

ORAL INTERVIEW OF JACK TONO BY FRANK ABE
NOVEMBER 30, 1993

J.T.: Well, this is what I do on my speaking engagements. It's real deep rooted from my childhood and Issei parents...the Issei traditional upbringing...My father was an individual from the Meiji era (just before the turn of the 20th Century, when feudal Japan opened itself up to the Western world), so their way of life was much more strict and down to earth... With that kind of teaching, and being brought up with it, I just kept it up.

F.A.: What are some of the things you remember your father saying to you?

J.T.: Well, there are a lot of things..

F.A.: You mentioned one was that there was one right way and a thousand wrong ways...

J.T.: That's right.

F.A.: Did he actually say that to you?

J.T.: Yeah. There's always one right and thousand wrong...and you got to stick to that one right (way)...He just taught me the way things should be. No "shikataganai" (it can't be helped), none of this bullshit. He says, "Either seek that one right, or don't do nothing. And I've been seeking that one right. I argued just the best of them, and then, if you know what the hell..get the reasoning and everything behind it...I have no regrets. Never. And this is, uh.. I ..I..give my parents a lot of credit for teaching me these things, and all my brothers and sisters the same things, too. Then, uh, being the head of the family, I kind of relate a lot of this things to the brothers and sisters too, so....A lot of them are bullheaded, I notice. God damn....I can't even... argue with them no more! I said, "Shut up!"..(laughing)..What the hell do I tell these God damn kids, brothers and sisters?

F.A.: And your kids...they turned out the same way..

J.T.: Yeah. I have, uh, expressed my philosophy, and what my parents taught me, and they always say, "Gi-Chan, Ba-Chan (Grandpa/Grandma) you know..They had, up to the ..the uh...experience some other ways with them, where I was totally out of the picture with my grandparents because they were in Japan and we never had the opportunity, but my father and mother let that all come to life in our daily pictures, and so that was a great thing. And then to think my father only had third grade education...That is the thing that really amaze me, because the only way I think he didn't leave Japan 'til about nineteen, and then during that time, a third grade education like I told you, he lost his mother at the child birth of his brother. So he had to quit school with just third grade education, and he went all around the neighborhood with a nursing mother would feed him (his brother) and then he'd go to another nursing mother, and then bring the kid home. Then again, the afternoon, he said he used to do, make his route again. 'Course, my father's family...they had rice paddy, and wood..timber, so

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considering Japanese life those days, they were...you got to say they were pretty well off. So, uh..

F.A.: Your father had a third grade education. How many years of school did you get?

J.T.: Just high school.

F.A.: High school?

J.T.: Yeah.

F.A.: High school. The what happened? Did you have a chance to go to college, or?

J.T.: No...well I had the best education after high school, it was three years in prison. (laughing) Greatest education in my life! That was, to me, worth about eight years of college education, I believe. Really. With ten below me, there was no way in the Hell I could advance myself into education...get more education, because I had to be the bread winner of the whole God darn family, andjust impossible...like these younger guys they all got Doctorate degrees, and this and that. They got a lot of fancy language, but God darn it, when you come down to basics, they don't beat me because I go down to the basics, and preach to those guys. They don't have this kind of experience. All their experience is just hearsay experience. It's not like when you have to live through it. It's entirely different.

F.A.: I know San Jose. Did you ever get to high school, or?

J.T.: No, I finished...Well first, we were in San Martin, when I started high school. I finished grammar school in San Martin, and then we had to go to Morgan Hill....Live Oak High School. I was there freshman, sophomore year, then we went to San Juan...moved to San Juan, and then I finished up (in) 38-39 (1938-1939) in Hollister High School.

F.A.: Oh.

J.T.: Yup.

F.A.: Do you have your Hollister High School year book?

J.T.: Oh, man...

F.A.: You might..

J.T.: Yeah.

F.A.: Ok.

J.T.: I probably have it some place.

F.A.: Ok. Did you read about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights in high school?

J.T.: Oh yeah! Jesus Christ, yeah. We had to...that was a must. Especially Senior Year we had U.S. History in Senior Year. Yeah, we were in school like the rest of the kids.

F.A.: Was there a teacher that you remember very vividly who taught you that, or...?

J.T.: Oh yeah. He was the Principal of the high school. He was a history teacher then. So all the seniors had to take it.

F.A.: Uh huh. This was still before the war, so they didn't have any particular irony, or....

J.T.: No...strictly U.S. history.

F.A.: Ok. So, when evacuation came, and you were upset?

J.T.: Sure! When it first happened. When it first happened, we were

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in San Jose, and we had strawberries then. In the winter time, my brother and I used to go to Di Arrigo Brothers shed..pack broccoli, celery for the eastern market right before Thanksgiving holiday and Christmas. So we worked there all winter after strawberry is finished around October after the first frost. So we started going to Di Arrigo Brothers every year for a couple of years we went there, and we were there when this happened, you know. So right away, just like any American citizen, we'll have to go into the Armed Services and anything like that. And we had no problem with working there...that place had about 40 people working there. And then like us guys, we were in the packing end of the broccoli, celery and stuff like that. So we were actually the main wheel of the packing shed. All the other workers were trimmers and stuff like that, you know. But there was about two, three of us that was packing and doing the main work, and we had no problem at all! Yeah, no uh, trouble with other workers, and then we worked right on thru until Spring. Of course, after Spring they're all done....mainly for the holidays. The winter months well, naturally, most of the places don't have all that vegetables Eastern shipment anyway...those things. Yeah, so uh, when this evacuation stuff came up, boy that nailed us. I was really disappointed in that. Yeah, I'm being a citizen and all that stuff and what really....wasn't that JACL had a meeting in San Jose...? That time, all these guys speaking up there were professional people. Yeah, all educated people, and those are the guys that not a single guy was protesting. Then, I started wondering....I said "Wait a minute. What's wrong with these guys? Don't they know we didn't do anything wrong, and then we have to go along with the program?" Evidently, I..a couple of times I let my feelings known, but that was....nobody else would do that.

F.A.: How did you make your feelings known, Jack? Did you stand up at these meetings to say, "Hey, wait a minute!"

J.T.: Well, after it was finished, I went up there and talked to some of the guys, and said, "Gee, what are we doing this for?" I was kind of uh...well, with the age I guess you speak out more, you know, but those days... I had my principles but I didn't let it out like nowadays.

F.A.: Because you were only 21 or 22.

J.T.: Yeah...22. '41 (1941) so 20.

F.A.: 20. So you were looking at what, 30 year old peers?

J.T.: Oh no. They were dentists, and all those guys. They were in their forties..

F.A.: Forties..

J.T.: Yeah.

F.A.: You felt you couldn't speak out...

J.T.: Oh absolutely. They had the education, so ...then again too, when this thing happened, I couldn't believe these guys leaning all one way and not the other way.

F.A.: Well, but they were 40 and you 20, Jack. Didn't you think

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that they must know better because they're older?

J.T.: Well yeah, that's why...the first impression I had when I went to the meeting, but when they turned..turncoat, I said (to myself) "Wait a minute. There's something wrong here!" but I didn't know what the Hell..I wasn't no JACL member or nothing, so I didn't know what the heck the story was.

F.A.: Was there anybody else who thought the same way as you?

J.T.: Well, there probably was, but uh, being a quiet Japanese, I don't think none of us spoke up, you know. But whatever I said didn't mean a hill of beans.

F.A.: So it's important to me that people say, "draft dodger" and stuff like that, but you really linked your draft resistance to your objection to the evacuation.

