

LIFE, LIBERTY, AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

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FADE IN

EXT. CORNER MARKET - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE - "1945"

The IGUCHI family - father, mother, and 2 sons - stand in front of the run down, closed neighborhood grocery market. They look at the building with apprehension.

JIM (24) stands behind his parents, looks dismayed at the wreck of a building.

Father TADAKI (50's) looks older than his years.

Mother HATOMI (late 40's) is quiet, strong, and just wants to get her family back on track.

SAM (21) is the youngest son. He limps from a leg injury.

Tadaki puts a key in the door and opens it slowly.

A car pulls up and the White passenger, KYLE WESTERLY (30's) leans out the window.

KYLE

Hey Japs, the war's over. Go back where you came from!

JIM

This IS our home.

KYLE

We'll burn ya down someday.

The car roars away, burning rubber.

JIM

Jerks! Go to hell.

TADAKI

Calm down. Too much noise.

JIM

They still think we're foreigners. Doesn't that make you mad?

Tadaki opens the door fully. He points inside and walks in.

TADAKI

This is our new life.

Jim glares in the direction of the offending car and escorts his mother inside. Sam limps in.

INT. CORNER MARKET - CONTINUOUS

The family looks around, spreads out. Loose junk lies around, dust everywhere, broken shelves, exposed wiring. This place has seen better days.

Graffiti on a wall: "No Japs allowed!"

JIM

Aw, fudge, what a dump. This won't be my life.

TADAKI

What do you mean?

JIM

I'll help as much as I can but I'm going to start my own gardener's business.

TADAKI

What? I need your help full-time. Sam cannot lift all the heavy boxes. I can do a lot but...

He watches Sam move boxes, favoring his leg.

TADAKI (CONT'D)

And it's not easy for your mother too.

SAM

You don't know anything about gardening.

JIM

I'm used to working outdoors. And I have bigger dreams.

TADAKI

Instead of helping your family?

JIM

I wanna get married, have a family. I'm gonna get respect when I'm rich.

TADAKI

How can you leave your mother when she's getting old? You're the eldest son now. You must take care of her.

Tadaki finds a chair and sits.

JIM

We'll figure that out later. For now, I need... what's the phrase? Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness?

TADAKI

Words. Just words.

JIM

But that's what society owes us. That's what the government owes me.

He angrily kicks an empty box.

TADAKI

I want our community to rebuild. Work together to have a shopping and community center.

JIM

For what?

TADAKI

To have shows, classes, dinners. Anything. It is important for our future.

Hatomi strolls by.

JIM

It's every man for himself, Dad.

HATOMI

Everyone is working so hard. Who has time?

TADAKI

I can dream too, can't I?

JIM

It's just pie in the sky.

TADAKI

So, not as important as your dream?

Jim is taken aback.

TADAKI (CONT'D)

You should be more concerned about reputation.

JIM

I don't care.

TADAKI  
You have to fight.

JIM  
Not what you taught me.

TADAKI  
Not with fists, with *atama*.

He points to his head.

JIM  
You told me your father didn't want  
you to fight.

TADAKI  
He did not want me to die. That's  
why he sent me here so I wouldn't  
be drafted into the Japanese Army.

JIM  
I didn't want to fight or die  
either. That's why I'm a "no-no  
boy."

TADAKI  
The war is over. Help your family  
and our people. Give respect, get  
respect.

Jim is stung. He takes a beat.

JIM  
Do you respect my decision?

Tadaki grits his teeth, holds back a comment.

JIM (CONT'D)  
I hope you're not burdened with a  
long life full of shame because of  
me.

Tadaki looks shocked. Jim, chastened.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Sorry, dad. I'm gonna look for the  
light.

He spins around and marches into the back room. He kicks  
trash on the way.

Hatomi walks up to Tadaki and links her arm over his arm.  
Tadaki looks around the room.

TADAKI

It could be worse, right?

She nods and smiles.

HATOMI

This is a special place. I feel the Shinto gods smiling.

TADAKI

You always bring sunshine.

The lights come on. Jim walks out from the back room.

JIM

Mom, you're so polite, if there was crap in your mouth, you wouldn't spit it out.

TADAKI

Do not talk to your mother like that. Ichiro would be cleaning already.

JIM

You'll have to make do with us lazy bums. I let a cat out the back door. I think he was keeping the rats away.

Jim kicks trash towards the back room.

TADAKI

This was going to help me feel like the head of this family.

HATOMI

It's not your fault. You did the best you could.

TADAKI

How can I feel like a man when they took everything? Those wasted years.

Hatomi leans into him.

HATOMI

I'm sorry you can't be an engineer.

TADAKI

And I am sorry you aren't teaching.

HATOMI

It will be okay. Smile and move on,  
neh?

Tadaki nods and squeezes her hand. Sam and Jim approach them.

TADAKI

Let's get to work. I want to open  
by New Years.

EXT. STREET IN LITTLE TOKYO - LOS ANGELES - DAY

Jim runs on the sidewalk, dodges the mostly Japanese-American pedestrians.

He passes a street sign - "LITTLE TOKYO."

Black Americans and Asians look into the restaurant and bar storefronts. Jim annoys them as he runs around and past them.

He stops in front of "CURLY'S RESTAURANT." A sign shows the daily specials: "Curley's Southern Fried Chicken" and "Oyako Donburi."

A Black man, MR. CHARLES (40's), the owner of the restaurant, stands in front. Mr. Charles is fashionably dressed, smiles to bring in customers. But he looks angry when he sees Jim.

MR. CHARLES

(stern)

Boy, what's the date?

Jim, out of breath, leans on his knees.

JIM

October 31, 1945, sir.

MR. CHARLES

And what time it is?

JIM

Just a little after three o'clock,  
sir.

MR. CHARLES

And why is that important?

JIM

I don't know, Mr. Charles.

MR. CHARLES

It's the last time you'll ever be late if you wanna keep working for me.

JIM

Yes, sir. Sorry, sir.

MR. CHARLES

Get in there with the other boys and eat.

INT. RESTAURANT - BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jim bounds inside.

He passes a small ceramic figure of an Asian waving cat. He rubs it furtively.

MR. CHARLES (O.S.)

Hey, we ain't partners! Don't touch my lucky cat!

Jim chuckles and walks into the employees' room, four round tables. Several Black men sit at one table, White men at another, and Japanese-Americans at the third. Everyone eats.

His White co-workers ignore him but a few of the Black men wave at him.

Jim walks over to the Japanese-American table. His friend DON (early 20's) nods at him.

DON

(between bites)

Late again?

JIM

I'm not perfect like you, Mister Don.

DON

After all these years together in camp, you finally admit it, huh? Sit.

JIM

Gonna eat with the *kuro-sans* today.

Jim looks at the table where the Black co-workers eat.

Don glances at the other table. Some of the White workers stare back.



DON  
Those boys won't respect you if  
hang out with the coloreds.

Jim glares at the White men.

JIM  
Those jerks? I can sit with  
anybody. Don't give a damn.

DON  
You should. They run this country.

JIM  
Not those fat-heads.

He grabs a tray with food and heads over to the table with  
the Black men.

They're eating quickly.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Gentlemen, and you too, Lee.

LEE (20's), built like a boxer. Outgoing man.

