

HANDOUT ONE:

Film Clip Transcript

JON MEACHAM:

In the wake of Pearl Harbor there were anxieties particularly along the West Coast that Japanese Americans might serve as agents of the Japanese Imperial Government, an enemy force.

RADIO BROADCAST (archival):

Word has just come that some 91 Japanese have been taken into custody in Northern California by the FBI. In Fresno, California, two Japanese were arrested, their automobile seized by the police.

B-ROLL (archival): an agent writing on a paper around with four Japanese men; agents walking by a wooden shack; agents rounding up more Japanese men

DONALD TAMAKI / Civil Rights Attorney:

Within a day, the Secret Service, the FBI sweeps into cities and urban areas from Seattle to Arizona, arresting community leaders, martial arts instructors, Japanese school language teachers, Buddhist priests.

B-ROLL (archival): MP's standing guard on a dock; Japanese people walking up

and down a street; a Japanese florist tending flowers outside her store.

MILTON EISENHOWER (archival):

Our West Coast became a potential combat zone. Living in that zone were more than 100,000 persons of Japanese ancestry, two-thirds of them American citizens, one-third aliens.

STILLS: Photo of the Takei family; photo of George and his brother; photo of

George Takei's mother holding baby Nancy.

GEORGE TAKEI / Actor and Activist:

My parents met in Los Angeles and they married there. I turned five years old on April 20th, 1942. I'm the oldest and my brother was next, a year younger, and my baby sister Nancy.

GEORGE TAKEI / Actor and Activist:

My parents met in Los Angeles and they married there. I turned five years old on April 20th, 1942. I'm the oldest and my brother was next, a year younger, and my baby sister Nancy.

B-ROLL (archival): Men holding up newspaper with headline that reads

"ENEMY PLANES OFF COAST" and details of riots in various cities; man looking through binoculars; soldiers standing guard looking out at the water.

TAKEI:

Here we were in the United States and the country was at war with our ancestral land and so there was great concern about what might happen to us.

HEADLINES: "COMPLETE ALIEN OUSTER IS URGED"; "BANISH JAPS FROM THIS COAST FOREVER"

STILL: Earl Warren speaking into a microphone.

HEADLINE: "MASS OUSTER OF JAPANESE IS DEMANDED BY ATTY.-GEN"; LOS ANGELES URGES OUSTER OF JAPANESE";

JON MEACHAM:

The Attorney General of California Earl Warren and others argued that people of foreign descent were dangerous, were potentially enemies of the country.

STILL: Graffiti on house reading "NO JAPS WANTED"; Sign reading "NO JAPS

SERVED HERE" at the Liberty Café; house with signs displayed, reading "JAPS

KEEP OUT YOU ARE NOT WANTED" and "JAPS KEEP MOVING THIS -IS A WHITE MAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD."

MILTON EISENHOWER (archival): No one knew what would happen among this concentrated population if Japanese forces should invade our shores.

B-ROLL (archival): Birds-eye view of White House; FDR signing page; secretaries in army office; General DeWitt among soldiers.

DON TAMAKI:

By February 1942, President Roosevelt signs Executive Order 9066, and this empowered the military to take control of the eight most western states. General Dewitt is placed in command of that whole western region. General DeWitt said that Japanese Americans are an enemy race.

MAN (archival):

He said very emphatically, "A Jap's a Jap. Any scrap of paper attesting to his citizenship doesn't alter that fact."

B-ROLL (archival): Army staff taking out stacks of notices; notices being nailed to posts.

TAMAKI:

He began issuing public proclamations singling out Japanese Americans.

STILL: Japanese-Americans reading curfew notice on a building; two men standing in front of notices nailed to a building; Japanese people in line outside; exterior of bank; police officers standing by bank; store with "selling out" signs plastered on windows; pan down to store with older man walking up to door; store with "close out sale" sign on window.

GEORGE TAKEI:

A curfew came down. Japanese Americans had to be home by eight o'clock and stay home until six AM in the morning. The government froze our bank account, rents couldn't be paid. My father's dry-cleaning business fell apart. Everything was lost. Everything. And then the soldiers came.

B-ROLL (archival): Japanese man with child in front yard of their house; soldiers look out window; tracking shot from car arriving at house; soldiers march past with bayonets.

TAKEI:

One morning my parents got me up very early together with my brother and my baby sister and dressed us hurriedly, and suddenly we saw two soldiers marching up our driveway

carrying rifles with shiny bayonets. And they stomped on the front porch and with their fists began pounding on the door. That sound still resonates in my mind.