J.T.: Well, yeah! You know, our main purpose..I don't think...maybe they do..they spoke up, but I haven't heard of it. But every time I speak, I sez, "We're not draft dodgers." There's a lot of guys, you know, especially these uh national groups..I don't say JACL but I say national groups always call us draft resisters-draft dodgers. I say we're hardly anything of that nature. I sez we would go providing the government restore the livelihood to the...our family, and security provided. I said then we'll go. That's all. Very simple. All the government had to do this. But at that time, no way in Hell they're going to do this...not return to California, the place of evacuation. So, uh, to the eyes of the JACL we're draft dodgers, and you take Bill Hosokawa..The last reunion we had..that Heart Mountain reunion we had at Reno before we had it in Seattle last year, all right?...Mits Koshiyama says uh...uh, "Hey let's go.."..that's after JACL passed that resolution apologizing...1989, I think it was, or 1988, somewhere around there, he says, "Let's go ask him if he's going to apologize." I said, "You go talk to the asshole. I had no part in it..no part with that dumb guy. He'll never admit it." So he goes over there and talks to him, asking if he would apologize because JACL apologized, because you know, he never wrote nothing good about us guys. And he tells Mits, "No." Then he comes back and tells me this. I says, "Mits, I told you he's an asshole, and then he...he'll die as an asshole. He'll never...he's stupid! These are the leaders that's been guiding the Japanese right along, and that's why we couldn't get nothing done. My God, after JACL passed the resolution, if he was a man he would come out and say, "Well, I was wrong." At least I would appreciate the guy then. But if he's going to insist that he ain't gonna do it, but then.. (laughing)..that guy's sick. Real sick.

F.A.: There have been some people who have said that you guys... resisters, are kind of ridiculing the veterans who did serve. That you feel that they were uh...chumps.

J.T.: No. I never had that in mind. We did our...I say whatever the other people done, that's their business. I have my principles. I did what I have to do...and uh, I say going to prison was the worst God darn thing in the Japanese peoples'

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minds. Going to prison...but with a righteous cause. I said I didn't give a damn. So, you know, I just thinking about my family, and I didn't know where..the future of the family was going. One remark I always make..make reference to these fellows died overseas..The last memory they had before they die is that their family was still in concentration camp. This is the thing I referred to..which was the truth at that time. And I didn't say that they were suckholes and all this other God damn thing. Everyone had their opinion. Nobody had a gun to their head. So I says...that's one thing. I never condemn nobody.

F.A.: What does it mean to you, Jack, that these guys who died overseas, unfortunate as that was, that was the last thing they remembered was their families in camp. What does that mean to you?

J.T.: Well, I just uh..felt really sad for those guys. With that kind of memory to hang on to when they...of course after they got killed, they won't know nothing anyway. But memory prior to that...it really hurt me inside to think they would have that thing hanging on to them when they were out there. See, this is the thing that really hurted me. and..uh, course us guys. I didn't go with the masses. I just made up my mind I wasn't gonna go, and by that time the masses formed to 63 guys. You know, that was a real big mass those days (laughing).

F.A.: Oh, let me ask you. These meetings. We have no pictures of these meetings. Of these big meetings at Heart Mountain. What was it like to be there?

J.T.: Well, uh, they just discussed the Constitution...uh, the rights of citizens.

F.A.: What did it feel like to be there? I mean, looking around.. Was there a big crowd?

J.T.: Well, the last meeting I went to, we had about over 200 guys in this mess hall there. And the guys were sitting all over the God damn place..

F.A.: What do you mean?

J.T.: Oh, the tables, you know, and the seats, and it was crowd.. we had a big crowd.

F.A.: People sitting on the tables?

J.T.: Yeah, yeah. That was largest meeting I went to, and I dunno who the Hell brought up this question: How many of you guys are going to refuse the draft? Everybody raised their hand. Typical Japanese way of doing things. Start with the masses, yea! I'm going! So I talked to myself. I said, "Holy Christ, this is great! Where the Hell they going to put all..".about 200-250 guys at that time. So I had the real high hope, you know. I said, "We'll nail this thing. They ain't going to do anything to us." Then when the F.B.I. came to round us up, we ended up ..63 guys. I said, "Ok, then. We'll get a shafting." But like I say, the younger guys in our group thought they going to beat the case and everything. I saw kinda..I didn't want to discourage them, but I says, "Forget it, you guys.

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When we do thing like this, especially with us guys, the first one to contest the case with the Government, you know God damn well they gonna shove it to us. To teach these other guys, Hey, you ain't gonna beat the Government." But the young guys had the outlook a little different and...about 18 and I was 23 and even five years different, so..I think they..when we got-heard that sentence of three years, I think a lot of them got air out of the bag..kinda deflated their ego. I kind of think. But me, I knew we were going to get shafted, so I knew it didn't bother me one bit.

F.A.: I can see that you being pretty stoic, Jack. Those guys cry? Anybody cry?

J.T.: No, I never saw any..maybe deep inside they were hurt. Sure.

F.A.: Made you sad.

J.T.: Yeah. Especially when they thought, "Jesus, citizen of this country. Fighting for our citizenship, Constitutional rights, and get shafted like this." I know a lotta...probably young guys got hurt. Like, my outlook was...known from the start that we weren't going to beat the government. And they were.. make sure that we ain't going to beat the government.... because if we did, everybody else would be in the same boat.

F.A.: So..you were at Mc Neil, and there were guys at Leavenworth.. what kind of attitude did you take into prison with you?

J.T.: Well, there was no attitude. The only thing I said was "Well, we done our best. We fought for our Constitutional rights and everything, and we lost." So I said, "What the Hell? Eventually, I figured, some way we gonna beat it. And I didn't think about a pardon by the President at that time. But I said the way things went and the way we got shafted, I said this is not the American way of doing things. And way back in my mind I figured we don't have to do too much. We'll beat 'em. Then... 1947 when President Truman pardoned us, that's what happened. And then I got the Presidential proclamation. I went to Library of Congress and got it. Funny thing happened. I went over there and then..prior to that at Archive in Denver. Right before Christmas, I was doing all this research work. I had about \$60.00 worth of material...I had copied over there, so you know, I gave that Eileen Bolger..She was the first lady I met over there, and then Dan Naling (sp?) was with those two, so I got to know those two real good. And they didn't have change for a hundred dollar bill, so I said, "You know what? All the favor you done here, I really appreciate it." So I said, "You guys have a party on me. It's Christmas time." I said, "Go ahead. Enjoy yourselves." They said, "Oh, we can't do that." I said, "I don't give a damn what the hell you do with that thing. I don't want it." So what they did was send that to as my donation to the Archives in Washington. So when I got..when I went for my (unclear), they said they'd mail it to me. So said, "Fine." So I got a copy..up to T. S they mailed me the copy. Well, I'll show it to you later. And then from T on is missing. It said, there is a note saying that too. There is

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a cost of so much. So I said would you please send that and we will send the balance. My name Tono starts with a T see, so I wrote a check and sent it to them. Afterwards, the company magnified (the) section. The rest of it regular print. But the T part was all.... magnified. And the check was returned, and a note from Mrs....whoever was in charge of the American Law department. She wrote a note saying that that this is...whatyoucallit..on the house. Then I realized why--I had donated money. Then I went back the following year to the Library of Congress, and Mrs. Gerland or Berland ..I said I'd like to meet the lady, and she said, "Im the one you want to see." You know..and then I told her the incident of why I'm here, and she said, "Why did you.." They said the expense of this copying and everything, and she said, "No. We heard about your case..." so I thanked her for that and she said, "You know. You're the first one that ever thanked us for any material coming out of this Library of Law." I said, "Is that right?" (laughing) Well, I said, "My God." (laughing) No, I..whenever...this is another thing my folks told me. Always remember. Appreciate what the people do for you. Always acknowledge it. And this is the thing I always do. That's why this lady was surprised that I even thanked her. She said, "You're the first one that ever thanked us." I said, "Lord help me." (laughter) Boy, I pity the Lord! Boy, He's gonna have a Helluva time...