LEE  
(keeps eating)  
Who invited you? This table just  
for the smart, good lookin' boys.

JIM  
Since I'm smart, I fit right in.

Everyone at the table laughs.

LEE  
Don't blame me if your wallet be  
missing when you get up.

JIM  
I heard that about you guys.

Not everyone laughs.

LEE  
Ain't you worried what your buddies  
gonna say? You eatin' with us?

JIM  
Most of those guys already hate me.

LEE  
What the heck that about, anyways?

JIM  
I'm a no-no boy.

The group stops eating to listen.

LEE  
What's that?

JIM  
No swearing allegiance to the  
United States. No volunteering for  
the Army.

He looks over at the Japanese table.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Lots of them think I'm a disloyal  
coward.

LEE  
I joined but Negroes couldn' mix  
with the Whites. Nothin' like  
servin' your country and still  
bein' second class.

The men nod in agreement. Go back to eating.

JIM  
I know how - -

LEE  
You don't know shit. You were  
campin' while me and my buddies  
were gettin' shot at.

Jim looks hard at Lee, takes in the unfriendly vibe from  
around the table. They're focused on him.

JIM  
Maybe I'm not smart enough after  
all.

Jim gets up with his food tray. He walks to the empty table  
and sits. No one looks up.

INT. RESTAURANT - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Kyle Westerly stands in front of a dozen young White men  
sitting at tables. They are fixated on Kyle. A "Keep  
Pasadena Ours" sign is taped to the wall.

Kyle looks angry, speaks angry and emits hate vibes with  
every word. He's dressed like any man out for a casual  
evening but he's definitely not in a casual mood.

KYLE

The Japs are moving in. We can't let 'em. They'll take our jobs, they'll poison our water, they'll bring their stinkin' food with 'em.

The men nod and murmur agreement.

KYLE (CONT'D)

We shoulda killed all of 'em with those atomic bombs. The only good Jap is a dead Jap, right?

More nodding and murmuring, more energetic.

KYLE (CONT'D)

We won't forget Pearl Harbor. We won't forget what they did to our country. And I won't forget what they did to me.

Men stand up and cheer.

KYLE (CONT'D)

They don't believe in Christmas. They don't believe in God. They don't wanna speak English.

The men scream disapproval.

KYLE (CONT'D)

This is our land. We're never gonna let foreigners take one inch. If you don't look like us, you can't be with us. Right?

Men shout agreement. They start chanting "Ban the Japs!" over and over.

CHRIS JONES (30's) watches Kyle from behind the tables. Chris is Kyle's right-hand man. He's low key, man of few words.

Kyle looks over at Chris and smiles. Chris gives him the thumbs up.

Kyle walks to Chris.

KYLE (CONT'D)

What d'ya think, Chris?

CHRIS

Great meeting, Kyle.

KYLE

We're gonna give those Japs holy hell.

Kyle starts chanting with the group and walks among them.

Chris responds with a nervous half-smile.

INT. CURLEY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Jim, Don and Mr. Charles sit around a table.

MR. CHARLES

Sorry you boys are quitting but I know you wanna go your own way.

DON

You've been great, Mr. Charles.

MR. CHARLES

The truth is I was gonna let you go anyway.

JIM

Did Lee say something?

MR. CHARLES

No, no. It sounds like the landlord isn't gonna give me a new lease.

JIM

Oh?

MR. CHARLES

He wants to give the restaurant back to the Japanese family that ran it before the war.

DON

Well, this is Little Tokyo.

MR. CHARLES

I thought we did a good thing moving here. Turning Little Tokyo into Bronzeville was exciting.

JIM

What can you do?

MR. CHARLES

We're getting some help from the Japanese business association but a lot of them want to move back.

(MORE)

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)  
I don't blame'em but it's hard for  
my people to find places to live  
and work.

JIM  
That's rough.

MR. CHARLES  
So, I wanna keep my boys working as  
long as I can.

Jim and Don nod.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)  
But you eat before you leave, you  
hear?

JIM  
Happy New Year, Mr. Charles.

EXT. STREET IN LITTLE TOKYO - DAY

Jim and Don walk out of Curley's, stomachs full.

Two Japanese-American men walk towards them. TOSH (20's) and  
NAK (20's) look serious when they see Jim and Don.

They stop a couple of feet away.

NAK  
Hey, Tosh, look at these two ugly  
mugs.

Tosh leans forward and stares.

TOSH  
And they're fat too.

JIM  
Ugly knows ugly, right?

All four men step into each other's faces like they're about  
to fight. Smiles break out all around, and they shake hands  
vigorously.

NAK  
Damn, long time no see.

JIM  
Not since you left camp. How you  
been, Nak?

NAK  
Tough finding work. Starting my own  
gardener's business.

JIM  
Hey, us too! How about you, Tosh?

Tosh nods vigorously.

Three Japanese-American men walk up behind them. BOBBY ITO, MITS and ROCKY (all 20's) look menacing. Bobby has attitude and is the leader of this gang.

BOBBY  
Look who's climbed out from under  
the rocks. It's the chicken crew.

JIM  
Keep moving. Nobody invited you to  
our party.

BOBBY  
Tough talk for a coward.

Nak takes a step towards Bobby.

NAK  
Bobby, shut up and get lost. We're  
not looking for a fight but I'll  
end anything you start.

MITS  
Why would we want to fight you  
losers? We fought Nazis while you  
clowns partied in camp.

TOSH  
Kill for a country that locked us  
up? You *bakatare* caved in.

ROCKY  
Who you calling idiots? I nearly  
got gutted and plenty of our  
buddies didn't get back. Show  
respect or I'll beat some into you.

Nak steps up to Rocky.

NAK  
Bring it.

JIM  
We don't wanna fight.

Bobby spits on Jim's shoe. Nak puts his face near Bobby's face. Bobby looks around Nak at Jim.

Jim tries to shake the spit off his shoe.

BOBBY  
Can't stand up for yourself?

NAK  
You talk too much.

Nak and Bobby glare at each other and circle carefully. Bobby swings.

The fight is on. They shout and cuss and grapple as they try to punch each other, mostly misses.

Anxious, Jim shuffles back a few steps.

A crowd gathers, shouts of encouragement.

Mr. Charles comes out and yells at them.

MR. CHARLES  
Get away from here! I don't need no trouble.

Two White police officers show up. Officer LEWIS (40's) steps between Nak and Bobby. Officer WALKER (40's) steps between the others. Both officers have attitude.

OFFICER LEWIS  
Knock it off. All of ya or you're going to jail.

Fighting stops.

OFFICER LEWIS (CONT'D)  
You Japs can't disturb the peace just because you're in Little Tokyo. You punks have to live by American rules.

The young men separate into their groups.

BOBBY  
We're just having a party, Officer. Go yell at a real criminal.

OFFICER LEWIS  
Don't get smart with me, Jap.

MR. CHARLES  
 Officer, no need to talk like that.  
 These boys were just having a  
 conversation about the old days.

All the men nod.

NAK  
 That's right, Officers.

JIM  
 (to Mr. Charles)  
 Sorry about this, sir.

OFFICER LEWIS  
 Get the hell out of here.

TOSH  
 (in fake accent)  
 So solly, Officer *bakatare*. We  
 velly solly and we stop now.

