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Vilification in Fox's "24"

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VILIFICATION IN FOX'S *24*

A Thesis Presented

by

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my little sisters and brothers Nikki, Terese, John, Jenny, T.J., Jayden and Kasey—all of whom will make their unique marks on the world—and to my fiery and spirited nieces, Salome, Izabella and Gizelle.

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The countless hours I spent watching *24* would not have been endurable without the soft and sweet company of my dogs, Diego and Sadie. Since they cannot read, I shall thank them with a biscuit.

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ABSTRACT

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This paper explores vilification in the popular counterterrorism show, Fox's *24*. A critical, in-depth analysis of three prominent antagonists from the show illustrates the different ways in which they are vilified. Each of the three characters is examined to understand which type of villain he or she embodies in *24*, which of the show's moral codes the villain affronts, and how he or she is punished or treated as a result. The analysis considers the broadcast of the show's first six seasons in relation to neoconservative and Christian Right values that characterized the George W. Bush administration after 9/11. It finds that the show's characterizations of all three villains— an Islamic extremist, a femme fatale, and a shirking bureaucrat—reinforce dominant xenophobic, patriarchal, and hypermasculine values, which underscored the Bush administration's war on terror.

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INTRODUCTION

The present study considers the dramatic series *24* (2001-2010) as a cultural text that works to influence viewers to understand who we are—and who we are *not*—by examining the cultural symbol of the villain in the show. Narratives about villains (the "bad guys") and heroes (the "good guys") are typically regarded as fantastical constructions. But the constructs "hero" and "villain" are not confined to the domain of fiction. These expressions, along with related ideas about the nature of good and evil, organize social morals, values and actions (Ingebretsen, 2001). Following the September 11 attacks, for example, the official rhetoric from the Bush administration focused on good versus evil. "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists," was the message Bush delivered to a joint session of Congress on September 20, 2001 (Kelly, 2007). This narrative helped to unify Americans as freedom fighters and positioned Iraq and Afghanistan—and for some, perhaps the entire Muslim world—as the villain in the American imagination (Giroux, 2004). The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were sanctioned in part (in good part, many would argue) by most Americans' understanding of the wars as their country's heroic fight against an evil villain (Anker, 2006). While they may be rooted in fantasy, constructs of heroism and villainy often have consequential effects in the real world.

This is not to claim that "real world" rhetoric of good and evil is more important than fantasy representations of good and evil. Instead, the two work together to help construct reality—or as one theorist writing post-9/11 has coined it, "hyperreality" (Denzin, 2003). News, movies, television shows, video games, and other media that contribute to our understanding of the world heighten and mold our experiences of

phenomena like terrorism. Norman Denzin describes modern experience when he writes, "Today we understand everyday life through mass-mediated performances that make the hyperreal more real than real" (p. 28). Mediated representations of the world—whether they are factually- or fictionally-based—affect our real-life experience. Drawing from Denzin's statement, even if one has no actual lived experience with something like terrorism, a television show that takes up the subject—like Fox's *24*—helps fill that experiential void hyperrealistically.

The show *24* can be thought of in relation to the so-called "war on terror." While the show's first season was in production prior to the September 11 events, it debuted on broadcast television—and gained popularity with American audiences—after 9/11. Referring to *24*, one scholar writes, "The series has been far and away the most extended televisual reflection to date on the implications of 9/11" (Downing, 2007, p.1). Each season (or "day" as it is referred to in the show) represents one twenty-four hour period and follows the fictional government agency, Counter Terrorist Unit (CTU), and its hero, Jack Bauer (Kiefer Sutherland), as they race to save the U.S. from what seems like an imminent terrorist attack. Each forty-two minute episode (or hour with commercials when broadcast) represents one hour in the terror-stricken day. As the clock ticks down—as time runs out—audiences ranging from 8.6 to 13.8 million (depending on the season) ("*24* [TV Series]," 2008) watch as Jack literally saves the day from America's enemies by way of vigilantism, torture, and other actions that fall under the "by any means necessary" rubric. TV critics, fans, and even many politicians heralded the show for its innovative split-screen, real-time format and its culturally relevant subject matter (Miniter, 2008; Peacock, 2007). While the show does not directly comment on the events

of September 11, *24* has been the most popular television show to reflect on and re-envision the real-life events of that day by engaging the theme of an impending terrorist attack on American soil.

I have chosen the show *24* as the subject of a critical analysis because of its hyperreal depictions of good and evil after 9/11. As Judith Warner writes in her *New York Times* article "'*24*' as Reality Show" (2007):

> The…years of the show's existence have given us a parade of imagery seemingly tailor-made from Bauer's TV world. The crumbling of the World Trade Center, Saddam Hussein in a hole, stress-deranged U.S. soldiers-turned-prison-block-pornographers—the dividing line between what's believable and what's not, between fantasy and reality, has become utterly permeable (par. 11).

Thanks to the pervasiveness of warmongering sensationalism in news and entertainment media, and the rhetoric of fear that infuses both Republican and Democratic policies, today's reality resembles an over-the-top, action-packed television drama. It is in this context that *24* might be understood as a fictional version of reality, and everyday life a real version of *24*. And it is for this reason that analyses of who is good and who is evil in the show are imperative and compelling.

Scholars and journalists have investigated the relationship between vilification in *24* and post-9/11 political hyperreality in the U.S. For example, Jane Mayer's 2007 *New Yorker* article, "Whatever It Takes: The Politics of the Man Behind *24*," discusses U.S. military leaders' concern over soldiers' desires to torture suspects like Jack Bauer tortures terrorists in the show. The author also recounts a closed-door meeting between former Bush administration Deputy Chief of Staff Karl Rove and original *24* Executive Producer

and Co-Creator Joel Surnow. This meeting with Surnow followed another one that Rove organized with Hollywood executives mere weeks after 9/11, "to discuss the war on terrorism and ways that Hollywood stars and films might work in concert, in ways both formal and informal, with the administration's communications strategy" (King, 2001, par.1). According to author Christopher Gair (2007), one way in which the show worked in concert with the Bush administration's communications strategy was through its stereotypical depictions of villains. Gair argues that the show, in its stereotypical portrayals of villains—especially foreign villains—"ultimately imagines an America re-invented and redeemed from within, through the deployment of 'traditional' values" (p. 208). These authors argue that there is a link between vilification in *24* and post-9/11 U.S. ideology and policy.

The "traditional" values upheld by the Bush administration in policy and discourse have been convincingly shown to be neoconservative values (Buchanan, 2005; Mann, 2004; Unger, 2007). The events of 9/11 were explained by those in power as a struggle of good versus evil, with Christian conservatives on the Right positioned as good, and Muslim terrorists and anyone critical of the U.S.'s actions positioned as evil. As Edgerton, Hart & Hassencahl (2007) write in "Televising 9/11 and Its Aftermath: The Framing of George W. Bush's Faith-Based Politics of Good and Evil," media after 9/11 facilitated the administration's religiously guided move to war by reinforcing simplistic constructions of evil Muslim terrorists and American Christian saviors. The authors argue that this faith-based narrative of good and evil, articulated by the administration and reinforced in media, provided justification for the implementation of a neoconservative, military interventionist political vision. In other words, the waging of

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the war on terrorism was as much about rallying Americans behind particular values and worldviews as it was about fighting terrorists.

Although links between the Bush administration's neoconservative, Christian Right ideology and content of the show *24* have been examined, a comprehensive analysis of the show's villains has not been done—and is no simple task. *24*'s plotlines hinge on twists, such as presumed terrorists who turn out to be undercover U.S. agents and U.S. government officials who turn out to be terrorist conspirators. So while it may be accurate to say that most of the Middle Eastern characters on the show are involved with terrorist activities, it is also likely that a Middle Eastern character might be key in helping Jack Bauer to save the day, or that Jack Bauer's own businessman father may be implicated in the day's terrorist events (as was the case in Day 6 of the show). In other words, it is not easy for a critic to provide a simple analysis of which kinds of characters perform the role of villain in the show, since there seems—on the surface, at least—to be an almost equal opportunity of being vilified across ethnic, racial, religious, and gender lines.

Fox executives, journalists, and even some academics have used this supposedly equal opportunity vilification as a way to defend the show against criticism (Ashbrook, 2007; Hibberd, 2010; Shaheen, 2008). Fox has officially and explicitly used this line of defense in responding to critics who find the shows depictions of certain groups troubling. When the Council on American-Islamic Relations raised concerns about *24*'s portrayal of Muslims in January, 2007, Fox released a statement saying, "Over the past several seasons, [*24*] villains have included shadowy Anglo businessmen, Baltic Europeans, Germans, Russians, Islamic fundamentalists, and even the (Anglo-American)

president of the United States" (Parry, 2007, par. 9). The network added, "The show has made a concerted effort to show ethnic, religious and political groups as multidimensional, and political issues are debated from multiple viewpoints" (Parry, 2007, par. 9).

The varied and multifaceted embodiments of evil in *24* are probably also the reason that a critical categorical investigation of the show's villains has been neglected until now. As James Poniewozik, a media critic for *Time*, points out on a *24*-focused installment of the NPR radio show *On Point,* it is not easy to identify the villains in the show because the plot features constant reversals. He takes this point a step further by claiming that this provides proof that there is no ideological slant to the show. He says:

> I think it's really hard to make a claim for the show as…making a partisan ideological argument on any side of the fence, because in fact its ideology is basically paranoia, which is to say that nobody can be trusted. The president is good this episode, but he could be in cahoots with terrorists the next (Ashbrook, 2007).

I intend in this paper to investigate whether Poniewozik's and Fox's assertion is true. Can *24* supporters justifiably claim that the show is ideologically neutral since all kinds of characters—even white, male presidential ones—are capable of performing as villains? A careful, critical look at vilification in *24* will help to answer this question.

Some background will help to explain how I became interested in vilification on the show *24*. The ways in which media propagated particular embodiments of evil after 9/11, and a concern for people who would suffer as a consequence, colored my entire academic career. I was a college student beginning my sophomore year at UMass

Amherst on September 11, 2001. Having unexpectedly lost my mother six months prior, and having committed myself to working with faculty in the Communication department who emphasize social justice, I was concerned about the role that mainstream media would play in shaping understandings of the 9/11 events and the United States' response. Conversations on this topic, as well as ones about the responsibility of the citizenry to engage critically—especially during times of war—weaved a common thread through my college years. I wrapped up my undergraduate career as an intern at the nonprofit Media Education Foundation, assisting in the production of *Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear, and the Selling of American Empire* (Earp & Jhally, 2004), a documentary film that examines the Bush administration's and media's manipulation of the 9/11 events to strengthen American empire.

It is no surprise that a few years later, as a graduate student in the UMass Communication department, I returned to these same themes in examining the show *24*. It must be noted, however, that when I first encountered *24* it was not primarily as a critic, but as a fan. The first season of *24* I watched on television was Day 4—a season so stereotypical in its depictions of Muslims that the producers were pressured into airing anti-stereotyping public-service type messages from the show's stars during the broadcast (Watson, 2005). Despite the stereotypes and extreme violence, I was hooked. Between the end of the television broadcast of Day 4 in May 2005 and the beginning of Day 5 the following January, my then boyfriend (now husband) and I rented and watched Days 1, 2 and 3. That is, we watched just shy of one hundred episodes of the series in the course of a year. Our Netflix account could barely keep up with our frenzied viewing.

Although cognizant of the show's troubling depictions of Middle Easterners, torture, women and the like, I was still completely captivated by it. I was hypnotized by *24*'s never-ending action, its plot twists, and of course, by the world-saving stunts of hero Jack Bauer. This dualism of both gaining pleasure from the show and also realizing its hegemonic elements helped me recognize *24* as a rich text for examining ideology. While completing my Master's coursework and acting as a teaching associate, I began using the show to teach critical media analysis to my undergraduate classes. The inspiration for this study is due in large part to my former students' smart and inventive analyses of the show.

The present study is a critical investigation into the ways in which certain characters are vilified in the show *24*. Recognizing the show's role within post-9/11 hyperreality, its acclaimed stylistic innovations, and its complex presentations of evil, this paper explores the nature of the villain in the text. Research questions guiding this study ask: Which types of villains populate *24*? Which of the moral codes that guide the show do the villains break? How are they punished for their moral crimes in this cultural text? The goal of this study is to critically analyze the construction of villainy in the show, and to inspire future investigations into social and cultural forms and effects of vilification.

CHAPTER 1

LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper asks the question: How are characters in the show *24* vilified? Due to the nature of this question, three bodies of writing comprise the literature review: works on the villain as a social symbol; works on villains in media; and works on the television show *24*. A review of research on the villain as a social symbol begins this section, providing a historical basis for the current study. Literature on villains in media is reviewed next, setting the stage for the analysis. A review of writing about *24* concludes the literature review, positioning the present work in the context of other analyses of the show.

The Villain as a Social Symbol

"Bad guys" and "evil-doers" have been a part of Western culture perhaps since its inception. Villains are some of the oldest and most used character types in the history of dramatic literature, populating the plays of Shakespeare and pages of the Bible (Alsford, 2006). Scholars like Mary Douglas (1966) have laid the groundwork for studying the villainous Other as a form of pollution in a society obsessed with purity. Scholars who study identity, politics and representations of the Other have elaborated on this idea, theorizing that the creation of an imagined Other is central to individual and group identity formation. Edward Said argues in his seminal book, *Orientalism* (1978), that the West defines itself through the Other by constructing its identity in contrast to the non-Western world. According to Said, because the imagined Western identity is positioned as superior to the Other's, the West is able to exercise and justify economic and

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ideological dominance over the Other. The initial connection between the Other and the villain is evident.

While there is certainly a relationship between "Other" and "villain," the two are not interchangeable terms. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak uses the notion of subalternity in conceptualizing the Other: "Subalternity is where social lines of mobility, being elsewhere, do not permit the formation of a recognisable basis of action" (2005, p. 476). It is when "the part is no longer part of the whole, and therefore the power to self-synecdochise has been taken away" (Spivak, 2005, p. 482). In other words, the Other exists outside of the constructed boundaries of the dominant and the good (Spivak, 2004). Villains, on the other hand, are defined as images of humans "who appear in fiction, folklore and life as idealized figures of evil, who tend to counter moral actions as a result of an inherently malicious will" (Klapp, 1954, p. 58). The villain is the fictitious image of evil in human form, whereas the Other is treated as the embodied effect of vilification. While there has been a great deal of scholarly investigation over the last thirty years into the construction, constitution and consumption of the Other, relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to the villain. Perhaps this is because the Other, being grounded in reality, is considered more pressing than its fictional counterpart, the villain.

The scarcity of scholarly attention to the villain is especially true for the screen villain. Non-human evil entities, or monsters, have been the topic of much screen discussion, but consideration of the human-form villain on television and in films has been taken up by only a handful of scholars. Martin Norden makes this point in the introduction to one of the few texts dedicated to evil and villainy on screen, *The Changing Face of Evil in Film and Television* (2007). He explains that while the general

subject of evil has been of interest to scholars from a variety of disciplines for a long time, film and television scholars have largely neglected comprehensive writing on the topic. Norden explains that television and film scholars have written extensively on genres that traffic in evil; "it is the rare monograph or edited volume, however, that goes beyond generic boundaries or individual productions to take an overarching perspective on the moving-image construction of evil" (p. xiv). These edited volumes and individual articles that discuss evil on screen will be reviewed later in this section.

The present paper might be considered a monograph of vilification in the show *24*; however, it also attempts to contextualize this televisual representation within broader cultural processes of vilification. While the current focus is an analysis of villains in the text *24*, its aim is to invoke connections to other historical and cultural themes of vilification. Of striking relevance to the task at hand is sociologist Orrin E. Klapp's writing about villains in the mid-twentieth century. Klapp's work serves as the theoretical framework for this paper due to the unnerving parallels between his studies of vilification in the 1940s and 1950s and constructions of villains today. Klapp, writing post-World War II and at the dawn of the Cold War in the U.S., published a series of articles in *American Sociological Review* and *Pacific Sociological Review* on the topic of heroes and villains. These articles, which he expanded upon and published in two later books, lay the foundation for the study of vilification as a social process. Klapp predicts that mass media will play a prominent role in the social process of vilification—this prediction occurring at a time when television is in its infancy. Given the nature and scope of Klapp's research in this area, it is a rich resource for scholars interested in evil on screen.

The first article in which Klapp lays the groundwork for addressing villains is in fact an article about heroes. "Hero Worship in America" was published in 1949 and explores heroes and villains as they relate to American society. The article defines hero worship and positions it as a social process. Klapp defines this phenomenon as: "a generic process which expresses itself in many aspects of life as the tendency to select certain individuals as collective ideals, to accord them with special status, and to surround them with behavior characterized as 'hero worship'" (1949, p. 53). Klapp outlines the social process of hero worship. In the end he concludes: "the hero is one of the most important symbols and occupies one of the highest statuses in social life" (1949, p. 61), which, Klapp claims, "enthrones heroes in an irrational status which criticism is often powerless to qualify" (1949, p. 62). While Klapp does not address villains directly here, he sets the stage for the analysis of the villain, the evil entity against whom this powerful, critique-resistant social symbol—the hero—is constructed.

The relationship between the hero and the villain is clarified in Klapp's next published work. "Heroes, Villains and Fools, as Agents of Social Control" (1954) outlines the three social types that Klapp is concerned with—heroes, villains, and fools— as deviants from normative, conventional behavior. Klapp understands the creation and maintenance of these roles as a social process that plays a part not only in theater, but also in institutions, politics, history, and everyday life. According to Klapp, a group understands and responds to what it considers abnormal behavior by reducing those exhibiting the behavior into simple social types, such as hero (better than the norm) and villain (worse than the norm). He stresses that the processes of lionization and vilification are group efforts: "These roles are created and assigned by collective

processes. A man can act in any way that he will, but only a group can make him a hero, villain or fool" (p. 57). The author explains that it is the group's *consensus in their assessments* of particular actions that lays the groundwork for hero- or villain-making, as opposed to the actions themselves. Klapp proceeds in the article to describe the normative nature of the three types; specify the kinds of conduct that lead to ascription of the types; outline the social processes of fool-making, vilification, and lionization; and describe how these types operate within real-life individuals and societies as agents of control.

Klapp describes the process of vilification as an important social control element. In order to make his argument, he first defines the villain as an evildoer who is hated because s/he is the enemy of the good, the weak, and of social organization itself. The villain's purpose, Klapp argues, is to create a crisis (or schism in the moral codes which organize society) from which the hero can save society and restore its "natural" (preferred) moral order. The hero and villain therefore share a symbiotic relationship: the hero is the defender of the mores and the villain is the offender. Second, Klapp describes the process of villain recognition: the villain must be visibly distinct from the norm, must conform to a popularly established type, and must have the social opportunity to perform a given role in a certain situation as defined by the group. Klapp points out that crises make especially good breeding grounds for heroes and villains, since they call into question moral codes around which the group is organized. Third, Klapp describes vilification as a social process. He explains that once recognized as a villain, the group tends to collectively treat a person in a way that is deemed appropriate for his/her status. Fourth and finally, the author describes the personal and group functions of the villain.

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Klapp claims that villains have four major functions: 1) to operate within the individual to facilitate self-judgment and imagine roles to avoid or emulate; 2) to operate within society to organize and simplify collective response; 3) to create rituals of solidarity; and 4) to perpetuate collective values. The social process of vilification outlined here represents a form of social control, the author argues, because it organizes individual and group thought and behavior toward a person who is collectively recognized as this evil, amoral social type.

The social response to the villain that Klapp describes in this article deserves further attention. Regarding this topic, Klapp explains that unlike society's response to the hero—an elevation and preservation of ideal or exceptional performance—society's response to the villain is to "reduce and destroy villains in status and person" (1954, p. 60). He goes on to write:

> The basic primitive attitude toward a villain results from the fact that he is
> conceived as a monster incompatible with social organization, a willful
> and inveterate enemy of mores, who must be expelled or destroyed if
> society is to be safe. The appropriate responses to such a creature are
> punitive and militant. Only when the villain concept begins to break down
> do humane and rational considerations seem to have much weight (1954,
> p. 60).

Klapp continues by elaborating on his assertion that a crisis is a situation ripe for vilification. He claims that vilification arises spontaneously in times of moral crisis and alarm as a desire to find and punish culprits. If there is not a villain handy, Klapp writes, then representatives of the people—official or unofficial—search for the villain, the

purpose of which is more about satisfying the public's desire than it is about solving the problem.

Klapp's social function of vilification is another area that deserves elaboration. Regarding the first function, Klapp writes that the villain operates to support the role of the hero, since, "to adequately play the part of deliverer or avenger it is necessary to have a strongly defined concept of an aggressor…against whom to draw one's sword" (1954, p. 61). Elaborating on this point, he states that villains are fantastic tools of public relations and propaganda. For example, he writes that the Marine Corps employs the figures "hero" and "villain" to strengthen the structure of their organization. In regard to another function of the villain, Klapp states that "People draw together to applaud a hero [or] fight a villain" (1954, p. 62), noting that courts, theaters, public forums and news are all arenas for collective ritual wherein group values are affirmed and hostilities are diverted to scapegoats. As for the villain's final social function, Klapp writes that as a symbolic figure in tradition, the villain "help[s] in the perpetuation of collective values, to nourish and maintain certain socially necessary sentiments" (1954, p. 62). These functions of vilification emphasize the importance of the villain as a symbol and agent of social control.

Klapp's next article in the series discusses villains exclusively. "American Villain Types," published in 1956, is a work in which the author attempts to identify the major types of villains on the American cultural scene. Klapp presents the results of a survey that identifies villain-types as they appear in popular vocabulary. His focus is to name and classify villain-types based on their colloquial use, but he recognizes that folklore and mass communications are sites where similar data could be collected. The

survey Klapp presents features a list of words like "bully," "fascist," "Jezebel," "traitor," and "con-man," which participants rated as: unfamiliar; heroic or admirable; villainous or evil; foolish or ridiculous; or none of the preceding. He uses these social ratings to group like-terms and classify the names that participants deemed villainous. Klapp spends the majority of the article presenting the various villain-types that the survey illuminates.

Klapp discovers two main categories in which most villains fall: highly visible villains, and villains of low or delayed visibility. The highly visible villains category consists of the following villain-types: desperado or outlaw; oppressor or bully; authoritarian; rebel; flouter; trouble-maker; claimant of undue privilege; intruder; suspicious isolate; monster; rogue; and renegade. The desperado or outlaw exhibits violent behavior. The oppressor or bully is cruel and strong and abuses his power over the weak. The authoritarian asserts his authority and imposes his will on others. The rebel threatens to overthrow authority. The flouter behaves scandalously, disregarding the social order. The trouble-maker causes waves. The claimants of undue privilege are selfish types who "claim more than their due" (1956, p. 338). The intruder is someone from the outside who shoves his way into a status system or group. The suspicious isolate looks or behaves strangely, his marginality marking him as dangerous. The monster is a villain who behaves and is motivated by demonism that is "beyond the ordinary range of human comprehension" (1956, p. 338). The rogue is a prankster. The renegade is a flagrant traitor.

The villains of low or delayed visibility are different from the highly visible villains in that their status as villains is not obvious. Klapp notes that they are usually thought of as weak and cowardly because they have to be "flushed out." The low or

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delayed visibility villains category consists of the following villain-types: underhanded traitor; deceiver; sneak-attacker; chiseler or parasite; shirker; and corrupter. The underhanded traitor is like a renegade in that he is a traitor, but instead of being flagrant, he works secretly to betray people who trust him. The deceiver is an outsider who is not what he seems who "pulls one over" on people. The sneak-attacker is an outsider of a malicious nature who strikes in a cowardly way. The chiseler or parasite exploits an unfair advantage underhandedly, mooching off of society. The shirker evades important responsibilities or duties. The corrupter has a demoralizing and poisonous social effect.

The villain-types that Klapp classifies are meant to be a glance at the way villains were used in popular vocabulary at that time. Besides the two main categories of villain-types just described, he discovers two more types, which he classifies as "miscellaneous": social undesirables and ambiguous vilifying epithets. Klapp summarizes his discussion of villain-types by determining that the creation of types is a group reaction to particular kinds of social deviance. According to Klapp, these deviant behaviors are ones that: 1) threaten social organization, laws, norms and mores; 2) abuse status in a serious way; 3) exhibit suspicious marginality or isolation that casts doubt upon one's membership in the group; 4) are secretive or furtive in manner; 5) display grotesque or extreme deviance; or 6) willfully fail in obligation or loyalty. While Klapp admits that his study is not meant to be an exhaustive poll that represents all of American opinion (since the sample is small and consists mainly of college students), it does present a useful foundation for discussing the main types of behavior considered villainous in the collective imagination.

Interestingly, Klapp does not end this article with merely a summary of the behaviors that indicate villain status. Instead, he concludes by talking about the implications for scapegoating villains via media. To frame the discussion, Klapp writes:

> We can judge that naming a villain has status-placing and defining functions, that is, to set him apart from normal people, idealize or exaggerate his character negatively, create a state of alarm, and call for strenuous role-playing to adequately deal with such a dangerous deviant…One may suspect that this primitive process will impede rational procedures, result in extralegal action, and cause some people to be treated with unrealistic severity (1956, p. 340).

Klapp follows by claiming that scapegoating is an unavoidable element of vilification. He writes that society punishes flagrant villains naturally and easily, whereas its punishment of less visible villains requires more creative kinds of scapegoating. Mass communications, Klapp argues, creates new opportunities for vilification, and hence scapegoating. The author concludes the article by claiming that vilification, dramatized repetitively in media and other institutions, is an important ritual, since it is a critical component of nation building.

"Notes Toward the Study of Vilification as a Social Process" (1959) is Klapp's final article on the topic of heroes and villains. Here the author argues that the villain is a fundamental social symbol, created by groups under particular conditions, to defend and repair its social structure and to strengthen morale and consensus about certain behaviors. He points out that while vilification may be considered destructive, it is a group process of defining status and conserving mores. To Klapp, vilification is not merely a literary

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device, but instead is a social process that should not be taken lightly. While Klapp does not overtly take a political stand for or against vilification, he does call for further scholarly investigations into the process due to its real world effects. Klapp writes: "There are practical reasons…for being interested in the study of vilification, since it plainly plays a part in the genesis of many kinds of legislation…and has been a propaganda tool of shocking power" (1959, p. 71). According to the author, the study of vilification is the study of a symbolic process that binds fiction and reality. Ahead of his time in many respects, Klapp understands that vilification is one of the ways in which groups construct realities.

The first step that Klapp makes in this article is to distinguish vilification from scapegoating. He starts out by emphasizing that vilification is a consensual, collective and moral process that takes place by collective symbolic interaction, which draws upon a "vocabulary of villainy," or stock images of villainy already culturally established. Scapegoating, on the other hand, is the "displacement of blame or aggression on the wrong people" (p. 72). While Klapp recognizes that searching for a villain might involve scapegoating, he clarifies that they are not the same process. The main difference that Klapp points out is that while scapegoating is typically considered prejudiced, unfair, unjustified, mistaken or wrong in some other way, vilification is considered justified by the group, since it is a consensual, moral process that the members engage in collectively. Drawing from Klapp, if a group considers the scapegoat the wrongly accused, then it considers the villain the rightly accused.

