

Revealed: U.S. housewife who became 'Jihad Jane' converted to Islam for a 'sense of belonging' after being raped for years by her father and becoming a prostitute at 13

By Daily Mail Reporter

The white Islamic militant who christened herself as 'Jihad Jane' has explained the some of the reasons for her conversion to violent radicalism.

Colleen LaRose, 49, of Pennsburg, Pennsylvania, pleaded guilty to several charges, including planning a jihad and conspiring to kill Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, in February 2011. But in her media first interview since being arrested and charged with a series of terrorism-related crimes, LaRose explained her journey to jihad. She was raped as a child, ran away from home to become a prostitute at 13 and fell into militant Islam for a 'sense of belonging.'

In an extended report by Reuters, when asked why militant Islam was so attractive to her, LaRose replied: '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.'

LaRose explained the difficulties of her early life in Detroit, Michigan, leaving her as emotionally vulnerable adult.

At around eight years old LaRose, and her older sister Pat, was raped by her father Richard LaRose. The sexual abuse continued until LaRose ran away from at 13. The girl then worked in prostitution and developed heroin and cocaine addictions. At 16, LaRose married a man twice her age, but just a year later she turned up at a shelter for teens in Memphis and was committed to a psychiatric facility for several months. While at this shelter she worked with counselor Ollie Avery Mannino. When Mannino rang Richard LaRose to check Colleen's story, her father answered with hesitation: 'Yeah. I raped her.'

As Reuters journalist John Shiffman, who spent six months investigating the case, wrote: 'He said it sharply, without remorse, and in such a prideful, guttural tone that Mannino snapped her head, stunned.' Richard LaRose died in 2010, having never been prosecuted for his crimes. Colleen LaRose continued to drift, split from her first husband, and married again at 23. This relationship ended in divorce 11 years later. LaRose claims that her father's abuse ruined her life: '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.'

LaRose became radicalized and posted under the name Jihad Jane on militant Islamic websites. When Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks portrayed the Prophet Muhammed with the body of a dog in 2007 put a £67,000 bounty on the head of the artist. In constant contact with al-Qaida operatives around the world, LaRose swore to travel to Europe and kill Vilks.

According to her indictment, she wrote: 'I will make this my goal till I achieve it or die trying.'

LaRose recruited other Americans, such as Jamie Paulin-Ramirez of Colorado and Mohammad Hassan Khalid of Maryland to her jihad cause. She got to Sweden in 2009 but was arrested by the FBI on her return to the U.S. While LaRose claims she got close to killing Vilks and achieving martyrdom, John Schiffman of Reuters claims: 'In truth, what happened proved more farcical than frightful, more absurd than ominous.'

'Jihad Jane' has been charged with conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists, conspiracy to kill in a foreign country, making false statements to the FBI, and attempted identity theft.