The guys stifle a chuckle.

OFFICER WALKER  
 See that you do. Next time, I'll  
 just bash your heads in. We shoulda  
 left you Japs in those camps.

MR. CHARLES  
 Officer, no need to talk like that.

OFFICER WALKER  
 Or what? Mind your own business,  
 Negro.

DON  
 Why you so agitated? We've done  
 nothing wrong.

OFFICER WALKER  
 You know what? We're taking you in  
 for bad attitude.

The crowd starts mumbling and voicing their disagreement in  
 impolite terms.

Officer Lewis turns to the crowd.

OFFICER LEWIS  
 Nothing to see. Go about your  
 business.

Officer Walker grabs Don to put handcuffs on.



Mr. Charles steps into his face.

MR. CHARLES  
You don't have to do this.

OFFICER WALKER  
Stay out of this, boy.

MR. CHARLES  
I ain't your boy.

The crowd gets louder.

The officers pull out their nightsticks.

OFFICER LEWIS  
Everybody get back.

People run and bump into each other. The officers get jostled.

Don turns to run. Officer Lewis swings at Don's head. Don ducks but Officer Lewis hits Mr. Charles in the ribs.

Officer Lewis swings again and hits Mr. Charles on the knee. Mr. Charles falls to the ground.

Chaos. Officer Walker draws his gun and points it in the air.

BANG! The crowd scampers away. The young men back away several feet.

JIM  
What the hell!

The officers hold back the young men as Jim checks on Mr. Charles.

He writhes in pain on the ground.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Damn cops!

MR. CHARLES  
(gritting through pain)  
Calm down, son. Don't make it worse.

Lee drives up in a car. He gets out, helps Mr. Charles into the back seat.

LEE  
I'll take him to the hospital.

Lee gives Jim a dirty look, jumps into the car and drives away.

OFFICER LEWIS

Go home, punks. Next time, it might be you.

The police leave quickly.

The two groups look at each other warily.

BOBBY

We'll see you again, chickens.

Bobby, Rocky and Mits stroll away, taunting as they go.

DON

Those jerks always show up when we're having a good day.

TOSH

Forget about them. They think they're tough because they fought in the 442nd.

NAK

I sure as hell wasn't going to volunteer to fight. And forswear allegiance to the Emperor of Japan? Who the hell had allegiance to him in the first place?

JIM

Answering "no" was the easiest thing I've ever done.

They dust each other off.

JIM (CONT'D)

Not only are we insulted by our own, but we gotta take it from Caucasians too. Did you hear those cops?

NAK

They beat that colored guy for no reason. He was just sticking up for us.

DON

Calm down. Let's get a beer.

Jim looks in the direction Lee drove away.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mr. Charles lies in bed with the typical medical equipment around him. He looks sleepy.

Jim knocks on the doorway and steps in.

MR. CHARLES  
What you doing here?

JIM  
Heard you weren't dead. Feeling okay?

MR. CHARLES  
Got some painkillers for broken ribs. I'll live.

JIM  
Thanks for back there. You were brave. Like a warrior.

MR. CHARLES  
Being a warrior ain't just fighting. It's standing up for what's right.

Jim looks down.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)  
I noticed you backed away from the fisticuffs.

JIM  
I'm not afraid - -

MR. CHARLES  
I didn't say that.

JIM  
I just... don't believe in fighting.

Mr. Charles yawns.

MR. CHARLES  
My mama taught me the same thing.

JIM  
You didn't fight?

MR. CHARLES  
(laughs)  
I paid my dues growing up.

JIM  
I'm not a coward like they think.

MR. CHARLES  
I believe you, son. Thanks for  
coming by.

He closes his eyes and dozes off.

Jim walks to a chair across from the bed and sits. He  
watches Mr. Charles sleep, respect reflected in his eyes.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Young Japanese-Americans drink, smoke, dance and talk in a  
private dance hall. "SPRING FLING" signs are taped on every  
wall. Ballons and festive streamers hang from the ceiling.

Jim and Don, dressed in suits with drinks in hand, happily  
watch the women walk by.

DON  
What a jumpin' crowd.

JIM  
Should get a lot of dancing in,  
huh?

DON  
I'm looking for smooching, if you  
get my drift.

Don spots a woman who stands along the wall. She talks with  
two other women.

DON (CONT'D)  
Do you see her in the blue dress?

Jim follows Don's gaze.

JIM  
I'm in love.

DON  
I saw her first.

JIM  
C'mon, you know she's my type.

DON  
No way. Step aside.

As Don moves forward, Jim puts a fist in front of Don's  
face.

JIM

Let's settle this the usual way.

Don puts his fist in front of Jim's face. They each take a step back.

They shake their fists up and down.

DON

*Jan ken po!*

JIM

*Jan ken po!*

They open their fists in a flash. Both of them have their palms open, fingers extended. Paper.

They look at each other's hand. Back at each other's eyes.

They shake their fists up and down again.

DON

*Ai ko desho!*

JIM

*Ai ko desho!*

Don extends his palm wide open again. Paper.

Jim extends two fingers. Scissors.

DON

Damn! How come you always win?

JIM

I have a strategy.

DON

Baloney.

A young woman strolls by, catches Don's eye.

DON (CONT'D)

Never mind. I'll talk to you later.

Don follows the woman and catches up to her.

Jim smiles, shakes his head. Looks at the woman in blue.

He tries his best to walk calmly, without stumbling, but he's nervous as heck. He finally gets there.

JIM

Good evening. I'm Jim.

MIKA (20's), dressed conservatively. Intelligent eyes, confident when she looks at Jim.

MIKA

Hello, I'm Mika.

She offers her hand and Jim shakes it gently.

JIM  
Here with your friends?

He looks at the other two women. They acknowledge him.

MIKA  
Yes, but we're about to leave.

JIM  
Well, the night is young. Would you like to dance? It cost enough to get in here.

MIKA  
Sorry, but it's time for me to go.

JIM  
Will you be here next week?

MIKA  
Probably. But if you want to dance with me, come a little earlier.

She smiles, bows slightly and leaves with the other women.

Jim smiles brightly. He watches as Mika gets to the exit. She turns slightly to look at him and saunters out the door.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Iguchi family walks in. It's cool outside so they are wearing coats. The HOST (40's), dressed in a casual suit, blocks them at the entrance. He has a sour look on his face when he sees them.

TADAKI  
Four for dinner, please.

HOST  
Do you have a reservation?

TADAKI  
It looks like you have plenty of tables.

HOST  
We'll be busy soon. Follow me.

The host leads them past several empty tables to the back of the restaurant, right near the restrooms. He points at the table.

HOST (CONT'D)  
Your waiter will be here in a moment.

They take off their coats and sit down. Jim looks over at the restroom door.

JIM  
Do you smell that?

Sam holds his nose and cringes.

Jim waves at the host. Host comes over.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Can you seat us someplace else? The smell.

HOST  
Without a reservation, this is the best I can do.

Jim points to the other empty tables.

HOST (CONT'D)  
All reserved.

Host puts on a knowing, lying face.

Jim looks at him. He understands.

JIM  
Come on everybody. Little Tokyo.

Hatomi looks at Tadaki. He nods.