Klapp then goes on to discuss the institutionalized and non-institutionalized forms that vilification takes. He writes that vilification can and does take institutional forms

within political scapegoating, war propaganda, penal institutions, and entertainment. However, he stresses that vilification does not lose its "grass-roots" nature because it is grounded in popular feeling. The author explains that, "vilification is not entirely dependent on official and formal machinery…It can work in the absence of institutions or in their presence—through them, paralleling them, in conflict with them" (1959, p. 73). Klapp defines vilification as complex, two-way conversations between institutions and the public. Hinting that groups shape—and are shaped by—vilification, and that this social process helps to constitute political identities, Klapp early on invokes ideas that do not become popular in academia until decades later.

Next, Klapp maps out the major phases of vilification as a social process. To set up the discussion, he describes vilification:

> As a movement, vilification is a mass groping for consensus as to the nature of evil, who the villain is, what he is like, what to do about him and how to organize toward him. That is, there is a creative task to perform which may involve not only assigning the villain symbol to certain parties but actually building the symbols and concepts themselves (1959, p. 73).

Klapp describes this creative task as a four-stage process. The first stage involves setting the cultural climate for vilification. The second stage involves the growth of the social demand for a particular villain as a response to the moral alarm that has been set off. The third stage in this process entails defining the villain and organizing as a group to act against him/her. The fourth and final stage of vilification involves the creation of a dramatic image to capture the punishment of the villain, an image that will imprint a

group memory or "residue." According to Klapp, these are the stages involved in the ritualistic social process that is vilification.

The author elaborates on vilification as ritual. Klapp argues that in repeatedly imagining and destroying villains, Americans sustain the function of villains as reinforcement of group morality. Klapp writes:

> In creating and repeating the fate of the villain, we recognize that society
>
> has a paradoxical aim toward him: practically it wants to be rid of him, but
>
> ritually it wants to retain him as an image of what happens to people like
>
> that and as an assurance that evil has been controlled (1959, p. 75).

The goal of vilification, writes Klapp, is not only to make a ritual of the villain's fate in imagery, but also create a continued moral sense of amoral people getting what they deserve, which legitimizes formal and informal sanctions upon them. Media, he adds, are specially equipped to display the treatment of the villain in thematic and stylized ways. Klapp reports that mass communication is the modern institutional site of the ritual destruction of the villain.

Klapp concludes his final essay in the series on heroes and villains with a discussion of policy. He writes that if vilification is an essential and universal group process—which he tends to argue it is—then vilification will persist. Klapp argues that simply educating people on this issue will not squelch vilification. Unless we create a society in which there is less aggression, anxiety, and moral alarm, groups will require a representation of the villain's demise. He follows with an alternative:

Should it, then, prove unfeasible to eliminate the villain-making process

from society, the alternative for public policy is better control—to make it

work more for the social order we want (1959, p. 75)

Klapp admits that it is unclear how this better controlled version of vilification would be

achieved. However, he does entertain the idea of government regulation of the visual

representation of the villain—a notion that was surely avant-garde in the 1950s.

Klapp's writing on villains is very relevant to the subject of this paper: vilification

in the show *24*. The author's work provides a framework for thinking about vilification

as a social process, which serves as a theoretical foundation for this analysis. These

important points having been made, Klapp's work is by no means unproblematic—

especially by today's postmodern standards. He tends to write with an undertone of

essentialism (for example, claiming that vilification is a "universal and essential group

process" (1959, p. 75)). He also discusses stages of vilification in a linear way and

categorizes villains as though there is little opportunity for mixing, crossover, or general

complexity. Most troubling, he uses villain names like "hussy," "bad nigger" and

"queer," without paying those terms any particular critical attention. One could argue

that by including these terms in his research survey, Klapp helps perpetuate the

systematic vilification of women, African Americans, homosexuals, and other minority

groups. No theorist should be taken out of the context of the time and place of his or her

work, however. So while these critiques are serious and important, they do not invalidate

his central argument: that vilification is a process of social control.

Vilification functions as a process of social control by calling to public attention,

and ultimately bolstering, the moral codes upon which the social group is organized. By

putting the group's moral codes in crisis and then saving them, society reinvests itself in the dominant moral values that hold it together as a group. Robert Wuthnow, in *Meaning and Moral Order: Explorations in Cultural Analysis* (1987) provides insight into this process. Drawing on Mary Douglas' idea of symbolic boundaries, Wuthnow defines a moral code as "a set of cultural elements that define the nature of commitment to a particular course of behavior" (1987, p. 66). On the study of moral codes he writes:

> in analyzing moral codes we are going to be dealing with symbols—cultural elements that express boundaries—and we are going to be looking for some structure among these symbols. In other words, symbols have to be related to one another in some manner so that boundaries or distinctions are implicitly present" (1987, p. 69-70).

Studying vilification requires an analysis of the moral codes that villains breach. In examining moral codes that media villains affront, blur, or muddy, one should look at the symbolic boundaries expressed and the structure that solidifies these boundaries into a dominant morality governing social behavior. In other words, a study considering moral codes should look at patterns in the distinctions that separate "good" from "bad."

Media Villains

The ideas about vilification presented in the previous section provide an interesting lens through which to view media villains. However, few scholars have picked up on these ideas to analyze vilification in television or film. One scholar who relates Klapp's concepts to media representation is Thomas Henricks. In his 1974 article "Professional Wrestling as Moral Order," Henricks examines vilification and hero

making in professional wrestling. While the author uses Klapp's theories to inform his research on the moral process that take place *within* the genre of professional wrestling, one can assume that mass media help propagate what Henricks calls this ultra masculine "moral order." The author argues that professional wrestling is dictated by a strict moral order that exaggerates—and reinforces—dominant real-life moral order. Therefore heroes and villains in this popular genre are sensational versions of the male-centered moral order that already exists in the dominant culture.

Professional wrestling is not the only entertainment genre that has gained the attention of scholars interested in villainy. Priscilla Kiehnle Warner's chapter "Fantastic Outsiders: Villains and Deviants in Animated Cartoons" (1990) covers how certain children's cartoon characters are marked as villains. The author invokes Klapp to situate her topic. Warner writes that short format television cartoons reinforce simplistic, narrowly developed, stereotypical villain characters. The three main ways cartoon vilification is accomplished, posits the author, are through the invocation of appearance conventions, race and nationality stereotypes, and norm-breaking character flaws. Addressing appearance conventions, Warner writes that ugliness and deformity are often cues to cartoon villainy. Race and national identity are other ways by which villains are marked as such. Warner writes, "These stigmatized characters are identified by in/out group boundary cues, 'us' vs. 'them' distinctions" (1990, p. 124). Character flaws that violate behavior norms—which include the violation of normalized gender roles—are another way of marking cartoon characters as villains, argues Warner. The author concludes that villains symbolize a threat to the stability of unified social groups in cartoons.

It is true that Klapp's theory of vilification, which is routed in sociology, has been mostly overlooked by media scholars interested in villainy and evil on screen. This is not to say that screen villainy has not been approached in other ways, however. The book *Bad: Infamy, Darkness, Evil and Slime on Screen* (2004), edited by Murray Pomerance, is a collection of essays that address villainy in television and film. The goal, according to the author, is to "navigate between…the structural and the phenomenological problems" (2004, p. 10) of exploring screen evil. By this he means that the authors present analyses of ideology while also considering the experiential nature of evil in television and movies. Wrapping up the introduction, Pomerance writes, "The villain we abhor is precisely the figuration we cannot accept as a version of ourselves" (2004, p. 17). The authors whose chapters comprise the book illustrate this point in a diversity of ways. The works most relevant to the current study will be reviewed next.

Bad: Infamy, Darkness, Evil and Slime on Screen is split into three sections. The first section, "It's a Slimy World, After All," collects chapters based in sociology or history that consider screen evil as an effect of larger cultural concerns over moral and ethical degradation. Gwendolyn Audrey Foster's chapter "Monstrosity and the Bad-White-Body Film" discusses the evil-embodied white figure in science fiction and horror films. She argues that these depictions portray the instability of whiteness and call attention to ways in which the body is marked (raced, gendered, classed and otherwise colonized). "Genocidal Spectacles and the Ideology of Death" by Christopher Sharrett is another chapter in this section. Sharrett examines films that feature mass violence and analyzes the imperialism and neoliberalism that underpin them. He points out that "the annihilation of the racial Other is a staple of the commercial entertainment industry"

(2004, p. 67), concluding that "all human experience (or at least all experience worth writing criticism about) is mediated" (2004, p. 69). Kirby Ferrell, in "Toxic Corps," explains the ways in which corporations, and nation states that are increasingly incorporated, are portrayed as enemies in films. The author argues that the parasitic and alienated depictions of corporations and corporate states serve a reflexive function; they help audiences face life in capitalist society (dominated by soulless, economically driven, mostly invisible corporate entities) cathartically through fiction. These chapters illustrate the cultural relevance of screen evil.

The second section of *Bad*, "Auteurs of Negativity, Icons of Darkness," focuses on evil as represented in individual films or by individual filmmakers. Gina Marchetti considers the Chinese villain in her chapter, "Cinematic Incarnations of Chinese Villainy." The author analyzes two contemporary films featuring evil Chinese characters and determines that "the Yellow Peril/Red Menace" image of the Chinese, leftover from the Cold War, continues in today's films. "The Villain in Hitchcock: Does He Look Like a 'Wrong One' to You?" by William Rothman is an analysis of the director's visual creation of the bad guy. Rothman points out that one of Hitchcock's favorite methods of marking a villain is through camera work, such as angles and shot compositions, which allow spectators to bear intimate witness to the villainy. The final section of *Bad*, "Charisma of Villainy," examines particular characterizations of screen villains. Murray Pomerance's chapter, "Tom Ripley's Talent," considers sexual identity and social class as they occupy enemy territory in *The Talented Mr. Ripley*. The author suggests that "evil" is a label that can be used systematically as a tool of oppression by those in power

to maintain the status quo in the film. These chapters show that the creation of the villain on screen draws from ideological and visual resources.

Martin Norden's *The Changing Face of Evil in Film and Television* (2007) is another collection of essays that addresses media villainy. The focus of the book is the construction of evil in television and film. A number of perspectives inform the text's chapters, including critical-cultural, historical and philosophical approaches. Observing that people turn to film and television to understand evil more and more, and also observing that few comprehensive works on screen evil exist, the editor offers the collection to help audiences critically navigate this terrain. Norden, paying special consideration to the troublesome depictions of evil and villainy in post-9/11 media, hopes to open a more robust and critical conversation about evil on screen. The chapters most relevant to the current study will be reviewed next.

A thematic thread organizes the essays in *The Changing Face of Evil in Film and Television*. For the sake of discussion, the book will be considered in two halves. The first half of the book includes two especially pertinent essays. The first, "Screening Evil in History: *Rope, Compulsion, Scarface, Richard III*" by Linda Bradley Salamon, examines evil in the four named films. The author illustrates the ways in which the films' murderers perform villainy in historically appropriate ways. For example, the author analyzes *Scarface's* Tony Montana—a money and power-hungry sociopath—as a response to the 1970s "war on drugs." In the second essay, "The Radical Monism of Alfred Hitchcock," Mike Frank argues that sexuality is a vital source of human evil in Hitchcock films. He contextualizes this finding within the broader culture, concluding: "It is difficult to say whether a different world with a different paradigm of knowledge

and of sexuality—thus of good and evil—is possible" (2007, p. 54), since, the author

points out, "this is a patriarchal world, and this dialectic…is a male dialectic" (2007, p.

54).

The second half of *The Changing Face of Evil in Film and Television* features

three essays that are relevant to the current analysis. The first, "*Training Day* and *The*

Shield: Evil Cops and the Taint of Blackness" by Robin R. Means Coleman and Jasmine

Nicole Cobb, is a comparative screen analysis that discusses how the films' construction

of a villain is dependent on the character's blackness. The authors find that the films

mark the black villains, but not the white villains, as truly evil. The second pertinent

essay in this part of the book is John F. Stone's "The Perfidious President and 'The

Beast': Evil in Oliver Stone's *Nixon*." The author finds that the President Nixon

character is vilified in two ways: by his character flaws and petty behavior, and by his

membership and participation in a conspiratorial group. The final essay that is important

to the study at hand is "Televising 9/11 and Its Aftermath: The Framing of George W.

Bush's Faith-Based Politics of Good and Evil" (Edgerton, Hart & Hassencahl). In this

essay the authors examine the ways in which media, following 9/11, framed the events of

the day in terms of good and evil. They determine that the dominant media narrative

framed police and firefighters as heroes, and Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda and the Taliban

as villains, which served a political and militaristic function. These essays form a rich

and diverse basis for the study of evil on screen.

Evil is also a central topic in the book *Heroes & Villains* (2006). Written by Mike

Alsford, the book explores the importance of villains and heroes in myth and

imagination. He analyses the theological meaning of popular heroic and villainous

figures by invoking such philosophers as Plato, Kant, Hegel and Nietzsche. In the chapter dedicated to villains, the author explains that the villain's autonomous individualism—or desire to remake the world according to his own will without adherence to any social contract—is an important element of his evil character. He illustrates this point by selecting dialogue from films like *Lord of the Rings* and plays like *Macbeth* that support his claim. Alsford also examines the idea of "the beast inside," or the villain that lurks within. He argues that taming the primitive, savage beast inside by exercising will and reason is a theme that appears in the ancient writings of Plato and contemporary films such as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* Alsford's main point in his examination of popular villains is that since individualist villains represent "the bad guys," this is a testament to humans' investment in themselves as social beings with responsibility to one another.

Other scholars have examined a particular type of villain as he or she is portrayed in media. Jack G. Shaheen's 2001 book *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* is such a study. Shaheen conducts a comprehensive analysis of the ways in which Arabs are portrayed in over 900 feature films. An encyclopedia of the U.S. film image of the Arab, the book lists the author's findings for each of the films reviewed. Tragically (according to Shaheen and the current author) only a handful of films feature heroic Arabs. The rest, Shaheen shows, are filled with stereotypical and villainous Arab characters. Most films portray Arabs as evil monsters, brainless buffoons, money-hungry and oversexed sheikhs, or enslaved and eroticized maidens. This overwhelmingly negative representation of Arabs in film dehumanizes Arabs, Shaheen argues, sending the message that "the only good Arab is a dead Arab" (2001, p. 18). He finds the repeated

and relentless image of the "reel bad Arab" to be evidence of Hollywood's ideological assault on a people, and attempts with his book to shine light upon and rally opposition to this relentless screen attack.

Shaheen follows up on his important book with one that specifically looks at Arabs in films after September 11. The book, *Guilty: Hollywood's Verdict on Arabs after 9/11* (2008), shows that while there is hope to be found in some rising filmmakers' complex and realistic depictions of Arabs and Muslims, most films hailing from the war on terror era feature the same damaging, stereotypical characterizations. He writes:

> Anti-Arab and anti-Muslim stereotypes help support the views of those who
> believe that Arab Muslims are a violent people. As a result, the mythology—
> Islam is synonymous with terror; Arab Muslims worship a Moon God; they
> launch suicide attacks because 79 virgins await them in heaven—persists (p. 10).

In Shaheen's assessment, these stale stereotypes, which Hollywood continues to reinforce in the years after 9/11, have immeasurable negative effects. Abuses of Arab American civil liberties after September 11, hateful graffiti on Muslim mosques, and violence against ordinary citizens based on their appearance are only some of the disturbing trends Shaheen names.

The stereotypical depiction of Arabs as villains in post-9/11 news coverage and its relationship to U.S. national identity construction is the topic of a related article by Elizabeth Anker. "Villains, Victims and Heroes: Melodrama, Media, and September 11" (2005) presents the argument that as an immediate response to the events of September 11, media formed and *per*formed a narrative that positioned America and its citizens as victims and soon-to-be-heroes, injured freedom fighters who would rise from the smoke

and ashes to destroy the evildoers and return the world to its good and natural order. The author describes a story that revolves around a fallen hero who promises to restore his dignity by conquering the enemy: a classic tale of the battle between good and evil. According to Anker, media—in explaining the events of 9/11 in the visual and rhetorical language of good versus evil—constructs American national identity melodramatically. In other words, it was not America's actions or policies that media framed as being under attack, writes Anker, but *us*: our shared values and ideals—our common sense of national belonging.

Other investigations into the construction of the villain in news media have been conducted. One such article is "Villains, Victims and the Virtuous in Bill O'Reilly's 'No-Spin Zone': Revisiting World War Propaganda Techniques" (Conway, Grabe & Grieves, 2007). The authors conduct a quantitative analysis of the Fox News show's rhetoric, using standards set up by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis. They find that the show's rhetoric features strong and prolific elements of propaganda, which includes a framing of the issues in terms of good and evil. The authors determine that terrorists, illegal aliens and foreigners are positioned as the most evil villains in *The O'Reilly Factor*. They find that this is due to a moral and physical threat that the show's host claims these groups present to the United States. Groups considered Left-leaning by O'Reilly, including Democratic politicians and media, work on the side of evil according to the show, whereas the Bush administration, the military, the criminal justice system and "ordinary citizens" operate on the side of the good. The authors find these results troubling, concluding that the fear-mongering propaganda qualities of the show counter journalistic values.

The fear-mongering functions of the villain cannot be understood without engaging the concept of the monster. Edward J. Ingebretsen's *At Stake: Monsters and the Rhetoric of Fear in Public Culture* (2001) situates villainy in relation to the monstrous in the book's introductory chapter. Ingebretsen argues that from antiquity to today, the monstrous body has been rhetorically crafted as the anti-human—a physical manifestation of the abnormal and immoral. The author argues that the rhetoric of monsters identifies those who operate outside of the social norm, marks them as perverse, and designs a fear-provoking ceremony around them. According to the author, this social monster-making ceremony is eroticized. Ingebretsen writes that bodies of monsters are "slowly stripped, deliciously moralized in the public" (2001, p. 3) by way of media. Therefore, fear and eroticism rhetorically mark the monster.

Ingebretsen writes in *At Stake* that while we destroy monsters because they are what we communally hate, we also desire monsters because they exhibit freedoms we lack. For example, the author notes that monsters often transgress socially constructed categories of race, class, gender and creed. He highlights an important difference between scapegoats and monsters, pointing out that: "Scapegoats we drive away, burdened with sin, real or imagined. Monsters, however, are to be relished" (2001, p. 3). The rest of the book supports this idea. It shows how media treatment of those deemed monsters works both to destroy them—to sustain a "traditional" moral order—and also to maintain them—to mythologize them and keep them within the communal memory. Analyzing villains in a contemporary popular television show, then, will provide insight into which traditional moral order is being maintained, and which monsters are being sewn into the communal memory of what shall not be.

Villains in *24*

Since villains are not a popular topic in film and television studies in general, it does not come as a surprise that villains in the show *24* are seldom analyzed. Other elements of the show, however, have gained a healthy share of scholarly attention. The first part of this section reviews articles written about the show *24* that have been published in academic journals. While none of these scholarly articles specifically focuses on villains in *24*, their review situates the current study within a literary milieu. Next is a review of four edited books that collect essays about the show *24*. Again, none of the essays included in these volumes exclusively focuses on villains in the show. However, themes that relate to villainy in *24*, such as race, gender, and national identity, are covered in several of the essays that are reviewed here.

One of the most recently published scholarly articles about *24* is a 2009 article published in *Political Communication*. "Where is Jack Bauer When You Need Him? The Uses of Television Drama in Mediated Political Discourse," by Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt, focuses on the invocation of *24* scenarios and characters in political discourse. Tenenboim-Weinblatt uses *24* as a case study to examine the ways in which TV dramas function in political narratives. The author examines references to *24* in politicians' discourse and finds that the show serves important political functions. First, references to the show serve to communicate opposing political opinions. Second, they show a relationship between media preferences and political identity. Third, references to *24* illustrate how consumption of the show relates to viewers' political allegiances and experience of the show. The author concludes that the *24* case study is an important

example of the "complex interactions within the contemporary media environment" (2009, p. 367) that help to shape political discourse today.

   24 is the focus of another 2009 article, this one published in *New Political Science*, which examines the interrelationship between mediated fiction and understandings of political reality. "Interrogating *24*: Making Sense of US Counter-Terrorism in the Global War on Terrorism" (2009) by Elspeth Van Veeren examines how the show contributes to popular understandings of the war on terror. Like Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Van Veeren argues that the fiction of *24* and the reality of politics are inseparable, as the public generates meaning through its intertextual interactions with the show and related political narratives. The author argues that while the show seems on its surface innovative, a critical reading of the text shows it to reproduce official discourses about the war on terror, just as popular culture has traditionally represented official discourses about crime, justice, and conflict. Van Veeren summarizes the implications of her findings on *24* in the following statement:

> As much as government rhetoric or new media…television shows [like
> *24*] are vehicles for communicating and (re)presenting fundamental ideas
> about how the world works, re-inscribing key myths surrounding security
> and world politics and therefore must be interrogated (2009, p. 119).

The author calls for more critical investigations into shows like *24* because of their real world impacts.

   A 2007 *Democratic Communiqué* article by John Downing touches directly on race and its relation to villainy in *24*. In "Terrorism, Torture, and Television: 24 in its Context," Downing points out that while characters outside U.S. borders largely perform

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stereotypically as villains in the show, African American and Latino U.S. citizens work alongside White ones to protect the country against foreign, evil Others. Downing calls this a "fantastic, denialist remove from the ongoing realities of contemporary racism" (2007, p. 74). He also explores what he calls the "soul" of terrorism in the show. The author claims that while the evil "outside" terrorist characters in the show are void of all reason and humanity and act out of rage, "inside" terrorists, like corrupt government conspirators, operate out of complex (albeit misdirected) reasoning. Although Downing does not draw the following conclusion, this phenomenon reinforces a classic Orientalist idea that Americans and the Western world are modern and civilized, acting out of reason, while the West's Others are backward and barbaric, acting out of irrational emotion (Said, 1978).

The show *24*, along with providing a basis for the journal articles just reviewed, has also inspired several scholarly books. The first, *Secrets of 24: The Unauthorized Guide to the Political & Moral Issues Behinds TV's Most Riveting Drama* (Burstein & De Keijzer, 2007), is a book about the show that collects both popular commentary on *24* as well as excerpts of political discourse thematically related to the show. This book features pieces by and interviews with actors on the show, academics, human rights activists, and military personnel, which focus on the ideological underpinnings of the show. While many of the authors and actors whose voices are represented in the book's pages are concerned about possible negative consequences of the show's depictions, they also tend to stress the "TV is fiction" line of argument, which ultimately has an effect of diluting critical attention that has been paid to the show in the popular press.

Jane Mayer's piece "Whatever It Takes: The Politics of the Man Behind '*24*'"

(2007), which first appeared in the *New Yorker*, starts off the book. This important article

might be considered the pioneering critical examination of *24*, since nearly every

subsequent article that questions the show cites Mayer. The author convincingly argues in

her article that *24* is politics thinly veiled as entertainment. She writes, "For all its

fictional liberties, '*24*' depicts the fight against [terrorism] much as the Bush

administration has defined it: as an all-consuming struggle for America's survival that

demands the toughest tactics" (2007, p. 2). The author goes on to imagine the show's

anti-terrorist content as a product of the cozy relationship between the show's producers

and the Bush administration. While Mayer's very critical article starts off *Secrets of 24*

and helps market it as an exposé, a good percentage of pages of this book are dedicated to

diminishing Mayer's claims. For example, actor Kal Penn, a Muslim actor who plays a

terrorist on the show, says in an interview included in the book, "I don't think that

terrorists are always constructed as 'foreign' or 'other' on *24*, but even if they were, I

don't think that's too far off from the reality of what's happening" (2007, p. 117). Some

might find this point of view particularly troubling, considering that Penn went on to

work in the Obama administration as the Associate Director of the White House Office of

Public Engagement.

Reading 24: TV Against the Clock (Peacock, 2007) is another collection of essays,

this one about the form and content of the show. The show's stylistic innovations and

problematic representations are the book's foci. The topics of the essays included in the

text range from the show's split screen format to discussions about torture, vigilantism,

and identity construction in the show. Some authors address gender and race as forms of

villainy in *24*. Others consider how formal elements of the show help to drive home particular ideological messages. Overall, this book provides both the widest and most complex range of critical analyses of the show. A few of this book's articles that address themes related to villainy, such as gender, race and national identity, are reviewed next in detail.

One author in the book addresses gender and its relationship to villainy in *24*. The 'bitch/damsel in distress' binary that the show's female characters often fit into is the topic of a chapter by Janet McCabe. The author writes about the victims and stop-at-nothing women who make up the show's female character population in "Damsels in Distress: Female Narrative Authority and Knowledge in *24*" (2007). She claims that when female characters in the show express power and agency, they often do so through what she calls stereotypically "bitchy" means, which contributes to their status as villains. In contrast, when a female character in *24* is positioned as a helpless victim, she is positioned on the side of good to be defended and rescued by the show's male heroes. The author argues that as far as depictions of women in the show *24* go, stale stereotypes dominate this supposedly innovative program.

Although not in *Reading 24*, a similar exploration of female villainy in *24* can be found in another book, *Film and Television After 9/11* (2004). Ina Rae Hark, in "'Today is the Longest Day of My Life': *24* as Mirror Narrative of 9/11," argues that not only does *24* mirror the narrative of the 9/11 events, but it emulates 9/11 in a way that frames the events in terms of traditional conservative values. Hark examines the show's first early episodes and, like McCabe, points out that many of the show's female characters are either evil villains or defenseless victims. Both of these portrayals, argues Hark,

reinforce a patriarchal ideology, which dictates that the show's men must conquer or save them. Despite the show's groundbreaking and heralded twenty-first century form, both authors who write about villainy and gender in *24* find more of the same sexist representations of women that have historically populated television and other media.

Returning to *Reading 24*, an article about American national identity and its relationship to villainy in the show is also included among the book's chapters. The relationship between narratives about national identity in popular culture and in political discourse is the subject of Christopher Gair's essay "*24* and Post-National American Identities." Gair recognizes the hypocritical quality of the show in its stereotypical portrayal of foreign villains juxtaposed against a presentation of a harmonious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual team of American counter-terrorism agents. He relates *24*'s representations of race and gender to what he calls "post-national American identity." He writes that this new sense of nationhood "pays lip service to inter-ethnic and international cooperation" (2007, p. 208) while creating an imaginary scenario in which America is redeemed by invoking conservative values. Gair concludes that this new American national identity reaffirms "traditional" American actions and values, such as preferring macho behavior to civil negotiation, violent force over diplomatic conflict resolution. Gair's article offers an important look into the ways in which portrayals of gender and race in *24* relate to the ways in which idealized American national identity is constructed in the show.

