Kahahawai Case Study Handout
- › Massie-Kahahawai Case Quotes Handout
- › Computer with projector

## ACTIVITY PREPARATION

- › Make one copy of the Massie Case Study Packet for each student.
- › Print copies of the Massie-Kahahawai Case Quotes and cut so that each group has one quote.
- › Divide students into groups of three to four students each.
- › Preview all material to ensure appropriateness for your students.

## PROCEDURE

### ACTIVITY ONE: MAP ANALYSIS (10 MINUTES)

- › Divide students into groups of three to four students each.
- › Project the map, *Hawaii Our Greatest Defense Outpost*, in the front of the room. Ask students:
  - › *What can maps tell us?*
  - › *What is being shown on this map?*
  - › *Has anyone visited any of these islands? If so, please describe the location and geography you observed.*
- › Ask students to work collaboratively to complete the map analysis questions.
- › Allow a few groups to share their answers and clarify any misunderstanding.
- › Explain to students:
  - › *After the outbreak of World War I, the Hawai'i National Guard nearly doubled in size. The military began building a new post for both the U.S. Army and Navy on Ford Island (the islet in the center of Pearl Harbor on Oahu). Roads and bridges were built.*
  - › *Military expansion holdings continued. By 1934, around \$40 billion had been spent on Pearl Harbor military base on Oahu. Hawai'i was seen as a central location on the road to Asia.*
  - › *Today, we are going to be learning about the Massie-Kahahawai case (1932) and how the case was a legacy of World War I.*

### ACTIVITY TWO: THE MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE (45 MINUTES)

- › Ask students to read the Massie-Kahahawai Case Study Handout and work as a group to answer the questions.
- › Project the political cartoon from *Brevities* in the front of the room. Ask students:
  - › *Make a list of the people, objects, and activities mentioned in the cartoon.*
  - › *How would you summarize the cartoon?*
  - › *Are there any questions or instructions provided in the political cartoon?*
  - › *Is the political cartoon trying to persuade you? If so, how? Do you agree? Explain why or why not.*
- › Distribute one Massie-Kahahawai Case Quote Handout to each student group. Ask students to annotate their quote in the following ways:
  - › Circle unknown or unfamiliar words.
  - › Underline any part of the text that is important.
  - › Write a question mark next to lines or sections that are confusing.
  - › Place an exclamation mark next to lines or sections that are provoking or surprising.
  - › Write words or notes in the margins that might pop into your head.
- › Ask students to discuss in their groups:
  - › *What is the author trying to say in the quote? What is the speaker arguing?*
  - › *Who is the speaker? How does the speaker influence the quote?*
  - › *What evidence from the quote supports the author's argument?*
  - › *Do you agree or disagree with the quote? Explain.*
- › Pair two groups together to share their quotes and insights. Ask the groups:
  - › *Compare and contrast both quotes. What are the similarities and differences between the quotes?*
  - › *How does the author's word choice impact the overall tone of the quote?*

## ASSESSMENT

- > Ask the students to imagine that Mrs. Grace Fortescue, Lieutenant Thomas Massie, Thalia Massie, Governor Lawrence Judd, or Admiral Yates Stirling were present in the classroom. Ask each student to write five questions he or she would ask during an interview.
- > Lead a short synthesis discussion, where you ask students, *How did the media, the U.S. military, the U.S. government, and racial and ethnic ideologies impact the ruling in the Massie Case in Hawai'i following World War I?*

## METHODS FOR EXTENSION

- > Students can research the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 with the assistance of U.S. Marines and the *USS Boston* and explain how this event set the stage to occupy the islands and establish military posts throughout the Hawaiian Islands.
- > Students can compare and contrast how African Americans and Hawaiians were viewed and treated by Americans during this time period.



# MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE STUDY HANDOUT

MAP, *HAWAII-OUR GREATEST DEFENSE OUTPOST*, SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER, 1938  
DAVID RUMSEY HISTORICAL MAP COLLECTION

What is an outpost?