The family stands up, put on their coats. Jim glares at Host as they walk out.

INT. IGUCHI CAR - NIGHT

Tadaki drives as they head to Little Tokyo to eat.

TADAKI  
I really wanted a hamburger steak.

JIM  
Can you believe that shit? Racist jerks.

HATOMI  
Why doesn't Pasadena have a Japanese restaurant yet?

JIM

Don and I tried to see a movie, but they wouldn't sell us tickets. Said they were sold out.

TADAKI

We need our own Japan Town. At least a community center where we can do things together. Like before the war.

JIM

You and that community center again. Why?

TADAKI

It's a promise.

JIM

For what?

TADAKI

We buy a house. Start a business. It's a pledge that we will live here.

JIM

So?

TADAKI

Those things are built on land, land that we own. It's ours, no one can take it.

JIM

That's bull. The government made us leave everything behind when they sent us to those desert camps.

TADAKI

But some of us still own. Look at Little Tokyo. It's there. The community is coming back.

JIM

What's your point, Dad?

TADAKI

Land is our legacy. It's proof that we won't go away. That we will stay, no matter what they do. It's our robustness, our resilience, our resolve.



JIM

This really means a lot to you,  
huh?

TADAKI

It means this is home. We can build  
a peaceful community of Negroes,  
Caucasians, everybody.

JIM

That is a crazy dream.

TADAKI

Still, my dream is not as important  
as yours?

Jim looks as if he's been slapped.

INT. BUSINESS OFFICE - DAY

TRACY TURNER (50's), owner of UPWARD LAND COMPANY, talks to  
her husband RANDY TURNER (50's), city mayor, in her office.  
Randy eats lunch as Tracy looks at papers.

Tracy wants to be rich and dresses for the part. She's  
outgoing, a real salesperson. Not concerned about politics.

Randy wants to run for higher office. He's happy working  
with the racists since it will help his career.

TRACY

Great news, Randy. We can join the  
country club! I'm closing on five  
more homes in northwest Pasadena.

She gleefully spins in her chair while holding up several  
contracts.

RANDY

Are you sure the Japs and coloreds  
will buy those houses?

TRACY

Where else can they go? The banks  
are redlining, right?

RANDY

I'm getting pressure to keep them  
out completely. No one wants yellow  
folks living here.

TRACY

Mr. Mayor, I'm sure you'll keep the  
power brokers happy and satisfied.

Randy holds up a glass as if toasting her.

RANDY

I have to if I'm going to run for governor. I need their money and endorsements.

TRACY

Don't worry about money, honey. I'm on a roll.

Tracy turns away slightly, afraid to ask.

TRACY (CONT'D)

And maybe we can start a family? My Valentine's Day present?

Randy pours himself a glass of water, ignores her comment.

Tracy's face darkens with disappointment.

RANDY

How about your dumpy commercial land?

He takes a bite of his lunch.

TRACY

The Japanese want their own stores and restaurants too.

RANDY

Gotta be careful, Tracy. Have to keep the anti-Jap folks happy if I'm gonna run for governor. I don't need publicity about my wife selling to Japs.

TRACY

The Japanese lived near me in Long Beach before the war. I played with them. They work hard. Someone has to sell to them. They have families  
- -

RANDY

Don't care. Keep it quiet.

Tracy turns away, chagrined.

INT. CORNER MARKET - DAY

Tadaki walks around the store putting inventory on the shelves. Sam cuts meat behind the meat counter.

Tadaki notices a young Black CUSTOMER (late 20's) walk in nervously.

The Customer walks around, looking for something, but he looks anxious.

TADAKI  
Can I help you?

CUSTOMER  
Uhh, naw. Just lookin'.

Tadaki goes back to filling the shelves from boxes.

From outside,

KYLE (O.S)  
Go to hell, you yellow-bellied  
rats!

The sound of glass breaking against the concrete wall. A car speeds away.

Tadaki heads out the door. Looks around cautiously.

EXT. CORNER MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Tadaki sees a small fire against the concrete wall, broken glass around it.

TADAKI  
Damn.

He goes to the hose bib near the entrance and grabs the hose. He turns the water on the fire and puts it out.

TADAKI (CONT'D)  
When will this end?

He goes back inside.

INT. CORNER MARKET - CONTINUOUS

The Customer grabs a couple of bottles of milk from the refrigerator and walks to the entrance.

Tadaki walks towards the Customer.

TADAKI

Excuse me.

The Customer pulls a gun from his waistband. Very nervously points it at Tadaki. His hand shakes and his foot taps the ground quickly.

CUSTOMER

Gonna take this.

Tadaki puts his hands up.

TADAKI

Be careful. We can work something out. You really need it, yes?

CUSTOMER

My kids need it.

TADAKI

We give you credit.

CUSTOMER

Can't pay you back.

Customer inches towards the exit.

TADAKI

Okay. Take it. It's okay.

Sam limps in and sees the gun.

SAM

Hey, what you doing? Put it down.

He runs towards the Customer.

TADAKI

No, Sam! It's okay!

Tadaki steps in front of Sam to stop him. Customer panics and pulls the trigger.

BANG! Tadaki falls to the ground.

Customer runs out.

Sam rushes to his father, blood spilling from his back.

SAM

Dad!

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Hatomi, Jim and Sam sit in the waiting room. They look very tired and concerned. Jim gets up and paces.

SAM

Where the hell were you today?  
You're supposed to be helping at  
the store. If anyone is gonna be  
shot, it should be you.

Jim stops and scowls at Sam.

A couple waiting in the room murmur to each other.

JIM

No one should be shot, jerk.

Hatomi stands up and waves her arms.

HATOMI

Boys, *damare*. Quiet down. We're in  
a hospital.

She bows apologetically to the couple.

JIM

Mom, I think I'm going to build  
that community center Dad wants.

HATOMI

How?

SAM

You "think"? The Caucasians aren't  
going to let you build anything.  
Hell, they're trying to stop us  
from living here.

JIM

I want Dad's.... I'll figure it  
out.

SAM

You're hardly at the store, you're  
barely gardening half-time, and now  
you want to work on a building?  
What a joke. You'll probably quit  
on that too.

JIM

Don't worry. I won't ask Mister War  
Hero with the bum leg to help.

Sam steps into Jim's face.

The couple get up and leave the room.

HATOMI

Boys! Stop it! What's the matter  
with you?

She sits down and shakes her head.

Sam clenches his fists.

SAM

You broke Dad's heart. Why couldn't  
you just volunteer?

JIM

They put us in prisons. Without a  
trial, without charges, without  
anything. Why would I fight for  
them?

SAM

Me and Ichiro were fighting for us.  
To prove our loyalty so Mom and Dad  
could get out.

Jim walks away and turns towards Sam.

JIM

And did that work? The war was  
almost over - -

SAM

That's because you were a disloyal  
ass - -

Jim jumps back into Sam's face and puts a finger in his  
chest.

JIM

Did that work for our relatives in  
Hiroshima? That's a government you  
want to fight for?

Sam steps back, turns away.

HATOMI

We left without a fuss.

JIM

Why didn't you resist?

HATOMI

How could we when soldiers and police were there with guns? Besides, we wanted to show that we were good Americans.

JIM

That didn't make it better.