24 and Philosophy: The World According to Jack (Weed, Davis & Weed, 2008) is a collection of philosophical essays deconstructing *24* hero Jack Bauer's moral character. Almost all of the articles in this collection focus on the rightness and wrongness of

Bauer's actions and/or the state's use of torture in ticking time bomb scenarios and perspectives philosophers might take in justifying or condemning torture. Many articles discuss the utilitarian approach to ethics, which focuses on the greatest good for the greatest number of people, in judging the rightness or wrongness of one's actions. For a utilitarian, Bauer's torture of a terrorist suspect would be morally acceptable if it saved many innocent lives, since the saving of those lives would presumably create the greatest benefit for the greatest number of people.

Not all of the chapters in *24 and Philosophy* support the greatest-good-for-the-greatest-number philosophy, however. Throughout the book many of the authors poke holes in this utilitarian idea, some of which take the stance that inflicting pain on another person is intrinsically unethical. As is the trend, just about all of the essays in this book focus on hero Jack Bauer's character and his morally questionable actions. The only article to touch directly on the show's villains is Stephen de Wijze in the chapter "Between Hero and Villain: Jack Bauer and the Problem of 'Dirty Hands'" (2007). De Wijze claims that Bauer, in the face of evil and immoral Others, must sacrifice his morality in order to do the "right" thing—a paradox that the author argues makes Jack become like the terrorists and criminals he despises.

Another book titled *Jack Bauer for President: Terrorism and Politics in 24* (Miniter, 2008) collects essays that discuss the relationship between the show and reality from a variety of perspectives. For example, Steven Rubio asks, in his chapter by the same title, "Can a Leftist Love *24*?" He tries to untangle the web of why many people on the political Left, himself included, struggle with the fact that they enjoy the show, despite being opposed to most of its political and ideological messages. The civil rights

lawyer Alan Dershowitz makes a convincing case for the regulation of torture in his essay "*24* and the Use of Torture to Obtain Preventive Intelligence." Dershowitz claims that just as Jack Bauer tortures someone only when he really needs to, so do interrogators in real life. He argues that since this is (in his opinion) a necessary reality, there should be rules in place to measure government accountability in torture situations.

Some pieces presented in *Jack Bauer for President* are celebratory readings of the show. For example, Jeanne Cavelos applauds the capacity of *24* to reconcile American audiences' post-9/11 anxieties in the chapter that opens the book, "Living with Terror: Jack Bauer as a Coping Mechanism in Post-Traumatic Stress Disordered America" (2008). Cavelos claims that audiences psychologically benefit from watching the show, especially those with PTSD, because it helps them "work through the trauma, fear, and disturbing beliefs that have haunted [them] since September 11" (2008, p. 16). The author views the show as a way in which audiences can deal with real-life psychological turmoil by vicariously conquering terrorism through the show. This celebration of *24* as a positive force in society thematically connects several chapters in the book.

Though the vast majority of the essays included in these four edited volumes on the show *24* focus either on the show's depictions of torture or Jack Bauer's moral character—neither of which is the focus of this study—these collections are valuable resources for the project at hand. It is worth noting, however, that none of the essays included in the aforementioned works exclusively focuses on the villains of *24*. A few address related questions of gender, race, and national identity as these concepts relate to villainy in *24*, but none engage these concepts specifically in terms of how they occupy enemy territory in the show. Though several of the essays focus on the moral dimension

of Jack Bauer's character and his use of violence and torture, none consider the character or his actions in direct relation to the show's villains. This thesis will join a solid body of work that has explored the show *24*, but it will prioritize the ways in which characters are vilified in the show. This thesis also stands out as it draws from the various books and articles written about *24*, whereas previously published works did not benefit from this body of literature.

This thesis seeks to paint a vivid picture of the ways in which characters are vilified in the show *24* to investigate the claim that the show's diverse set of villains is evidence of ideological neutrality. But as has hopefully been made clear in this literature review, vilification does not occur in a vacuum. In the classical sense of a hero narrative, one of the villain's major functions is to define the hero, for without the villain there are no mores to be defended, and therefore there is no need for a hero. This is also a classic case of binary construction, the cultural process in which complex ideas are simplified, narrowly defined, and cast into stifling categories such as "good" or "bad." By representing what it is to be evil, the villain also defines what it is to be good, which often supports traditional or mainstream values and morals. In the case of the U.S. today, these traditional values are thought to reinforce a dominant patriarchal, ethnocentric culture. Therefore, in examining vilification, one can derive conclusions about the cultural ideals for the hero and the traditional values he upholds. This thesis illuminates and interrogates a powerful binary on which one cultural text—the show *24*—relies, which may reinforce oversimplified and distorted public conceptions about who and what is good or bad. While this paper focuses on villains in one show, it taps into broader culture processes of vilification, lionization, and the preservation of particular worldviews.

CHAPTER 2

METHODS

This paper takes a critical approach to the analysis of villainy in the show *24*. Employing the tools of contemporary cultural and rhetorical criticism, it will examine the ways in which characters are marked as villains in this popular text. The current study examines the villain—and symbolic meanings embodied by the villain—in *24*. It can therefore be characterized as a textual analysis, but this does not suggest that the show may be 'read' to have only one meaning. The concept of *24* as an artifact embedded with meaning to be extracted is substituted by the more nuanced idea of the show as a text that creates meanings in conversation with the public. Within this framework, institutions and the public share agency—including the creation of the villain symbol. This paper examines the text *24* from one analyst's point of view, while recognizing that there is no singular meaning to be derived from the fluid text.

A cohesive theoretical and methodological approach for such a study exists at the intersection of cultural and rhetorical criticism. Barry Brummett outlines this model in his book *Rhetorical Dimensions of Popular Culture* (1991). Drawing from cultural critic Raymond Williams, Brummett conceives of a rhetorical criticism that is equipped to address popular culture. The author defines three terms that enable him to make this paradigmatic coupling: "rhetoric," "popular," and "culture." First, Brummett argues that, in order for the model to work, rhetoric must be conceptualized as "the social function that influences and manages meaning" (1991, p. xii). Second, drawing from Williams, the author lands on a definition of culture: "Culture is the vast set of artifacts that nurture and influence the development and growth of a people," (1991, p. xix). Third, he defines

the popular as that which is accessible and intelligible by the broadest range of society. These conceptualizations allow Brummett to envision a rhetorical analysis of popular culture.

Brummett summarizes his theoretical and methodological approach to a rhetorical analysis of popular culture at the start of the book. Commenting on the theoretical component, he writes:

> If culture means those objects and events that nurture, shape, and sustain people, then popular culture must be those artifacts that are most actively involved in winning the favor of the public and thus in shaping the public in particular ways…The work of popular culture is therefore inherently rhetorical (1991, p. xxi).

The author follows by arguing that because of the inherently rhetorical nature of popular culture—and its role in shaping people into who they are—it is a domain in which rhetoric (as meaning management) must be engaged. He outlines the method for a rhetorical engagement of popular culture when he writes, "When we consider the rhetoric of popular culture…we are considering how artifacts work to influence us and to make us who we are, and how cultures symbolically nurture and engender their members" (1991, p. xxi). The present study asks how, in constructing villainous characters in particular ways, we "symbolically nurture and engender" some of our social members.

Before proceeding, my methodological intentions must be made explicit. I do not intend in the following pages to conduct a psychoanalysis of the show's writers in an attempt to tap into their deep-seated intentions. I do not try to derive audience's interpretations of the show by conducting an audience analysis, nor do I examine *24* as a

commercial text designed to appease particular advertisers and sell specific products. All of these are valid methodological approaches to the topic at hand, but they are not the methods employed in this study. Instead, I conduct a critical analysis of *24*, focusing mainly on the characters' dialogue and actions in order to demonstrate how the show constructs villains. This critical textual analysis aims to call attention to problematic elements of *24*, and to disrupt passive consumption and internalization of the show's messages. The goal of this approach is to gain a rich understanding of vilification in the show, and to challenge audiences to critically engage this and other media texts.

The present analysis is one critic's examination of vilification in the television show *24,* so it is worth explaining my understanding of a critic's role. The work of the critic is to call attention to problematic patterns and to disrupt or complicate these patterns. It calls on audiences to alter their approach to the text, to adopt a questioning position and mobilize for change. Tim Dant, in *Critical Social Theory: Culture, Society and Critique* (2003), explains that the work of criticism involves recognizing that each text is a social formation that serves particular interests. To engage as a critic is to take a political stance toward a text, to question the interests being served by it and propose alternatives to its passive adoption. Within these pages I present my critical interpretations of *24*, interpretations that are influenced by the works of many scholars who came before me, and also by my subjective positioning and experience. I call attention to patterns I find problematic in the show, discuss the interests they might serve, and encourage readings that challenge instead of naturalize these patterns.

The proposed approach is advantageous for the research questions at hand. Importantly, it enables me to examine the complex, multifaceted villains of *24* in

complex and dynamic ways. Because skin color and dress are not always the simple modes of vilification in the show, a more nuanced approach than a traditional visual-based semiotics is necessary. Even in their complexity, however, we can understand the various ways in which the characters are vilified with careful critical analysis. We can also probe how these villains threaten—and ultimately uphold—the traditional values that the show's hero(es) protect. While this analysis focuses on the traditional values threatened and upheld in the fictional world of *24*, it is widely accepted that no text exists independently of the world outside it. Just as real world values seep into fiction, values from the fictional realm seep into the real world. It is within this paradigm that the current thesis is composed.

The present study explores the rhetorical and visual signs that are employed to construct the villain in *24*. The paper presents scene analyses, focusing on characters' dialogue and actions, to explore vilification in the show. Where applicable, formal elements and other aspects of the scene such as setting, characters' attire, etc. are considered. The following questions are posed: Which types of villains populate the Days (seasons) of *24*? Which moral codes do villains violate in the show? How are these moral-abusing villains treated in the text? The aim of the study, in answering these questions, is to paint a comprehensive portrait of villainy in the popular, and hence influential, cultural artifact, *24*. In examining vilification in the show, the study also aims to understand how values in the show might reflect or rub up against dominant values in the real world.

The six days of *24* that were broadcast in their entirety from 2001-2008 comprise the sample for this analysis. The choice to limit the study to the first six seasons of the

show was made for practical reasons; data was collected for analysis and the first draft of this thesis was composed in the year 2008. I had not intended to include Days 7 and 8 in the study. However, to my surprise, one of the villains I examine (Charles Logan) reappears in the show's final season. Therefore I analyze elements of the final season (Day 8) that relate to this villain. It is worth noting that the first six seasons of the show aired on American television while George W. Bush was President, whereas the final two seasons were broadcast after Barack Obama took office. Another important distinction between the first six seasons of *24* and the final two seasons is a change in the show's executive production team. Joel Surnow, a self-proclaimed "right-wing nut job" (Mayer, 2007, p. 1) who supported Bush's policies (and presumably also the fear of the Other that underscored the administration's politics) served as an Executive Producer for Days 1 through 6, but left early into the production of Day 7 and was replaced at the show's helm by Howard Gordon, who identifies as a "moderate Democrat" (Mayer, 2007, p. 3). These considerations shed light upon the sample selection and explain the choice to focus on the first six seasons of the show, while including relevant aspects of the show's final season.

Characters are the focus of the analysis. Data were collected on characters that fans of the show named as villains in a post on the official Fox *24* online discussion board ("Villains Elimination Game," 2007). This fan-oriented data collection process was an attempt to ensure that I collected data not only on characters that I deemed villainous, but on characters that viewers of the show agree are villains. Data was also collected on the character Jack Bauer. As the hero of the show, Bauer plays a vital role in antagonist characters' vilification, since he is the one against whom the villains are constructed.

Three phases made up the process of data collection and analysis. First, I watched all one hundred forty-four episodes (referred to as "hours") of the six seasons (referred to as "days") of *24* broadcast between 2001 and 2008. This was my second viewing of all but one of the days. During the course of the viewing, I recorded notes on the relevant characters in relation to vilification. These notes focused on the actions, dialogue and other elements that helped position characters as villains. Electronic spreadsheets, one for each season, served to record and organize this qualitative data. The day, character, hour, time code, plot summary, and scene descriptions were the elements recorded.

After collecting the data, I selected three villains that were prominent characters in the six seasons I reviewed for which to conduct a close analysis. The three characters I closely examine are: Nina Myers (played by Sarah Clarke); Habib Marwan (played by Arnold Vosloo); and Charles Logan (played by Gregory Itzin). I chose to examine Marwan because he is a Middle Eastern, Islamic terrorist villain. This variety of villains appears in three out of the six days, making this demographic an important one to study. Marwan appears in more individual hours of the show than any other Islamic terrorist, and also strikes me as the most complex, least stereotypical of the Middle Eastern villains in the show (which I hoped would contribute to a more complex analysis). I chose Logan because he is the white, male presidential character that the show's defenders often point to when claiming the show's ideological neutrality. I also selected Logan because he appears in half of the days I considered, and because he is intimately intertwined with most of the show's other bureaucratic and corporate villains. I selected Myers because she also plays a villain in three out of the six days examined, and because of her status as the show's first major villain. Myers also unofficially holds the crown as "best villain"

among many *24* fans ("Villains Elimination Game," 2007), which also factored into my selection of her character for close analysis.

Finally, revisiting Klapp's work on villains, I probe how villains in *24*—a show that rose in popularity during the Bush administration's launch of the war on terror— might relate to the villain-types Klapp identifies as popular during the anti-communist Red Scare of the McCarthy era. The current analysis takes Klapp's valuable, and still (as it turns out) relevant, categorization of villains and uses it as a launching pad to critically analyze important aspects of vilification in *24*. However, it must be understood that because there is overlap that can be identified in Klapp's villain categories, and because today's screen villains are perhaps more complex than the ones he identified in mid-twentieth century, Klapp's villain-types are used in this paper as a way to frame the discussion, as opposed to argue that the villain fits squarely or singularly within any one category. I analyzed the three selected characters to: 1) understand how the villains in *24* might relate to the villain-types Klapp identifies at the dawn of the Cold War; 2) describe the moral codes the villains violate; and 3) illustrate how villains are punished or otherwise treated in the show. The results of this process are the focus of the chapters that follow. Chapters analyzing each of the three villains and a conclusion comprise the remainder of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3

HABIB MARWAN: THE MONSTER

Foreign villains are major players in the world of *24* in the first six seasons. They hail from Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. Writing about the show *24*, Downing (2007) notes that, "the series draws upon current national stereotypes aplenty, especially those enshrined in ongoing news media stories—Mexican drug barons, Serb terrorists, Chechen and Russian terrorists, Chinese secret agents, as well as Arab and Iranian terrorists" (p. 74). This last group is one of the most prevalent—and perhaps most culturally relevant—considering the show was broadcast after September 11. Terrorist villains hailing from the Middle East play major roles in three out of the six Days of *24* examined in this paper. It is for this reason, and due to the standout nature of their evil and punishment in the show, that one Middle Eastern character is the focus of this chapter.

Middle Eastern villains in *24* are militant Muslims that terrorize the United States and its people. These Islamic extremist characters are what Klapp would consider "highly visible villains," enemies that are flagrant or overt (1956, p. 337). In other words, they are easily identifiable in the text. The easily identifiable nature of these villains in *24* has been picked up on by critics and social advocacy groups. It even prompted the show's producers to air anti-stereotyping messages during one of its most Middle Eastern terrorist-strewn seasons (Watson, 2005). Terrorists hailing from the Muslim world—their nationalities often skillfully obscured in the show—comprise an important group of villains in *24*.

This chapter explores the Middle Eastern villain in *24*. A close analysis of one Middle Eastern character is presented in order to understand how he is vilified in the text. To paint a full picture of the character's villainy, this chapter draws from the literature reviewed in the previous chapter and asks: Which type of villain is the Middle Easterner in *24*? Which moral codes in the world of *24* does the villain breach? How is the villain punished in the show? Each of these questions comprises a subsection of the chapter, and each is answered by presenting three scenes from the show. Plot descriptions contextualize each scene, and specific actions and pieces of dialogue are presented for analysis. A critical analysis follows each scene, and a summarizing paragraph ends each section. The conclusion ending the chapter presents the major findings from the three subsections, and describes how the analysis fits within or rubs against existing research about vilification.

Villain Type

Habib Marwan, the Middle Eastern villain examined closely in this paper, is characterized as a monster. According to Klapp, the monster is "a bizarre villain whose acts and motivation are beyond the ordinary range of human comprehension and whose stature approaches the demonic" (1956, p. 338). Some of the names he gives to this type of villain are pervert, psychopath and sadist (Klapp, 1956). Marwan is vilified as a monster because his acts—attempts at the nuclear destruction of the United States—and his motivations—Islamic extremism—are made incomprehensible (as in motivated by actions his victims and the show's heroes cannot understand) in the show. Marwan is demonized in *24* because his religious impetus is synonymous with the murder of

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innocent Americans. He breaches the moral boundaries of "insider" versus "outsider" in the show by working within the borders of the U.S. and using its democratic resources for his evil. This show's hero relishes punishing the villain with violence and is fulfilled by his gruesome demise. As a result, the hero takes pleasure in the destruction of the Middle Eastern villain.

As a monster, Marwan is a villain whose behaviors and motivations are outside the realm of reason and understanding. This monster is a tall, olive-skinned man with black eyes and very short, dark hair with a dramatic widow's peak and a British accent. He is central to *24* Day 4. Coordinating a nuclear attack against the United States is his intended finale to the terrorist events he orchestrates. Marwan is the leader of an Islamic extremist group plotting from inside the U.S. to destroy the country, and his motivation is religious and political in nature. This villain oversees various violent monstrous acts in the name of his Muslim people. Despite the lengthy explanations Marwan and his terrorist assistants give for these acts, however, their motivations are made mysterious and, as Klapp describes, "beyond the range of ordinary human comprehension" (1956, p. 338) in the show. Evidence of this can be found when Marwan oversees the capture and attempted beheading of the U.S. Secretary of Defense; when he films a message to Americans explaining the nuclear attack; and when describes his motivations for his terrorism to the show's hero. These three examples of his monstrosity are illustrated in the following pages.

The first example of Marwan coordinating incomprehensible monstrous acts is when he orchestrates the kidnapping and attempted public execution of the U.S. Secretary of Defense at the beginning of Day 4 of *24*. This day begins with CTU learning of an

impending terrorist attack in the U.S., the details of which are unclear. Bauer is working as security to the Secretary of Defense James Heller (William Devane) at the start of the day, but he quickly transitions back to CTU when the Secretary and his daughter, Audrey Raines (Kim Raver), who is also Bauer's lover, are captured and set to be executed by Islamic extremists. During the course of the day it becomes clear that the kidnapping and planned execution are part of a larger terrorist attack on the country, set to conclude with the detonation of a nuclear bomb, organized by the terrorists' leader, Marwan. The planned public execution of Secretary Heller is Marwan's first monstrous act. Marwan's intended televised murder of the U.S. government official is presented as incomprehensible in the context of the show.

Scenes that best illustrate the villain's first monstrous act take place during the 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. hours during Day 4. Heller and Raines are kidnapped by men who have been identified by CTU as Islamic extremists hailing from Turkey. Their intent is to try Heller publicly for what they call his "crimes against humanity." Commenting on this during the 11:00 a.m. hour, Heller, in prison gear and chained back-to-back with his daughter, says, "This trial is going to be a spectacle, broadcast all over the world, designed to humiliate and degrade this country." The extremists, dressed in black with dark fabric covering all but their eyes, and adorned with rifles, march the gagged Secretary of Defense in an orange prison suit to a seat in front of a camera. This scene is spliced with ones of CTU staff and the U.S. President watching the broadcast of Heller's trial.

While Heller sits peering into the camera, Marwan's men proceed with the trial. One man with a thick accent reads from a sheet of a paper in the final minutes of the 11:00 a.m. hour:

> We are about to embark on a process of justice that will forever change the world. Our people will finally be liberated from the tangle of corruption that has been choking them for centuries. No longer will justice be the propagandist tool of the power elite. It will once again become the instrument of the people, delivered through true believers whose courage to use the sword has made this day not only possible, but also inevitable.

The 12:00 p.m. hour begins with the continuation of the trial. The man in black proceeds:

> James Heller, you have been brought before this court of law to stand trial as a war criminal. We will prove to the people of the world that these crimes against humanity are the direct result of the policies initiated by you…Under your orders, the death squads of America continue their imperialist crusade against the true believers and pure followers.

And finally, just before the man in black hands a pistol to another like him who aims it at the Secretary of Defense's head, he says, "James Heller, before the eyes of God, I sentence you to death, to be carried out immediately." The sentence fails to be carried out, however, as Bauer intervenes, gunning down the executioners.

Though these scenes to dot feature Marwan, they function to paint the villain as a monster to make clear that the evil actions he orchestrates are directly related to the Muslim religion, and that this brand of evil lurks not only in Marwan but also in his

Muslim henchmen. In the executioner's dialogue, he claims to do justice on behalf of his people "before the eyes of God." Since CTU has identified Marwan's terrorist group as Islamic extremists earlier in the day, these words suggest that Marwan and his henchmen are representatives of the Muslim people, the "true believers and pure followers," on behalf of whom they work with their "courage to use the sword." These scenes paint a portrait of Marwan as a monstrous Muslim leader of an evil people hell-bent on destroying America.

Theses excerpts of dialogue have another outcome: the creation of nonsensical explanations for the extremists' actions. The executioner's claim to be conducting a trial while a U.S. leader sits gagged in a basement and has a gun ultimately pointed to the back of his head creates immediate cognitive dissonance: this is not what a U.S. court of law looks like. The executioner also professes to be reclaiming a justice system that has been used by the power elite as a propagandist tool, all the while constructing what the Secretary calls a broadcast spectacle to humiliate and demean the United States—in other words, propaganda. Several minutes of dialogue are used in these scenes to "explain" the Islamic extremists' execution of the U.S. Secretary of Defense. However, there is no comprehensible explanation that can be derived from the discourse. Generalized and unsubstantiated statements about Heller's "crimes against humanity" and the U.S. "imperialist crusade" function not to enrich, but to muddy, understandings of the terrorists' actions. In short, these scenes paint Marwan, and the Muslim people on whose behalf he terrorizes, as monsters whose reasoning is impossible to grasp.

Another scene later in Day 4 featuring Marwan further marks the villain as a monster. At this point in the day, it is suspected that the capture and planned execution

of Secretary Heller was a diversion from Marwan's main objective: to detonate a nuclear bomb in the United States. A U.S. nuclear warhead has been reported missing, and CTU is trying to locate both it and Marwan. At 1:00 a.m., Marwan is shown in a room inside a building in which video cameras are being set up. A black flag with Arabic script hangs as a backdrop. Marwan tells the videographer that he wants the tape delivered to television stations by dawn. When the videographer asks if Marwan wants to cover his face, he answers no—that he wants the American people to "know who did this."

Marwan tells the camera crew he is ready. They shine the lights on him, and he then delivers the following message into the camera:

> People of America, you wake up today to a different world. One of your own
> nuclear weapons has been used against you. It will be days and weeks before you
> can measure the damage we have caused. But as you count your dead, remember
> why this has happened to you. You have no understanding for the people you
> strike down or the nations you conquer. You choose to meddle in their affairs
> without respect. You follow your government, unquestioning, toward your own
> slaughter. Today you pay the price for that ignorance.

As Bauer and his men infiltrate the building where Marwan is recording, he continues his message:

> Unless you renounce your policies of imperialism and interventionist activities
> this attack will be followed by another and another after that.

When the Secret Service inadvertently complicates Bauer's operation, Marwan escapes but leaves behind the tape—confirming to CTU that the nuclear attack is imminent.

Here Marwan is portrayed as a monster with the darkest of intentions. He starts his address to the American people, which he plans to deliver through mass media, by telling them they wake up to a different world—an America afflicted by a nuclear explosion. He boasts about the number of Americans who will be killed as a result of his attack. Marwan asks Americans to remember why this has happened to them, that it is their fault for "following [their] government toward [their] own slaughter." Instead of religious appeals here, Marwan's appeals are political in nature. He blames the American people for the imperialist actions of their government but fails to specify a single one of those actions. He promises to continue to attack Americans unless they renounce their "policies of imperialism and interventionist activities." However, these broad statements about imperialism and interventionist activities again serve only to muddle his message. He tells Americans that they pay the price for their ignorance with their lives, yet he says nothing to educate them and provides no clear basis for his actions. This scene in which Marwan tapes an address to the American people to be broadcast after his nuclear attack serves to position the Islamic extremist's motivations as "empty rhetoric" – reiterations of catch phrases that have no meaningful bearing on the real lives of Americans. The only thing made clear is the division between Marwan's people and ours. He is vilified as a monster with many articulated reasons for his evil actions—none of which are tangible.

One last scene solidifies Marwan's monster status. At 4:00 a.m., Bauer and CTU have found and captured Marwan but have not located the nuclear weapon set to strike. While interrogating Marwan about the location of the nuke, Bauer and Marwan have a telling exchange.

Jack: You and I both know that all I want to do right now is kill you, but I have

my orders…I've been instructed to ask you what you want.

Marwan: What I want is already happening.

Jack: The death and destruction of innocent life is a means to an end. Why don't

we just skip to the end.

Marwan: To the end?

Jack: Everything that you did today, you did for a reason, for your people. What

do you want to change?

Marwan: I have no interest in having a political discussion with you.

Bauer explains that the President will fulfill Marwan's demands because he has no

choice, that Marwan only needs to tell him what he wants. Marwan reiterates that he is

already getting what he wants with the coming nuclear explosion. The conversation

ends:

Marwan: Besides, your President sees me in only one dimension: evil.

Bauer: As you see us.

Marwan: Yes, and vulnerable.

The scene ends with Bauer sitting across from Marwan looking into the villain's black

eyes.

This scene emphasizes Marwan's role as an uncompromising evil monster in the

show. Literally placed up against the show's hero, seated across from him, Marwan is

given the opportunity to get exactly what he wants. Bauer explains that the President is

waiting to fulfill Marwan's every demand. But it is clear that Marwan has no demands in

the conventional sense of the word. There is no negotiation to be made because Marwan

is getting what he wants: the death of innocent Americans. This is an incomprehensible

idea in *24*, a pathology relegated to the domain of psychopaths and sadists. The

distinction between Americans and Marwan's people is never made clearer than in

Bauer's and Marwan's final exchange. Bauer, like Marwan, desires the death of his

enemy; he makes this clear when he tells him he wants to kill him. But Bauer in this

scene observes a comprehensible higher law—wanting to kill Marwan, but not the people

he claims to represent—which underscores his heroism. Each character sees the other as

evil, but the difference is that Marwan sees Americans as vulnerable to his evil actions.

The monster preys on vulnerable Americans, his only desire to see them dead.

As has been illustrated in the previous examples, Marwan is vilified as a monster

that orchestrates the murder of innocent Americans for the sake of his "people" (who he

never actually names). The reasons that he and his henchmen provide for their evildoing

offer little in the way of explanation for their actions, and instead function to create a

clear division between "us" (Americans) and "them" (Muslim / Middle Eastern people).

Marwan's and his men's appeals to imperialism, interventionist activities, conquest, and

crimes against humanity function as terrorist buzzwords with no discernable or actionable

evidence beneath them. Their words act as a rhetorical cloth that hides their true

motivation: to kill. This is poignantly revealed in the final scene when Bauer tells

Marwan that the President will give him whatever he wants for his people, and Marwan

answers that he is already getting what he wants: the nuclear destruction of the U.S. A

sadistic psychopath in *24*, Marwan's one discernable desire is to murder innocent

Americans.