B-ROLL (archival): Soldier walks by storefronts; soldiers carry luggage and load them onto trucks; Japanese women standing around outside.

TAKEI:

My father came out, answered the door and we were ordered out of our home. We stood on the driveway waiting for our mother to come out and when she came out she had our baby sister in one arm, a huge heavy looking duffel bag in the other and tears were streaming down her cheeks.

B-ROLL (archival): Japanese American people waiting on street to board buses; soldiers assist an elderly woman with walking.

STILL: Japanese woman standing beside truck with Japanese child peering out the back; Japanese kids in the back of a truck, a small girl peeking out through two pieces of wood.

B-ROLL (archival): Luggage piled roadside; children wait, sitting on top of luggage

TAKEI:

We were taken by truck to the Buddhist temple in downtown Los Angeles in Little Tokyo. And that's where we were all assembled.

B-ROLL (archival): Japanese boy waiting next to stacked luggage and belongings; two small children waiting by their family's belongings.

WOMAN (archival):

The heads of the families were ordered to report and we were given our family number and tag.

STILL: Japanese family posing for a photo with their tags attached to their coats; two young children wearing hats who have tags on their coats; Japanese girl with a tag attached to her shirt; a young child looking out of a bus window.

B-ROLL (archival): Buses pulling up to drop off Japanese families; shot of the racetrack with the internment bunks lined up into the

distance; interior of a camp with men carrying belongings; people being handed their tag and blankets/pillows.

TAKEI:

And a row of buses took us to Santa Anita where we were unloaded and herded over to the stable areas and each family was assigned a horse stall to sleep in, still pungent with the stink of horse manure.

STILL: Horse stall.

B-ROLL (archival): Crowd of Japanese Americans with belongings waiting around; Japanese Americans board trains, armed soldiers stand by; luggage tossed into train cars; fellow Japanese Americans wave to friends and family aboard train.

TAKEI:

We were there about three or four months... and then we were loaded onto trains with armed soldiers at both ends of each car.

B-ROLL (archival): shots of train moving and of tracks below; train in far distance moves across a landscape with smoke billowing from the top; soldiers waiting for Japanese Americans to deboard train; people deboarding train; families registering at camps.

TAKEI:

We were transported two-thirds of the way across the country to the swamps of Arkansas. There were ten camps altogether. Rohwer, Arkansas was the farthest east.

B-ROLL (archival): footage of barracks; still of kids sleeping on cots; people being handed out food in camps.

DALE MINAMI / Civil Rights Attorney:

The camps were not camps. They were prisons. They lived in dusty barracks. There were cracks in the walls so they had to stuff newspaper in to stop the wind from blowing in. They had common latrines without doors. The food was terrible, inadequate medical care.

GEORGE TAKEI:

I did go to school and I remember we began every school day with the pledge of allegiance to the flag. I could see the barbed wire fence and the sentry tower right outside my

B-ROLL (archival): Bell ringing, a mountain in the distance; school kids in class; guard tower; American flag flying over a barrack.

schoolhouse window as I recited the words, "With liberty and justice for all."

STILLS: Japanese crowded behind barbed wire fence

B-ROLL (archival): interned people walk around camp.

STILL: Japanese American woman outside her living quarters in a camp

DON TAMAKI:

By the end of 1942, you had almost 120,000 Americans, people like my mother and my father who were born in California, who are citizens by birth, who had lost their property, they had lost their freedom, some had even lost their lives without any trial, without any charges and for no offense.

STILLS: Japanese Americans lined up, one man holding American flag

B-ROLL (archival): Japanese Americans lining up by trains, returning home

GEORGE TAKEI:

We were incarcerated for the duration of the war, four years. When we were freed, we had nothing. For my parents, everything that they had worked for was taken away.

FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT:

We know now that if we lose this war, it'll be generations or even centuries before our conception of democracy can live again.

B-ROLL (archival): Still of Tule Lake camp, still of Japanese Americans walking past camp guard; boats during WWII, FDR with Churchill; still of young Japanese boy sitting on pile of luggage next to officer; young Japanese Americans with tags; Man pointing to sign that reads "We don't want any Japs back here... EVER!"; Modern - families trying to come to the U.S. detained behind fence; young child crying and looking up at mother and border patrol; young boy standing among border patrol.

JON MEACHAM: It's one of our most shameful episodes and a reminder that even in the midst of a global campaign to defend liberty, someone as otherwise remarkable as Franklin Roosevelt was able to make a decision that violated fundamental principles of both human and American rights. The internment is a cautionary tale. When we give in to the worst in us, we exclude, we oppress, we marginalize.