F.A.: We were talking about going to McNeil..the prison. And your attitude was we'll get thru this somehow, and you got the pardon eventually. It seems to me that you carried your attitude of resistance even in prison....

J.T.: Well, I carried the resistance into the prison. How shall I say it. Our contention: we knew we did the right thing, so our conscience...my conscience was clear. I don't know about the other guys, you know. That's why I..when I went in there I had..whatyoucallit..attitude of like I was railroaded in and I got short changed as a citizen, and I kind of think that kind of hung in me..behind my head. So, I was the athletic director over there, and well, first of all the reason why 33 of us were sent to McNeil Island (Federal Penitentiary) was that we were under 25, and all single guys. And then the married guys and then the relatives..brothers, and cousins, and older guys went to Leavenworth, Kansas. So we went there (McNeil)..Course we had to stay in isolation for one month. We got interviewed by a psychiatrist, parole office, the Reverend, and uh all these guys you know..from medical doctor. Each one of us get interviewed and then they write...the interviewer writes their own opinion of the individual. I don't know what the Hell they wrote about me, but talking with the Reverend, I said, "By the way, Reverend," I says, "What do you think? Would you do the same thing we did?" He says, "You guys did the right thing." He's the only one. The rest of the bastards had all different excuses. But I thought well, this man being religious, he had

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the right outlook on life. So, I was...everyone had to have a job in there. 40 hours. At first it was 44 hours a week and then it was cut to 40 hours a week. And then we don't get paid so we get three days a month good time and five days a month good time after the first year. Of course you could lose all that too. You know, they give it to you. They didn't pay you cash, but uh..in other words on a three year sentence, you get 254 statutory good time. That means you get out that much earlier. Plus the days you earn at the farm. Three days a month the first year, and five days a month the second year. So, by the time you do your..finish your time..after serving two years, rest of it..you're out. Just like you're out on parole, you have to report to parole every month. Tell 'em what you're doing and what you're not doing, and everything...work, and stuff like that. And so, uh while I think about it I might as well tell you because I might get lost on the way. I used to tell the parole, "I used to drive a truck into New York City, see..those days.. to the vegetable market. These semis (semi tractor trucks) or whatever was ready to go I used to drive it up from the farmer. But I never told the parole I was doing that. I was supposed to notify him if I went out of State I was supposed to, you know..

F.A.: This was after the war.

J.T.: Yeah, after I got out of prison.

F.A.: You were still on parole after that?

J.T.: Yeah, because you do two years, and on a three year sentence you got one year you gotta be on parole.

F.A.: But you were pardoned.

J.T.: Oh no. That was afterwards. 1947.

F.A.: That's right.

J.T.: See.

F.A.: So you were still on parole!

J.T.: Yeah. (laughter) So I'm supposed to report to him that I'm.. you know, if you go out of State just tell me (what) you doing..but I didn't tell him. I said Hell with this son of a bitch, you know. But I never got in trouble, so I didn't have to go back to prison.

F.A.: That's good. (laughter)

J.T.: Well, that's my nature. Doing everything in a crooked way.. (laughter) If there is a way of doing it, I'd beat 'em.

F.A.: That's right! (laughter)

J.T.: Always try to beat 'em. Then afterwards uh...now we'll go back to the prison..

F.A.: Yes..

J.T.: After we got there, then, uh..First day it was funny! Can you believe 33 of us lined up in a tomato field picking green tomato. They had a cannery in there...on the island there where the inmate ran the place. Then they were going pickle green tomatoes, so uh, Jesus. 33 of us lined up picking tomato. We had one old guard, Wilkinson. I'll never forget his name. He was close to seventies I guess. And he was the

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only one out there, and a couple of guys showing us off, you know. All the rest of the guys in one line, and these God damn creeps-there were about three, four guys way ahead of us. And I hollered at 'em. I said, "God damn you bastards! Come on. Keep up with the crowd. What are you guys going to do? Show us up? They started giving me a lot of lip so I started throwing green tomatoes at those guys. Then tomatoes come flying back and then more guys got into it and the damn guard saw that. He comes over, "Hey, you God damn guys, cut it out!" And turned his back to me, and I throw a green tomato and hit him right in the seat of the pants. "Who did that?" ...and I'm working like Hell. (laughter) Then he turns around and we're throwing tomatoes over there, and then I hit him again. He said, "God damn, sons of bitches," he said. "I'm getting the Hell out of here!" (laughter) He watched us on the outside. But then finally it died down, and you could see all the Goddam green tomatoes all over! (laughter) I felt sorry for the old bastard, but oh man, we had so much. He couldn't do nothing. He never done nothing. And that was the first day initiating the guard. (laughter) Oh Christ! Then, after that everybody got into ..as a job opening as a inmate left the place, they all got into different area, you know. And most of the guy went into the kitchen, and the kitchen guard was a real nice guy. He's a terrific guy. And then most of the jobs in there. Then I was the athletic director. And I set up...oh, then afterwards we had guys come in...second group from Heart Mountain come in. 25-26 guys. Then later on, Minidoka guys came in. So, you're talking about inmate capacity of 300 on the farm. Uh, almost 80 were Nisei, and it was ...so we had like the first group we had two softball teams. The second group had, uh, a team. Minidoka had a team. Blacks had a team, and gringos had a team. A lot of our guys were mixed up, you know. I used to to have guys on our team that didn't know baseball from Adam, you know. Swing the bat like an old lady, but I figure, they want to have the whatchucallit to join in the crowd and play. So I said, "Come on." So I used to put them on our team. I put 'em in right field, you know. When I play second base or shortstop, I'm about 10 feet away from them when the ball comes there! "Hey, gimme the ball, and I throw it in." But that's how we-I got the guys to make-do easy time over there. Otherwise, we had a ..didn't do things active..keep yourself active. They would have done a lot of hard time. But we....that's one God damn good thing about us guys. I always say this: The other guys don't do this, but it goes with the Issei's teaching. We were there for over two years, and not one of us...among 80 guys...never did we have a brawl, argument, fist-fight among each other, at all. This, I say, we have to give the Issei credit for teaching us what has to be done at that moment. And this is a most important thing. I still believe that. Because of the upbringing, we got along with the blacks...all these others. There were lifers there,

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and next door to me was a Nihonjin (Japanese) from Alaska. Miki Mikami. He was a lifer. He was just barely five..he must have been about four (feet) eight (inches). He was in there for murder. I always looked at him, and said, "How in the Hell did this little shit head murder a guy?" But he was in there for murder. And he was a baseball fan, and me ..was athletic director, sleeping next to each other. Bunk beds, you know. And uh..and then he used to smoke and he used to smoke the Government issue Bull Durham and pipe tobacco, and stuff like that. Stuff like that, so commissary time I used to buy extra and give it to him. And being a baseball man from way back, and being athletic director, we used to have a great time. We made, I think the Niseis..us guys really made him do easy time. During the two years we were there, he really..I could see it in his face, you know. Yeah.

F.A.: It cheered him up too.

J.T.: Absolutely! And not only that. Later on, I found out they paroled him to Japan. Yeah. I said, "Yeah. Good for him."

F.A.: This is a long shot. But did Mikami kill a Japanese woman in Alaska?

J.T.: Well..

F.A.: ...or had tried?