HATOMI

We wore our best clothes to the train station. We took our dignity and self-respect. That was the most important thing we carried.

Jim sits down. Moments of silence.

SAM

It was a colored that shot him.

Jim shakes his head.

JIM

Dad doesn't deserve this.

SAM

I haven't gotten over Ichiro yet.

JIM

Where were you when you found out?

Sam looks downcast.

SAM

Italy. Don't wanna talk about it.

JIM

Weren't you shot around the same time?

Sam glares at Jim.

SAM

Are you listening?

JIM

Okay, okay.

HATOMI

He was feeling so good about the store. He felt like he had his life back, a purpose. I wish our family

- -

A DOCTOR (40's) comes to the waiting room. He looks tired and sad.

DOCTOR  
Mrs. Iguchi?

Hatomi stands up.

HATOMI  
Yes?

Doctor folds his hands in front and looks at her.

DOCTOR  
I'm so sorry.

He bows slightly.

Hatomi sits back down.

Doctor looks at Jim and Sam to confirm they understand.

Jim and Sam go to her. She buries her face in her hands and cries.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

It's an overcast Spring day.

Jim, Hatomi and Sam sit in front of a small table that has an incense burner and a picture of Tadaki. A vase with daffodils and poppies is also on the table.

The smoke of the burning incense wafts through the air.

Several people stand behind the family. The women cry.

The BUDDHIST MINISTER (50's) stands next to the table. As he speaks, Jim closes his eyes.

BUDDHIST MINISTER  
This is the "Letter On White Ashes"  
by Rennyō Shōnin, a traditional  
reading at our funerals.

INT. CORNER MARKET - DAY- FLASHBACK

Tadaki and the family look around the store the first day.



BUDDHIST MINISTER (V.O.)  
 Not knowing whether death will come  
 today or tomorrow, those who depart  
 before us are as countless as the  
 drops of dew.

INT. CORNER MARKET - DAY - FLASHBACK

Jim and Sam argue in the hospital waiting room. The doctor  
 walks in.

BUDDHIST MINISTER (V.O. CONT'D)  
 Therefore, in the morning we may  
 have radiant health; but by evening  
 we may be White ashes....

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Tadaki and Jim argue the importance of the community center.

BUDDHIST MINISTER (V.O. CONT'D)  
 We are brought to understand that  
 each moment of our life, every day,  
 is precious and unrepeatable.

BACK TO SCENE.

Jim has tears in his eyes as he looks down at the grave  
 markers of TADAKI IGUCHI and ICHIRO IGUCHI.

Sam walks slowly next to Jim.

JIM  
 I don't have time to help at the  
 store anymore.

SAM  
 We - I need your help.

Jim wipes away tears.

JIM  
 I have to build the community  
 center. It's our legacy. No time to  
 waste.

SAM  
 You're gonna disappoint him again,  
 huh?

Jim gives Sam a dirty look and walks away as the sun sets.

INT. BANK OFFICE - DAY

A man in a suit sits behind a large desk. The nameplate reads "William Gild, Manager." GILD (40's) straightens his tie.

Across from Gild, Jim, dressed in a coat and tie, sits nervously.

JIM  
Mr. Gild, I want a loan to build a  
- a building.

GILD  
Very good, Mr. Iguchi. Do you own  
any land?

JIM  
No.

GILD  
Have any savings?

JIM  
Not really.

GILD  
Any co-signers or guarantors?

Jim looks embarrassed.

JIM  
I don't think so.

GILD  
Have any collateral at all? Any  
plans, drawings?

JIM  
No.

Gild stares at Jim and blinks.

GILD  
I don't think we can give you a  
loan, sir.

JIM  
Why not?

GILD  
You don't understand how loans  
work, do you?

JIM  
Never asked for one before.

GILD  
Obviously. Sorry.

INT. CORNER MARKET - BACK ROOM - DAY

Jim and Hatomi sit a card table. Jim is agitated.

JIM  
I was so humiliated. I don't have anything for a loan. He was laughing at me.

HATOMI  
So ask for help.

JIM  
Come on, Mom. I'll be more embarrassed.

HATOMI  
This is for the community, yes? So ask for help.

JIM  
And give Bobby another reason to call me a loser? No way.

HATOMI  
Don't let your pride get in the way. Our people will be happy to help if they think it's an important thing. Convince them.

JIM  
I hate asking for help.

HATOMI  
How important is this to you?

Jim closes his eyes and clenches his teeth.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

A long table rests on the auditorium stage. Across the front of the table is a sign: "So Cal Gardeners Association." Five men, looking officious, sit at the table. About fifty Japanese-American men sit in the auditorium seats.

Jim sits in the front row while Bobby sits in middle of the crowd.

MAS UCHIDA (40's) sits in the middle of the table and runs the meeting. He wears his work clothes and looks like he's had a long day.

MAS  
Last item. Announcements. Anyone?

Jim stands up, raises his hand.

MAS (CONT'D)  
Iguchi-san. Go ahead.

Jim looks nervous.

JIM  
For us to rebuild, we need our own place to watch movies, have dances, community dinners, and anything else we want to do. I want us to build a community center.

MAS  
That's going to take planning. You have experience?

JIM  
I need help from all of you to raise money. We have architects, engineers, professionals. I'll recruit them.

Bobby stands up.

BOBBY  
Why do we need it? We've got this room for meetings.

JIM  
But I bet we're paying rental fees, right, Uchida-san? And I bet we're not getting a discount.

MAS  
That's right.

BOBBY  
How can we trust you? You're a traitor. And you don't seem too smart.

The crowd murmurs agreement.

JIM

Bobby, you know I'm right. The other clubs are meeting all over town. Don't we want someplace to call our own? One place where we can see each other.

BOBBY

We don't want to see you.

JIM

If someone else collects the money, I don't care. But we all have to help or else we're never going to have our own Japan Town. A place to show off our culture and pride.

BOBBY

As long as you don't keep the money.

MAS

What do the rest of you think? After being shipped all over the country, coming back together would a good thing, yes?

A couple of beats. Then a murmur of approval from the audience.

MAS (CONT'D)

Okay, we agree. Give at least five dollars. We'll collect it in a special fund.

JIM

Ask your customers too. And the Japanese businesses and family associations. If we all pitch in, we can do this.

MAS

We're done.

As Jim passes by the stage, Mas points to Jim.

MAS (CONT'D)

You've just raised hopes. Don't waste your chance to change what people think of you.

JIM

(bows, nods)  
*Wakarimashita.*

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Jim and Don stand against a wall. They nurse drinks as they look around the hall.

Jim sees Mika, elbows Don and walks over to her. Eyes aglow.

JIM  
Here I am. Dance with me?

MIKA  
Nice to see you.

Jim takes her hand and leads her to the dance floor. It's a slow song. He maintains proper space between them as they circle the floor.

MIKA (CONT'D)  
You haven't been here in awhile.

JIM  
You noticed. I'm flattered.

MIKA  
Don't get big headed.

JIM  
My father died so I've been busy.

Mika's eyes open wide.

MIKA  
Oh, I'm so sorry.

She looks at him for a beat, expecting an explanation.

MIKA (CONT'D)  
Doing what?

JIM  
Something for him.

They dance in awkward silence for another beat.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Where are you from?