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What is the purpose of an outpost?

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Why would the United States of America place an outpost in Hawai'i?

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How does the Pearl Harbor relate to other military outposts around the world and/or in the U.S.? Cite evidence from the map.

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Why was Pearl Harbor their "Greatest Defense Outpost"? Cite evidence from the map.

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## MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE STUDY HANDOUT

*TERRITORY OF HAWAII V. AHAKUELO, ET. AL. (1931), PAGE ONE*

On the evening of September 12, 1931, Thalia Massie and her husband, Lieutenant Thomas Massie, went to the Ala Wai Inn in Honolulu to socialize. Tommie ignored Thalia while he drank with friends. Around midnight, Thalia got into an argument with a Navy lieutenant over a seat at a table. Thalia slapped him hard across the face. Sometime after this incident, Thalia Massie left the inn.

About an hour later, Thalia was spotted walking along Ala Moana Road by several people in a car. The car was driven by Eustace Bellinger and accompanied by his family and friends. They stopped. Thalia approached the car and asked if Eustace and the rest of the group were white. Due to her poor eyesight, Thalia was unable to tell who was driving the car. When they confirmed that they were white, Thalia muttered, "thank god," and accepted a ride from them. Noticing her disheveled appearance, including her torn dress, as well as a swollen lip and facial bruising, the group tried to convince Massie to go to the hospital. Massie refused.

She told the group that she had been forced into a car and beaten up by five or six dark-skinned Hawaiians. They asked her if anything else had happened to her and she said no. She told them that since it was dark, she could not see the license plate number of the car and could only identify her assailants by their voices.

When Thomas Massie arrived at home, Thalia's story changed. She told Thomas that she was assaulted and raped. He wanted to call the police, but Thalia begged him not to do so. Thomas called anyway, and the officers came out to interview Thalia. She repeated her story to the officers saying she only knew her attacks were Hawaiian and that she could only identify them by their voices. Thalia could not identify the license number of the car to the officers.

The first officer to question Thalia described her appearance: "When I saw Mrs. Massie there was blood dripping from her top lip. The only thing I noticed about Mrs. Massie's face was the busted lip, her hair was all messed up and she was crying." Another officer said he did not remember her complaining about her jaw and that she could talk clearly.

After the police interviews, Thomas Massie took his wife to the hospital where she was examined by Dr. David Liu at 2:35 a.m. on September 13. Thalia told the doctor and nurse the same story. The doctor did not confirm nor deny that a rape had occurred.

### Witness Accounts

At about 12:10 or 12:15 a.m., Alice Aramaki, who worked nearby, observed a woman walk by fitting the description of Thalia walking near Waikiki Park. Alice saw the woman pass only about a dozen feet from her. The woman stood out in Aramaki's mind as it seemed unusual for a white woman dressed in a green gown and fur lining to wander around the area at that time of night. Alice also noticed a "haole" (white) man dressed in a dark suit walking just a few feet behind the woman. Two more witnesses, Mr. and Mrs. George Goeas, saw the same couple walk past their car at about 12:10 a.m.



Thalia Massie, at the age of 17, when she married Thomas Massie. *New York Daily News*, May 8, 1932. Courtesy of Newspapers.com (415027691).

Adapted from Michael Hannon, "The Massie Case," University of Minnesota Law Library, [http://moses.law.umn.edu/darrow/trialpdfs/MASSIE\\_CASE.pdf](http://moses.law.umn.edu/darrow/trialpdfs/MASSIE_CASE.pdf).

## MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE STUDY HANDOUT

*TERRITORY OF HAWAII V. AHAKUELO, ET. AL. (1931), PAGE TWO*

At about 12:40 a.m. in Honolulu, the same night Thalia was allegedly assaulted, there was a near-miss traffic accident in which both vehicles stopped after almost colliding. There was a brief altercation between Agnes Peeples, the wife of the driver of one car, and a Hawaiian youth in the other car, Joseph Kahahawai, who was riding with some friends, got out of the car and yelled at Peeples' husband. Mrs. Peeples got out of the car and shoved Kahahawai, and one man punched Mrs. Peeples.