J.T.: I. This is one thing I never questioned him. I didn't want to you know..

F.A.: You never found out what he did.

J.T.: Yeah. True. Whatchucallit. Grapevine, I know what he did. He was in there for murder, but I didn't..

F.A.: But you didn't find out.

J.T.: Never did I ever try to bring back these kind of memories to him or nothing.

F.A.: Mikami.

J.T.: Mikami. Yeah.

F.A.: That was a long shot. I have an ex girl friend whose uncle's lover was killed by a Japanese guy in Alaska.

J.T.: Oh yeah?

F.A.: I began to wonder if this is the same....the same guy!

J.T.: Yeah. Maybe find out...go back. Tell them that I was sleeping next door to him. Next bunk.

F.A.: Next bunk?

J.T.: Next bunk! There is an aisle about this much, and he's over there against the wall, and I'm next to him. But we had a great time. Being a baseball man..I'm a baseball man, so we really made (unclear) time then..

F.A.: What was your favorite team back then?

J.T.: Huh?

F.A.: What was your favorite team? Baseball.

J.T.: Uh, you mean the majors?

F.A.: Yes.

J.T.: I didn't have no uh favorite team. I just loved to play. My major sport was baseball. Then basketball.

F.A.: And Mikami. What was his favorite team?

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J.T.: Oh..he didn't have ...
F.A.: Who was his favorite player?
J.T.: Aw, Jesus Christ, I don't even recall those things.
F.A.: Did you follow..baseball at the entry level or were you a baseball fan at the major league level?
J.T.: Oh, I'm not too much...They used to have the World Series there too, you know. We used to hear that in the prison.
F.A.: That would be '45 World Series..'45-46?
J.T.: Yeah. Wait a minute..1944. Yeah. '44 because we were there July. We got sentenced 29th of July, I think. And then..
F.A.: You went to McNeil by October?
J.T.: Oh yeah. We were in prison then...because it comes over the P.A. system. We used to hear it.
F.A.: P.A. system?
J.T.: Yeah.
F.A.: In the big house.
J.T.: No. We were on the farm.
F.A.: You were on the farm. Was there a P.A. on the farm?
J.T.: Yeah. We had dormitory one. And upstairs...and then we had a recreation room here. Then dormitory one was here, and the office was here. And then the Superintendent..recreation side. And then upstairs they had dormitory two and three. And down below naturally is all black..most of these blacks..
F.A.: (unclear)
J.T.: Oh yeah. The blacks weren't up there. So I was considered a black, I guess. I was down in dormitory one. Then they had three barracks outside. Army barracks. So the new ones would go to the barracks, and then if the dormitory opens up, they'd bring them all in.
F.A.: And was there a big house at McNeil?
J.T.: Yeah. And then, it was about three or four miles out..We had a farm, and the big house was towards that...
F.A.: Ok. But all you Japanese boys were on the farm.
J.T.: Yeah.
F.A.: In dormitories one, two, and three.
J.T.: And I wouldn't...the early guys..everything went in alphabetical order so the early guys, uh..they went to the big house, I think. Ten, fifteen guys went to the big house, and then as the farm opened up, then we all went up to the farm.
F.A.: Did you spend any time in the big house?
J.T.: No. I was. Tono was T..on the tail end. So we went directly to the farm.
F.A.: Was it considered an honor farm?
J.T.: Well, its a farm system....Naturally you have to be on your honor because there are no guards outside of personnel in the office there. And then the guard takes you out to the different crews. That's about the only thing. There's no bars on the window. No fences. It's wide open. If the guys want to take off, they could have took off. At low tide there was one place on the island that's only about fifty yards wide. They could have went. In fact, there were one or two guys that did

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it, and the sirens sounds all over the island, and then everybody inside, and nobody gets out.

F.A.: You mean they could walk across to Tillicum?

J.T.: No. To one of the peninsula there, and then they could walk all the way down there to the mainland from there.

F.A.: To the mainland. From the island.

J.T.: Yeah.

F.A.: I know Tillicum. There's a town, where the ferry dock is.

J.T.: Yeah. Years ago.

-end of side A of tape-

J.T.: No, we had one...one of the C.O. guys, Conscientious Objector walked out. He was a damn fool, but he was one of those arrogant guys, you know....

F.A.: Not like you: a humble guy like you.

J.T.: No! (laughing) No, I'm humble compared to those guys. (laughing) That's a crock of shit! (laughing)

F.A.: World Series in a P.A. system. I like that. That's very interesting.

J.T.: Yeah. So we stayed in and heard the radio. We get the afternoon off.

F.A.: And so you heard the '44 World Series.

J.T.: Oh, man, I dunno.

F.A.: You guys like cheering? Like you know?

J.T.: Yeah. Yeah. We were uh whatyoucallit..listened to the game.

F.A.: Cheer good plays. Whoop and holler.

J.T.: Yeah. Those days everything was radio.

F.A.: Yeah.

J.T.: ..They made it very, uh, they kept us occupied in different ways, you know. Not just prison terms alone. So with this kind of thing it kind of enlightened our life a lot.

F.A.: It all sounds like no different from camp, almost.

J.T.: Yeah. Yeah. Only thing we didn't have the women and the family. That's the only thing. Yeah.

F.A.: Min Yasui said you go in prison they're going to hack you with two by fours.

J.T.: Yeah! He told ...uh..see, I got ...

F.A.: Did it happen?

J.T.: No! Shit! We know that's a bunch of bull, uh..But just to threaten 'em. Just to get some information out. That kind of mentality they used to.. for us guys to uh, speak up, but..

F.A.: Didn't happen.

J.T.: Nah, shit. I was the instigator over there on the farm. No way, Jose, the thing like that happen. Man, I'd kill 'em. (laughing) But now, we had a hell of a good relationship over there. All the inmates sympathized with what we said. And you know, about 300 inmates there. About a hundred of them were Jehovah Witness. They were religious, conscientious objector. And they were guys-Quaker group over there too that went astray from the work camp and then they were brought to

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prison. And Gordon Hirabayashi was there for a little while. He used to work in the cloak room, where they issue clothing twice a week. And sometimes, it was funny. 'Course, uh, they said they feed you saltpeter over there. That's a bunch of crap, you know. And then sometime, you gonna see a guy with a yellow stain on his shorts, you know God damn well he had a wild dream (laughing). Yeah! So, I was young. One time boy I thought it was real great, and before I knew it Jesus God damn its all wet. Warm? I only Christ..So I said, "Hey Gordy," next day..we go to shower every day, see. "Hey, Gordy," I said, "Hey, how about a shorts," I said, "God damn, I had a wild one last night." (laughing) Gordy wouldn't give us one, yeah. Oh shoot. He..so, uh, we used to, when our clothes get dirty, you know. So Gordon and I were real close in there. So one time he come over here, and the Seattle guys honored him, so one of the guys said, "Hey, Gordon (unclear) ...come on, join us." So I went over there, and Gordie seen me, he says, "Oh, for Christ's sake my old time..." And everybody is surprised, saying "Wait a minute. What is this cotton picker knowing this guy for?" (laughing) Yeah. So. Man. That's why, you know, life of the Niseis there whether our group or second group from our Heart Mountain or Minidoka guys, man like Pancho Nakashima, Sakaguchi brothers, Hank Hirabayashi, uh, Inouye, Akutsu, Jim Akutsu...all those guys. Yeah. I know 'em all. That's why when we had the Heart Mountain Reunion in Seattle its good. I called Jim Akutsu, and then, and Mits Koshiyama been up there, you know.

F.A.: That was a hell of a meeting you had in the Buddhist Church.

