



The Best of WILL ROGERS' Political Wisecracks

Written in the '20s and '30s, they're wise and witty—and timely as today's newspaper. "You take a Democrat and a Republican," wrote the famed humorist, "and you keep them both out of office and I bet they turn out to be good friends and maybe make useful Citizens"

June 4, 1920

I HAVE been asked to cover the Republican Convention, to write something funny. All you have to do to write something funny about a Republican Convention is just tell what happens. The Convention is held in Chicago. Chicago is located just North of the U.S. I am well acquainted with the American Consul there. Chicago holds the record for Murders and robberies and Republican Conventions.

The Convention started off with a setback. A carload of wine billed for Chicago for "Medical Purposes" got held up.

The Democrats are investigating slush funds. If they can find where it comes from they want theirs.

June 7, 1920

They called in a Professional pray-er as none of the Politicians present knew how. Of course Will Hays (Republican National Chairman) has told him what to pray for. A great many of the leading Republicans were against having the Prayer as

they didn't think it necessary this year but, to add variety to an otherwise monotonous show, they decided to leave it in.

Will Hays seemed quite relieved at the end of the Prayer when he heard no applause, as he said, "You never can tell what a Republican will do."

June 11, 1920

I phoned Will Hays. "Why don't some of them say something?" He said, "Well, I guess they have told all they know about Wilson."

I said, "Why surely some of all these thousands of Republicans must know of him poisoning a well or dynamiting an orphan asylum or something." Prohibition has raised the price of votes. Votes that used to cost a dozen 5 cent beers are now selling for a four dollar bottle of hair tonic. And the tough part of it is they are no better votes.

(The Republicans nominated Senator Warren G. Harding of Ohio for their Presidential candidate and Governor Calvin Coolidge of Massachusetts for his running mate.)

June 14, 1920

Only two detrimental things have come out since Nomination in Harding's whole record. One was his middle name, Gamaliel, and the other he used to play a slide trombone in a country band. Musical circles in Washington are now looking towards a big revival.

Ohio claims they are due a President as they haven't had one since Taft. Look at the United States, they haven't had one since Lincoln.

June 15, 1920
When I learned that President Wilson was not going to the Democratic WeeGee Convention at San Francisco I decided to go to the White House where the orders would be phoned out. The Pres. and I sat at the phone listening.

After the Chairman had finally given out, I woke President Wilson up and asked him how he liked the speech.

The President said, "It was all right but he left out part of it."

ILLUSTRATED BY LOWELL HESS

A political cartoon by Hess depicting a caricature of Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) wearing a top hat and a suit. He is sitting at a desk, looking down at a newspaper. On the desk are a typewriter, a telephone, and a small box. The cartoon is signed "hess" in the bottom right corner.

Collier's for January 26, 1952



Kazuko Higa, only woman on the island. For her love, men fought and killed one another

ON JUNE 28, 1950, the U.S. Navy cutter Miss Susie, cruising off Anatahan Island, a jungle-covered dot in the central Pacific, 64 miles north of Saipan, was hailed from the beach by a figure waving something white. Those aboard made out a stocky, brown-skinned young woman wearing a banana-leaf skirt and nothing else. A whaleboat put ashore and next morning returned with the woman, now dressed in what she had been waving—a dress made of parachute nylon. The woman was no South Sea Islander but Mrs. Kazuko Higa, twenty-eight, a former Japanese bar girl from Okinawa, who had been for five years the only woman resident of Anatahan, but not, according to her bizarre story, lacking in male companions.

Scattered over the island's seven square miles were 22 men of an original group of 32, all but one of them marooned Japanese soldiers and seamen from three small ships sunk by American planes in June, 1944.

To Lieutenant Commander James B. Johnson, of Birmingham, Alabama, USNR, aboard the Miss Susie, Mrs. Higa revealed more about this die-hard garrison, which, as the then deputy civil administrator for the northern Marianas, Johnson had been trying to coax into surrender for years.