Muslim people have a long history of being vilified as monsters with incomprehensible motives in U.S. media. As explained in the Literature Review, Jack Shaheen, in *Reel Bad Arabs* (2001), reviews over nine hundred movies featuring Muslim characters and discovers that the monstrous villain is one of the most popular roles that people hailing from the Middle East play on screen. His comprehensive analysis reveals that Middle Easterners almost always appear as bad characters in films and are often shown to be anti-Christians and foreign invaders terrorizing innocent U.S citizens. While Marwan hails from Turkey—a western-leaning, secular, and non-Arab Muslim state—his anti-Americanism and Islamic extremism are made clear. This depiction matches Shaheen's findings: "Today's imagemakers regularly link the Islamic faith with…holy war and acts of terror, depicting…Muslims as hostile alien intruders…intent on using nuclear weapons" (2001, p. 9). The vilification of Marwan's character matches this stereotypical way in which Muslim people have historically been portrayed on screen.

The incomprehensibly evil motives of the Muslim villain are consistent with other depictions of monsters. According to Edward J. Ingebretsen (2001), monsters have always populated the public imagination precisely because of their unintelligibility. The chaos that the monster embodies is alluring because of his utter nonconformity to the rules that govern human behavior. Ingebretsen explains this concept when, drawing from Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, he writes:

> The monster's body is a 'cultural body'; the monster is a harbinger of 'category crisis,' escaping categories of knowledge as well as form; monstrous fear displaces, relocates, and sometimes exploits desires that are equally monstrous.

In sum, the monster watches and wards at the gates of the human, policing 'the

border of the Possible'" (2001, p. 5).

Monsters, then, in their incomprehensibility, help define which bodies and actions are

human, and which are not.

Two points must be made explicit in understanding the *24* character Marwan as a

monster. The first is that the show, in marking Marwan as a villain, relies on the

character's Middle Easterness and Islamic fundamentalist rhetoric to do so. Marwan is a

monster precisely because he is Muslim and Middle Eastern, and while he is not a

monster in the sense of a horror movie (with fangs, scales, etc.), he physically represents

the non-white American and does monstrous things Americans cannot understand. His

faith and operation on behalf of his people help to frame Muslims and Middle Easterners,

by extension, as monsters in the show. The second point to be made clear is that by

placing anti-imperialist words in the mouth of the monster, the show makes these words

and the beliefs behind them monstrous. As a result, criticism of U.S. imperialism—

especially in such a public venue as television—is a terrorist activity in *24*.

Moral Codes

There is no shortage of moral codes that Marwan breaks in the show. Marwan's

character and actions evoke a plethora of boundaries from killer/innocent victim,

Muslim/Christian, Middle Eastern/Westerner and more. Recall from the Literature

Review that an investigation into moral codes requires an examination of how symbolic

boundaries are expressed and structured into a dominant morality that governs social

behavior (Wuthnow, 1987). While some grey areas appear, moral codes of *24* generally

operate on binaries. This dualism is worth investigating because first, it speaks to the notion of hero-villain construction analyzed in this paper. Second, it resonates with Bush's with-us-or-against-us ideology, which unfolds in the show. And third, it points to how a critical intercession, such as this one, could complicate the binaries the show puts forth.

One moral code stands out above the rest in considering Marwan's villainy. Marwan complicates the symbolic boundaries that separate the "bad" outsider from the "good" insider. By working within U.S. borders and using U.S. democratic resources to do evil on behalf of his people, Marwan breaches boundaries that are constructed in the show to signify who is "us" (the American hero-types) and who is "them" (the Middle Eastern villain-types). The villain's lighter complexion and British accent aid his ability to dissolve this boundary, since he does not quite look or sound like the Arab terrorist archetype. In blurring the distinction between outsider and insider, Marwan's character calls for stricter definitions and policing of who is "us" and who is "them." In other words, by breaking down symbolic boundaries meant to keep outsiders out, Marwan reinforces the need for even stronger divisions, and bolsters a moral code that good insiders must be protected against evil outsiders at all costs in *24*. He accomplishes this in three ways: 1) by coordinating terrorism from inside a U.S. office; 2) by planting a Muslim extremist terrorist cell masquerading as an immigrant family in the U.S.; and 3) by using a U.S. human rights group to aid his terrorist activities.

Marwan's breach of the boundary of insider versus outsider is evident at the beginning of Day 4. Bauer and CTU have tracked the day's terrorist events to Marwan, whom they discover in the process is a U.S. trained chemical engineer. After following

some leads, the CTU team locates Marwan in an L.A. office building. When Bauer and

CTU agent Curtis Manning (Roger R. Cross) enter the building with the goal of capturing

Marwan, it becomes evident that Marwan is working as a terrorist and hiding in plain

view. The scene shows how the villain operates within state boundaries from an average

U.S. place of business to conduct evil. Working on his terrorist plot side-by-side with

average Americans, Marwan blurs the boundary of insider versus outsider.

   The scene that best illustrates this boundary breaching is during Day 4 at 6:00

p.m. On the DVD disc menu, the scene is called "Needle in a Haystack." Bauer and

Manning enter the office building where Marwan is known to be located. When the two

are in the stairwell in route to the office of IDS Systems, the company from which

Marwan is operating, Manning tells Bauer that Marwan's terrorist cell infiltrated the

business. Bauer replies that Marwan wants to use their servers to download the virus into

the nuclear power plants, and Manning adds "by piggy-backing on IDS hardware." They

enter the office quietly. It is a busy scene of cubicles and men and women in business

attire bustling about, talking, passing papers, and working on computers. Bauer and

Manning scan the office frantically, then walk around the perimeter of the cubicles,

concealing their guns from the office people, searching for Marwan. Before Bauer and

Manning spot him, Marwan gets a call from a fellow terrorist alerting him that CTU

agents are there. A map of the United States with areas highlighted is shown on his

computer screen as he grabs a gun from beneath a sheet of paper on his desk. Marwan,

dressed in black from head to toe, slowly stands up. Bauer spots him and calls for

Manning. As they begin to move on him, Marwan raises his gun in the air and shoots.

The office workers scream and run, causing obstacles between the agents and their man, and Marwan escapes.

This scene demonstrates that Marwan is a monster among us, violating the moral boundary the show constructs between insiders and outsiders, us and them. The title of the scene, "Needle in a Haystack," sets the stage for this interpretation, signaling that among the good American office workers, there is a bad one who does not belong, someone who is hard to spot but is nevertheless unlike the others. Bauer and Manning's conversation before entering the office makes clear that Marwan and his cell are "piggy-backing," in parasite fashion, on the technologies of this U.S. business in order to conduct their nuclear attack. Considering the name of the company, IDS Systems, Marwan is metaphorically shown to be *inside* the system. When Bauer and Manning enter the office, they are unable to detect Marwan right away through the hustle and bustle of a typical place of business. Marwan hides in plain view, coordinating a nuclear attack from his cubicle alongside average white-collar Americans. When Marwan gets tipped off that CTU is in the office, he grabs his gun and slowly rises, his tall, dark stature suddenly sticking out like an exposed needle in a haystack. His gunshot, which transforms the corporate workplace into a site of violence rather than production, confirms his not belonging and sends the authentic American workers into a chaos that allows for his escape. This scene demonstrates how Marwan permeates the boundary of insider versus outsider by infiltrating the U.S. business system.

Another way that Marwan is shown to complicate the boundary of insider versus outsider is by employing terrorists designed to blend in with U.S. society. In Day 4, Marwan does not work alone to implement the capture and planned execution of

Secretary of State Heller and the nuclear attack against the U.S. He has a network of terrorists inside state borders who help him, including the Araz Family. At the very beginning of the day, the Araz family seems like a well-assimilated Middle Eastern immigrant family that has achieved the American dream. It soon becomes clear, however, that the father, Navi Araz (Nestor Serrano), the mother, Dina (Shohreh Aghdashloo), and the teenage son, Behrooz (Jonathan Ahdout), work for Marwan and are intimately involved in the day's terrorist events. The terrorist activities of the Araz family are another way in which Marwan dissolves boundaries that separate insider and outsider, thus making it possible for anyone—especially anyone of Middle Eastern background—to be a terrorist in the show.

A scene that illustrates the dissolution of "us" versus "them" presented by the terrorist Araz family can be found during the very first hour of Day 4, 7:00 a.m. Dina, the curvy, black-haired mother with giant eyes and a raspy, accented voice; Navi, the slim, olive-skinned father with a stern face; and their son Behrooz, a skinny, tan skinned son wearing jeans and mp3 player earbuds, prepare breakfast. Their kitchen is sunny and open, with light stone countertops topped with plates of breakfast foods. When Behrooz goes upstairs to make a phone call, Navi tells his wife that he is afraid Behrooz is still seeing "that American girl" behind their backs. Behrooz returns to the kitchen, and Navi asks his son whom he was talking to. When Behrooz names a male friend, Navi bangs on the countertop, gets close to Behrooz's face and yells, "Don't lie to me!" He tells his son that he knows he has been seeing "that American girl." Behrooz tells his father that that is his business, to which Navi responds there is no such thing as "his business" while Behrooz lives under his father's roof.

The family then sits down to eat breakfast. The television in the room is tuned to Fox News, which recounts an L.A. train crash that morning. When the newscaster says authorities are not sure if it was an accident or targeted attack, Dina glances down. Navi mutes the television with the remote control and says, "So far, everything is on schedule." The family then has a conversation about a suitcase that will arrive at their home, which Behrooz is to take to a warehouse where his father indicates their people are working. The following verbal exchange then takes place:

> Dina: Behrooz, if your father seems severe, it's because our job here is a difficult one. If we are to succeed, it's important that we are of a single mind.
>
> Behrooz: (Looking down) I understand.
>
> Navi: (Touching Behrooz's hand) What we will accomplish today will change the world. We're fortunate that our family has been chosen to do this (smiles). We cannot fail.
>
> Behrooz: Yes father.

Navi and Dina exchange a glance and a smile. Dina takes a bite of eggs and the scene ends with the ticking clock.

This scene invokes and complicates boundaries the show constructs to separate U.S. outsiders from insiders. A Middle Eastern-American family is shown in a typical-looking upper middle class kitchen preparing an average breakfast. Behrooz wears headphones around his neck—a symbol of today's American youth (and probably not the way most American audiences would imagine Middle Eastern youth, given stereotypes of Oriental primitivism). These elements of the scene show the blurring of the line between Middle Eastern and American. When Navi demands that Behrooz stop dating the

"American girl," the boundary between their family and Americans is invoked. This distinction—and the fact that they are manipulating this boundary for their malicious purposes—is reinforced when Dina tells Behrooz that it is important that the family "be of a single mind" if they are to succeed in what becomes clear is the day's terrorist attack. The single mind she speaks of invokes the idea of a Middle Eastern mind versus an American mind—that while they are masquerading as Americans, it is important that they not become Americanized. Navi's comment that their family is lucky to have been "chosen" has a religious ring to it, signaling a faith-based motivation for the day's events, which he says will change the world. The scene illustrates how the family can simultaneously appear to be an average American immigrant family and actually be anti-American monsters planning a terrorist attack over breakfast—without it even affecting their appetites.

The scene just discussed illustrates how Marwan abuses democratic policies of the U.S., which allow Middle Eastern families to immigrate and assimilate into American culture, for evil. Additionally, Marwan manipulates the U.S. system designed to defend human rights. When Marwan's crew shoots down the U.S. President's plane and steals pages from the nuclear "football," which has information about the locations of and codes to detonate nuclear weapons, CTU tracks down an American man who is believed to be involved in the attacks. Bauer locates this man, Joe Prado (John Thaddeus), and brings him to CTU for interrogation. When Marwan gets word that Prado is in CTU custody, he calls a lawyer from the human rights organization Amnesty Global and tells him that CTU is holding Prado without evidence and planning to torture him. Marwan manipulates the situation, knowing that Amnesty Global wants to thwart—in presumably

striving towards a democratic and multicultural world—boundaries that separate insiders (who deserve lawful treatment) and outsiders (who require extralegal treatment like torture). Marwan's violation of Amnesty Global's hopeful pipedream shows precisely why such boundaries need to exist and be reinforced militarily in the show.

A scene that best illustrates this abuse of boundaries takes place at 12:00 a.m. when Prado is in custody at CTU. Prado sits in the interrogation room, while CTU supervisor Michelle Dessler (Reiko Aylesworth) and agent Manning look on from cameras in an adjacent room. Manning, who is leading the interrogation, explains to Dessler, "I just need to establish that even though we're in a government building, I'm willing to go as far as it takes." He then says he is going to start with Richards, as he nods to a man standing in the corner with a silver case. Manning and Richards enter the interrogation room. Prado tells Manning he will not talk, that he is innocent and has not been charged with anything. When Prado reiterates, "I'm not saying anything to you," Manning answers, "Highly unlikely." Richards opens the silver case and pulls out a needle. As Manning pushes Prado's head to the side making his neck easily accessible for Richards' needle, Prado yells that his crime was in self-defense. Suddenly, Buchanan, Director of CTU, stops the interrogation.

Buchanan summons Dessler and Manning to the main floor of CTU and says, "We have a problem," introducing David Weiss (Evan Handler), an attorney from Amnesty Global. The following dialogue occurs:

> Weiss: I have a signed court order here protecting the rights of one Joseph Prado, whom you have in custody. This U.S. marshal is here to ensure that I am taken to the prisoner immediately.

Manning: This is ridiculous.

Weiss: That's your opinion. But Mr. Prado's rights will not be violated. Take me to him now.

Buchanan: We have no choice, Curtis. Do what he says.

Manning: There is a nuclear warhead missing. This is our only lead, Bill.

Buchanan tells Manning that they must do what the attorney says. When President Logan does not override the authority of Amnesty Global and fails to authorize the torture, Weiss frees Prado from CTU.

This scene evidences the breakdown of boundaries separating insider from outsider, which Marwan uses to his advantage. Being an outsider working toward the nuclear destruction of America for the sake of his people, Marwan uses the U.S. system of human rights, as enforced by Amnesty Global, as an aid in his evil activities. As agent Manning and Richards are about to torture Prado—an interrogation technique that is proven to be effective in prior episodes and seasons—they are interrupted by a human rights attorney who says that he is there to ensure that Prado's rights are not violated, to which the head of CTU comments that they have no choice but to comply. Manning brings up the missing nuclear warhead, expressing the severity of the ticking time bomb situation, and says that Prado is their only lead, stressing that getting information from him is crucial to saving the U.S. When the Amnesty Global lawyer is successful at impeding CTU's torture of Prado and gets the terrorist collaborator freed from their custody, Marwan succeeds in dissolving boundaries of insider versus outsider by using U.S. human rights policies and institutions to execute his terrorist plot. The consequences of this are twofold. First, it casts organizations, and even policies, that

ensure human rights as vulnerable to manipulation by terrorists. Second, it calls for

stricter definitions—and militaristic enforcement of those definitions—of who is an

insider (and morally good) and outsider (and morally bad).

Marwan takes advantage of democratic U.S. policies and resources to do evil. In

addition to his use of the media to propagate his terrorist message as detailed in the first

section, Marwan infiltrates a U.S. business, implants a terrorist family to live among

Americans, and employs a U.S. human rights group to free a terrorist conspirator. In so

doing, Marwan exploits the U.S. policies and industries that are fundamental to its liberal

democratic system. He abuses human rights and immigration policies to protect a

conspirator and organize his terrorist cell, respectively. He abuses the industries of media

and business to publicize his terrorist message and manipulate technological

infrastructure for his terrorist acts. Marwan, a foreign monster, gets inside U.S. systems

to plant his anti-American brand of evil, blurring moral boundaries of bad outsider and

good insider.

The monster that strikes a blow at the U.S. by way of infiltration elicits a fear

response to protect the nation. Ingebretsen, in *At Stake: Monsters and the Rhetoric of

Fear in Public Culture* (2001), describes the ways in which monsters provoke public fear

of certain socially undesirable actions or attributes. This public fear often has political

implications for particular bodies—fear-based policies that come to be considered normal

or unremarkable. The author writes:

> On screen as well as on the streets, monsters, and talk of monsters, have served
>
> as ideological police since ancient times. They secure the normal; the exclusions
>
> they exercise and the violence encoded in language about them are supported by

the triumvirate of religion, state, civility…Making monsters is one way

aggression becomes an unremarked trauma of everyday life (2001, p. 20).

The monster that works from within the state to terrorize it strikes fear into a public that,

as a result, condones policing and punishment of these monsters for the sake of security.

Marwan and his Islamic fundamentalist desire to destroy the United States

certainly set off a fear response in the world of *24*. The state agency responsible for

countering terrorism, CTU, hands the case almost entirely over to the best agent it has

ever had. Bauer is expected to apprehend Marwan before he detonates the nuclear

warhead, no matter what the cost. So while Marwan capitalizes on democratic policies

and resources for his terrorism in the show, Bauer is expected to bend, and indeed does

bend—by way of torture and other rogue actions—laws that are meant to protect

democracy. On both sides of the coin, anti-democratic policies and actions are framed as

pro-American in the show. By showing that a terrorist takes advantage of the democratic

system to do evil, and that a hero must break laws in order to protect the nation state and

its people, democracy, as a governing system, is made dangerous in the show.

<u>Punishment</u>

Marwan's punishment in *24* is fitting for his sadistic anti-American evil. Since

Marwan is motivated by a desire to murder vast numbers of Americans—a motivation

beyond the realm of ordinary human understanding—Marwan is punished in ways that

express a reciprocal desire to destroy him. The perverse pleasure he seems to derive from

planning a nuclear attack on Americans is reversed back onto him in the show. When the

show's hero punishes Marwan, the punishment has a quality of pleasurable retribution.

The hero looks forward to and enjoys inflicting pain on the villain. In the end the villain martyrs himself, gaining momentarily pleasure in thinking he achieved his goal of nuclear annihilation, before the show's hero stops the bomb and ultimately robs the terrorist of his eternal fulfillment. Marwan's treatment in the show illustrates how his punishment is pleasurable for both them and us, Others and Americans, which is positioned as a double win in this show. In the case of Marwan's ultimate demise, the Muslim terrorist gains only a momentary sense of satisfaction under false pretenses, while the American hero enjoys much greater satisfaction by ensuring that the cause for which he dies fails. These points are illustrated by three examples explored in the following pages.

The final minutes of the 3:00 a.m. hour during Day 4 exemplify the pleasurable punishment of the monster. CTU knows that Marwan is planning a nuclear attack before dawn, and a nuclear warhead is missing. Bauer, Manning, and some other agents track down Marwan in an abandoned, graffiti strewn building where he has set up his laptop to launch the nuclear missile. Searching for him inside the dark building, Bauer directs Manning and the other agents to force Marwan in his direction. Marwan, moving away from the other agents, backs into a doorway where Bauer stands pointing his gun. Marwan remains in shadow as light is cast on Bauer's face. Bauer mutters, "I've been waiting for this" in a breathy voice. Marwan backs up into the light, raising his hands above his head, and says, "You're too late." Bauer pauses, purses his lips, then shoots a single shot into Marwan. Marwan lets out a groan as he falls to the floor.

This scene illustrates Bauer's anticipation and partial fulfillment of his violent assault on Marwan. Bauer instructs the other agents to drive Marwan his way so that he

can come face to face with the villain. At the moment of the confrontation, the shadowy figure is cloaked in darkness, while Bauer's heroic face is bathed in light—a visual representation of good versus evil. When Bauer says, "I've been waiting for this," he expresses the enjoyment he expects to gain from assailing the villain. When Marwan answers, "You're too late," backing into the light and putting his hands up in surrender, it does not prevent Bauer from indulging in what he had been looking forward to: inflicting pain on Marwan. Bauer shoots Marwan to fulfill his fantasy of destroying him—payback for Marwan's intended destruction of America/ns.

As the scene continues, Bauer's treatment of Marwan supports the claim that Bauer's punishment of the monster is rife with the same perverse pleasure that characterizes Marwan's actions. As agent Manning closes in, Bauer approaches Marwan, who bleeds face up on the ground. Bauer kneels down over Marwan and a close up of the bullet wound fills the screen. Bauer grasps Marwan by the neck and presses his knee into the wound. Marwan groans. Bauer says, "That hurts, doesn't it?" Marwan is silent, but his lips quiver. Close ups frame the scene as Bauer presses his pistol against Marwan's temple. He slides the gun up and down Marwan's face, cocks the gun, and pushes the gun into Marwan's forehead. Manning says, "Jack. Jack, what are you doing? We still need him." Bauer continues to slide the pistol around on Marwan's face, then presses it into his throat. Marwan says, "Go ahead, kill me. That won't stop the missile." Bauer, this time his face in shadow, says and then yells, "What are you talking about?" He steps away from Marwan, gun still pointed at him, while Manning finds a live feed of the missile preparing to launch on Marwan's laptop. Bauer joins Manning at the computer, directing the other agents to secure the criminal.

This scene in which Bauer inflicts pain on and taunts Marwan with a gun illustrates the pleasure the hero derives from punishing the villain. Bauer kneels over Marwan, coming face-to-face with him before he puts pressure on the captive's bullet wound. Bauer does not cause pain in order to get information from the villain, as is the case with most torture scenes in the show. Instead, Bauer causes the pain for his own pleasure. Bauer's statement, "That hurts, doesn't it?" verbalizes the pain he causes Marwan, affirming the bodily harm he inflicts since Marwan won't say it himself. Bauer's sliding of the pistol around on Marwan's face and shoving it into different parts of his head could easily be argued to have metaphorical significance. Someone analyzing this scene from a psychoanalytic point of view might understand Bauer's gun as a phallus and instrument of male domination in the scene. Bauer's pleasurable abuse of Marwan demonstrates the perverse, sadistic pleasure the hero takes in punishing the monster. Only when it becomes clear that Marwan is needed for informational purposes does Bauer stop treating him like an object of cruel pleasure and begin treating him like a prisoner.

The final example of Marwan's punishment is the scene in which he plunges to his death in the final hour of Day 5. At 6:00 a.m., having launched the countdown to nuclear attack and slipped away from Bauer and CTU yet again, Marwan tries to escape. When Bauer and his team have been unable to locate the nuclear missile, they track Marwan to a rooftop where he attempts to escape by helicopter. After a gunfight between the CTU agents and Marwan, Bauer corners Marwan on a rooftop. While Bauer moves toward Marwan—his only hope of gaining the location of the nuke—Marwan inches toward the edge of the building. When Bauer gets near, Marwan jumps over. Bauer

grabs hold of Marwan's arm. A spotlight from a CTU helicopter shines light on Marwan

dangling from the edge of the tall building where Bauer strains to hold him. Bauer yells

to Marwan, "Tell me where the missile is. Tell me where it is!" Marwan flashes a giant

grin. As Bauer repeats for Marwan to tell him where the missile is, Marwan pulls a knife

from his pocket with his one free hand and slowly slashes Bauer's. Blood flows and

Bauer screams. Marwan looks at him, smiling. Jack mutters, "No." Bauer's injured

hand loses its grip and Marwan plunges down from the rooftop. The villain grins as he

falls to his death and Bauer screams, "No!" Marwan's lifeless body is shown on the

ground, and Bauer continues with his screams, "No!"

This scene shows Marwan's martyrdom. Since he is an important agent of

information in this scene, and not a conquered terrorist to objectify as he is shown in the

previously analyzed scene, Bauer attempts to stop Marwan's self-destruction. The grin

on Marwan's face as he commits suicide signifies his happiness with what he believes is

the success of his nuclear attack on the U.S. and his satisfaction with his impending

martyrdom. Achieving an apparently noble death for an Islamic extremist, Marwan

believes he has succeeded in his mission to kill Americans as he falls to his death.

Bauer's attempt to get information from him about the location of the missile and the

horror expressed by his screams of "No!" present a stark contrast to the Bauer/Marwan

confrontation previously analyzed. In the first scene, Bauer falsely thought he had caught

Marwan before he detonated the nuke. In the second scene, Bauer knows that the nuke is

about to go off and Marwan is their only chance at salvation.

In this final scene, Bauer is upset to lose the information about the warhead,

whereas Marwan is happy to die for his cause under the false assumption that he has

achieved his goal. Later, when CTU is able to strike down the nuclear missile before it detonates, Bauer robs Marwan of that satisfaction, ensuring that Marwan dies without purpose. Bauer, not Marwan, is rewarded for the terrorist's death since the hero achieves both of his goals: the safety of America and the terrorist's demise. Marwan achieves none of his goals—not the detonation of the bomb, not the destruction of America, not his presumed hope of dozens of virgins in the after life—not one.

Destroying the monster is meant to be a pleasurable experience, argues Ingebretsen (2001). The author even argues that the pleasurable destruction of the monster is an inherently sexual pleasure in *At Stake*. Ingebretsen claims that the stories told about monsters in popular culture, while usually masked, are about sex. He explains that monsters are both sexy and scary because "monsters are supposed to do just what they desire, and that frightens us" (2001, p. 4). It is because of his dual sexy/scary nature that "each monster embodies and embroiders an eroticized tale, as each body is slowly stripped, deliciously moralized in public" (2001, p. 3). Because he breaks most traditional moral codes, the monster's screen destruction is mean to be something audiences, and certainly other characters in the text, relish. Bauer takes slow pleasure in shooting and tormenting Marwan with his gun. Marwan's suicide is rendered meaningless for the Islamic extremist but eternally gratifying for the hero and audience when Bauer stops his mission from succeeding.

The eroticized destruction of the Muslim monster can be found in many contemporary cultural texts. Pop culture after 9/11 is especially ripe with Muslim terrorists/monsters being stripped and moralized in a sexualized manner. Jasbir K. Puar and Amit S. Rai, in "Monster, Terrorist, Fag: The War on Terrorism and the Production

of Docile Patriots" (2002), explain how cultural texts after 9/11 rely on processes of "quarantining a racialized and sexualized other, even as Western norms of the civilized subject provide the framework through which these very same others become subjects to be corrected" (p. 117). The authors argue that contemporary cultural constructions of Muslim "terrorists" mark them as non-White, non-heterosexual (and subsequently, non-masculine), non-Western, and ultimately non-human. After 9/11, Muslims are marked in the culture as monstrous, terrorist, homosexuals to be corrected—*eradicated*—by the West. That Bauer's and Marwan's mutually (albeit for diametrically opposed reasons) pleasurable destruction of the monster in *24* is an example of this.

Chapter Conclusion

Marwan is vilified as a monster in *24*. The Islamic extremist is motivated by the desire to destroy America/ns. His motivations for mass murder are made incomprehensible in the show, despite lengthy explanations by Marwan and his terrorist crew. This Middle Eastern villain manipulates moral codes that distinguish "good insider" from "bad outsider" when he uses resources inside U.S. borders as instruments of terror. His perverse punishment in the show matches the perverse nature of his crimes. If Klapp's argument that the villain functions to define and ritualize what the community does not accept is true, then Marwan functions to show that politically and religious-minded Middle Easterners use rhetoric to mask their essential evil. Marwan demonstrates that terrorist monsters that prey on America—especially from inside its borders—ought to be destroyed…and that we ought to take pleasure in doing it.