J.K.: Yeah. So I told him to see if he could get the guys together. But he doesn't hear. I give him Jim Akutsu's phone number. I said, "What you Goddam cheap ass." You know, he...So I says "Ok. Give me the phone number." And then I called him up, and I told him what the occasion is going to be. So I says, "I know you guys been critized, ridiculed, and every other God damn thing." But I said, "Hey,listen. We beat the system." I says, "Let's get together." I told him there's a bunch of us from LA going up..and then he says, "Well, I'm in Chicago, so I'll go from here." San Jose guys gonna to go up. I says, "Let's get a place, and then have a rap session." So that's what we did. But the guys in California wouldn't even think these kind of thing. You know, it's really a sin. And all of sudden, aw the hell with them. I do my own thing.

F.A.: Did they actually call you the morale officer in camp?

J.K.: Who me?

F.A.: Yes.

J.K.: Well, I wouldn't say that. More hell raiser than anything else I guess.

F.A.: So that was not a title you had?

J.K.: Nah. Nah. I tried to uh, keep the spirit up all the time. You know, this is my nature. You know...as far as the Oriental astrological calendar, I'm a monkey. All right. You know the nature of monkey, right? In American what you call it,

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astrological sign, I'm a Scorpio. So you know what Scorpio nature is. So I'm from the two different whatchullit, but I combine the both together, and that's me.

F.A.: Yeah. (chuckling) What's your birthday?

J.K.: 11-16-20.

F.A.: Oh! 20th! Happy birthday!

J.K.: Thank you. Just got through with it. And, uh..so you know, these kind of thing...all the people frown on it, but hey! listen. This kind of thing is built into you. There's no way of getting away from it. And this is ...actually it really shows up in the way you do things, the way you speak..your everything in life..it really reflects onto these signs. I'm a firm believer in that. Not that my sign says I do this, but I do it automatically. You know, then I look back and say, "Wait a minute." So, that's the reason why I always burn both ends of the candle all the time, you know. The lively side, keep the guys morale up and stuff like that, and joke around and ad lib and then I got the other side too. That if it ain't right..moreso with the righteous principle. I'll nail the son of a bitch. I don't care who he is. To the cross. I'd been doing this, right along. Through my work and everything. Majority of the guys I know that, they don't want to upset the apple cart. They don't wanna make waves and all that bull. I say, "Hey! When you're right." I says "Goddammit, why should you hold back?" Even in prison, I...I told the guards and the superintendent...oh man! Aw man..

F.A.: What did you tell them?

J.K.: Well, ah yeah. First of all, uh, what we do is well we..like I say, you earn your days over there and you can lose them. Twelve months..end of the twelfth month, I finally got ticked off. Reason what happened. We were playing with gloves over there..guys..I had to sew every day because with the thread how much beating can the glove take, right? So, and then I told the administration..this was towards the Fall, and we're still playing.. had the league going so I says, "You know, I'm concerned about the boys playing baseball with these God damned gloves. I said they're going to bust their fingers. I said, "I don't know about you guys, but I played baseball. I know what the hell is going to happen." I said "I know they must have some used gloves over there at the big house. I said why don't you get..send us the used stuff. We don't want the new stuff. I said send us the used stuff. "Oh, we'll do it." Two weeks go by. Three weeks, and nothing happened. So I reminded them again. They says, "Well, we'll get to it." I said, "You know, that's what you've been telling me all this time." I said, "You guys ain't done nothing." Then I said to myself, "Fuck yourself." There was one guy, bright guy, going in there. Truck driver. Ewing. And I said, "Hey, Ewing." And then he told me that he knew the civil service athletic director over there. He said, "Oh, he's my buddy." I said, "Well fine, then. You go tell him.

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Well, you know the condition of our gloves down here.. and the equipment we have to play with...the baseball shoes. The spike is so worn out," I said, "you could scratch me with me with it, and it won't even leave a mark." So I says, "See if he could send us some used equipment. That's all we want." About a week or two later, God damn. Two big box full of equipment, you know. Then uh...the whatchucall...the administration got on my case. He says, "What's the idea, Tono, going over your head?" I said, "Why shouldn't I?" I said, "Shit" I said, "I've been telling you guys for three, four weeks what the hells gonna happen." I said, "If you can't.. don't understand what the hell I'm talking about, I could these things. So I did it. So what's the big deal?" "No, we don't do things like that around here." I said, "Well, you can shove this job up your ass, " I said. "I've enough of this bullshit." When you get in bad with the administration, you know you're in for it. They ain't gonna give you nothing good. But I know that. So, uh, they put you with the worst God damn guard over there. So it happened to be a bunch of Jehovah Witness, and we had to go out to that tomato field. And they were criss cross colorated (?) so that around the tomato plant there was grass, and we had to clean that out. So there was about 10 Jehovah Witness and then there was an Irishman named Hardy, and he was a crook, and then Rosenthal, he was a C.O., and myself was the oddball in that group. So I told these two guys, I said, "Hey, let's screw this son of a bitch. Let's get on our hands and knees and pull one grass at a time. They can't say we're not working. At least we're working. That's what we did. One grass at a time. And these God damn other Jehovah Witness man they go off and back and we still on the second plant. He's hollering...whooping and hollering behind us. I told him, "Hey, we're working, ain't we? We ain't sleeping here." "Oh, you got to do better than that." I said, "Fuck you. We're working. That's what you want us to do. We're doing that." So they pink slip us. Every time you get a pink slip, that's for some offense. You have to go to court Tuesday afternoon. Every Tuesday for a month, they would call us three names. "Hardy, Rosenthal, and Tono. Stay in for court." (laughing) Every Tuesday. It got to be a habit. It was a joke around.. So we go to court, and then Superintendent was Judge Cook. He was a Lieutenant, and he was a jury, psychiatrist, doctor, and parole officer. They were all on the jury. Then whatchucallit reads our offense. He says, "What do you got to say?" I says, "I'm doing my best out there, and if he doesn't like it, it's not my fault." "No, we know you can do better." I says, "Sir, I am my peak of my production. I can't do any more than this. I ain't going to do no more than this."

"All right. Show privileges this week." Ok. So you're denied show privileges. Come week end, you're not supposed to go to the show, see. So one night, dormitory one, two, three would

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go Saturday, and then barracks go the Sunday, and vice versa on the next week. So the night guy and I we're real good..on good terms. We're buddies. So I used to tell the tall black guys, "Hey, you go right by that guy. He's by the door there see." So I says "Just bullshit when I sneak around." So they're talking when I sneak out and go out and see the show, and then I walk right in front of him, you know. "Hey Tono!" "Yeah." "You're supposed to be in there." I says, "I know" and I kept...(laughing). I didn't miss a thing. Oh shoot! Ah man! Ah, what the hell. For one month. Finally, on the fourth week, they took three days away from me, you know. I said, "Well, that's all right." That's the same excuse I gave them. Every time I go to court. "Doing my best and can't do any better than that, and I ain't gonna do any better than that." Then afterwards, I was put onto the wood crew. They were cleaning out a place for a dam for the water supply. They had their own filtration plant, so they clear out the place, and then they put me on with another jerk. So, hell, I wouldn't work much with that guy, so I lost...four months straight I lost five days. But they put me with different asshole guards, and finally from the fifth month on they put me with a guard that was on bad terms with the administration so him and I got along real good. It was funny.