After recovering her balance, Mrs. Peeples grabbed the youth by the throat and hit him in the face. The young men soon drove away, but Mrs. Peeples got their license plate number. She went to the police station and reported the incident and the license plate number of 58-895. This information was broadcast over all police radios, and about an hour later the assault on Thalia Massie was also broadcast over police radios.

Numerous police officers concluded that the youths involved in the incident with Agnes Peeples must be the same youths that assaulted Thalia Massie. Some of the officers had called the police station and received more information about both incidents. Some of these same officers that responded to the Massie home knew about the Peeples incident.

On October 12, 1931, the five youths were indicted for raping Thalia Massie. The jury was unable to reach a verdict and the judge declared a mistrial on December 6, 1931. The mistrial outraged U.S. Navy personnel and white citizens in Hawai'i and government officials throughout the United States.



From left to right: Ben Ahakuelo, David Takai, Horace Ida, Henry Chang, and Joseph Kahahawai. *New York Daily News*, May 8, 1932. Courtesy of Newspapers.com (415027691).

### Backlash and Racial Tensions Following the Mistrial

On December 12, a group of white men kidnapped Horace Ida, one of the Hawaiian defendants, at gunpoint as he came out of a bar in Honolulu and drove him to a Pali cliff on Oahu. He was stripped and beaten until he appeared to be unconscious. They severely beat his face and back. At the police station, Ida could not identify his attackers, but suspected they were U.S. Navy men.

Thomas Massie and Grace Fortescue (Thalia's mother) were enraged with the mistrial and decided to take justice into their own hands. They engaged the help of Albert Jones, and Edward Lord, two enlisted men serving in the U.S. Navy. On the morning of January 8, 1932, Massie, Forescue, and Jones drove to the Judiciary building. On that same day, Joseph Kahahawai, who was awaiting retrial, arrived at the Judiciary building to report to his probation officer as required. His cousin, Edward Ulii, accompanied him. When Kahahawai and Ulii came out of the building, they were met by Jones, who showed Kahahawai a forged summons. He stated Kahahawai needed to appear before Major Ross, the High Sheriff of Honolulu.

## MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE STUDY HANDOUT

*TERRITORY OF HAWAII V. AHAKUELO, ET. AL. (1931), PAGE THREE*

Kahahawai got into the car with Jones. Thomas Massie got into the same car. Grace Fortescue followed in the other car. Ulii contacted the police when the car did not go to the police station. The police department sent out a call for police officers to be on the lookout for a car meeting that description.

The kidnapers drove to the cottage Grace Fortescue had rented and where Edward Lord was waiting for them. Kahahawai was shot through the chest. The group put Kahahawai's body in the rental car and pulled down the shades to hide the interior. They started driving towards Koko Head to dispose of the body.

Less than 30 minutes later, Detective George Harbottle, who had worked on the Massie rape case, spotted a Buick matching the description with its shades pulled down and gave chase. Harbottle tried to get the female driver to pull over, even firing two shots into the air, but she refused. He eventually forced the car to the side of the road and placed the three occupants under arrest. When he opened the back door of the car, he saw "a white bundle tied with rope. A human leg was sticking out from under the covering and it was cold. Kahahawai was on his way to being thrown in the sea."

At the Massie household, investigators found Thalia and a drunk Albert Jones. Jones had the magazine for a .32 caliber pistol with eight bullets in it. He still carried the phony summons that lured Kahahawai to his death. At Grace's cottage, investigators found evidence of the murder, including the same type of rope used to tie Kahahawai's body, the newspaper photographs of Kahahawai, bloodstains, and signs that someone had tried to clean up the crime scene.