This depiction of the monstrous Middle Easterner is unfortunately not novel. As Shaheen so comprehensively concludes in *Reel Bad Arabs*, Muslims have been presented as Islamic extremist terrorists on screen time and time again, creating a dangerous stereotype of Muslims as evil. *24* changes the packaging of this stereotype slightly, presenting a Muslim villain with a British accent from the non-Arab state of Turkey who is trained as a chemical engineer in the United States. These variations in the traditional script for the Middle Eastern evildoer reflect the evolution of the screen villain to more complex characterizations. Unlike many of the simplistic characters Shaheen presents in his analysis, the Middle Eastern villain in *24* is smart, well spoken, and able to seamlessly infiltrate the United States to carry out his evil. He and his henchmen provide ample reasons for their actions, as illustrated by the monologues the terrorists give in the show. Their explanations do not, however, point to a more human portrait of the Middle Eastern villain. Instead, these complexities in characterization simply add more layers that need to be peeled away to reveal the simplistic, intrinsic evil at the core of Muslim monsters.

This chapter reinforces what other scholars who have approached the representation of Middle Easterners in *24* have claimed: the portrayal adheres to a familiar stereotype. John Downing, in "Terrorism, Torture, and Television: *24* in its Context," describes the ways in which terrorists in the show are devoid of reason and operate with purely evil souls. Christopher Gair, in "*24* and Post-National American Identities" highlights the show's stereotypical presentation of foreign villains, which this paper builds on by examining in detail how one Middle Eastern character is vilified. Another contribution this paper makes to the discussion is how, in his vilification as a

monster in *24*, the Middle Eastern villain's motives are skillfully made incomprehensible, and his fatal punishment should be relished.

More broadly, this chapter contributes to a body of literature on screen villains that considers the ways in which race, religion and nationality are used to mark bad guys as such. As discussed in the Introduction, Priscilla Kiehnle Warner (1990), in studying cartoon villains, finds that race and national stereotypes often are indicators of villainy. Gina Marchetti (2004) analyzes the vilification of Chinese characters and finds that their brand of evil reflects Cold War fears and stereotypes. Robin R. Means Coleman (2007) discusses the ways in which dark skin signifies true evil in films. This analysis of the Middle Eastern villain in *24* supports their arguments that ethnicity and nationality, as well as non-Christian religion, are employed as indicators of villainy—and, more specifically, monstrosity.

One way to understand the monster is through what he or she warns against. Howard Chua-Eon defines the word "monster" by analyzing its etymological routes. He writes in his 1991 *Time* article, "The Uses of Monsters," that the word "is related to demonstrate and remonstrate, and ultimately comes from the Latin monstrum, an omen portending the will of the gods, which is itself linked to the verb monere, to warn" (par. 2). This leads the author to the conclusion that monsters have an intrinsically pedagogical function: they teach society lessons about its shortcomings. Lust, greed, selfishness, anger and bigotry are some shortcomings that Chua-Eon cites. In this sense, Marwan's character might be interpreted as a warning against our own xenophobia.

Klapp was concerned about villains because of what he believed to be their roles as agents of social control. Writing around the time of McCarthy's witch-hunts, Klapp

recognizes a link between types of vilification and the preservation of particular

moralities that are considered in jeopardy. He points out that crises provide a ripe

breeding ground for vilification because the moral codes by which a society organizes

itself are called into question, and in order to calcify that moral order, heroes with the

"right" morality must defeat villains with the "wrong" morality in the communal

imagination. Klapp argues that this process upholds traditional values because it stamps

certain behaviors and characters as evil, and expels them from the domain of the good,

righteous, moral community. In the world of the show *24,* Marwan functions to uphold

the image of the Islamic extremist terrorist and bolster values for the policing and

punishing of outsiders who might take up their evil cause.

CHAPTER 4

NINA MYERS: THE FEMME FATALE

Female characters comprise a healthy share of the villains on the *24* landscape. The female villains in *24* are a diverse group, spanning many races, nationalities and sexualities, but they are unquestionably evil and especially difficult to defeat due to their conniving, backstabbing ways. As one author writes, "Jack…deal(s) handily with the villainous men who threaten [his life], but women are an unending source of trouble and pain" (Hark, 2004, p. 128). Another author adds, "if [the show's female characters] are not working under male supervision and/or with the men, then they are invariably up to no good" (McCabe, p. 151). The female villains of *24* present a special challenge for the show's male heroes—especially Jack Bauer. Bauer underestimates their skillfulness, is fooled by their feigned innocence, and is manipulated by their seductiveness. Their special ability to bamboozle the show's main hero may make *24*'s female villains the most dangerous in the show.

Keeping with the structure of the previous chapter, this chapter presents a close analysis of one female villain to gain insight into how she is characterized in the text. This chapter draws on content from the literature review and additional helpful texts and asks: Which villain-type does the female villain in *24* represent? Which moral codes in the world of *24* does she break? How is this villain punished in the show? Each of these questions makes up a subsection of the chapter. Three scenes from the show are presented and analyzed to answer each question. Scene descriptions provide context, and dialogue and actions from the show are highlighted for the purpose of analysis. The

chapter's conclusion presents the findings from the three subsections and connects the analysis to existing literature about vilification of female characters on screen.

Villain Type

Appearing in three seasons of the show and popularly regarded as one of the show's most infamous villains, Nina Myers is one of the show's deadliest antagonists. The villain type that this character most closely fits is the flouter, a highly visible villain. Klapp describes the flouter as a person who "seems to thumb [her] nose at the social order by scandalous misbehavior" (1956, p. 338). According to Klapp, some of the names given to this type of villain are hussy, harlot, and Jezebel. Myers is vilified as a flouter because she "misbehaves" against the United States government—and against her former lover, Jack Bauer—by being disloyal to them. She uses sex as a tool to do evil, breaching the show's dominant moral code of a tamed female sexuality. As a result she is punished in ways that reassert male dominance over her body.

The villain Myers is a petite white woman with sharp, classically attractive facial features and short, cinnamon-colored hair. She operates as a villain in Days 1, 2 and 3 of *24*. In Day 1 she acts as Bauer's second-in-command and former lover until the end of the day, at which point she is revealed to be a traitor funneling information to the enemy. Myers acts as an independent terrorist contractor in Days 2 and 3. Disloyalty is her unique brand of misbehavior. An expert criminal for hire, she sells her skills to any terrorist or terror organization with the means to pay her fee—selling out anyone or anything for money. Myers disobeys the social order by betraying her former professional and sexual partner, Bauer. Examples of her double-crossing include her

leaking information to terrorists as a double agent, attempting to murder the show's hero, and tricking the hero into working against CTU. These examples are illustrated in the following pages.

The first example of Myers' double-crossing disobedience is when she sells information about Bauer and the government agency CTU to terrorists. Myers is shown to be a deceptive double agent at the end of Day 1, when she is revealed to be a villain. Before this twist in the plot, Myers works as Bauer's closet confidant at CTU. During the day's events, which include the attempted assassination of African American presidential candidate David Palmer (Dennis Haysbert) and the kidnapping of Bauer's wife and daughter, Myers is Bauer's go-to woman. Even though Bauer is warned at the start of the day that there is a mole at CTU, he never suspects Myers, his second-in-command and former mistress. It is not until the final few hours of the day that Myers is unmasked and vilified as a double-crossing flouter.

A scene that illustrates Myer's role as a double-crossing flouter takes place at 10:00 p.m. toward the end of Day 1. Serbian terrorists Victor Drazen (Dennis Hopper) and son Andre Drazen (Željko Ivanek), who have organized what they believe to be the successful assassination of Senator Palmer and the kidnapping of Bauer's wife Teri (Leslie Hope) and daughter Kim (Elisha Cuthbert), stand in the dark at the edge of a pier from which Kim has escaped. Andre's phone rings. He answers and a familiar voice answers in a foreign language, translated by subtitles on the bottom of the screen, "It's Yelena"—a name the audience has never heard. Andre's face darts up to look at his father and he asks, "Why are you calling?" The scene cuts to the caller's location, where her hands open blinds that peek out into the main floor of CTU. The rest of her body out

of view, the woman tells Drazen that Palmer is not dead, that it was a trick for them to keep Kim alive. Andre asks if she is sure. The camera flies from the open blinds to a tight close-up of Myers' face with a phone against her ear. She answers, "Yes, I'm sure," as revealed by the subtitles, and hangs up. Myers walks out of the frame, and through the open blinds CTU's Tony Almeida (Carlos Bernard) is in sight. He sees her and says, "There you are." Myers joins Almeida in the shot and stands shoulder to shoulder with him as he tells her about the latest CTU intelligence. The ticking clock appears and counts down, ending the hour.

This is the first scene in which Myers is presented as a villain in *24*. She is vilified as a flouter by selling out the U.S. government and her ex-lover/supervisor by feeding classified CTU information to Serbian terrorists. Her ability to communicate with Drazen in a foreign language while both hiding from and spying on her CTU coworkers through the blinds illustrates her double-crossing villainy. Myers' double-crossing is accentuated when she exits her dark nook and stands side-by-side with Almeida, who fills her in on recent intelligence, which, unbeknownst to him, she uses against the government and country. In providing information to the Drazens, she violates the social order in which she should be loyal to the U.S. government as a CTU agent, and loyal to Bauer, the show's hero, as his ex-lover, confidant and inferior.

Myers is vilified as a disloyal flouter again in the show when she attempts to kill Bauer. At the beginning of Day 2, Bauer has Myers in custody. Myers, who is believed to have information that will lead Bauer to a nuclear bomb set to go off in the U.S., cooperates with CTU in exchange for a pardon by the President for her past crimes. When adversaries shoot down the plane that Bauer and Myers are on en route to track

down the terrorist lead, Myers is injured in the crash. Bauer recuperates a breathless

Myers with CPR and, preparing to face off against the men who tried to kill them,

entrusts her with a gun. Myers is disloyal to Bauer in this situation when she turns the

gun on him, her savior.

The scene in which Myers' disloyalty is best highlighted in Day 2 is at 4:00 p.m.

Myers holds a machine gun to Bauer's back in the dusty, mountainous region where their

plane has crashed. When a CTU rescue team arrives by helicopter, Myers demands to

speak to the President or else she will shoot Bauer. They comply with Jack's command

and connect her to the President. Pointing the gun steadfastly at Bauer, who is on his

knees, hands behind his head, Myers has the following conversation with President

Palmer and his Chief of Staff, Mike Novick (Jude Ciccolella):

Myers: What I want is non-negotiable.

Novick: What do you want?

Myers: I'll tell you where the bomb is in exchange for immunity.

Novick: The President's already granted you a total pardon.

Myers: Except this is a crime I haven't committed yet.

Novick: What crime?

Myers: The murder of Jack Bauer. Add that to my pardon and I'll tell you where

the bomb is.

After Bauer tells Palmer that he has no choice but to grant her the pardon if they hope to

track down the nuclear bomb, and after Palmer confirms with the ranking official at CTU

that there is no alternative, Palmer agrees to Myers' terms.

Myers is vilified as a flouter through her disloyal behavior in this scene. She intends to kill Bauer, who breathed air into her body and gave her life in the previous hour. This time she betrays not just her ex-lover and former boss, but her lifesaver. She also forces President Palmer to make a decision that, while it serves his country, makes him disloyal to his friend and patriot. Myers' misbehavior in this scene abuses the social order because she coerces the President—the character of highest social status in the show—to pardon her for killing Bauer, his friend and also his own lifesaver (as Bauer saved his life in Day 1). Myers' extreme betrayal in this scene violates the social order and serves only her own self-interest.

A final example in which Myers is vilified as double-crosser is when she tricks Bauer into working against CTU. In Day 3, Bauer encounters Myers in Mexico when she is bidding for a deadly virus that will be used by the person she is working for as a biological weapon against the United States. When Myers wins the deal for the weapon, Bauer captures her. He pulls a gun on her, but she pleads with him not to kill her, promising she can help CTU locate her terrorist employer, a man named Alvers (Lothaire Bluteau). Bauer gets the okay from his superiors at CTU to fly Myers to Los Angeles for questioning. It is in route to Los Angeles that Myers' disloyalty is again invoked.

A scene that illustrates this instance of Myers's betrayal occurs at 1:00 a.m. Bauer and Myers are on a cargo plane heading from Mexico to Los Angeles. Myers, sitting with her hands cuffed to a pole behind her, claims to have a phone number for Alvers that she will furnish, providing that Bauer will support her case with the Department of Justice. When he agrees, Myers tells Bauer that the number requires special dialing instructions to make contact. Bauer secures a phone and asks Myers for

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the number. She gives him the number and complex set of instructions, which he

follows. When he finishes dialing, the scene cuts to CTU headquarters where computer

screens go blank and agents report system failure. When the scene returns to the plane,

Bauer is dialing again, and the following exchange takes place:

> Myers: You don't need to dial it again, Jack. Once was enough.
>
> Bauer: What are you talking about?
>
> Myers: You just triggered a worm that's going to bring down agency
>
> connectivity.
>
> Bauer: (Walks over to Myers, puts his face level with hers) My God, what have
>
> you done? (Grabs her by the neck and screams) What have you done?
>
> Myers: Until I say otherwise, your entire anti-terrorist computer network is
>
> jammed.

The remainder of the hour is spent trying to undo the worm that Myers tricked Bauer into

triggering.

This act of betrayal solidifies Myers status as a double-crosser. She gains Bauer's

trust by pretending that she will help him contact Alvers in exchange for his help

pleading her case with the Department of Justice, and she uses Bauer's trusting

vulnerability to enable the computer worm. Myers, with her hands literally tied behind

her back, tricks Bauer into working against CTU. Myers is a prisoner at this time,

immobile, physically bound to the plane by handcuffs. Bauer is her capturer, prison

guard, and even her promised voice of defense. And still Myers abuses this hierarchical

social order of capturer and captured. She is vilified as someone who disrupts the social

order by her scandalous betrayal.

Myers' vilification in *24* closely resembles the ways in which women are vilified in World War II-era film noir. Her characterization matches that of a "femme fatale," a female villain who:

> refuses to play the role of devoted wife and loving mother that mainstream society prescribes for women. She finds marriage to be confining, …and she uses all of her cunning and sexual attractiveness to gain her independence…And in spite of her inevitable death, she leaves behind the image of a strong…and unrepentant woman who defies the control of men and rejects the institution of the family (Blaser, 1996, par. 1).

The femme fatale is an independent and sexy bad girl archetype. She operates against the hero, and against the patriarchal institution of the family, typically for self-serving purposes.

The characterization of female characters as double-crossing sirens has been a topic of inquiry for many film and feminist scholars. Julie Grossman, referencing Samuel Fuller's 1964 film *The Naked Kiss*, explains the patriarchy-preserving function of the femme fatale in the following passage:

> To preserve itself, patriarchal culture projects images onto women that perpetuate a binary opposition of good girl versus femme fatale; attempts to assert independent existence, and to live beyond or to escape such projected gender fantasies, then upset patriarchal order, and cause it to redouble its efforts to categorize these women as deviant (2007, p. 20-21).

Grossman's analysis emphasizes that the femme fatale archetype hardens the cultural idea of there being two classes of women: good and bad. A good woman obeys the social

order of obedience and dependence, whereas the femme fatale is independent and disobeys the patriarchal order.

The understanding of the femme fatale as a cultural product of patriarchy sheds light onto why this villain type, born in mid-twentieth century film noir, persists as a modern pop cultural archetype. As women continue to break out of stifling gender roles and make strides toward equality, patriarchal culture continues to mark her as evil. Had Klapp written his analysis of villain types ten years later than he did, he may very well have opted to call his flouter "femme fatale" instead. However, writing at the very time of the birth of the femme fatale in film noir, Klapp lacked the insight of Grossman, the feminist film scholar whose work was aforementioned. Grossman understands that women's evil roles in film noir reflect a crisis of masculinity in America after gender roles were destabilized during World War II. She writes that the films suggest "the trap that society lays for women, who are branded as evil, as potentially deceptive, before they even speak" (2007, p. 23). The cultural manifestation of the evil, deceptive woman outlives the post-WWII years, the cold war, and even the twentieth century, as Myers' *24* character illustrates.

Moral Codes

Myers's ability to deceive the hero hinges largely on her sexual prowess. In using sex to get close to the show's hero in order to ultimately double-cross him, she violates the dominant moral code of a tamed female sexuality. Myers affronts the dominant idea that sex is a sacred, family-building bond between a husband and wife when she uses sex as a tool for her villainy. Sex allows Myers to gain the trust of the show's heroes, which

she uses to manipulate them and do evil. Myers' sexuality and her evildoing go hand-in-hand in the show. This is evidenced by Myers' murder of her ex-lover's wife and unborn child, her employment of her sexuality to detect evil, and her manipulation of men through sexual provocation.

The first example of the linkage between Myers' sexuality and her villainy is seen in Day 1. Myers spends the entire day as Bauer's right-hand woman as he tries to prevent terrorists from assassinating presidential hopeful David Palmer and rescue his own kidnapped wife, Teri, and daughter, Kim. A conversation at the beginning of the day between Bauer and Teri makes clear that the two are recently reunited after a separation. Later in the season the audience finds out that during the separation, Bauer had an affair with a woman. Toward the end of the day, Teri finds out that the woman her husband was seeing is Myers. Events at the very end of the day drive home the connection between Myer's flouting, villainous character and what the show presents as her amoral sexuality.

The final hour in Day 1, 11:00 p.m., emphasizes this connection. Bauer has successfully stopped Palmer's assassins from succeeding. He is on his way to bringing his daughter to safety, and his wife, Teri, is awaiting their arrival at CTU, where Myers is still operating as a mole. Teri walks in on Myers in a back room of CTU while she is on the phone speaking a foreign language. She says to Myers, "I didn't know you speak German." When Teri spots the blood of a security guard Myers killed moments before, Teri tries to leave. However, Myers pulls a gun on her, forces her face against a wall, and tells her to get on her knees. Myers then ties Teri's hands behind her back and tapes her mouth closed. When the person Myers speaks to on the phone tells her to make sure no

one can connect her to Germany, Myers flashes a look at Teri and says she understands. Myers picks up her gun, walks behind Teri and says, "Everything will be fine." It is not until the last minute of the day that Jack finds Teri slumped against a machine, red blood staining her white shirt in the area of her heart. He picks her up in his arms and her head falls back, limp. The screen splits between Bauer holding his dead wife tightly and scenes from the first hour of the day, when he, his wife and daughter were together at home. He hugs her lifeless body tighter and cries, "I'm sorry," the words that end the day.

While Myers does not exhibit any flagrant sexual behavior in this episode, her destruction of Bauer's family is made literal. After coming between Bauer and his wife by having a sexual affair with him, thereby abusing the sanctity of marriage, Myers destroys his family once and for all by killing his wife and the unborn child she carries. It can be understood that Myer's sexual relationship with Bauer allowed her to gain his trust—a trust that let her avoid detection as she worked for terrorists inside CTU. Myers' tying Teri's hands, taping her mouth, and forcing her to get on her knees symbolize how one woman's amoral sexual tactics render a "good" married woman powerless. The red bloodstain over Teri's heart signifies Myer's destruction of Teri's physical and metaphoric heart. Bauer's flashbacks to scenes of their family at the start of the day's events drive home this point. Myers is able to ravage Bauer's family first morally by seducing Bauer, and then physically by murdering Teri, and, with her, the fetus. When Bauer cradles his wife's lifeless body in the last moments of the show and cries, "I'm sorry," he is expressing his sorrow for falling prey to Myer's sexual seduction, which opened the door to her evildoing.

After using sex to gain Bauer's trust and ultimately terrorize his family and the country in Day 1, Myers continues to do evil through her sexualized body. Myers' use of her sexuality as a tool for evil is seen again in Day 3. Bauer is working undercover in Mexico to acquire a virus that terrorists threaten to use as a dangerous biological weapon against the United States. Bauer tricks the Mexican Salazar brothers into believing that he is no longer working with CTU and that he wants to be readmitted to their gang after Bauer breaks the older brother out of prison. Bauer earns the Salazars' trust, so when he tells them about the financial possibilities of purchasing the virus, they agree to the idea. When they arrive to bid for the virus, however, Myers is the other bidder. When Bauer tries to convince Myers to partner with him—that he's no longer a government man and is only after the money—she insists that his act must be a facade. She does not know Bauer's motives for sure, however, until she tests him with a kiss.

The final scene in the 10:00 p.m. hour of Day 3 exemplifies this. Myers and Bauer are by themselves near the site of the virus bid. Myers stands in front of Jack, who is sitting, and the following conversation occurs:

Myers: You really did break Salazar out of prison.

Bauer: I'm not the man you knew before.

Myers: Well, I don't know about that, (kneeling) but for two hundred million dollars, I'm going to keep an open mind. (Hand clutching Bauer's on his lap) So Jack, (hands moving up his thighs) if we're going to go forward with this I have to know one thing. Are you going to be able to forgive me for killing Teri?

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> Bauer: If I wanted revenge, Nina, I would have killed you already. You know
>
> that. (Pause) It's like I said, all I want to do is finish this deal and disappear for
>
> good.
>
> Nina: (Long pause) Convince me.

Nina, with her lips parted, slowly moves in for a kiss. She gets almost all the way to Jack before his lips meet hers for a kiss. The ticking clock interrupts to end the hour.

Here again, Myers uses her sexuality as a tool for doing evil. She uses sexual means to detect if Bauer is telling the truth. By moving physically close to Jack, holding his hands and moving them up his thighs, she attempts to arouse and weaken him. Myers mentions her murder of his wife to remind Bauer, and the audience, of her evil. Her sexuality and evildoing are articulated simultaneously in this moment, as two sides of the same coin. When Bauer tells Myers he is not the man she knew, she says, "Well, I don't know about that," meaning that she is not able to detect whether or not he is lying. When she says, "Convince me," and moves in for a kiss it becomes clear that Myers depends most not on her cognitive ability as a villain, but on her sexuality. Because Myers was able to get sexually close to Bauer before and knows what it feels like sexually to have his trust, the kiss will reveal if he is lying. This flouter uses her body as a tool for evil, breaking a traditional moral code in the show that upholds a family-bounded female sexuality.

Myers' sexuality is invoked as a villainous tool again later in the day. When her skills as a seductress tell her that Bauer is lying after their kiss, Myers tries to escape. Bauer captures her, however, and brings her back to CTU for questioning. Agent Tony Almeida, with whom Myers was sexually engaged the prior season, is in charge of

Myers' interrogation. But Myers manipulates Almeida by bringing up their sexual past while his wife, Michelle Dessler, watches. Myers is also revealed to be linked sexually to the terrorist suspect, Alvers, whom CTU is looking for. Myers' amoral sexuality is the mark of her villainy. She seems to be unable to operate as a villain without using sex as a tool.

A scene in which Myers' sexuality can be seen to function as the linchpin of her villainy is in Day 3. Almeida is standing at the edge of a table where Myers is seated under a spotlight in the CTU interrogation room. They are on one side of two-way mirror through which Dessler and an analyst observe them. Almeida tells Myers he wants to know everything she knows about Alvers. When Myers claims she already told Bauer everything she knows, Almeida asks her to repeat it to him. She responds, "First Jack, now you. Hmm. What does that remind me of?" Almeida ignores this and presses forward, asking what she knows about Alvers. Myers focuses on Almeida's wedding ring and asks Almeida who the lucky girl is. She says, "Hope you did a background check, though, because you don't want to make the same mistake twice." When Myers still will not talk, Almeida reads Alvers' medical records aloud to Myers, which lists what CTU knows about him. The records indicate that he's had a knee operation and is being treated for HIV. The analyst observing the interrogation reports that Myers' pulse spikes at that moment, concluding, "Someone hasn't been using protection with Marcus Alvers." Dessler reports this to Almeida, saying, "She's probably had sex with him." Almeida then tells Myers, "See Nina, my colleagues in the next room tell me something in those medical records concerns you. I'm guessing it's not the knee." Nina looks Almeida in the eyes as he says this, responding only with a slight smirk.

Myers' flagrant sexuality is articulated as a fundamental aspect of her villainy. She obliquely refers to her former sexual relationship with and deceit of Almeida as a tool to throw him off balance and gain control of the interrogation. Then, upon hearing the news that the terrorist, Alvers, has HIV, her body responds with a faster pulse. The analyst, Dessler, and Almeida all interpret this as meaning that Myers has had unprotected sex with the terrorist. Her sexual misbehavior is already on their radar, leading them to the quick conclusion. In a single scene, Myers' sexual relationships with Bauer, Almeida, and Alvers are all invoked as she is questioned at CTU as a criminal terrorist conspirator. Myers' breach of the moral code of a family-centric female sexuality is central to her vilification in the show.

Using sex as a tool to do evil is the quintessential stamp of a femme fatale. Film noir and modern films that use elements of the genre often feature evil female seductress. These femme fatales use sex as their weapon of choice, a tool to seduce and double-cross the hero. Miranda Sherwin examines the role of the femme fatale's sexuality in modern film in her article "Deconstructing the Male: Masochism, Female Spectatorship, and the Femme Fatale in *Fatal Attraction*, *Basic Instinct*, and *Body of Evidence*" (2008). Sherwin explains that the femme fatale's sexual desire is always staged, an act designed to fool men. This is constructed as dangerous and villainous, claims the author, because women do not need men to fulfill their sexual desires. Even though the femme fatales in these films have sex with the male protagonists, Sherman notes, "they are notoriously sexually liberated" (2008, p. 177), presenting an affront to the dominant patriarchal order that requires women to depend on men. The femme fatale's sexuality and her evil are so

fused, claims the author, that her body itself is transformed into a weapon in the imagination of the spectator.

Importantly, the femme fatale's untamed, evil sexuality is not expressed as an individual pathology. Instead, it is presented as a violent weapon launched against the family. Sherwin makes this clear in her analysis of femme fatales when she observes, "female violence is enacted within and directed against the family" (2008, p. 177). This is a crucial point because it illustrates that the evil woman's breach of the dominant moral code of a disciplined female sexuality does not just have personal consequences for the villain and her opponent. Instead, her sexual misbehavior has dire consequences for families, and presents a threat to the very notion of the family unit. In expressing her independent sexuality, which she exclusively uses as a tool to do evil, the femme fatale assaults dominant ideals of the family. In stepping outside of the role of subservient woman in the home—the role of a "good" woman—the femme fatale destroys the family. This is explicitly shown to be true for *24*'s Myers, whose violent and sexual actions destroy the hero's family when she breaks up his marriage and then murders his wife and would-be child.

Punishment

Myers affronts the moral code of a disciplined, family-bound female sexuality in *24*. Her punishment in the show can consequently be linked to her villainous sexual misbehavior. As Klapp emphasizes, a main goal in the ritual punishment of a villain is to create consensus around amoral social members "getting 'what they deserve'" (1959, p.75). According to this logic, by sexually misbehaving Myers gets what she deserves

when male characters exert violent dominance over her body. Drawing conclusions from the show, what Myers deserves for her terrorizing sexual misconduct is the male abuse and destruction of her body. The show's male hero routinely chokes, tortures, strips, and finally murders her.