And then, uh, over there I used to work you know..with this guy I got along, so I used to work. But with the other guards, I would work, but very slow pace. Real slow pace. He said, "God damn Tono, you've got to do better...." I says, "The first time I use an axe. I says I don't want to cut myself." I got to watch myself, and all the excuses I give him. And all the other..most of the niseis went to the kitchen. They all went to the kitchen. Cooks, and everything, and stuff like that. We had Gypsy Matsumoto, a little short guy in LA. He was driving a team of horses, and two guys driving trucks, and one guy..two guys working in the dairy, it was kind of a self supporting place, you know. We had a dairy, we had the poultry, we had the piggery, vegetables, apple orchard, and uh berries. We had berries over there. Raspberries and stuff, and so we had guys working all over, and well during the day I don't have too much to do so I used to walk around to different place. I used to go see the piggery, and I used to know the guy Joe working there. So one day they slaughtered some pigs and I was over there right before lunch, and he said, "Hey Jack. You ever eat pigs' tail?" I said, "Hell no. What's it like?" "Well here, try some." They're making lard there you know, out of the whatchucallit, and they had a big vat of lard going and they had a pig's tail tied onto a string and cooking in there. "It's about ready." I say "Ok." So first time in my life I eat pigs' tail. (laughing) It's good. Like eating pork. Yeah. Mickey Mikami used to take care of the poultry house. Yeah. He was a poultry man, so I used to bullshit with

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him. I..I think with us being there he really enjoyed..we really make it good for him. Same time over there, so..

F.A.: What did you guys wear?...Striped..

J.T.: No. No. We had these blue uh white denim type of clothes.

F.A.: Yeah. Denim shirts?

J.T.: Shirts. Jackets, and pants. For underclothing we used to wear that old boxer short type..Old type, you know, not the jockey shorts, but the old..So, I was really...and then uh Jesus, you know, sometime I go to apple orchard crew. Wintertime, and we had to do something. And on the way home we stopped at the storage barn where they kept the apple, you know. So those day we had the winter jacket so I tied the sleeve.. ..pulled the inside out and tied the sleeve and stuff all the apple in there. Then when I..when we check in we have to walk by that guard office and then go to our dormitory or whatever. So I had the God damn bulky jacket full of apples in the sleeve, and I walk right by him and then he says, "Tono," and this and that. After I get in I just dump the whole God damn thing on the bed and say, "Hey, you guys. Come on. I got a bunch of apples here." And all the guys have a feast. (laughing) Apples, and ..One time they made a mistake. They used to..from the mainland they used to..whichamacallit ...the mess food and stuff, you know, they would bring it to the piggery. They were supposed to bring it over there, and one truckload they put it in back of the theater. I heard about that then find out that five pound can ham and powdered ice cream in there, and everything so me and another guy after supper we have time-recreation period before lights out so we went in the theater, and they have wood shop there and everything, so you know. We broke into the back and I found a five pound can of ham and powdered ice cream, and I told the guys in our dorm..I was on dorm one so I said, "Hey, we're going over there to steal some stuff, so you guys stay by the window. When we come by we'll just throw it up there window and then we'll walk in as if nothing happened." So that's what we did. Then, uh, fall of the year, late..we had that canned ham on the radiator, heating up, and we all had glass..pint jar for a cup. Oh, we always had hot water so we put about two tablespoons of that powdered ice cream in there and put hot water..like a malt. And we're drinking that and two night crew guards..they go to the barracks to count heads first, and then count the dormitory. See when they went out, I went down to the pantry and stole a couple loaves of bread there. Then after lights out, we'd cut the..by then the meat was hot then, and we cut the meat up and drink our own malt.. (laughing) Oh shoot! The guys upstairs never done that, you know. Oh, we used to...Oh God! and they never know. And then the leftover. Next day I brought out the wood crew and then oh..whatchucallit..we had to burning the brush...and we had a good fire going. This guard and I got along good so, "Hey boss,"...We had meat on a stick..toast it. "You want some canned ham? This is good stuff." "Ah, go ahead. You guys eat

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it." We ate it right in front of him. (laughing) Oh man, I used to do more God damn things. Jesus Christ. But rest of the guys never done this thing. They were just...

F.A.: You did this with "hakujins" (Anglos)

J.T.: Hakujins and our guys..We had another guy that was almost mischievous as I was..

F.A.: Who's that?

J.T.: Ken Tainaka (Tanaka?). He was Yakima Volley guy. Before the war.

F.A.: Yakima... Valloy?

J.T.: Valley.

F.A.: Oh, Valley guy.

J.T.: Yeah.

F.A.: Nisei. He's a Minidoka boy.

J.T.: Yeah. But them guys came to Heart Mountain from Yakima. Them guys came straight.

F.A.: Was he a Heart Mountain boy?

J.T.: Yeah. That's the reason we came together. I don't know why they didn't go to Minidoka because all the Northwest people went over there, right? But that one group came to...that one block there (at Heart Mountain) was Washington people there. We knew them right away because their complexion is nice... women especially..nice, clean white complexion whereas you take San Jose girls. They're ruddy because sunburn and all that stuff. And so we spotted those girls right away..... But uh, him and I got a lot of mischievous things. And then when I was working with this God damn jerk of a..this was Fall of the year when they harvested peas, vine and all. And then they bring it...we had a vinery there. You'd throw all the pea in there and then that thing..big rotating paddle that would separate the vine from the peas, and then the peas would all fall in the bottom. So our crew was whatchucallit.. feeding that you know..we had to work that.. So I ..I told the guys, Hardy and (name unclear)...my buddies, "Hey, let's screw this bastard." Then, I happened to find a rock you know, on the side, about this big. So I just put it in there and put the vine on there and I threw it in the machine, and five minutes later..."CLONG-CLONG-CLONG"... "Hey, shut that God damn thing.." And then some of the Jehovah Witness would go inside there and separate everything and finally take the rock out, and "God damn you guys. Watch it. You going to ruin the machinery." "How in the Hell can we see it in all the God damn vines here. You want us to separate everything and then work?" "No." "Ok." So again later on we do the same God damn thing. I put a rock in there and throw it in, and then by the time they find the rock and everything, it's about ten minutes. We get ten minutes rest. (laughing) They never knew who the Hell done it. Here I was doing all tat God damn thing. (laughing) Oh man! That's why I say, "I have so much memories over there, it's uncanny." Where the rest of the guys were just like Buddha, you know. Straight. Then none of the guys lost days. I was the only guy that lost all that God

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damn days..

F.A.: How many?

J.T.: Twenty. Twenty three days.

F.A.: Did you have to stay longer than the other?

J.T.: Yeah. I had to.

F.A.: You did twenty three days longer.

J.T.: Yeah. All them guys got out ..uh..report giving us our agenda for the following day, he says, referred to us "as you Jap boys," and then corrected himself. On the way, when we got to the county jail I told, "This God damn sheep herder, he's got it in for us as...forget about winning this case. We're in for it. And, uh Jesus, you know this..Goodman's memorandum (Federal judge who found Tule Lake draft resisters not guilty) goes into all whatchucallit..reasoning and then into the Selective Service Law, and ...it's really...When I found this I said, "Man, did I hit a gold mine." So, uh..it's uh whatchucallit, really interesting. He says, "Selective Service Training and Service Act does not provide for forcible induction upon failure to obey the direction of the statutes. In declaration of policy set out in Section 301 of the Selective Service Training Act, Congress declared that Congress further declares that in a free society the obligation and privileges of military training should be shared generally in accordance with fair and just system of selective, compulsory military training and service. Certainly, fair and just compulsory military training of (a) free society is wholly inconsistent with the instant proceedings. Due process guaranteed by the fifth amendment means that there can be no proceeding against life, liberty or property which may result in deprivation of either without the observance of the general rule established in our system of jurisprudence for the security of private rights." And, then it says here that the Government urges the question of due process is not reachable at this time, but only by a writ of habeas corpus after complying with the order of the local board. However, it is clear to me that the defendant is under circumstances..not a free agent, nor is any plea that he makes free or voluntary, and hence he is not accorded due process in this proceeding. The issue raised by this motion is without precedent. It must be resolved in the light of traditional and historical Anglo Saxon approach to the time honored doctrine of due process. It must not give way to overzealousness in an attempt to reach by criminal process those who we may regard as undesirable citizens.