She let it be known that she herself had not succumbed to the blandishments of American peace propaganda—copies of Emperor Hirohito's surren-

der announcement and other appeals to call off the war—which had been delivered to the island from time to time.

She had given up, she said, simply because she was tired of being a *femme fatale* to a male harem and because she feared for her life.

Just how *fatale* a *femme* she had been remained a partial mystery for another year. Then the Anatahan garrison—now reduced to 19—formally surrendered to Johnson on June 30, 1951, on the same rocky beach where Mrs. Higa had given herself up. The capitulation came nearly six years after that of the Japanese Empire.

Flown to Tokyo from Guam on a Marine transport plane, the survivors set foot on Japanese soil exactly seven years and 42 days after leaving it in the middle of World War II. They returned to families which had given them up for dead, to seven wives who had remarried, eleven wives who had remained faithful, and a crashing curiosity on the part of the rest of the world as to just what did happen on Anatahan.

The answer is a sometimes heroic, sometimes ludicrous epic of misguided patriotism and a more understandable—to Western minds—melodrama of hunger, sex, jealousy and violence.

For, of the 12 men who died on Anatahan, seven were murdered or killed in fights over Kazuko Higa, and an eighth was executed after a "trial" by a jury of his peers. One of the killers and the executioner are among the 20 who returned to Japan.

The story begins on May 24, 1944, when a convoy of 16 ships, most of them fishing vessels, sailed from Yokohama with supplies for the by-passed Japanese garrison on Truk Island in the south central Pacific. The war was not going well for Japan, and some of the men were depressed by the exhortation of a high Japanese naval officer, delivered before the convoy set out. If only two of the ships got to Truk, the navy officer shouted, the expedition would still be worth while—for this was to be a 100-year war.

Fifteen more vessels joined the convoy on the way. Not one reached its destination. As they pro-

ceeded south, they approached a fatal rendezvous with a massive American task force charging up in the opposite direction for the invasion of Saipan, a key island in the Marianas chain, 1,200 miles south of Japan.

American dive bombers pounced on part of the convoy when it got abreast of Anatahan. On June 12th, they sank the Hyosuke Maru and the Akebono Maru, and the next day the Kaiho Maru, all fishing vessels of about 35 tons. Two men were killed, but all the rest aboard the three ships, including five wounded, got safely ashore.

The men fled into the jungle as the planes now turned to bombing and strafing the island; the invasion of Saipan was on and every Japanese for hundreds of square miles was catching it. Between raids, the survivors took a census. There were 31 of them—eight Japanese Imperial Navy seamen, two army privates and 21 navy-drafted civilians, most of them fishermen. The youngest was eighteen and the oldest forty-eight. Between them they had salvaged three days' supply of food, one bottle of iodine, one light machine gun, two rifles and about 350 rounds of assorted ammunition.

The Homer of a Pacific Odyssey

The worst wounded was Tsuru Maruyama, thirty-five, a slight, sleepy-eyed navy seaman, the only artist in a pretty rough crowd. In civilian life he had taught the samisen, the three-stringed Japanese zither, hardly recommended training for the ordeal he was to undergo. Despite a bullet hole through his right leg and another through his right hand, he cast himself in the role of Homer to this Pacific odyssey and resolved to remember all of it.

In addition to 45 scared Kanaka natives, there were two other people on Anatahan: Kikuichiro Higa, the assistant overseer of the island's copra plantation, and Kazuko Higa, a plump, square-jawed, disturbing young woman they took to be his wife. Both were Okinawa-born Japanese. The cast was complete.

The badly wounded men were placed in hastily

Lt. Comdr. J. B. Johnson, USNR, shakes hands with Junji Inoue, one of holdouts he took off island. Inoue was the first to surrender



Anatahan, where the small band of Japanese held out, is a tiny dot in the Marianas. The men were survivors from ships bombed by Allies