MIKA  
Hiroshima. But I was born here.

JIM  
Did you see the bomb?

She drops her eyes and exhales.

JIM (CONT'D)  
I'm so stupid. You don't have to -

MIKA  
I have to learn.

JIM  
So, you're *hibakusha*?

MIKA  
I guess I am. I survived.

Jim stops dancing and looks at her.

JIM  
Thought we had it bad but you've  
been through real hell.

MIKA  
Can we just dance?

Jim dances again.

JIM  
I'll shut up.

MIKA  
*Shikata ga nai, neh?*

JIM  
Yeah, can't do anything about it.

The music stops.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Want to get some air?

Mika nods.

EXT. DANCE HALL PATIO - CONTINUOUS

He takes her hand and leads her outside where people are  
drinking and smoking.

MIKA  
Where are you from?

JIM  
Born in Los Angeles but lately in  
Manzanar and Tule Lake.

MIKA

We heard our relatives were rounded up and killed. Including my parents.

JIM

Where are - -

MIKA

They moved to Chicago. Scared and dazed like the other *Issei*.

They look away from each other.

MIKA (CONT'D)

What are you doing for your father?

JIM

Gonna build a Japanese community center.

MIKA

What a great idea.

JIM

You think so?

MIKA

I miss going someplace where we can see friends. This dance hall is nice but it's not ours. I want to help, okay? Really.

Jim smiles.

JIM

I know this seems fast, but can I take you out tomorrow?

MIKA

I'm not that kind of girl.

JIM

I didn't mean - -

MIKA

Maybe we can eat and dance next week. You can tell me how I can help.

They both smile.

JIM

It would be my honor.



He bows slightly, wide stupid grin on his face. She walks away.

He watches her leave, still grinning.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Randy and Kyle sit a booth in a dark corner. Drinks on the table.

RANDY

I hear you're not a fan of the Japs.

KYLE

I'm not shy about that.

RANDY

Seems like we can help each other.

KYLE

I'm listening.

RANDY

If there was a patriotic American group that didn't want Japs to move into our beloved town, there might be some benefits for that group.

Randy looks both ways, then back at Kyle. He rubs his thumb across his fingers, indicating "money."

KYLE

What does this group have to do?

RANDY

Do whatever, you know, against anything the Japs want to do. And against anybody who tries to help them.

KYLE

Hell, I'm happy to do that for free.

RANDY

Then you'll really be happy with what I give you.

INT. KYLE'S CAR - DAY

Kyle drives, Chris is the passenger. Kyle hums a song.

CHRIS  
Why are we just driving around?

KYLE  
A friend wants us to keep an eye  
out for anything that shouldn't be  
happening.

CHRIS  
Like criminal stuff?

Kyle winks at him.

KYLE  
Sure.

They drive past a park. Several Japanese-American children  
(6 to 13 years old) play on the bars, sit on the swings, and  
go down the slide.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
What the hell?

Kyle stops the car.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Kyle gets out, Chris follows.

Kyle walks quickly towards the children and starts yelling.

KYLE  
Hey, whatcha doing? You can't play  
here. This is my park.

The children stop playing, look at him.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Did you hear me? Don't you Japs  
speak English?

The children slowly back away from him.

KYLE (CONT'D)  
No speekee American? Get out of  
here!

The children keep shuffling backwards, look at each other.

CHRIS  
Kyle, they're just having fun.

KYLE  
Now! I mean it.

He starts walking towards the children in a threatening manner. The children scream and start running away.

KYLE (CONT'D)

That's it, run home, all the way to Jap-land. Damn yellow bellies.

CHRIS

They're just kids.

KYLE

Yeah, well, I was just a kid when I got chased out of here.

CHRIS

By the Japanese?

KYLE

By the Jews, Italians, everybody. No compassion for me. They said it was their park.

CHRIS

That's terrible. I'm sorry.

KYLE

So I've got no pity for Jap kids. Let's go. This is a good day.

Kyle smiles at Chris, walks to the car, hums a song.

Chris follows, looks shocked as he watches the backs of the children running down the street.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

The tables have vases with spring flowers.

Jim and Mika stand along a wall, drinks in hand.

JIM

Crowded tonight.

Rocky walks up.

ROCKY

Would you like to dance?

JIM

Get lost. She's with me.

MIKA

Jim! Sure, Rocky, let's dance.

Mika hands her drink to Jim and walks towards the dance floor. Rocky smiles at Jim and follows Mika.

Jim seethes and drinks from both his and Mika's cup.

Don walks up to Jim.

DON  
What's with the face?

Jim points to Mika and Rocky.

JIM  
That jerk is trying to steal her  
and she's letting him.

DON  
Relax. She's just being polite.

Jim keeps staring at Mika. He keeps drinking. The music stops and they come back.

ROCKY  
Thank you, Mika. You're a great  
dancer.

He smiles at her and gives a bigger smile to Jim. He walks into Jim's shoulder, then past Don.

JIM  
Why did you dance with him?

MIKA  
Why? We're not married.

JIM  
I don't want you dancing with  
anybody else.

She takes her drink from Jim.

MIKA  
(giggles)  
Oh, are you jealous?

She looks at his stern-face. Realizes he's not kidding.

MIKA (CONT'D)  
I'm still meeting people and I  
really like you but -

JIM  
You're my girl.

Mika brushes hair away from her face.

MIKA  
You need to calm down.

JIM  
And I don't like you acting like a  
loose woman.

Mika slaps him across the face and runs away.

DON  
Damn, Jim! What's wrong with you?  
You won't fight but you insult a  
woman?

Jim cringes and runs after her.

EXT. DANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Jim catches up to Mika, who stumbles along a fence.

JIM  
Mika! Wait.

Mika stops. She's crying.

JIM (CONT'D)  
I didn't mean it. I - I just have  
strong feelings for you. I might be  
going fast, but - -

MIKA  
I've had it hard too, you know? I  
want love and respect.

JIM  
I get it. I want respect too.

MIKA  
Then why - -

JIM  
Rocky just uses women and then  
breaks their hearts. I'm trying to  
protect you.

MIKA  
Don't you think us girls know about  
him? I'm not stupid and I'm not  
going out with you if you don't  
understand that.

Mika wipes her tears and walks away. Jim watches helplessly.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Randy Turner walks towards the closed door when his chief of staff, GORDON MACK (30's) comes in.

RANDY

I need more press about keeping the Japs out of town.

GORDON

The churches are pushing to welcome them back. They say it's the right thing to do.

RANDY

Hypocrites. When the war started, they didn't say a thing. Now that they can get parishioners, they embrace them.

GORDON

Wanna push back? Could be risky.

RANDY

Don't worry, I got some options lined up for that. But I need a signature move to show how strong I'm anti-Jap. Keep your eyes open.

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

The banner taped to the wall reads "Beat the Summer Heat."

Jim and Mika dance. They look a little sweaty.

JIM

Isn't it time for a break?

MIKA

Tired already?

Kyle, Chris and two other men appear at the front door. The room gets quiet.

Don and Jim approach them.

DON

What are you doing here?

KYLE

Felt like dancing. Wanted to see a few exotic Jap girls for myself.

He looks at a couple of women up and down with a salacious smirk on his face.