The motion to quash the indictment is granted, and the proceeding is dismissed.

You see the difference between Goodman and this..I mean Goodman and that cotton picker we had? He just...states that when the FBI picked us up..we went to the court house.. Cody, got finger printed, got interviewed. The regular process with any criminal. Nothing stating like Judge

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Goodman just..went through all the meaning of the laws.. the Selective Service laws. And I said, "Gee whiz. What a difference between a cotton picker and a really uh whatchucallit. That's why when I hit this thing, I said, "Holy smoke!" Really gold mine.

F.A.: Yeah.

J.T.: Nobody else said it except me. But another thing I said too was in uh whatchucallit. I.. didn't send..I don't think I send this whatchucallit. I send this-Judge's memorandum to Matsumotos in LA and then Koshiyama in San Jose. I told them to make this central library for the guys who want all the information..and then whatchucallit, I sent it to them, but I don't know how many guys made use of this, or how many guys he alerted over there that "Hey, I (Jack Tono) got all this stuff." Even at Rodino's committee hearing, Jack Herzig went with me so anybody had document with that committee, you got a set of books. So he says.. I told him I had one, and Jack Herzig had a book at home, but he says "I have one in there too.." so he got it. So he gave me both sets, so I sent one to Koshiyama. But I don't know if he really told the guys that "Hey, this is available for you guys. Come and look at it." Maybe he kept it for himself.

I don't care, but I thought that if he did that he's pretty God damn selfish. After..it's my expense..I got paid..copying all this stuff. I never asked for no money..no nothing. I don't tell 'em how much it cost or nothing. You know, but whatchucallit..this is sole denial letter.(showing letter to Frank Abe).

F.A.: Ah..It's from Dillon Myer (War Relocation Authority)..

J.T.: Yup.

F.A.: To Edward Ennis (Director of Enemy Alien Affairs)
Reading: "We are extremely anxious these men not be returned on parole to their relocation centers. If they are returned without substantial sentences, other evacuees desirous of evading honest service might conclude that refusal to report would merely result in a slight slap on the wrist. It would in fact be preferable to Army service from their point of view."

J.T.: Now you know. Right?

F.A.: Um hmm.

J.T.: They did everything under the sun to make sure we didn't get out. It really, uh..it was really something. This (showing the document) is the Presidential Proclamation I got. Yeah.

F.A.: Oh.

J.T.: Yeah. There's all...they don't state the camp. They just say Wyoming with a Japanese name and the State. You figure it's Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, you know. That's all camp.

F.A.: (reading) Arizona, Idaho..

J.T.: Yeah. You see the difference in the print? They magnified it.

F.A.: Yep. Convicted June '46. Wyoming. Then this is the (name unclear...Falbo?) case which that appeals court refused our whatchucallit. But this guy is a C.O., and as far as (Falbo?)

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goes, he was a C.O. to start with. They refused their draft, period. From the beginning. But this guy here, he refused to go to work camp, and that's the God darn word that put us.. gave us ...they never override it because of the (Falbo) case. See, I got it red lined there...

F.A.: Umm...(reading)...

J.K.: And that's why the appellate court based their decision..that we refused the order. Not that military side, but the work camp..

F.A.: You didn't refuse...you weren't offered the chance.

J.K.: Yeah, I know. But, he's a Conscientious Objector, and those Quaker...mostly Quaker group. When they refuse, they have to go to work camp to work it off. But this guy here refused the work camp that's why he...our judge..I mean the Appellate Court used this decision to deny our appeal. You see, we were...hook and crook they got us...then ..naturally the Supreme Court won't honor our appeal...because of the Appellate Court decision. Then uh...you know so I go to the (library?)..Eastern Washington to Eastern Oregon, they're beyond the 300 mile limit, so loyal citizens and peons in the Western Defense Command were a bunch of radicals...and we couldn't be trusted.

You know I got this Tolani Committee hearing (February, 1942) when JACL testified in 19..uh right after signing the evacuation order..and Mike Masaoka went up there and testified. I got his whatchucallit Tolani Committee hearing and what JACL said and all that stuff, so I bring all that up when the JACL apologized to us. And then I wrote to the Hokubei Mainichi about that and exactly put down what JACL Mike Masaoka said, "J stands for justice and all that bullshit.." And then I thought that was real good if they would be the leader in whatchucallit..assisting Japanese progress, but...it's a bunch of lies. You know, I gotta say Koshiyama and rest of those guys in California...they don't have this kind of stuff, so what the hell they going to talk about? That's why I went to Laramie, Wyoming, God damn it was really interesting. All those people really enjoyed it. Because I brought out...whatchucallit...about a month before I went Bill Hosokawa was up there, and he didn't say nothing of importance. He just, uh kinda patched it here, patched it there, and nothing like what I said, you know. I said that's the kind of leadership we had. That's why guys like us fought for our Constitutional rights, we got nailed to the cross from our own peers, mind you, I said. I said that is the most...I think in my lifetime that was the lowest point of my life...when our own peers stuck us in the back. That was terrible. And like, over here, last year...I mean this year. Early part of this year. There was one lady, she's active with that Japanese American Historical Society in Chicago. She says we have to...she knows me real good. Her son takes judo and he's helping my son with judo, and she knows my history so she says we have to have your events

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recorded with that historical society. I said, "Fine," so I had about a four or five hour interview. And then, when I was in..last year I was at Cheyenne, Wyoming, at this Wyoming State Tribune. They call it...name changed now..I think it is Cheyenne Wyoming Tribune, or Cheyenne Tribune, or something like that. But I went to their library, and oh, they got stacks and stuff.. paper from way back.

F.A.: Bound volumes.

J.T.: Yeah.

F.A.: Yeah. I heard about that.

J.T.: And I went there and I took June of 1944, and our trial date, fore and aft, and I'm looking thru it and I'm writing down what day it is, what column, and continuation, and what page, and you know...so they told me everything is microfilmed at the Archives. So when I brought that paper, I showed her. This is the information I am looking for at the Archives. So she brought out the reel, and the operating..They operate for you, and they make the print. She happened to see this, and she said, "You know, there is a historian here, getting together history of the State of Wyoming. And you know, by looking at this, you people are part of Wyoming." I said, "Well, our trial was here in Cheyenne." So she says..told me, reading "Lawyers clash at trial for Japanese. Pickett (sp?) and Menin exchange angry words. Offer to translate them into action. Angry words between lawyers and offers to translate them into action marked the final day in District Court. Menin...uh John B. Pickett, this is wrong, isn't it? Assistant U.S. District Attorney John C. Pickett told Samuel Menin of Denver, chief defense attorney, quote 'Sit down or I'll sit you down' when Menin interrupted the Government's final argument with an objection. 'Try it,' replied Menin. 'If the court will permit me it, I'll do it in short order,' Pickett addressed U.S. District Judge Blake Kennedy. 'Let him try it,' said Menin. Judge Kennedy asked the Denver attorney to sit down and Pickett to continue. Pickett contended that the Government had shown in a non jury trial the accused were sent notices to report for pre-induction examinations, and ya di ah di ah." Ok.

F.A.: I know that it's fifty years ago...

J.K.: Yeah. Yeah.

F.A.: What do you recall about taking of these pictures?