Myers is choked numerous times throughout *24*, and tortured for information several times. In Day 2 Bauer chokes her while torturing her. When Myers is identified as someone who might have information about the day's impending nuclear threat, the President pardons her for her past crimes in exchange for her cooperation with CTU. The terrorist activities of the previous season that she is pardoned for include the planned assassination of Palmer, the kidnapping of Bauer's family, and the murder of Bauer's wife and developing infant. When Bauer is put in charge of interrogating Myers at the beginning of Day 2, it is the first time he has seen Myers since realizing that she killed his wife. Bauer's violence on Myers in the CTU interrogation room is an example of how she is punished for behaving as a flouter.

The interrogation scenes during the 1:00 p.m. hour in Day 2 illustrate this punishment. Bauer walks into the dark room where Myers is seated at a table, hands and feet cuffed, and hands the presidential pardon to her. She tells Bauer that she needs to be on a plane to Visalia right away to meet her contact if he wants to stop the bomb. When he refuses to make a move until she gives up her contact's identity, Myers asks why she would lie if her pardon is only good if she stops the bomb. Bauer answers, "Because you're worse than a traitor, Nina. You don't even have a cause. You don't believe in anything. But you would sell anyone and anything out to the highest bidder." Then, as he flips over the table that separates them he yells into her face, "So stop wasting my

time! Give me a name!" Looking him directly in the eyes, Myers says, "Don't even bother, Jack. If you lay a hand on me, you'll be taken off the case." Bauer exhales and backs away from Myers, taking a seat across from her. Then she adds, "You're just gonna have to follow my lead." Bauer's jaw and eye twitch, then Myers smirks. Bauer pounces out of his seat and onto Myers, scraping her seat across the floor until he forces her against a wall. He grabs her by the neck with one hand and shoves her head against the wall. Inches away from her face while he chokes her, Bauer says, "You are gonna tell me everything I want to know or I swear to God I will hurt you before I kill you and no one will stop me, do you understand me?" CTU Director, George Mason, enters and tells Bauer to let her go. He releases his grip and Myers falls forward, gasping for air.

Mason escorts the agent out of the interrogation room and tells Bauer he's finished interrogating Myers because he's "lost it." Then they have this conversation:

Bauer: George, right now she thinks she's won the lottery. She's in control. You want her to tell the truth, you take that away from her.

Mason: By killing her? Yeah, that'll work.

Bauer: No, by giving her someone to answer to, someone to be afraid of. She has to believe that I'd be willing to put my revenge in front of finding this bomb.

Bauer convinces his boss to let him continue interrogating Myers when he says, "You need to let me go back in there. Show her that I have the power to do anything I want to her." Mason not only agrees, he helps by turning up the heat in the room ten degrees at Jack's request. Bauer walks into the room, shoots the wall right behind Myers' sweating head twice, at which point she gives up some of the info he wants. When he cocks the pistol and puts it to her temple, she trembles and tells him more.

These scenes illustrate how the show's hero violently punishes Myers, both physically and psychologically. His choking her against a wall parallels real-life scenarios of men's domestic violence against women (Burnett, 2009). By telling her that he is going to hurt her before he kills her, Bauer attempts to strike fear into Myer's heart. When he meets with Mason, Bauer reveals that this abuse is central to his plan to gain control over her and get the information that he wants. He says that in order for Myers to cooperate, she needs someone to answer to and be afraid of. Bauer's claim that Myers needs to believe he can do anything he wants to her convinces the CTU director not only to allow Bauer to continue the interrogation, but to act as an accomplice in it. Mason turns up the heat in the interrogation room literally to make Myers sweat—which represents both the sweat of her pain and the sweat of her past sexual misconduct. When Myers subsequently gives up the information, it shows that the violent, manipulative tool works.

Myers' psychological punishment continues in the next hour of Day 2 when Bauer forces her to be stripped naked in front of him. At 2:00 p.m., Bauer is transporting Myers by air to Visalia where she will connect with her contact who has information about the nuclear bomb. Bauer, seated across from Myers, asks her how far their landing place is from her contact. She says she will tell him when they get there, and Bauer grabs her by the cuffs and pulls her toward him. He says, "We're fighting the clock here, Nina, so you better start talking." A male FBI agent on the flight tells Bauer that threatening her won't do any good. Bauer releases her, throws a pile of clothes at her and sneers, "Fine, get her changed. I need her to look like a civilian." The FBI agent pulls Myers up from her seat and begins to walk her to the plane's bathroom. Bauer says, "No. She

doesn't leave my sight." The agent turns Myers around so that she is facing Bauer and walks her toward him. The agent uncuffs her. Myers, glaring at Bauer, unbuttons and removes her shirt. Scars on her back are revealed to the camera. The scene ends with a tight shot of Bauer as he stares at Myers' topless front.

Bauer punishes Myers in this scene by forcing her to get naked in front of him. When his attempt to physically coerce her is interrupted by the FBI agent, Bauer resorts to psychological abuse. When he says "I need her to look like a civilian," Bauer stresses the last word, emphasizing Myers' current status as his prisoner. When Bauer tells the FBI agent that Myers does not leave his sight, the agent has no objection. In fact, he turns Myers around so that her breasts are toward Bauer and marches her closer to him for the strip show. This suggests that while the agent is charged to protect Myers' life, her psychological well-being is not his concern. In this sense, the two men cooperate to degrade Myers. After using her sexuality to do evil against Bauer, Bauer forces her to use her body to please him, not as a lover, but as a sexualized, submissive prisoner. The scars on her back remind the audience that no matter how physically tough Myers may be, no matter how much abuse her body has endured, Bauer, the male hero, always has the psychological upper hand.

Myers achieves her final destiny in Day 3 when Bauer shoots her dead. Myers is in the custody of CTU after having been captured by Bauer during his undercover operation to stop a deadly virus in Mexico. At 2:00 a.m., Myers is being tortured for information she might have about the virus; this is done by an interrogator, who the head of CTU claims is incapable of being manipulated because his sole function is to inflict pain. Myers does manipulate the interrogator, however, by jamming her neck into his

syringe. The maneuver gets Myers transported to the CTU clinic, where she kills and injures the medical staff, and attempts to escape. Before she can escape, Bauer's daughter, Kim, who at this point is a CTU employee, finds her in a back room of the building and pulls a gun on her. Kim tells Myers to drop her gun, or else she will shoot her. But Bauer enters the scene and shoots Myers before Kim has a chance to. Bauer, the show's hero, is the privileged one who gets the pleasure of killing the flouter once and for all.

This final scene of the 2:00 a.m. hour of Day 3 shows Myers' ultimate punishment. Bauer points his gun at Myers, whom he has just shot, and who lies face up on the floor of the machine room. Her chest rises deeply and rapidly as she bleeds. Bauer tells his daughter, who still points her gun, to go back into the CTU office and tell them he has captured Myers. Kim says quickly, "Dad, listen to me, we need—" and Bauer cuts her off, "Kim, go now!" Kim looks at him and he says to her, "Please, baby, just go." Kim leaves, and Bauer turns his attention to Myers, who tries but fails to reach a gun inches away due to her weakness. Bauer says, his gun still pointed at her, "You don't have any more useful information, do you Nina?" She gasps, "I do." Her deep, irregular breathing is audible as she slowly struggles to reach the gun with her bloody fingers. Bauer says, "No you don't," and shoots her two more times. Bauer stares into Myers' dead blue eyes as the ticking clock ends the hour.

Myers, the flouter who thumbs her nose at the social order by her scandalous sexual duplicity, is shot dead at point blank range by the show's hero. When Kim, sensing what he plans to do, starts to explain to her father that CTU needs Myers for the investigation into the virus, Bauer cuts her off and yells for her to get out. He does not

want his daughter to lose her innocence and "good girl" status by killing Myers. When she does not listen to his order, he appeals to her as a little girl, begging her to "please, baby, just go." Following the patriarchal appeal, Kim leaves. When Bauer asks Myers if she has any more information, and concludes that she does not, he determines that she is no longer valuable. Myers is only as good as the information she can provide to CTU. Bauer makes this evident when he shoots her three times at close range. Bauer murders Myers in a machine room similar to the one in which she killed his wife seasons before, finally avenging her death and giving the villain "what she deserves." Bauer is never prosecuted for Myers' murder in the show—the matter is simply never addressed from any legal standpoint—framing the hero's execution of the villain as the natural endpoint to her misconduct.

The punishment that Myers endures is typical of treatment dealt to the modern day femme fatale. The hero's violent abuse of the badly behaving female villain is standard treatment. According to Sherwin (2008), sex and violence are so closely intertwined that the hero's punishment of the femme fatale takes on a sadistic quality. The films the author reviews contain female villains who also participate in sadism, but she points out an important difference between the femme fatale's sadism and the hero's. While female sadism is eroticized in the movies, male sadism is made dangerous, often resulting in the injury or death of the femme fatale. Sherwin concludes that in modern femme fatale movies, the male protagonist responds to the female villain by either physical or metaphorical rape. As *24*'s Bauer chokes Myers, makes her sweat, has her stripped, shoots her once and then shoots her twice more for pleasure, he physically and metaphorically rapes her.

Writing about female villains in James Bond films spanning the last four decades, Tony W. Garland claims, in "The Coldest Weapon of All: The Bond Girl Villain in James Bond Films" (2009), that the femme fatale's demise is inevitable and to be expected. Garland writes, "The femme fatale's unwillingness to relinquish her status as 'intelligent and powerful' coincides with a recognition of 'her desire for freedom as attainable only in death'" (2009, p. 183). The author argues that the femme fatale's quest for freedom to achieve power is doomed due to the patriarchal nature of society. Therefore, he claims, the femme fatale must be killed or otherwise destroyed. It is only in her death that she could possibly attain this freedom, for she is not permitted access to this powerful position in life. Well aware of society's rules for women, audiences expect and anticipate the femme fatale's destruction.

While the femme fatale maybe be raped and her death may be expected, many feminist film scholars consider this female villain a screen embodiment of agency and power. Grossman (2007) summarizes the ways in which feminist film scholars have historically examined the femme fatale, "first, in terms of her role as a projection of male fear and desire; later, as a politically forceful symbol of unencumbered power" (p. 19). Precisely because she disobeys the patriarchal social order and acts independently to acquire money or other personal gains, the femme fatale, according to some theorists, is a powerful feminist symbol. These scholars understand the punishment of the femme fatale as a social commentary on what happens to women who dare to cross gender boundaries and who, in doing so, present a threat to the dominant male culture.

The case can be made that Myers is a powerful female character that, against the patriarchal odds, expresses agency and independence in a male-dominated world. I do

not disagree with this argument per se. What must coincide with this argument, however, is a careful examination of how Myers is punished in the show and how audiences are asked to feel about that punishment. If a viewer identifies with the hero, as Klapp and others have suggested is the natural course, then the viewer is expected to take pleasure in Bauer's sadistic abuse and murder of Myers. The viewer is also positioned to consider this violent treatment both warranted and legal, as Bauer punishes and kills Myers while operating as a high-ranking government agent. Other viewers who identify with Myers might enjoy her femme fatale tactics, but that pleasure is short-lived when she is severely and fatally punished. In my assessment, neither position presents a stride toward gender equality, since the powerful female character is marked as evil and brutally destroyed whether the viewer likes it or not.

Chapter Conclusion

Myers is one of *24*'s most infamous villains. She is vilified in the show as a flouter, a woman who disobeys the social order by scandalous misbehavior. Her misbehavior is illustrated by her disloyal actions against Bauer, her one-time lover and supervisor. Her disloyalty is exacerbated by the immoral means she uses to do evil: sexual seduction, intuition, and provocation. Myers breaks a moral code of a tamed female sexuality when she uses sex as a tool for her villainy. The show's hero punishes her body accordingly. First, Bauer chokes her, articulating his need to induce fear in her and control her—a discourse that mirrors men's real-life abuse of women in domestic violence situations (Burnett & Adler, 2005). Second, Bauer forces her to strip naked in front of him, demonstrating his psychological control over her body. Third, Bauer

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murders her when he determines she is no longer of value. If the function of a villain is to define and ritualize what a society does not accept, as Klapp argues, then Myers functions to show how a status-abusing, sexually untamed woman is physically and psychologically abused and, finally, killed.

The harsh fate that Myers meets is consistent with what other scholars have determined is *24*'s misogynist portrayals of women. Ina Mae Hark, in her chapter about *24* in the book *Film and Television After 9/11* (2004), writes in reference to the show's early seasons:

> Despite its appropriateness to a sadomasochistic project, *24*'s habit of representing nearly every significant female character as either bitch-betrayer or terrorized victim is disturbing evidence of a profound misogyny that has received amazingly little commentary (p. 138).

The author points to Myers as the quintessential example of how women in *24* are brutally characterized in its first few seasons. Hark demands that the show's "wholesale animus directed at female characters," (2004, p. 138), which is constructed as a sadomasochistic thrill, be protested.

The sadomasochistic project of vilifying female characters in *24* can be considered a symptom of a larger struggle for gender equality on screen. That a female character in *24* can best achieve power by way of sex and betrayal is indicative of the patriarchal culture of the show. One author argues that "dense and deeply entangled gendered politics" are key to the show's narrative. McCabe (2007) writes that the show:

> Reproduce[s] modern gendered power relations in which female agency involves a continual but ambivalent struggle in resisting *and* reproducing entrenched

patriarchal culture that, while oppressive, is necessary for personal success – and

narrative survival (p. 161).

According to the author, female characters' struggle for power in the show—which, as

has been illustrated, is often marked as evil—is a key element of its narrative. When

characters like Myers express agency, it presents a resistance to the show's patriarchal

narrative. When Bauer brutally destroys her, it ultimately presents a reinforcement of the

show's oppressive culture. The female villain's resistance to patriarchy, and the fatal

punishment she receives as a result, are narrative linchpins of *24*.

Villains function in television shows and other screen media to cross moral

boundaries and, for the most part, to uphold the dominant morals that organize the show.

A villain's evil actions provoke the hero's defense and reinstatement of the mores that

govern the show's narrative and culture. Mike Alsford, in his book *Heroes & Villains*

(2006), writes that in the final analysis, "the worst thing one might have to say about

villains…is that with respect to other human beings and the rest of the world—they

simply do not care" (p. 121). In examining the villain in a popular television show, it is

important to consider what kind of moral world she works against. Myers, characterized

as a flouter and femme fatale, snubs the intensely oppressive, patriarchal world of *24*.

Her sadomasochistic destruction in the show illustrates how the show's heroic characters

care deeply about maintaining the misogynistic world in which they operate.

An emblem of the morally bad, the villain clearly has a social function within her

fictional world. But she also has social function in reality. Remember that Klapp argues

in his 1954 article that villains function as agents of social control. According to the

theorist, the process of vilification organizes individual and group thought and behavior

against those collectively recognized as amoral, and therefore evil, social types. Myers, vilified in *24* as a sexually liberated female who abuses patriarchal status rules, organizes collective thought and behavior against this social type. Her evil is constructed as a symptom of her independence, and so it is against the woman's independence that collective opposition is rallied. If villains are agents of social control, Myers' character is an agent of social domination of women.

CHAPTER 5

CHARLES LOGAN: THE "NOT GEORGE W. BUSH"

"Home grown" white, male villains pepper the days of the show. Corrupt politicians and greedy businessmen make up this category of characters. These bad guys are the characters that the show's producers and commentators point to when defending the show against accusations of prejudiced representations (Hibberd, 2010). The show's apologists claim that a variety of characters are presented as bad guys in the show, and that all racial and ethnic groups have an equal opportunity of being vilified in *24* (Ashbrook, 2007; Parry, 2007). While it may be true that groups traditionally considered privileged are sometimes included as enemies in the show, the ways in which they are vilified differ dramatically from the ways in which Middle Eastern and female villains are marked as such. Whereas the female and Middle Eastern villains are framed as embodiments of evil that should be destroyed, the white, male bureaucratic villain is treated as a good guy gone astray who should be rehabilitated.

A close analysis of one of these bureaucratic villains is presented in order to understand the specific ways in which the character is vilified in the text. To illustrate the character's villainy, this chapter draws on content from the literature review and asks: Which type of villain is the white, male bad guy of *24*? Which moral codes in the world of *24* does this villain breach? How is the villain punished or otherwise treated in the show? As in the previous chapters, each of these questions comprises a subsection of the chapter, and is answered by presenting three scenes from the show. Descriptions of the plot and scenes serve to situate each scene within the analytic framework, and specific actions and pieces of dialogue are analyzed. A critical analysis drawing from existing

research follows each scene, and a summarizing paragraph ends each section. The

chapter's conclusion presents the findings from the three subsections, and ties the

analysis to existing literature about vilification.

Villain Type

The *24* character examined in depth in this chapter is Charles Logan, played by

Gregory Itzin. The villain-type that Logan most closely qualifies as is a shirker.

"Shirker" falls under Klapp's category of "Villains of Low or Delayed Visibility," which

he describes as follows:

> These types are usually imputed with cowardice because they do not come out in
>
> the open but have to be detected or "flushed out." Hatred of them is mixed with
>
> contempt. Whether or not actually weak, all receive some advantage from society
>
> (1956, p. 338).

Some examples Klapp uses to illustrate a shirker are draft-dodger, yellowbelly, and hit-

and-run-driver. He defines a shirker as a villain that "evades an important obligation or

duty" (1956, p. 339). Logan fits this profile in the show because he evades a duty of

utmost importance in the show: that of the U.S. presidency. In shirking his presidential

duties to his country and people, Logan breaks the mold of a strong, authoritative, macho

leader, breaching the show's boundaries of masculinity. His gentle punishment in the

show travels an avenue from shame to redemption to a physical blow.

The villain Logan is a white man who is small in stature with graying hair and an

expressive face. He acts as a villain in Days 4 and 5 of *24*, and returns to redeem himself

in Day 6. Vice President Logan takes over the U.S. presidency in Day 4 amidst a terrorist

attack when the President's plane is shot down. Unsure of himself, unable to make

timely decisions, and making bad decisions as a novice president, Logan performs as a villain in hindering CTU's actions to stop the nuclear attack. In Day 5, Logan, more comfortable in his role as President, helps coordinate a terrorist attack on the U.S. in order to ensure financial benefits for his supporters. Logan returns in Day 6 to help Bauer and CTU stop the day's impending terrorist attack.

Logan is a shirker, perpetually concerned with his self-preservation. Logan evades his duties as President in three important ways: 1) by putting his own safety above the duties of the presidency during the terrorist attack in Day 4; 2) by failing to make tough and timely decisions that day; and 3) by helping to coordinate a terrorist attack for the sake of his reelection in Day 5. These instances are described in the following pages.

The first example of Logan's vilification as a shirker takes place during Day 4. Muslim extremist terrorists headed by terrorist Habib Marwan are launching an attack on the United States. They have kidnapped and attempted to execute the U.S. Secretary of Defense, shot down the President's plane, rendering him incapable of leading, and captured codes that will enable them to launch a nuclear attack on the country. At this time, Logan, then Vice President, is called upon to assume the role of President. However, his fear gets in the way of being an effective leader. Logan expresses concern first and foremost for his own safety, shirking his obligations to serve as a strong and fearless president of a nation under attack.

This point is best illustrated by scenes in Day 4 during the 12:00 a.m. hour. Logan and Chief of Staff Mike Novick are in the White House walking back from Logan's swearing-in ceremony. Novick informed Logan moments before that the nuclear

codes had fallen into terrorist hands. Logan is on his way to the protective bunker when the following dialogue occurs:

> Novick: Mr. President, it may be precipitous moving to the bunker now. Working from the Oval Office might exhibit a greater sense of confidence in our abilities to handle this crisis.
>
> Logan: The purpose of the bunker is to protect the President in times of crises, is it not?
>
> Novick: Yes, sir.
>
> Logan: Well, I feel it is always wise to take the prudent course.

A subsequent scene continues along this self-preservation theme. After learning that Marwan has procured a nuclear warhead, another conversation about the President's safety takes place between Logan and Novick. Novick has just informed the President that it is going to be difficult to locate Marwan and the nuclear weapon.

> Logan: (Raised voice) Who knows what else they're planning! I'm sure he's going to come after me next.
>
> Novick: Mr. President, there is no indication that that's his plan.
>
> Logan: (Yelling, pointing) You don't know that. I don't know that. We don't have enough information to know what his plan is!
>
> Novick: (Pause) The head of Secret Service is on his way over now. He has a revised plan that I'm certain will ease your mind about your safety.

While Novick utters this final line, Logan, hands in his pants pockets, meets Novick's gaze. Then he looks down at his shoes and the scene ends.

These scenes indicate that Logan shirks his obligation as President because he is overrun by fear for his own safety. In the first exchange, the President's Chief of Staff, Novick, suggests that the President not retreat to the protective bunker. He says that working from the Oval Office might "exhibit a greater sense of confidence in our abilities to handle this crisis." This suggests that Novick considers Logan's desire for personal security to be detrimental to the greater good of the country. It suggests that even more than his personal safety, Americans need from the President an image of strength and ability to thwart the terrorist attack from the President. However, Logan ignores Novick's opinion and takes the "prudent course"—or the course best equipped to protect his personal safety—by retiring to the protective bunker. In the second exchange, Logan explodes in a fit of hysteria and paranoia, expressing unsubstantiated fears that the terrorists will be after him next. Novick, thwarted by the President's fearful emotions, tries to appeal to Logan logically. He explains that there is no evidence to support the President's fears and explains that Secret Service has a new plan that will ease Logan's concerns about his safety. In this time of crisis, Logan is more concerned about himself than about the needs of the American people, as established by Novick. Preoccupied by his safety, he evades his duties as President.

Another scene that demonstrates that Logan is vilified as a shirker occurs during Day 4 when Logan must decide whether or not to authorize torture. CTU has captured a terrorist conspirator name Joe Prado, who is known to be involved in the day's attacks. As CTU is about to interrogate the suspect, a lawyer from the human rights group Amnesty Global (who, unbeknownst to CTU and the President, was hired by terrorist leader Marwan) stops the torture and demands Prado's release. The only way that CTU

can hold the suspect and continue their interrogation is if President Logan overrides the

attorney's authority. Afraid to make the bold call to authorize the torture, which both

CTU and Novick believe to be in the best interest of the American people under the

circumstances, Logan evades what is framed in the show as his presidential duty to "do

whatever it takes" to stop the ticking time bomb from going off—which in this case, and

many other instances in the show, is authorizing or enacting torture.

A scene in Day 4 that illustrates this vilification of Logan as a shirker for failing

to authorize torture takes place during the 12:00 a.m. hour. CTU Director Buchanan and

Agent Bauer place a call to the President, who is joined by Novick and Logan's Chief of

Security, Walt Cummings (John Allen Nelson), to ask for the President to override the

Amnesty Global lawyer's authority so they can interrogate Prado. The following

conversation takes place:

> Novick: Am I correct in assuming that this suspect is unlikely to respond to the
>
> kind of Q and A that his lawyer would permit?
>
> Bauer: That's correct, Mike. If we want to procure any information from this
>
> suspect, we're going to have to do it behind closed doors.
>
> Logan: You're talking about torturing this man?
>
> Bauer: I'm talking about doing what is necessary to stop this warhead from being
>
> used against us.

Logan asks Buchanan to give them a moment and motions for Cummings to mute the

speakerphone, which he does.

Logan consults his two staff people about whether or not he should authorize the torture while Buchanan and Bauer await their answer on the other end of the phone line. The conversation continues on the White House end of the conversation:

Logan: Mike, what do you think?

Novick: I think we need to do whatever it takes to find Marwan.

Logan: Walt, weigh in.

Cummings: Well, this makes me nervous.

Logan: Why?

Cummings: Suppose this man being innocent, as he claims he is, your first act as

President is to sanction his torture. It will forever haunt your presidency.

Logan un-mutes the speakerphone and tells Buchanan and Bauer that he will call a special meeting with the Justice Department and have an answer for them in twenty minutes. Bauer tells him that they do not have time and begs, "With all due respect sir, please let us do our jobs." Logan tells them he will get back to them as soon as he can, which, as the plot unfolds, is not soon enough.

Logan fails in this scene to fulfill his obligation to make a "tough call" for the sake of Americans' safety, shirking his duties as President. Authorizing torture is positioned as the morally right thing to do in the show, and Logan's failure to "man up" and give Bauer the go-ahead to torture is framed as a shirking, villainous move. When Logan asks Bauer if he is requesting permission to torture Prado, Bauer redefines torture, telling the President that he wants to do "whatever it takes" to find the terrorist leader and stop the nuclear attack. Instead of making a decisive call, Logan instead consults his staff people. Novick makes clear that he is with Bauer, the show's hero, in doing "whatever it

takes." Cummings, however, expresses concern over authorizing the torture, not because it is illegal or unethical, but because it will tarnish the President's political career. Whereas Novick sides with Bauer and has the protection of Americans in mind, Cummings sides against them and has his and Logan's political careers in mind. Faced with two opposing opinions, Logan is unable to make a decision. He decides to get even more opinions from the Justice Department, unwilling to accept responsibility for the tough call. Despite the fact that time is of the essence and the nuclear bomb could be detonated at any moment, Logan requests more time to make a calculated decision. In allowing the consideration of his political career to impede his decision to authorize torture—which is positioned as the morally right choice by the hero's support of it— Logan shirks away from his presidential obligation. He fails to make a difficult decision that might save Americans because it might jeopardize his political future.

Another example of Logan's shirking ways can be found in Day 5. Bauer and CTU, in investigating the day's terrorist events, have found Logan, still President, to be helping to coordinate the day's attacks. Conspiring with corrupt U.S. businessmen and former government officials, Logan plans to have nerve gas released on Russian terrorists as part of an elaborate ploy to secure American oil interests in Central Asia. His plan goes astray and results in Logan's authorization of former President Palmer's assassination to cover up the conspiracy Palmer was going to reveal. Logan's plan to protect American oil interests also results in the nerve gas falling into terrorist hands. It becomes clear that Logan coordinates the attacks as a way to maintain his political power, evading his primary duty to serve and protect the people of the United States.

A scene that illustrates this point takes place during the 12:00 a.m. hour of Day 5. Bauer has enlisted Secretary of Defense Heller to confront Logan about his involvement in the day's terrorist attacks. Heller confronts Logan at the White House and tells him he knows about his role in the nerve gas plot and Palmer's murder. The following dialogue between the Secretary of State and the President occurs:

> Logan: Until you sit in my chair, you don't know what the hell you're talking about.
>
> Heller: Your chair is not a throne, Charles.
>
> Logan: I'm protecting the interests of our country.
>
> Heller: You mean oil.
>
> Logan: Yes. Yes! This country needs energy more than you or anybody in this gridlock government cares to admit. We'll see how you judge me when the cost of oil goes up over a hundred dollars a barrel and the people who put me in office can't afford to heat their homes or run their cars.
>
> Heller: And you think that justifies the blood on your hands?

Heller then presents his demands to the President, which include for Logan to resign.