The evidence was overwhelming, and Jones, Lord, Fortescue, and Massie were charged with first degree murder. They were booked, fingerprinted, and their mug shots were taken as would be done with any other suspects. But the similarities ended there. Admiral Yates Stirling intervened and demanded that the custody of these suspects be handed over to the U.S. Navy. After some negotiations, Harry Hewitt, the Attorney General of the Territory of Hawai'i, agreed to let the Navy take custody on the condition that it was clear that the civil authorities in Hawai'i had jurisdiction and the defendants would be made available when called. The authorities in Hawaii knew this was risky because the Navy could have spirited the defendants away to the mainland and beyond the reach of Hawaiian law enforcement.



From left to right: Albert Jones, Grace Fortescue, Edward Lord, and Lieutenant Thomas H. Massie, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, April 29, 1932. Courtesy of Newspapers.com (276118196).

## MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE STUDY HANDOUT

*TERRITORY OF HAWAII V. AHAKUELO, ET. AL. (1931), PAGE FOUR*

Stirling had the defendants housed on the docked ship USS *Alton* that was used for visiting VIPs. They were treated more like heroes than felons by the U.S. Navy and by many on the mainland. There was so much outpouring of support, especially for Grace Fortescue, that the entire top of the ship and other available spaces were covered in flowers sent by well-wishers. Soon the guards had to refuse to accept any more flowers because there was no place to put them.

The remaining four Ala Moana defendants were taken to jail for their own protection.

The case went to trial with famous lawyer Clarence Darrow coming out of retirement to serve at the defense lawyer. He was paid \$30,000 for his services.

At about 5:30 p.m. on Friday, April 29, 1932, the jury reached a verdict and the defense and prosecution were called back to court. The jury's ballot was given to the judge, who gave it to the clerk to read. The clerk began, "We, the jury, find the defendant, Thomas H. Massie, guilty of manslaughter. Leniency recommended."

The clerk continued reading the same verdict for the other three defendants. The judge sentenced each defendant to ten years at hard labor in Oahu prison.



*Honolulu Star-Bulletin, April 29, 1932. Courtesy of Newspapers.com (276118196).*

The defendants left the courthouse with their lawyers and Attorney General Hewitt and walked across the street to the Iolani Palace.

Governor Lawrence Judd held a press conference and read the commutation of sentence that he gave to the four convicts:

The undersigned, defendants in the matter of the Territory of Hawaii vs. Grace Fortescue, et al, and their attorneys, do hereby respectfully pray that Your Excellency, in the exercise of power of executive clemency in you vested, and further in view of the recommendation of the jury in said matter, commute the sentences heretofore pronounced in this matter.

Then it was announced that the ten year prison sentence had been reduced to one hour in the custody of the High Sheriff. The hour had already been served and the defendants were free.

# MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE STUDY HANDOUT

## TERRITORY OF HAWAII V. AHAKUELO, ET. AL. (1931), QUESTIONS

What event happened to Thalia Massie on September 12, 1931? When and where did it take place?

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What event did Agnes Peeples experience? When and where did it take place?

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After the trial of the four Hawaii men, describe the verdict. What was the outcome?

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Explain what happened to Horace Ida?

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What happened to Joseph Kahahawai as a result of the verdict?

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Describe the outcome of trial of Mrs. Grace Fortescue, Lieutenant Thomas Massie, and the other men. Did they go to jail? Explain what happened. How was Governor Lawerance Judd involved?

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# MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE STUDY HANDOUT