JIM  
We don't want trouble. Everyone here is just trying to have fun.

DON  
We don't go to your dances.

KYLE  
We'll do whatever we want. This is a free country, remember?

JIM  
Why do you hate us so much? Do we curse you? Punch you?

KYLE  
What do you think, Chris? Interested in one of these lovely gals?

CHRIS  
Let's go, Kyle.

A dozen Japanese men congregate behind Jim and Don.

KYLE  
Yeah, okay. The smell offends me anyway. We'll have to fumigate when we kick the Japs out of here.

Kyle smirks as they leave. Jim returns to Mika.

Jim takes a deep breath.

MIKA  
My hero. Let's get a drink outside.

EXT. DANCE HALL PATIO - CONTINUOUS

They grab drinks from the counter on the patio along with some paper napkins. Jim wipes his forehead and neck while Mika dabs her face.

JIM  
You can really dance.

She bows slightly to him.

MIKA  
Don't you love this music?

He looks down and shuffles his feet nervously.

JIM  
Thanks for giving me another  
chance.

MIKA  
It's your last, no-no boy.

They laugh.

JIM  
Uh, can I take you to Catalina  
Island tomorrow?

Mika puts on a fake shocked look.

MIKA  
Jim-san, you go pretty fast, *neh*?

JIM  
Did you see those racists  
threatening us? My mind is patient,  
but my heart wants to move.

MIKA  
My friends told me you were trouble  
and I shouldn't see you.

Jim pauses, struck by that comment.

JIM  
Is that because I'm a no-no?

MIKA  
I don't care about that. Probably  
because you're good looking and  
have lots of girls swooning over  
you.

Jim laughs.

JIM  
Even if that were true, I would  
still be here with you.

MIKA  
Aren't you afraid of me?

JIM  
Are you gonna hit me again?

She playfully whacks his arm.



MIKA  
 People think I have radiation and  
 can make them sick. I'm ...  
 damaged.

Jim steps closer to her.

JIM  
 Should I be worried?

MIKA  
 How do you feel about children?

JIM  
 Huh?

MIKA  
 I don't know if I can have any.

Jim grabs her hand.

JIM  
 What happened to you?

Mika takes a deep breath, closes her eyes.

MIKA  
 I lived on an island outside of  
 Hiroshima city. I missed the first  
 ferry or I would have....

EXT. HIROSHIMA SKIES - 1945 - FLASHBACK

HISTORICAL NEWSREEL FOOTAGE of the ATOMIC BOMB being dropped  
 over Hiroshima. The mushroom cloud rises above. Afterwards,  
 the land is burnt and decimated, buildings in rubble.

MIKA (V.O.)  
 Bright blinding light, big mushroom  
 cloud, hot windstorm like nothing  
 before. Three days and nights of  
 fire in the city.

HISTORICAL NEWS PHOTOS of civilians with checkerboard burn  
 patterns on their backs, survivors with skin blistered and  
 peeling away.

MIKA (V.O. ) (CONT'D)  
 The Navy started bringing survivors  
 to the island hospital. We helped  
 move the burned people. Children.

BACK TO SCENE

MIKA (CONT'D)

No one knew what kind of bomb it was. The doctors didn't know what to do.

She wraps her arms around herself.

MIKA (CONT'D)

It was horrible. I'll never forget the misery and suffering, the crying and moaning. The smell of burned flesh. How am I'm still alive?

Jim hugs her. She sobs softly, then takes a deep breath.

JIM

I love you. You're different and I'm different. That makes us the same.

She smiles.

MIKA

I like that you're a no-no boy. You stood up to the government. And because they killed innocent people in Hiroshima, I don't like them either. But we're not going to Catalina, yet.

JIM

How about if you meet my family first?

Mika looks surprised.

INT. CORNER MARKET - DAY

Jim and Mika walk in the back door.

BACK ROOM

JIM

Here it is. My mom and brother are inside.

MIKA

I like it. Feels right.

JIM

That's what my mother said.

MIKA  
You have smart women all around  
you.

JIM  
You're entitled to your opinion.

FRONT ROOM

They walk inside the store. Different ethnic folks shop.

Sam straightens products on the shelves.

Jim takes Mika's hand and leads her to him.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Sam, this is Mika.

MIKA  
(bows)  
Nice to meet you.

SAM  
(bows back)  
Me too.

SAM (CONT'D)  
(to Jim)  
Can you help move stuff tonight?

Jim looks at Mika.

JIM  
We're supposed to - -

MIKA  
Of course we can help.

SAM  
I didn't mean you, Mika.

MIKA  
I can lift boxes so *shinpai shinai*.

SAM  
It's not that. I'm worried you'll  
make me look bad.

JIM  
Anybody can do that. But we're  
going out tonight so - -

MIKA  
We can help your brother. This is a family business, right?

Hatomi walks up to them.

JIM  
Mom, perfect. This is my girlfriend, Mika.

HATOMI  
Thank you for coming by. Would you like some tea?

MIKA  
I think we're moving boxes first.

SAM  
Mika-san, we could use some help with the Japanese-speaking customers. Can I talk you into working here a little bit?

Mika looks at Jim, he rolls his eyes.

MIKA  
I would love to help.

JIM  
Come on. She's my girlfriend.

SAM  
That's even better. Keep the money in the family.

Mika beams at that comment.

She looks at Jim. Nothing. She looks at Hatomi, who smiles and nods.

Mika bows.

MIKA  
*Arigato.*

SAM  
Thank you. Now let's get to work.

HATOMI  
Sam!

Mika looks wide-eyed at Jim.

MIKA  
Wow, tough boss, huh?

INT. DANCE HALL - NIGHT

Jim, Mika and Don dance to the music.

DON  
This place is packed.

JIM  
End of summer. Everyone is having  
fun again. Mika, let's go outside.

DON  
I'll meet you there.

Jim and Mika grab drinks off a table and walk outside.

EXT. DANCE HALL PATIO - CONTINUOUS

They look around, find chairs and sit down. Mika looks up.

MIKA  
Bright stars tonight. Everything is  
bigger here.

Jim takes a sip from his cup and looks at the sky.

JIM  
Really? Bigger?

Don arrives, big smile on his face.

DON  
Is it time?

Jim nods at Don, stands, shuffles his feet while he gets a  
small jewelry box out of his pocket. He kneels down in front  
of Mika.

MIKA  
What are you doing?

JIM  
I saw this in a movie.

He clears his throat, perspiration on his forehead.

Her eyes are open wide.

JIM (CONT'D)  
 We haven't gone out long but I know  
 you're the girl I want to live with  
 forever.

He takes the ring out of the box and holds it up. It's a  
 modest colored jewel.

JIM (CONT'D)  
 Will you marry me? And really soon?

She swallows. Looks around at the people looking at them.

MIKA  
 You hardly know me.

JIM  
 I love the way you move hair out of  
 your eyes. How when you see me, you  
 smile and turn away.

MIKA  
 Do I?

She looks directly into his eyes.

MIKA (CONT'D)  
 Only if you can say it in Japanese.

He rolls his eyes and looks up. Don howls with laughter.

JIM  
 Oh, crap.

MIKA  
 I'm kidding. Yes, my love.

He stands and puts the ring on her finger. They hug. The  
 people around them clap.