This scene illustrates that Logan, in attempting to preserve his executive title, shirks his duties as President by endangering the American people. Logan tells Heller that he does not know what he's talking about until he occupies the President's chair; Heller responds that his chair is not a throne. Heller insinuates that Logan does not have the unilateral power of a king, that his obligation is to the American people. Logan replies that he is protecting the interests of America and Heller responds, "You mean oil?" Logan shouts, "Yes!" expressing the conflation of 'American interests' and 'oil' in

his viewpoint. Logan reveals that his attempts to keep oil prices down are not for the sake of all Americans, but for the ones who put him into office. His word choice shows that Logan is more concerned about reelection and his preservation of the presidency than about serving and protecting all Americans. Heller's question, "and you think that justifies the blood on your hands?" serves to negate Logan's defense of his actions. The quote reinforces the notion that by committing those crimes, Logan has abused his power. His hunger for power motivates him to put Americans at risk, evading the presidential duties to serve and protect.

Another function of this scene is to put the idea of oil interests in enemy territory. This is comparable to the way that issues of imperialism are dismissed by putting them in a terrorist domain, as explained in the previous chapter. Here, the idea that an American President would act to protect oil interests is made implausible and indefensible in reality, since it is constructed as the motivation of a selfish, shirking villain. The message is that only a weak and selfish shirker would risk American lives to protect his political and financial interests. A corresponding message is that a strong president who is motivated to protect Americans would not be involved in such corrupt activities. Attention to corporate interests that might motivate a masculine head of state is thwarted as a result, since these leaders tend to occupy heroic space in the national imagination.

A strong argument can be made that in being vilified as a shirker, Logan represents the anti-cowboy president. The cowboy is a classic mythic American figure that has been invoked since the U.S. western expansion as a cultural symbol of rugged self-confidence and righteousness. According to Westcott (2003) and Renshon (2005) some of the defining qualities of a cowboy are his confidence, decisiveness,

courageousness, independence, honesty, patriotism and upstanding morality. Real-life presidents have invoked the cowboy mythology to frame their personas and approaches (Malphurs, 2008). Logan's character possesses none of these qualities, and in fact embodies the opposite. In evading his duties as president by obsessing over safety, failing to make tough and timely decisions, and conspiring against his country for personal gains, Logan is the polar opposite of a cowboy.

It follows that Logan can be understood as the anti-George W. Bush character. Bush, the U.S. President during the majority of *24*'s broadcast, has been characterized as a cowboy president that engaged in frontier politics after 9/11. Ryan Malphurs, in his article "The Media's Frontier Construction of President George W. Bush" (2008), extensively analyzes the ways in which domestic and foreign press characterized the President as a cowboy. Malphurs argues that by continuously highlighting "old west" elements of his rhetoric, appearance, décor, and policies after 9/11, Bush and the media cooperated to paint the President as a tough, morally right, justice-seeking, patriotic defender of the innocents during a time of crisis. *24* paints President Logan as the opposite, while painting Jack Bauer as the embodiment of this cowboy ideal.

Take, for example, Logan's approach to torture versus President Bush's policies on the matter. Logan cannot make the tough call on his own, but instead asks for numerous opinions before making any decision. He is portrayed as having no clear moral vision guiding his decision on torture. He is more concerned with making the politically smart choice than defending Americans from the impending terrorist attack by authorizing torture, which the show consistently positions on the side of moral righteousness. Alternatively, President Bush's stance on torture is presented as guided by

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a clear-cut cowboy mythology. Malphurs, in the article discussed above, mentions a

2007 popular article in which the author states that to understand Bush's torture policies,

one must simply look to the cowboy art that decks walls of the President's oval office.

Lawrence and Jewett, in *The Myth of the American Superhero* (2002), clarify what this

means when they write that the cowboy's "extra-legal violence and personal vengeance

are essential to [his] vigilante ideology" (p. 40). President Bush is presented as the

justice and retribution-seeking vigilante who authorizes torture because it's the patriotic

thing to do, whereas Logan, the not-Bush character is, in his early stage as President, too

concerned with things like multilateralism and careful decision making—all of which the

show paints as antagonistic—to do "whatever is needed" to protect the U.S.

Moral Codes

Logan is vilified as a shirker in *24* by breaching the moral boundaries of the

show's preferred brand of masculinity. Masculinity, characterized by staunch machismo

in the show, is an important moral code by which the hero, Bauer, abides, but Logan

continuously breaks. The fear, weakness, physical insecurity, and emotionality Logan

exhibits in the aforementioned scenes support this claim. They counter the hero's (as

well as the cowboy's) qualities of macho fearlessness, physical strength, and tendencies

toward violence, and therefore abuse the show's moral code of an exaggerated

masculinity, or what Erica Scharrer (2005) defines as "hypermasculinity." Additional

ways in which Logan breaches the boundaries of idealized masculinity as it is portrayed

in the show are his inability to lead, his concern about his image, and his episodes of

hysteria. This villain's affronts to the moral code of macho masculinity in *24* are

described in the following pages.

The first example of Logan breaching the moral code of macho masculinity

revolves around his ineffectiveness as a leader. This characteristic of Logan's is

highlighted during Day 4. Logan, the former Vice President, has just taken over the U.S.

Presidency. After a series of poor decisions, Logan admits that he is not fit to run the

country on his own. Taking the advice of veteran staff person Novick, Logan calls in

former President Palmer—the beloved leader from prior days of the show—to help him

steer the country during the day's terrorist attacks. Logan's call for help signals his

breach of the show's code of masculinity, a code of self-sufficiency and decisiveness.

Palmer's role during this day is not only to advise the new President about handling the

day's terrorist attacks, but also to advise Logan on how to be a more manly man and

hence a better leader.

A scene that provides evidence for this claim can be found during the 3:00 a.m.

hour of Day 4. Palmer, having been called in by Logan to take over the Presidency in all

ways except the title, works with Bauer and CTU to stop the impending nuclear attack.

When the Chinese consulate in L.A. refuses to release to CTU a terrorist suspect with ties

to Marwan, Palmer authorizes a rogue mission for Bauer and his masked men to enter the

consulate and capture the suspect. The mission results in the death of the Chinese

Consulate. If they can prove that the U.S. government was involved in the incident, the

Chinese intend to take it as an aggressive act and respond accordingly. Logan, who is left

out of the loop due to his proven inability to make tough, timely decisions, displays his

lack of leadership in his response to the news.

The scene begins with Logan walking into the office where Palmer and Novick are talking. He asks Palmer, "What the hell have you done?" and then explains that the Secretary of State told him about the covert action that Palmer authorized at the Chinese embassy. His voice getting louder and face redder with each passing word, Logan tells Palmer that the action at the embassy could provoke a war. This exchange between Logan and Palmer then transpires:

> Logan: (Yelling) Now how am I supposed to be able to fight terrorists while I'm provoking a nuclear superpower?
>
> Palmer: I would advise you to calm down, sir, if we're going to get through this day. We didn't bring this crisis on ourselves, but we're going to be the ones to settle it. This is a dirty business, and we're going to have to get our hands dirty to clean it up. Now, please, Mr. President, you brought me here to help you. Let me do it.

Logan looks at Novick, then back at Palmer, but stays silent. The scene ends with the ticking clock.

This scene demonstrates that Logan does not have the manly leadership skills necessary for a U.S. President in *24*. First, Logan questions Palmer's authorization of the attack, expressing mistrust in the decision-making of the very person he put in charge. Logan's loud and angry tantrum about the ambush of the embassy comes off as childish, especially in contrast to Palmer's calm and secure demeanor, which characterized his successful handling of terrorist situations in prior days. When Logan yells, "How am I supposed to be able to fight terrorists while I am provoking a nuclear superpower," he does many things: he expresses his inability to do more than one thing at a time; he

admits to being intimidated by China; and he displays his fear of being personally accountable for committing controversial actions. None of these are fit for a President, who must adhere to the show's codes of macho masculinity, as Palmer's response illustrates and cements.

Palmer first tells Logan that he must calm down if they are going to get through the day, sending the message that his emotionality is unfit for a manly leader. When Palmer tells Logan "We didn't bring this crisis on ourselves, but we're going to be the ones to settle it," he expresses the *24* brand of macho fearlessness exhibited by the show's male heroes in *24*. This quality required of a leader is exaggerated when Palmer says that the dirty business of terrorism requires getting hands dirty to end it. Law breaking is clearly a part of that macho fearlessness, based on the rogue ambush he authorizes. Finally, Palmer reminds the new President that Logan himself recognizes his weakness as a leader and called Palmer to help. When Palmer says, "Now let me do it," he at once displays Logan's weakness in asking for help and reinforces his own manliness and resolve in coming to the rescue with a willingness to get his hands dirty.

Logan's explosive and hysterical emotional expression presents another breach to the virile masculinity befitting of a *24* man—and certainly President. Many of the scenes so far described illustrate this, highlighting Logan's raised voice, reddening face, pointing fingers, and general loss of emotional and physical control. A scene during Day 5 provides even more evidence of Logan's out-of-control emotionality. Russian nationalist terrorists have taken over a U.S. airport and televise an announcement that they will begin killing hostages unless Logan and the Russian President, Suvarov (Nick Jameson), denounce the anti-terror treaty they plan to sign that day.

Logan has an explosive reaction to the news that terrorists plan to kill American hostages unless he repudiates the "crowning achievement" of his presidency, the anti-terror accord. In an office with his staff men Novick and Cummings, Logan watches the masked terrorists make their demands on television. He switches off the television and then yells the following:

> Logan: This is insane. How do these people get control of an entire airport? We've been preparing for this summit for sixteen months. Every news agency in the world is here! I – I've staked my entire administration on this day and now these people are demanding that I go on national television and publicly repudiate everything we've done?
>
> Novick: (Motioning for Logan to lower his voice) Mr. President, perhaps you should take a few moments –
>
> Logan: (Screams) Mike! I want this handled! (Pointing) Do you understand? I – I don't care how you do it. I don't care what it takes. (Slaps the table) Fix it!

Logan leaves the office. Novick and Cummings exchange a glance. Novick takes a breath and shakes his head. The scene ends.

Logan's yelling, pointing, and table slapping illustrate his hysteria. He once again demonstrates in this scene his inability to handle a stressful situation without having an emotional outburst. Novick motions for him to calm down and suggests he take a few moments, probably to gather his composure. But Logan bites back, screaming for Novick to "fix it." In demanding that Novick come to his rescue, Logan reinforces his inability to handle things on his own like a "real man." This emotional outburst harkens back to Day 4 and reminds audiences of Logan's continued unmanly approach to crises.

Despite the fact that Logan has gained some experience in the role of President, his unrestrained fits of rage show that he is still in breach of the moral code of masculinity suitable for a man and even more so, the nation's leader.

In addition to his lack of leadership and explosive emotionality, Logan breaches the show's boundaries of masculinity by expressing concern over his appearance. In stark contrast to the show's manly heroes, who are never seen to express concern over their looks, Logan is obsessed with his public image. The very first scene in which Logan appears in Day 5 is a testament to this point. At the beginning of the day, Logan is awaiting the arrival of the Russian President to discuss the anti-terrorism alliance they plan to enact. Logan, in planning for their press appearance, manipulates the setting to prop himself up, so as to appear as tall as the Russian President. This signifies the President's preoccupation with his appearance, and his need to make himself look bigger than he actually is—an action with metaphorical significance.

At 7:00 a.m., Logan and his two head staff people, Cummings and Novick, are briefed in a White House office while awaiting the Russian President's arrival. The following conversation transpires:

Logan: Walt! My chair?

Cummings: Don't worry Mr. President. I had it adjusted.

Logan: Good.

Novick: Adjusted? Wait a minute, what are we talking about here?

Cummings: Yuri Suvarov is over six feet. The Russian President can't be looking down at the President of the United States with the cameras rolling.

Novick: That's a risky proposition, Walt. If the press finds out about it –

Cummings: They won't.

Logan: (Pointing at the television) Don't underestimate the power of the image, Mike.

Logan then explains that this is the "defining moment of [his] administration" and that it's important the media presents it "the right way."

This scene shows that Logan's media savvy is fueled by his insecurity and failure of masculinity. Cummings' explanation that the chair was adjusted on Logan's orders to prevent the Russian President from towering over the American President signals Logan's insecurity about appearing smaller in stature and in power than his Russian counterpart. When Logan points at the television and tells Mike not to underestimate the power of the image, he calls attention to his preoccupation with his public appearance. Despite the risks associated with manipulating the President's chair to make him appear larger, which Novick points out, Logan and his Chief of Staff insist on the supremacy of the image. This symbolizes that since Logan is not big and strong in his actions, he must at least fool people into thinking he is bigger and stronger physically. In obsessing about his physical appearance next to the leader of another superpower, Logan expresses his self-doubt, thereby breaking the show's code of idealized masculinity. While surely real-life politicians attend to their media images with care, it is telling that when *24* reveals this 'behind-the-curtain' view of the villainous President, it exposes his departure from the show's preferred brand of masculinity.

The macho code of masculinity that Logan breaches by failing to lead unilaterally, behaving hysterically and obsessing over his appearance can be seen in contrast to a cowboy code of masculinity. Lawrence and Jewett describe the rugged,

manly characteristics of the mythic cowboy figure in *The Myth of the American Superhero* (2002). The authors point on in their text that the cowboy acts boldly and independently, seeking advice from no one and relying solely on his sense of morality and quest for retribution. The cowboy is cool and collected, emotions never impeding his ability to "get the job done." The cowboy does not *try* to look tough; he simply *is* tough. The iconic cowboy hat and boots have come to emblemize the cowboy's brand of rogue masculinity, but he doesn't fuss over his appearance. The mythic cowboy is a man of the wild, with little regard for the law or others' opinions of him. According to Lawrence and Jewett, he stands out in the American collective imagination as not only an iconic masculine figure but as a human superhero.

Logan's emasculated character can be compared to President George W. Bush's hypermasculine cowboy image, to which the show's male heroes, especially Bauer, conform. Bush's media constructed "tough guy" image, especially in the wake of 9/11, has been a popular topic of inquiry for communication scholars. Mark Crispin Miller, in his book *The Bush Dyslexicon* (2001), describes how Bush's macho media image, combined with his bad grammar and anti-intellectualism, transformed him from an elite Yale aristocrat to "the guy next door" in the public imagination. Norman Mailer, in an interview in *Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear & the Selling of American Empire* (2004), describes how and why Bush adopts a macho image. In pulling media stunts like flying a fighter plane in full combat gear and declaring "Bring it on!" in a lead up to the Iraq war, Mailer argues that Bush uses machismo as a trope with which to win over white, male supporters who feel devalued due to the women's liberation movement.

These rough and tough images of President Bush stand in stark contrast to the insecure, emotional and vain characterization of President Logan.

Punishment?

Logan is presented as a shirker who evades the duties of the presidency in *24*. His vilification is underscored by his breaching of the show's moral codes of masculinity. As Klapp highlights in his writing about villains, one of their main social functions is to show what happens to social members who cross the community's moral boundaries. The show's treatment of Logan is therefore critical in understanding his villainy. Logan is threatened, redeemed, and physically wounded in the show. Presenting a sharp contrast to the brutal ways in which foreign and female villains examined in this paper are punished, Logan is given a chance at forgiveness in the show, and ends Day 6 a rehabilitated man. Unlike the other two villains analyzed, Logan is granted the opportunity for redemption, a main difference being that he is a straight, white man—a type worthy of salvation in the show.

The first way Logan is punished in the show is when Bauer captures and threatens him in the final hour of Day 5. Bauer has discovered that Logan authorized the day's terrorist attacks, which resulted in the murder of many innocent Americans, including some of Bauer's close personal friends. When taped evidence of Logan's involvement is destroyed, Bauer covertly enters the President's plane as he is about to take off, captures him at gunpoint, and breaks into a government building basement where he attempts to record Logan's confession. Logan offers Bauer whatever he wants—immunity, escape from the country, enough money to start a new life—but Bauer demands a confession and

the names of the other people involved in the conspiracy. Logan says he will not confess.

Bauer cuffs Logan to a pipe, gives him a seat to sit in, and sets up a computer to record

the confession. Bauer threatens to kill Logan but never lays a hand on him – leaving him

entirely unharmed.

The interrogation scene at 6:00 a.m. illustrates that this threat of harm is just a

bluff. When Bauer demands that Logan name his co-conspirators, Logan says, "A man

will say anything under torture. This won't mean a thing." To this Bauer responds, "Mr.

Logan, I'm not going to torture you. But you are going to tell me what I want to know,

or so help me God I will kill you." Bauer sits across from Logan and begins the

questioning with a gun in hand. Bauer explains to Logan how his conspiratorial actions

personally affected him, resulting in the deaths of friends and affecting his relationship

with his daughter. "I have absolutely nothing to lose" Bauer tells the President before

again demanding he name his co-conspirators.

The scene continues when Bauer tells Logan he has until the count of three to

confess, or he will kill him. Bauer counts to one and two, forcing the gun closer and

closer to Logan's face, as the President tries to convince Bauer that he will go down in

history as a martyr while Bauer will go down an assassin. Logan tells Bauer that if he

loved his country, he would not murder its President. Bauer screams three and Logan,

gun inches from his head, tightens his eyes. Bauer's hand and the gun shake. Logan

opens his eyes, cocks his head to the side, and says, "You can't do it can you?" Bauer

tightens his grip and Logan nods and repeatedly tells Bauer "It's alright." Logan adds,

"It's right that you can't. I'm the President." Bauer's mouth twitches, but he does not

move. Secret Service moves in, frees Logan, and takes Bauer into custody.

This scene shows how Bauer threatens Logan, but never actually hurts him. Bauer claims to have nothing to lose, that he is willing to kill the President. However, his inaction proves Bauer is bluffing. Bauer makes clear at the start of the questioning that he will not torture the President. Despite being personally affected by Logan's actions, Bauer does not inflict pain that so often serves as a successful information-gathering tactic. Bauer's refusal to torture Logan implies a respect for his body, being white and male, and his position of power. Bauer's trembling hand as he holds the gun to Logan's face expresses his inner turmoil, his inability to entirely smash the moral code of respecting authority. When Bauer cannot kill Logan, Logan attempts to sooth Bauer's mind, telling him that it's right he could not kill the President. Logan appeals to Bauer's moral impetus, reminding him that it would be morally wrong to kill the man with the highest status and authority in the country. Bauer's refusal to torture Logan and his inability to kill him leaves the villain threatened but unharmed.

Logan returns the following day, Day 6, a changed man. Instead of being punished in his return, Logan is offered a chance at redemption. After his involvement in the terrorist attacks of Day 5, Logan is prosecuted and confined to house arrest. As Bauer and CTU begin to investigate the current day's attacks, Logan calls Bauer from his ranch and insists he has information and connections to a Russian terrorist plotting with Muslim extremists to coordinate an attack against the U.S. Claiming to be interested only in redemption, the scruffier Logan convinces the new President to release him into CTU custody to help stop the attacks. The President complies and releases Logan to Bauer. However, Logan has to work to redeem himself in Bauer's eyes.

Scenes at 4:00 p.m. exemplify Logan's attempts at redemption from his villain status. Bauer confronts Logan, who has been released to his custody, at Logan's ranch. The former President has a messy grey beard and wears a corduroy jacket over a plaid shirt. He tells Bauer he can help him find Gredanko, the Russian terrorist CTU seeks. When Bauer insinuates that Logan must want a plea agreement in exchange for cooperating, Logan claims that that is not the case. He explains:

> I'm not the same man I was two years ago…I've changed. I've had time to think about what I did. I've had time to reconnect to my faith. So no, I don't want a pardon, and I wouldn't accept it if it was offered to me.

Later, while Bauer awaits Logan inside his home, Logan says privately into the mirror: "You brought me out of a horrible pit and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings." In a following scene, Bauer flips to a bookmarked page in the Bible at Logan's ranch and a highlighted section reads, "Out of the mud and the mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand."

These scenes show how Logan is offered redemption in the show. By adopting a more down-to-earth look and, by reconnecting to his Christian faith, Logan leaves behind his evil villain status. His refusal of a pardon proves that he is willing to repent for his wrongdoings. When he says, "You brought me out of a horrible pit" to himself in the mirror, he talks to God—but also to Bauer. This is supported by the matching passage Bauer finds bookmarked and highlighted in Logan's Bible. Bauer exposed Logan's conspiracy in Day 5, brought him out of his pit of deception, and also spared his life when he had the chance to kill him. Because of this Logan is a changed man—no longer a villain, but an aspiring national hero. Unlike the other villains examined in this paper,

Logan repents and is redeemed as his information helps lead Bauer and CTU to the terrorists threatening the U.S. that day.

The transformation of Logan from selfish villain to sacrificing heroic type is presented as his transition into manhood. The new Logan presented in Day 6 in fact resembles the virtuous masculine media image of President George W. Bush. The vision of Logan on his ranch in laymen's clothes evokes images of Bush on his Texas ranch, images that Malphurs (2008) points out were instrumental to the media's construction of the president as a cowboy. Malphurs writes that in doing business from "The Western White House," Bush's Prairie Chapel Ranch in Crawford, Texas, and inviting news crews to the scene, Bush gave media plenty of ammunition to paint him as a macho cowboy.

Logan's newfound Christianity is also a move towards a more Bush-like persona. In addition to his cowboy machismo, Christian religiosity was a major component of Bush's public image. Henry Giroux, in "Beyond Belief: Religious Fundamentalism and Cultural Politics in the Age of George W. Bush" (2004), explains that Bush's Christian fundamentalism colored both his persona and his policies. He writes:

> Believing he is on a direct mission from God, President Bush openly celebrates
> the virtues of evangelical Christian morality, prays daily, and expresses his
> fervent belief in Christianity in both his rhetoric and policy choices (p. 204).

The new force of Christianity in Logan's life as he attempts to redeem himself presents a shift toward a more Bush-like character. Logan's character is born-again as a Christian cowboy, and given an opportunity to act as a hero in his new self-sacrificing, more masculine role.

The final element of Logan's treatment in the show is his unprovoked stabbing at the hands of a hysterical woman in Day 6. Logan visits the home of his ex-wife, Martha (Jean Smart). She is shaken to see him and upset by his presence, but she agrees to cooperate with him when he explains that her relationship with the First Lady of Russia may help CTU locate a dangerous Russian terrorist. Martha, who suffers from psychotic episodes (as illustrated in Day 5 by her need for medication and reference to her prior institutionalization), is not able to see Logan for the changed man that he is. Instead of recognizing his redeemed status, Martha acts on her desire for vengeance for Logan's involvement in the murder of her friend David Palmer by thrusting a knife into her ex-husband. Logan, attempting to do the right thing for his country and repent for his sins, suffers unfair persecution at the hands of his insane ex-wife.

Logan waits in the home of Martha and her new partner, Secret Serviceman Aaron Pierce (Glenn Morshower) as CTU tries to reach Russian First Lady Suvarov on the telephone for Martha. Logan sits on a couch across from Martha and Pierce. Martha, with a tear running down her face, asks Logan if it bothers him to see her with another man. When he admits that it does, she says, "But you've had a rebirth. You should be happy for my happiness." When he says he is, she says, "I'm sure you are" and walks behind Logan to the kitchen where she frantically dices kiwi while yelling insults at him. Her partner asks her to calm down because she's going to "get all stirred up," to which she replies, "Oh wow, God, we couldn't have that, could we?" Martha brings the kiwi back to the table and sits on the couch. Logan thanks Pierce for being there for Martha and tells him he is a good man and she is lucky to have him. Martha says, "Oh, cut the crap with the sincerity, the new enlightened soul. At least you used to be an honest

crook!" She throws a piece of kiwi at Logan. When Aaron tells her to stop, Martha says, "Sorry, I'll be a good little girl." She picks up a plate from the table and walks behind Logan. She pauses in back of him, pulls a knife from the top of the plate, and stabs Logan near his shoulder. Martha repeatedly utters, "He wouldn't stop" and lets out a shrill cry as Pierce yells for a paramedic. The audience is lead to believe that Logan dies as a result of the stabbing, as he does not reappear during the day.

Logan's final punishment is to be bloodied by his mentally unstable ex-wife. She mocks his newfound Christianity twice, first when she says he should be happy for her because of his rebirth, and again when she sarcastically calls him an "enlightened soul" and tells him to "cut the crap." Martha's emotional state and her increased agitation are illustrated by her tears, throwing of the kiwi, and rain of insults on her ex-husband. When her partner expresses concern over her getting "all worked up," his real fear is her having a psychotic fit. He is rightly concerned when Martha stabs her ex-husband—a Christian man repenting for his sins and trying to stop a terrorist attack against his country. Her repetition of phrases and screaming after the stabbing underscore her psychotic state. While even Bauer, a man who was deeply hurt by Logan's conniving ways, can forgive Logan and accept his help for the sake of their country, Logan's unstable ex-wife is unable to do so. Logan is injured when Martha mocks his religiosity and expresses her own selfish quest for revenge with a knife to his body.

Chapter Conclusion

Logan is vilified as a shirker in *24*. He evades the important duties of the American presidency by choosing his personal safety over the well-being of the

American people, failing to make tough and timely decisions when his country is under attack, and aiding a terrorist plot in order to appease his voter base. He breaches the show's boundaries of macho masculinity by failing to be a good leader, behaving hysterically, and obsessing over his public image. His treatment in the show is a mix of gentle punishment and redemption. The show's hero threatens him but is unable to actually hurt him due to a morality that emphasizes a filial respect for authority. Logan is later offered a chance at redemption after he is reborn as a Christian cowboy-type, but his deranged ex-wife stabs him while he is on his way to atonement. Logan's evolution over the first six days of the show from insecure, novice leader to a calculating terrorist conspirator to an aspiring national hero are unique; neither Marwan nor Myers transforms in such a dynamic way as the white, male presidential character.

That Logan's treatment in the first six days of the show is not only gentle punishment (in the form of threats), but also redemption, is an important point. Unlike Marwan and Myers, this white, male villain does not end Day 6 on an evil note. He ends the day a reborn soul, having rid his character of evil through his newfound religion. He wraps up the season rehabilitated, his villainous actions explained away by his lack of Christianity in days past. Even Logan's slippage back to villainy in Day 8, the final season of *24*, does not negate this finding. Unlike the other villains this paper has considered, Logan is granted the opportunity to redeem himself. In Day 8 he is even entrusted with access to the White House once again after he has already coordinated a terrorist attack from within its walls in Day 5!

It is true that Logan ultimately winds up on the wrong side of *24* history. But it is impossible to determine whether this eventuality is an effect of the show's creators

needing to end the series quickly (and hence their relying on a duplicitous character to that end) or a concerted effort on behalf of Howard Gordon, the Executive Producer who took over for Joel Surnow to oversee *24*'s final two seasons, to attempt to prove there is no ideological slant to the show. Whatever the motivating factor for Logan's re-branding as a villain in Day 8 after his reinvention as a hero-type in Day 6, it is hard to imagine Myers or Marwan traveling such a multifarious path. Logan, the white male of high status in the show, embodies complexities and an ability to be both good and bad, whereas Myers, being female, and Marwan, being Middle Eastern and Muslim, are intrinsically—and invariably—evil. Their characters were born and died that way.