L. SIMPSON, "HAWAIIANS MUST BE PUNISHED!," FEBRUARY 1, 1932  
BREVITIES

Brevities Runs Big Prize Contest!—Details Given in Next Issue

# BREVITIES

America's First National Tabloid Weekly

Vol. IV, No. 4

New York, February 1, 1932

Price 15 cents

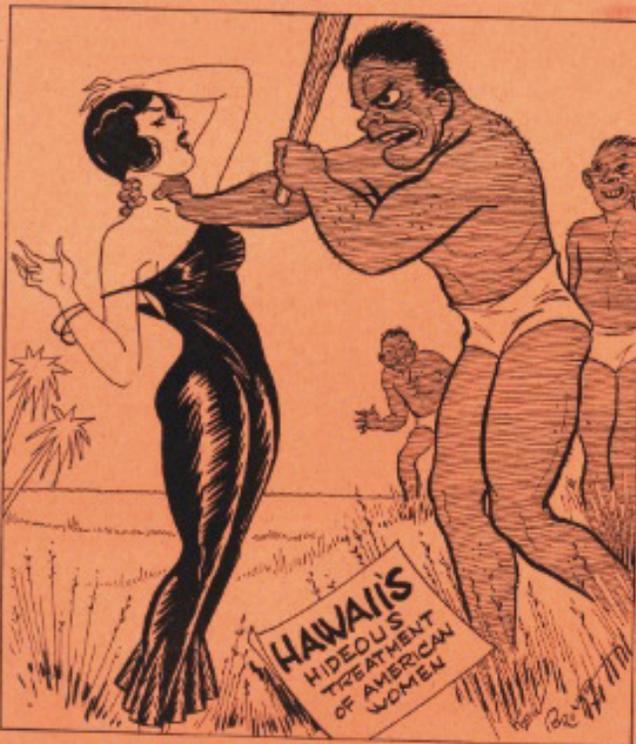
# HAWAIIANS MUST BE PUNISHED!

HOTCHACHA—Page 2

## Martial Law, Complete Housecleaning Necessary to Protect American Women

THE NEW MENACE

By L. SIMPSON  
(Publisher of Brevities)



The melting pot of the North Pacific has boiled over and spilled its race-hatred brew into the streets of Honolulu.

An aristocratic American woman, a naval officer (the husband of her young daughter), and two enlisted men are being held on charges of murder. Race hatred swept through the streets of Honolulu. It caught up a young American girl and almost destroyed her. Then it placed the prisoners in jail.

Congress refuses to act firmly to punish the Hawaiian responsible for the situation. The Senate vacillates and in the end Washington, apparently, will wash its hands of the whole matter, hoping that the turmoil will die down.

The people of America demand justice. They cannot see their women assailed in the streets of an island city owned by the United States without the perpetrators of the crime being punished. If it was the first offense against our women in Hawaii the matter would be serious enough. But statistics show that the recent assault against the young naval mistress was one of a series carried on against white women.

### Lax Law Enforcement

In most of these cases the Hawaiian authorities were lax. Punishment was not swift. It was not severe. It is now necessary that high officials step in and inflict punishment upon the criminals of our island possessions so that we can hold our own respect and that of the nations of the world.

On September 12, 1931, Mrs. Thelma Massie, 19-year-old wife of Lieutenant Thomas Massie, a submarine officer, was assaulted in the streets of Honolulu. Five men overpowered her and threw her in an auto. She was carried to a lonely spot where the 5 men, all of mixed blood, viciously assaulted her. They bruised her body and broke her jaw. Subsequently these men were arrested and tried by a native jury. The jury disagreed and the men were freed pending further legal proceedings. Evidence was strongly against these men, but they were freed.

The brutes natives gloated. They felt they

(Continued on page 12)

# THE MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE STUDY QUOTES HANDOUT

## Quote One

Admiral Yates Stirling, Jr., Commander of the 14<sup>th</sup> Naval District (included Hawaii and Pearl Harbor)

"...[O]ur first inclination is to seize the brutes and string them up on the trees. But we must give the authorities a chance to carry out the law and not interfere."

"I was informed reliably that the vote of the jury began and remained to the end, seven for not guilty and five for guilty, the exact proportion of yellow and brown to whites on the jury... In Hawaii the majority of every jury will be Asiatic or mixed blood with a sprinkling of Hawaiians and whites. Ordinarily, civil justice can be obtained. In this extra-ordinary case the emotion of the races had been aroused to a pitch where sympathies were in favor of the accused men. Conviction thus was impossible."