J.K.: Well, uh, I thought it be nice if we got hold of a picture, and we got it too..

F.A.: Yeah, yeah. I have it.

J.K.: No, where in the Hell did I put mine. And anyway I got it. And then a lot of these guys...I went to Matsumoto's place in L.A. He's got this framed one ...Sakai sent us..Japanese American draft resisters, whatchucallit?

F.A.: The Bar Association?

J.K.: Yeah. Something like that. Yeah..yeah.

F.A.: Japanese American Bar Association.

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J.K.: Yeah. Yeah. They sent us certificates. He got it, what you call...framed up.

F.A.: Ike Matsumoto? ...He was very proud of that.

J.K.: Yeah...where is mine? (looking) It's here someplace!
(laughter) I wonder what the Hell....I'm proud of what I did, but I don't advertise it. I put all my uh whatchucallit into different interviews and different speaking engagements. That's my way of doing things. Whereas they don't, you know. That's why when I speak at these like (unclear).. "Boy, yours are really interesting." Those people really enjoy it. I say "Next time, I say, whatchucallit my relatives in Colorado, so let you know ahead of time, and get a different breed up there, and I'll speak again.

F.A.: Well, anyway, what do you recall about taking of the picture in the courtroom? I guess....

-end of side B of first tape-

-side A of second tape-

F.A.: Yes....They lined you all up, in this picture?

J.K.: No. We were all sitting down, normally. Where we (were) every day during the trial. Then he took a picture, and I thought it was a pretty good memorabilia for us guys, if we were able to pick up the picture.

F.A.: So you knew it would be...historic.

J.K.: Yeah. Oh absolutely....After all, a mass trial like this is uh one of a kind, especially during that war time. It was something unheard of. Yeah, we uh...I thought it was pretty good.

F.A.: You recall any guys horsing around during the picture?

J.K.: Uh?

F.A.: Were the guys horsing around, or sitting pretty still?

J.K.: Yeah, we uh...we kinda..we behaved pretty good in court. We never tried to attract attention. We were very uh...Of course we were wanting to hear what's going on. It's something new for us, and, uh...we were consider a mass (unclear) we were really obedient, quite patriotic.

F.A.: Were there a scare, though?

J.K.: Oh?

F.A.: Weren't you scared of the trial?

J.K.: No.

F.A.: Not you.

J.K.: No. The reason why...I already made my committment that we gonna get hung, anyway.

F.A.: Figuratively speaking.

J.K.: Yeah...(laughing) Yeah, you know. I figure, Jesus, how in the hell the government gonna lose to us guys? Then that's gonna fix the whole Goddam Nisei operation. And no way they not gonna whatchucallit.. They're not going to lose to us. So they wrangled the Constitution every which way they could, and just avoided a lot of that stuff. We knew just what's

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gonna happen. Well, I don't know about the other guys, but I knew myself that if they lost to us, then they got a big problem on their hand. They got to send everybody back to California, or...all the camps. After we beat the case, what the hell they going to do? They can't keep us. So I know they weren't gonna let us win at all. Being a first test case, always...we would get the shaft. We did. And, uh, like I say, we don't begrudge the sentence. At that time, we couldn't win anyway. That's the philosophy I had. I don't know about the older guys. Maybe they were different, but I look at it from the standpoint that being a test case, no way you gonna win. And moreso during war time to..so I was...just my nature too. I look at the bright side and the other side, and go right down the middle. Nothing bothers me. I uh..there were times I know. I would uh farming I would have about ten bucks in my pocket and then waiting for the crop to come in, an one of the hunting buddy come over, and they were having a hard time: six, seven kids and having a hard time, and they couldn't do this and then so finally I parted with five bucks. And so, next day..that day..I paid..I had ten bucks on the three number at the bookie, you know. Uh, that morning, something told me about this number, so I paid ten bucks on that number. I didn't think nothing of it. Then next day, I go..after I give this guy five bucks, and I didn't tell my wife at all.. you know, I only got five bucks left. And we gonna take care of groceries and everything and wait for the crop to come in, and so I dropped in for something..and this guy, runner for the bookie says, "Hey, you hit the number." "Are you bull shitting me?" "No, you hit the number." And, ten bucks..five hundred to one, you know. That's five thousand bucks! Just like that. (laughing) So you know, things like that. Spur of the moment, I think, well that's it. I play, and then money just came in, you know. So that part never phase me. Where is my last dime coming from?

Three years I go to Vegas. Every year we go to Hiroshima Kenjinkai (prefectural group meeting-immigrants from the Hiroshima prefecture in Japan) So, uh..I was waiting for Ike Matsumoto. I always call him when we go..February, third week in February. So I get a room with two double beds. So we were staying downtown, Golden Nugget down there. So we get two double beds, so they take one and we have one. I always invite him, so he comes over there. He's my kohai (junior)...junior so I have to take care of him, right? Japanese style. Senpai (senior)-kohai. (Jack is senior-Ike is junior) So we go over there and eat, and I always take care of the bill. He wants to pay..."Oh, forget it!" So, I was waiting for him..we were waiting for him. We were going to go across the street to the Fremont to eat. Afternoon, about three o'clock. And then, uh we couldn't find Ike. I dunno where in the hell he went to. So I told Mary, "I'm gonna go over there... dollar slots." You pay for slugs, and there's a two dollar machine right in front of me, so I put two dollar in, and pull it, and Goddam,

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this machines ok! It's my type of machine. You know, that ..turns slow. So on the fourth two dollar pull, I hit double jackpot, three of them come out. Sixteen hundred bucks, right! there, right? Holy Christ! So I got ..after 1,999 dollars you have to sign that I.R.S. form. So I signed it. They give you the whole works, you know. So I finally, go over there and and I show 'em all the money I had you know, and then I told 'em how I hit it. Oh, so we went to eat. Sit down. And then I play KENO. My birthday, and my wife was 65 and I was 70. So I played the fine number...I had 50 bucks on. And then I was watching the thing, and son of a bitch..all the fine numbers come out. Thirty six thousand bucks I hit 'em for. THIRTY SIX THOUSAND BUCKS! (laughing) THAT'S HOW I AM! And then the guys, then my dau..I told my kid, I'd call back home. She spread the the word around the Chicago group that I hit 'em for thirty six thousand. Then a lot of guys says, "Who is the asshole that plays 50 bucks on a number...in KENO! WHY ME! I'm the asshole. (laughing) Ohhhh! That's why, you know. I'm just (a) tougher guy. I just go there and...that's why I get everything free at Fremont, you know. So, when I go there, I gamble too, a lot. Dice. So they had uh..categorized 500 dollar players..4, 3, 2, 100..So when a 500 dollar player calls in, they always got room for him. So, you know, I always start out with 500 bucks when I play dice. So they know me right away. And then, so, I go up to the executive office. Day shift.. This guy was a day shift manager those days..casino. Now he's the head of marketing. So every time I go up there, I go into the (unclear) office, this one, that one, personnel. I know practically everybody in there, see. Start from the registration desk down below. And then to the..cashier at the restaurant and everything, and they give you a gold card, and I have to sign for it and everything, and everything is comped (free). So I go up there and bullshit with them and.. So he told me how they have these.. everyone categorized, and so one time Ike's brother wanted to go about ten days before New Year's Eve. Then he calls me up, and I says, "What? You guys are nuts! Don't call me ten days before! I says no way in the world you gonna get room. Even I could say that, you know. So I called...but I says I'll try. He says .. so I talked to this Howard Chatsburger (sp?).executive. Day shift.. .this guy was a day shift manager those days..casino..I told him, "Hey, my buddies....."