The inclusion of characters like Logan as bad guys in *24* might add to the overall diversity of villains in the show. But to use the show's white male villains as a vehicle for warding off criticism of the show's problematic portrayals of foreign and female villains is absurd. A closer look at the relatively benign ways in which this bureaucratic or corporate type of bad guy is vilified in the show, compared the brutal ways in which the racialized and gendered villains are characterized, warrants more criticism of the show, not less. This chapter supports John Downing's (2007) observation that while foreign terrorists are evil to the core and devoid of reason, domestic bad guys in the show are good guys gone astray, operating on misdirected reasoning. Misdirected reasoning can be corrected in *24*; an evil soul cannot.

It is also important to underscore that Logan's misdirected reasoning in the show is positioned as the mark of the shirker. President Logan's emasculated "not cowboy" vilification in Days 4 and 5 of the show, and President Bush's cowboy lionization in the media, present a striking contrast. Coupled with the point that Logan becomes more

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Bush-like (residing on his ranch having found Christianity) as he sheds his villain status, Logan's character reinforces the concept that in the world of *24*, George Bush-types are good guys. This applies to an argument posed by scholar Kirby Ferrell, who argues in "Toxic Cops" (2007) that agents of nation states are increasingly depicted as evil to help audiences deal with the alienating effects of capitalism. This may be the case with *24*, but what are the implications when these agents are vilified in ways that reinforce the hypermasculine, unilateral, above-the-law cowboy ideal for those in power?

A study on vilification that clearly resonates with this analysis can be found in *The Changing Face of Evil in Film and Television* (Norden, 2007). John F. Stone's chapter, "The Perfidious President and 'The Beast': Evil in Oliver Stone's *Nixon*," analyzes the ways in which the President Nixon character is vilified in the film. He finds that Nixon is vilified on a micro level by his petty behavior and flawed character, and on a macro level by his conspiratorial activities. The author concludes that the film, in vilifying a presidential character, "signals a willingness to recognize the potential for evil in places, people, and positions that were, heretofore, largely taboo" (p. 177). The same argument can be made for the vilification of Logan's presidential character in *24*. However, the author makes an even more important point: that these new and nuanced representations of evil on screen should provoke even more investigations into the nature of evil on screen, not hinder it.

In closing this chapter, Klapp's categorization of villain types is an appropriate end point. The bureaucratic villain analyzed in this chapter most closely fits the definition of a shirker. Unlike the foreign and female villains analyzed in this paper, this type of villain falls under the theorist's category of "low or delayed visibility." The villain-types

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that comprise this category are not easily recognizable and need to be discovered or

"flushed out." What is it that makes this type of villain, even today—over fifty years

after Klapp's writing—so difficult to detect? One could certainly argue in *24* that the

bureaucratic villain's white maleness—typically markers of a hero in the show—helps to

mask his villainy. The white male is a hero until proven villain in *24*. Klapp's writing is

half a century old, and yet the idea that characters marked by gender or race can wear

their villainy on their bodies persists. Logan's vilification as a low-profile shirker in *24*

only reinforces the dominant cultural trend that positions female and non-white

characters as more obviously evil.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

A conclusion of this study of vilification in the Fox show *24* should begin by situating the show within its originating cultural milieu. *24* premiered just weeks after 9/11, and many interpret the show—especially the seasons produced immediately after September 11—to be a direct response to those events. The show was quickly embraced and celebrated for its cutting-edge, real-time format and dramatic appeal, climbing to the top of television ratings charts at its premiere and being nominated for eighteen Primetime Emmy awards for its first six seasons ("*24* [TV Series]", 2008). The American public and Hollywood were joined by many politicians in their adoration of the show, who publicly applauded *24*'s life-like depiction of the war on terror (Mayer, 2007). Fans and critics alike deemed the show innovative. But how innovative is *24* in its depiction of villains? According to the research conducted for this thesis, hardly.

Villains from the McCarthy era are recycled and repackaged in *24*. Monsters, shirkers and flouters—villain-types identified by sociologist Orrin E. Klapp over fifty years ago—populate the *24*-villain scene. And not only are the types of villains left over from the Cold War era, but so too are the ways in which the characters are vilified. Female villains, as represented by the character Nina Myers, are disloyal status-abusers who use sex to do evil. Foreign villains are often Middle Eastern terrorists like Habib Marwan who, despite the explanations they give for their actions, are reasonless monsters hell-bent on destroying America. Bureaucratic villains like Charles Logan are harder to detect because of their "lower visibility" as powerful white, male characters. Vilified by his weakness, this bad guy has a chance to become good when he adopts a stereotypically

masculine, Christian stance. While the intricacies of these characters' vilification may be more complex than what Klapp observed half a century ago, the general constructs are stale.

A review of the findings from the analysis illustrates how, while complex in many ways, the villains of *24* reflect routine ideas of who and what is bad. Marwan is a Middle Eastern terrorist who is vilified as a Muslim monster. The reasons for his evildoing are "beyond the realm of human comprehension," despite the lengthy political rhetoric he and his henchmen use to justify their terrorism. In the end it is clear that what Marwan really wants—his true motivation—is to see Americans dead and America destroyed, a concept that is made unintelligible and therefore monstrous in the show. By doing evil within U.S. borders, manipulating U.S. resources and policies, this villain blurs the show's moral boundaries of good insider versus bad outsider. The villain's punishment consists of the hero slowly, and with great pleasure, inflicting pain on him. Marwan's ultimate demise comes when the villain commits suicide. He happily martyrs himself believing he has achieved his evil goal of a nuclear attack on America. When the show's hero stops the bomb before it detonates, the monster's self-destruction is mocked, and is transformed into the object of pleasure for the hero.

Marwan's vilification as a Muslim monster is not innovative. In his analysis of nearly one thousand films, dating back to some of the very first ever made, Jack Shaheen (2001) shows that characters of Muslim descent, particularly Arabs, are almost always villains. Shaheen demonstrates that the evil Muslim terrorist is a historically popular screen villain. Theorists who have specifically considered villains in *24* have also pointed out the show's stereotypical depictions of Middle Easterners (Downing, 2007).

While the show makes Marwan's brand of monstrosity complex by invoking such reasons for his evildoing as "U.S. empire" and "crimes against humanity," it ultimately empty his rhetoric of meaning by treating those concepts as merely terrorist buzzwords. In so doing, the show tosses Marwan into the group that Shaheen so extensively criticizes: the "Reel Bad Arab" (or in this case—"Reel Bad Turk"). Although Marwan is a Western-educated chemist with a British accent, these character details do not dilute his status as an evil monster to be destroyed. If anything, Marwan's surface Westernization functions to show that in the world of *24*, there just might be a terrorist lurking in your backyard—and you might as well enjoy killing him before he detonates a bomb and happily kills himself along with you.

The female villains of *24* also fit a tired mold. Myers has all of the marks of the femme fatale from mid-twentieth century film noir. She is a flouter who continuously abuses the patriarchal social order by deceiving her male superiors. She uses sex as her main tool for doing evil, seducing and manipulating the show's heroes at every turn. Myers, as a consequence of her villainy, is punished in ways that exert male dominance over her body. The show's hero chokes and beats her, strips her naked, and executes her when she is no longer of value to him. He demonstrates in the show that the proper response to her sexually untamed villainy is brutal abuse and, finally, murder. Bauer's fatal, final action against Myers is never punished or even questioned in the show. Indeed, Bauer's execution of the woman who betrayed him and his country functions as the heroic and justifiable endpoint to her evil.

Vilifying female characters by marking them as self-interested, double-crossing sex vixens is standard screen practice. As Marwan's character matches up in many ways

with the age-old media depictions of Middle Easterners, Myers' character embodies the classic femme fatale. Her self-sufficiency is a constant abuse of what is presented as the show's "natural" social order. Her independence in and of itself is marked as evil. Myers' sexual independence heightens this evil characterization, for it is through her use of sexuality that she is best able to deceive the show's heroes and exert her villainous power. Myers' untamed sexuality reinforces the show's moral boundaries of good girls (powerless, family-oriented victims) and bad girls (powerful, family-abusing villains). When the show's hero assaults her over and over again, he punishes Myers for her sexual misbehavior as well as her villainy, since they are presented as one-and-the-same. The take-home message here seems to be that in the world of *24*, a woman expressing independence—especially sexual independence—is inherently evil and should be beaten into submission. If she refuses to obey, she deserves a death sentence, whether or not the authorities formally authorize the murder.

In contrast to the Middle Eastern and female villain this paper has examined, the white male villain in *24* deserves a shot at rehabilitation. Logan is considered as a prime example of the group of bureaucratic and/or corporate bad guys that pepper the *24*-villain scene. He fits the description of a shirker: a villain who evades an important duty by failing to be presidential. Logan's presidential failure is marked by his failure to embody the show's preferred brand of masculinity. The show emasculates his character by presenting him as scared, weak, indecisive, emotional and self-interested—in utter contrast to the show's hypermasculine male heroes. While the bureaucratic villain may represent a less stereotypical screen villain than American television audiences might be used to, his vilification reinforces age-old ideas about masculinity and power. Also, as

opposed to the show's more flagrant non-white and female villains who are destroyed with pleasure, Logan's treatment in Days 1 through 6 is a mix of gentle punishment and rehabilitation.

Logan is treated as a good guy gone astray in the first six seasons of *24*. Unlike Marwan and Myers, Logan is not presented as evil to the core but as a decent soul who has been corrupted. This is evidenced by the fact that Bauer, in confronting Logan for the first time after realizing his villainy, cannot hurt Logan. Bauer threatens the President but is physically unable to inflict harm on his body. It is unclear whether Bauer's refusal to hurt Logan is due to Logan's status as President or to the essential goodness Bauer sees deep inside him. But either way, this confrontation shows that in the world of *24*, a white collar—and white male—villain is not to be severely punished. He should be given a chance to redeem himself. This is exactly what Logan does when he is reinvented in Day 5 as a macho, Bush-like cowboy who has found God. He comes back to help Bauer— and America—in order to repent for his sins. And while his mentally deranged ex-wife (who is too hysterical to recognize his born again goodness) bloodies him, he has a window of opportunity to become good. Though in Day 8 that window closes as Logan ends the series a villain, it is important to consider the chance he is granted to transform.

The differences in the ways in which Middle Eastern, female, and white male enemies are vilified in *24* cannot be understated. That the show's producers and commentators use "equal opportunity vilification" as a way to defend its portrayals is extremely problematic at best. If there is a single point this thesis hopes to make it is this one: criticism of the show *24* and its ideological power—especially in relation to vilification—should not and cannot be hindered by the "everyone's a villain" argument.

A closer examination of the show's villains reveals deeply disturbing trends about who and what is villainous, and how that villainy ought to be punished. This analysis has illustrated that in the world of *24*, "highly visible villains" (like female and Middle Eastern enemies) should be violated and killed, whereas "villains of delayed or low visibility" (like bad white, male bureaucrats) should be shamed and attempts at rehabilitation made.

One might wonder why it matters how enemies are constructed within the world of one television show. First, I argue that *24* is not just another TV show. As Jane Mayer (2007) explains in her seminal article about the politics in *24*, the show carried tremendous political and cultural weight during the post-9/11 years of the Bush administration. Joel Surnow, the show's co-creator and Executive Producer of its first six seasons, was not bashful about deeming *24* part of the war on terror. Leading up to and during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, many spoke of the show as though it reflected the realities of America's battle against terrorism. The show has been connected time and time again to U.S. practices and policies about torture, as the collections of essays about *24* summarized in the Literature Review illustrate.

Most recently, Glenn Greenwald (2010) wrote an article about French documentarians who created a faux torture experiment to replicate the famous 1961 Stanley Milgram one, wherein participants were instructed to administer an electric shock to a person in the next room. Greenwald hypothesizes that the results, an increase from 65% who shocked in 1961 to 81% who shocked today, can be at least partially attributed to the pro-torture ideological effects of *24* and other Fox shows. While the participants in the documentary's experiment were not subjected directly to the show, *24* has been

recognized as an important and influential cultural text in the years after 9/11. Just as the show's depictions of torture and ethics are cast in critical light, so must its portrayals of villains.

Villains are agents of social control. This is the argument Klapp makes as he examines vilification in American culture at the dawn of the Cold War. He writes in 1954 that vilification is a group process by which a community or society deems certain people and behaviors as abnormal and undesirable. It is a process the group undergoes in order to sustain its moral boundaries, its ideas of what is right and wrong, good and bad. Klapp highlights that crises make particularly good breeding grounds for heroes and villains because a crisis throws into chaos the moral boundaries by which the society organizes itself. Vilification functions as a form of social control because it provides an opportunity for the community, in that time of chaos, to reaffirm the identity and immorality of the bad guy, and, in contrast, its own group identity and morality.

Glowing like a beacon in the dark cultural chaos that followed the attacks of September 11 was the show *24*. If Klapp's theory is correct, then the show's villains and heroes acted as agents of social control in order to help redefine U.S. group identity and morality in the aftermath of 9/11. What kind of group identity and morality does the show help to establish? It helps to reestablish, in heightened ways, values reflective of the Bush administration, in which Christian Right paleoconservative, and military interventionist neoconservative interests aligned. This ideology emphasizes prejudice over inclusion and values the sanctity of the family—as long as the woman's most important societal role is that of mother. At the same time this ideology envisions the struggle against terrorism as a war of good versus evil, one in which American military

might must prevail. I argue that the villains of *24* are important players in this ideological warfare. Marwan acts as the evil Muslim monster that must be destroyed. Myers performs as the disobedient woman who uses sex to destroy families (and hence the country), who must also be destroyed. Logan plays the weakling bureaucrat who, to become a hero, must become George Bush. All of these villains, each in their own way, help to bolster the values that characterize the Bush administration.

If *24*'s villains act as agents of social control in the Bush administration post-9/11 war on terror years, so too do the show's heroes. In order to understand how *24* might contribute to an idealized sense of American national identity, it is important to consider how the show envisions heroism. A look at the show's ultimate hero, Jack Bauer, provides some frightening insight. He breaks laws, repeatedly and without repercussions. He breaks into embassies and kidnaps suspects. He beats, strangles, tortures, and—for all intents and purposes—rapes women. He does whatever it takes to get the job done, regardless of whom he hurts or kills along the way. His only moral obligation seems to be to the good (virtuous and vulnerable) members of his family, and to the mass of people that comprise the group "innocent Americans." He puts his life on the line and commits a host of violent acts on their behalf, for which he is repeatedly pardoned, and permanently idolized in the show. *24* protagonist Michelle Dessler, Director of CTU during Day 4, has a conversation with CTU Agent Tony Almaeda in which they solidify Jack's heroic status at the end of the day:

> Almaeda: It's funny, this morning Jack and Audrey were planning their future. Now he's responsible for her husband's death and he may have to torture her brother.

Michelle: And yet, every move he's made has been the right one.

Despite all of the legal, moral, and ethical boundaries Bauer crosses in the show, he is positioned as heroic. Bauer's actions, if committed by a villain, would be evil. But there is one important distinction that seems to separate Bauer from the villains: Bauer is on our side. Following the logic of *24*, if morally, legally, and ethically reprehensible actions are committed on "our" behalf, by one of "us," then they are by necessity good.

It is time we seriously consider what kinds of actions are being committed on our behalf in the stories we tell, and whether or not these actions are permissible in the society we wish to create. The methodological approach I have taken in this paper falls at the intersection of rhetorical and cultural studies. It considers popular texts, such as television shows, cultural artifacts that influence the growth of a people. I have analyzed characters in *24* to understand how their villainy is constructed within the world of the show. Early on in this thesis I asked how, in constructing villains in certain ways, *24* might symbolically nurture and engender some members of society. The results of this analysis show that vilification in *24* reinforces dominant xenophobic, patriarchal and hypermasculine values. While this might positively affect elite social members who profit from the maintenance of the status quo, it has damning implications for people of color, women, and members of other minority groups.

As explained in the introductory chapters, the lines between reality and fantasy blur when it comes to heroes and villains. Future research should ask the questions: Which actions and which bodies are we to deem villainous, and how should they be treated? Are we to consider the real-life Bauers of the world heroes? This paper has focused on analyzing constructs of hero and villain within the text *24*, but because reality

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is always in fluid conversation with the fictional realm, scholars should ask these difficult questions moving forward. *24* was an extremely popular show after September 11, 2001 and continued to be until its final episode aired in May, 2010. Analyses of the show that critics may undertake in the future should ask why *24* has been such a hit, and what kind of world its very popularity has helped to create.

I argue that *24* has helped to create a world in which torture is seen as necessary and normal. It is a world in which laws are not much more than annoying obstacles that must be hurdled to stop the dreaded ticking time bomb from detonating. The world touted by *24* is one in which Muslim and Middle Eastern people are evil, as are critiques of U.S. imperialism, which serve only to move forward terrorists' wicked agenda. It is a world in which to be considered "good," women must be subservient, obedient girls who respect the patriarchal order, and where "bad" women who defy that order are punishable by physical and psychological abuse and murder. The world *24* promotes recognizes that some powerful, white men might let their self-interest get the best of them, but that this is a treatable imperfection. It is a hospitable world for Christian Right paleoconservative and military interventionist neoconservative agendas—and toxic for progressive ones.

Fighting against racism, sexism, homophobia, economic injustice, imperialism and any host of social issues progressives take on is difficult in and of itself. Challenging institutionalized injustice means taking on some of the most powerful entities in the world. But when mainstream television shows like *24* support corporate-influenced, pro-war agendas by perpetuating particular worldviews, progressive activists' jobs are made exponentially more difficult. My next-door neighbor might not like George Bush. He may have no idea what Halliburton is. But he loves Jack Bauer. So when I knock on his

door to ask him to sign my petition to close Guantanamo Bay, he declines because he's with Bauer (and Halliburton, and Bush). This may be a hypothetical, and yes, simplified example, but it serves to illustrate the point that *24* and its problematic characterizations pose serious real-world threats to peace and justice seekers.

This past Christmas, a friend's mother—a war protester and also fan of *24*—gave me a t-shirt that reads, "You only woke up this morning because Jack Bauer spared your life." Accompanying the text is an image of Jack Bauer aiming a gun. I accepted the gift, a thoughtful gesture from a loved one who knew I was slugging away at this thesis. At first I thought I would never put it on, but I soon embraced the irony in my sporting it. After wearing it out once, I learned what a great conversation-starter the shirt is. Fans of *24* are excited to express their adoration of Jack Bauer to a perfect stranger.   The first time someone commented on the shirt, it was midnight in a bathroom line at a Harvard Square bar. A man in his twenties in the line in front of me said, "I love Jack Bauer!" Not having prepared a response, I instinctively answered (in a friendly, but curious tone), "Oh yeah? Why?" He said, "Because he's the man!" with a pump of his fist in the air.

I wear the Jack Bauer t-shirt in public infrequently, and only when I'm in muckraking kind of mood. I realize that its message—without an element of criticism or irony—may undermine my critical work on the show. But on the occasions when I have worn it and engaged in discussions, I've been amazed by the similarity in what people have to say. The conversations that the shirt's message has inspired drive home for me that, to quote the young man in the bathroom line, Jack Bauer embodies "the man" to *24* fans. He represents the idealized American figure in their eyes. He may be a fictional character, but it doesn't seem to make him any less of a national hero in fans' view.

And why shouldn't fans confuse Jack Bauer for a real-life hero when plenty of politicians refer to him as though he were real? What follows is just a short selection of quotes illustrating political figures' invocation of Bauer in their discourse. Congressman Tom Tancredo, at a nationally televised Republican Presidential Primary Debate in May 2007 said:

> You say that nuclear devices have gone off in the United States, more are planned, and we are wondering about whether water boarding would be a bad thing to do? I'm looking for Jack Bauer at that time, let me tell you. [thunderous applause]…We are the last best hope of Western Civilization. When we go under, Western Civilization goes under (Nico, 2007, par. 9).

President Bill Clinton on *Meet the Press* in September 2007, said:

> If you're the Jack Bauer person, you'll do whatever you do and you should be prepared to take the consequences…If you have any kind of formal exception, people just drive a truck through it, and they'll say, 'Well, I thought it was covered by the exception'…When Bauer goes out there on his own and is prepared to live with the consequences, it always seems to work better ('Meet the Press,' 2007, par. 33).

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia, at a June 2007 international legal symposium in Canada, said:

> Jack Bauer saved Los Angeles…He saved hundreds of thousands of lives…Are you going to convict Jack Bauer? Say that criminal law is against him? 'You have the right to a jury trial?' Is any jury going to convict Jack Bauer? I don't think so…So the question is really whether we believe in these absolutes. And

ought we believe in these absolutes (Lattman, 2007, par. 3-4).

It is clear that the character Jack Bauer embodies an ideal that is celebrated across the political spectrum, whose outspoken fans include both Republicans and Democrats. But does this fact make the show "fair and balanced," as the Fox mantra states?

Actor Kiefer Sutherland, who plays Jack Bauer, thinks so. In a 2010 interview during the broadcast of the show's final season, Sutherland says just that: *24* is "incredibly balanced. It was balanced at the very beginning and it's balanced today" (Hibberd, 2010, par. 3). He points to the show's indictment of "conservative president" Charles Logan as proof of this balance, and current *24* Executive Producer Howard Gordon chimes in to deny the show has any political agenda, stating, "There is no conscious propaganda" (Hibberd, 2010, par. 5). Maybe conscious is the key word here, since Shaheen, for one, sees a very clear imbalance:

> During three of *24*'s seasons, we heard US government officials spewing out anti-Arab and anti-Muslim slurs, which were uncontested, and we watched Bauer's violent actions justify torturing and killing of numerous Muslim and Arab "fanatics." I stopped counting after 100 or so dead bodies (2008, p. 49).

There is clearly a disconnect between what the show's defenders see as fair and what critics identify as blatantly unjust.

This study has aimed to debunk the argument that "equal opportunity vilification" in *24* is somehow proof of its neutrality. It has illustrated that villains in *24* are not created equal, and that there are indeed strong political and ideological implications in the very different ways in which the show's characters are vilified. I asked Professor Mark Crispin Miller, author of several books about media and the Bush administration,

including *Cruel and Unusual: Bush/Cheney's New World Order* (2005), what he thinks

of *24* apologists' argument that the show does not lean in any political or ideological

direction since the show includes white, male villains. In a personal communication by

email on May 22, 2010 Miller responded:

> That defensive line…is disingenuous, since the show is a frank celebration of the
>
> extra-judicial use of force by federal police to save the rest of us from a demonic
>
> foreign evil; and that is a fascistic tactic…The idea that we can't afford such
>
> niceties as due process and democratic governance, because we're living in
>
> emergency conditions, under siege by sly and brutal enemies of Christianity—in
>
> fact, *Semitic* enemies—certainly *is* "ideological," even if it has a certain visceral,
>
> sub-ideological appeal.

The Middle Eastern and female villains examined in this paper embody the "demonic"

and "foreign" enemies Miller describes. Juxtaposed against these truly evil villains in *24*

is the white male shirker, who is saved and redeemed by his born again Christianity and

reincarnation as a Bush-like figure in Day 6. If the producer's claim that there is no

"conscious" ideology promotion is sincere, it would serve Gordon—and the rest of the

show's apologists—well to consider what factors might be working subconsciously to

produce such messaging.

I, for one, don't buy the sincerity of claim that *24* is impartial. One would be hard

pressed to find a critical media scholar who would agree that any text that truly is. But

how do we call attention to this pro-status quo partiality, and resist the steady integration

of this bias into our dominant culture? One way, of course, is criticism. That is the tool

I've used in this thesis. Another is satire.

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One of the most popular satirists today, Stephen Colbert, recently aired a segment on his show, the *Colbert Report* (Colbert, 2010), about the finale of the show *24*. He brings to light the absurdity of a television show dictating American policy in a "ThreatDown" bit when he says that Fox's cancellation of *24* presents "a direct threat to our national security." He continues, "*24* was our nation's greatest justification for the use of torture!" Colbert then shows a number of clips of Fox media personalities celebrating the torture methods of Jack Bauer, including one of Laura Ingraham, who says, "The average American out there loves the show *24*. In my mind, that's as close to a national referendum that it's okay to use tough tactics…as we're going to get." Colbert follows Ingraham's sound bite by applying her logic to the show *Grey's Anatomy*, which he says might be considered a referendum on healthcare: "Now that they've passed this bill, our tax dollars will be used to pay government doctors to hump each other in the supply closet." Colbert's satirical treatment of the role that *24* has come to play in the American torture debate disrupts pro-torture ideology from quietly and seamlessly seeping into dominant ideology.

Perhaps the greatest weakness of this study is that, unlike Colbert's piece, which draws connections between *24* and "the real world," this thesis mainly focuses on the inner world of the characters in the show *24*. Future research is needed to investigate the links between vilification in the show, vilification in mainstream media in general, and processes of "Othering" and scapegoating in real life. Another limitation of this study can be identified in its methodological approach. As a critical textual analysis, it presents one person's examination of patterns in three villains in the show and positions these patterns as problematic. An audience analysis would help establish how viewers

consuming this text interpret and respond to its messages—an element that this paper clearly lacks. Finally, a deeper look into the ways in which race and gender function as modes of vilification *24* is needed to dissect how racism and sexism are perpetuated in the show, despite how inclusive and multicultural its cast might appear on the surface. The current analysis has hopefully set the groundwork for such future analyses.

Future work to be done in response to the findings of this thesis should not be limited to academic studies. In addition to further research on vilification in the show *24* and other popular texts, activism and education are essential. From an educational standpoint, school and community leaders can use the model laid out in this paper as a way to engage students and community members about media and ideology. By closely examining villains in a popular show with which groups identify strongly, for example, members of the community can understand what kinds of villains the bad guys embody, which dominant morals codes they threaten, and how they are punished for these affronts. Once that information is brought to light, the group can discuss whether or not the characters' punishment fits the crime, and whether this kind of treatment is acceptable in a real-world scenario. A question to ask would be, which kinds of punishments, committed by which kinds of people, fit which kinds of crimes in the show? What are the comparisons in real life? These questions would open a rich dialogue about vilification on screen and in day-to-day life. From an advocacy standpoint, we must use all of the tools at our disposal to educate the public and hold media producers accountable for the content they produce by way of criticism, satire, and activism.

As a society comprised of engaged and artistic citizens, we must come up with innovative ways to battle stale, oppressive ideas that take new, more complex forms. As

corporate media engage in subtler and more nuanced strategies to maintain the status quo,

we must invent new culture jamming tactics. I, for one, can imagine a response to a

popular bumper sticker that reads "WWJBD? (What Would Jack Bauer Do?)" My

bumper stick would add an image of a Jesus-y Bauer shooting, strangling, or torturing, an

image that would immediately create some cognitive dissonance and critical reflection

around which figures and actions we idolize. We must constantly bring into question

who our collective heroes and villains are and ask why we confer this status on them. As

Pomerance so poignantly states of screen villainy, "These things of darkness we must

acknowledge are ours" (2004, p. 10). We must ask if these constructions of good and

evil reflect our common ideals, and if they do not we must imagine and enact

alternatives.

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