Source: Michael Hannon, "The Massie Case"

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## Quote Two

Governor Lawrence Judd

"...From that hour on, however, Admiral Stirling seemed intent upon justifying his position that Hawaii was peopled largely by individuals of a very low class, whose presence was, somehow or other, un-American and a danger to defense and a hazard to the womenfolk of the defenders. A whole series of messages was sent by Stirling to the Navy Department to build up this position. Copies of these were supplied by the Secretary of the Navy to the Secretary of the Interior. And these, in turn, were sent to me. I read them with worried fascination."

Source: Michael Hannon, "The Massie Case"

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## Quote Three

Admiral William V. Pratt, Chief of Naval Operations

"The American men will not stand for the violation of their women under any circumstances. For this crime they have taken the matter into their own hands repeatedly when they have felt the law has failed to do justice."

Source: Michael Hannon, "The Massie Case"

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## Quote Four

"...Honolulu, paradisaic melting pot of East & West, was tense with trouble last week. Yellow men's lust for white women had broken bounds. Short sharp disorders brought the tramp of soldiery through the streets. A tremor of apprehension ran through Hawaii's motley population— coolies from China, great Russians from Siberia, little Japanese crowded off their homeland, Portuguese, Porto Ricans, Koreans, Filipinos, sugar and pineapple workers all."

Source: "Lust in Paradise," *TIME Magazine*, December 28, 1931

# THE MASSIE-KAHAHAWAI CASE STUDY QUOTES HANDOUT

## Quote Five

Editorial Run in Hearst Newspapers Around the Country

MARTIAL LAW NEEDED TO MAKE HAWAII SAFE PLACE FOR DECENT WOMEN.

The situation in Hawaii is deplorable. It is becoming or has become an unsafe place for white women. Outside the cities or small towns the roads go through jungles and in these remote places bands of degenerate natives or half-castes lie in wait for white women driving by. At least forty cases of such outrages have occurred and nobody has been punished. . . . The whole island should promptly be put under martial law and the perpetrators of outrages upon women promptly tried by court martial and executed. Until such drastic measures are taken, Hawaii is not a safe place for decent white women and not a very good place for self-respecting civilized men.

Source: Michael Hannon, "The Massie Case"

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## Quote Six

Mrs. Grace Fortescue

"I have slept better since Friday, the 8<sup>th</sup>—the day of the murder—than for a long time. My mind is at peace...I am satisfied, and I am not worrying."

Source: Michael Hannon, "The Massie Case"

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## Quote Seven

Admiral Yates Stirling, Jr., Commander of the 14<sup>th</sup> Naval District (included Hawaii and Pearl Harbor)

"I was informed reliably that the vote of the jury began and remained to the end, seven for not guilty and five for guilty, the exact proportion of yellow and brown to whites on the jury...In Hawaii the majority of every jury will be Asiatic or mixed blood with a sprinkling of Hawaiians and whites. Ordinarily, civil justice can be obtained. In this extra-ordinary case the emotion of the races had been aroused to a pitch where sympathies were in favor of the accused men. Conviction thus was impossible."

Source: Michael Hannon, "The Massie Case"

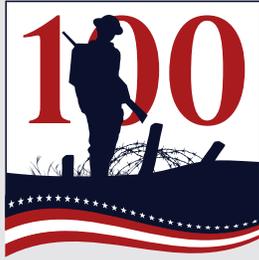
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## Quote Eight

L. Simpson, "Hawaiians Must be Punished!," February 1, 1932

*Brevities*

"...Race hatred swept through the streets of Honolulu. It caught up a young American girl and almost destroyed her. Then it placed the prisoners in jail. Congress refused to act firmly to punish the Hawaiians responsible for the situation...The people of America demand justice...Punishment was not swift. It was not severe. It is now necessary that high officials step in and inflict punishment upon the criminals of our island possessions so that we can hold our own respect and that of the nations of the world."



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