JIM  
 You won't regret it.

DON  
 (to Mika)  
 I bet you might.

MIKA  
 I do have one wish.

JIM  
 Anything.

They move away from the other people, hand in hand.

MIKA  
You have to try to get along with  
everybody. We have to blend into  
the community.

JIM  
How?

MIKA  
Join some clubs, find some other  
things to do. How are you going to  
raise money if you don't meet new  
people?

JIM  
I want to spend time with you.

MIKA  
We're going to build the community  
center. Together.

He hugs her.

JIM  
I love you, Mika.

MIKA  
I love you too.

They smile.

EXT. MIDDLE CLASS HOME - DAY

The sky is overcast.

There is a "For Sale" sign in front of the modest house.  
Jim, Mika and Tracy stand on the front lawn. They wear light  
coats.

TRACY  
This will be a great place for you  
and your children.

MIKA  
It's very nice.

JIM  
Can we afford it?

TRACY  
I'll work with the banks to get you  
a great mortgage. The banks love  
making loans here.

JIM

We'll leave it to you, Mrs. Turner.

They walk towards the parked car. Randy sits in the driver's seat, reads some papers. He looks out through the open window as they approach.

TRACY

This is my husband, Mayor Turner.

JIM

Nice to meet you, sir.

Jim extends a hand through the window. Randy ignores it.

RANDY

You gonna feel safe living here?

TRACY

This is a nice neighborhood. Lots of colored people live around here.

JIM

I think we - -

RANDY

Be careful. Lots of people don't like your kind.

TRACY

Honey, I think they know what's going on in the world.

JIM

We will be fine. Appreciate your warning, though. Goodbye, Mrs. Turner.

Jim and Mika walk towards their car. They look shocked.

Tracy gets into the car.

TRACY

What the heck are you doing?

RANDY

Just making them feel comfortable.

TRACY

This is my business you're messing with, dear.



RANDY  
Can't have too many Japs moving  
here, Tracy.

TRACY  
Japanese have been here for  
decades. They're human.

Randy looks at Tracy.

RANDY  
Those foreigners aren't human to  
me.

TRACY  
How about what I want?

RANDY  
You're making money.

TRACY  
I want a family too.

RANDY  
We can't bring kids into this  
world.

TRACY  
Why not?

RANDY  
The war just ended. Our economy is  
still coming back. And we have  
these Orientals trying to take our  
city. This isn't a good time to  
start a family.

TRACY  
When will it be a good time?

Randy waves at her to be quiet.

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE - SIDE YARD - DAY

Jim uses his gas-powered lawn mower, goes back and forth. He  
looks across the street and sees a Black man using a push-  
reel-mower to cut the front lawn. The man struggles  
mightily.

JIM  
(laughing)  
Poor bastard.

Jim finishes the last cut, turns off his mower and pushes it towards the garage.

The Black man crosses the street and walks towards him. He has a serious look on his sweaty face.

It's Lee.

JIM (CONT'D)  
 (to himself)  
 Dammit.

Lee walks up to Jim.

LEE  
 I thought it was you.

JIM  
 Lee?

LEE  
 You know it's me. Can you help with my lawn?

JIM  
 Not today. Too busy.

Jim pushes his mower into the garage. Lee stares for a second and walks back home.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Mika washes vegetables in the sink. The calendar on the wall is turned to October 1946.

Jim walks in and puts his hands under the faucet.

JIM  
 The Negro guy Lee moved in across the street.

MIKA  
 That's nice.

JIM  
 No, it's not. I don't wanna talk to a low class *kuro-san*.

Jim picks up a kitchen towel and wipes his hands.

MIKA  
 Isn't he a nice man?

JIM  
 His kind killed my father. And we  
 didn't get along before. I don't  
 like *kuro-sans*.

Mika looks confused.

MIKA  
 But you like Mr. Charles.

JIM  
 He's - - different.

MIKA  
 He's Negro, yes?

JIM  
 He's smart, classy. Light-skinned.  
 Not like Lee.

MIKA  
 When I went to Japan, the other  
 girls insulted me all the time  
 because I had dark skin. California  
 tan, you know?

JIM  
 That was mean. You're Japanese.

MIKA  
 But Japanese like pale skin. If  
 you're dark, it means you worked  
 outside in the field, like a  
 peasant.

JIM  
 This is different.

MIKA  
 Really?

Embarrassed, Jim throws the towel into the sink and walks out.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

It's early morning. Beach overcast hides the stars. A group of young men fish from the shore. A sign near a table with coffee cups says, "Nisei Fishing Club."

Jim and Don look cold, stand on the wet sand wearing boots, fishing vests and knit caps. They hold their poles with the lines in the ocean.

DON  
It's been three hours. We met  
enough guys. Let's go.

JIM  
Shit, here comes Bobby.

Bobby walks up to them with his pole and three perch hooked  
on a string.

BOBBY  
Catch anything?

Bobby swings his pole around and the fish hit Jim in the  
face. Jim gives him a dirty look.

DON  
I caught one.

BOBBY  
That's it? You guys are terrible.

JIM  
It's my first time.

BOBBY  
Losers never catch anything.

JIM  
Why can't you leave me alone? You  
know you're better at baseball.

DON  
And fishing.

Jim glares at Don.

JIM  
Our war is over.

BOBBY  
Do you know how many thousands of  
us died?

JIM  
Do you know how many of us the  
prison guards shot?

BOBBY  
How's the community center coming  
along? Doesn't "no-no" mean "no can  
do?"

Bobby laughs and glides away through the sand.

Jim and Don reel in their lines.

JIM  
I really hate that guy.

INT. CURLEY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Inside the front room, Mr. Charles sits while Jim and Mika stand.

MR. CHARLES  
What's on your mind?

JIM  
I -  
(looks at Mika)  
We want to build a Japanese-  
American community center in  
Pasadena.

Mr. Charles leans back in his chair.

MR. CHARLES  
Wow, big idea. Yours?

JIM  
My father's.

MR. CHARLES  
What you need?

JIM  
Besides money, I need someone who  
knows how to pick the right place  
and get a lease. I need a  
businessman.

MR. CHARLES  
What's in it for me?

JIM  
Money, but... You were willing to  
stand up for us before. I just  
thought maybe....

MR. CHARLES  
If I stick my neck out for you, I  
might not get another lease  
anywhere.

Jim looks down, disappointed.

JIM  
I really need your help. Nobody respects me.

MR. CHARLES  
Why not?

JIM  
I'm an outcast.

MR. CHARLES  
What do you mean?

JIM  
I'm not a vet. I refused to serve.

MR. CHARLES  
I don't know why you made that choice, but so what?

JIM  
I don't know if I did the right thing.

MR. CHARLES  
This country brutalized my people for hundreds of years. Now they've destroyed your community. I understand your anger and confusion. It's not your fault.

JIM  
Everybody, even my family, hates me.

Mr. Charles leans forward.

MR. CHARLES  
I don't hate you, son. How serious are you?

JIM  
I'm gonna do everything I need to do. I promise.

Mr. Charles contemplates Jim. He looks at Mika, she smiles. He puts his hand on his chin.

MR. CHARLES  
The Japanese haven't done anything bad to me. We need to work together. And I remember your hospital visit.

He leans back.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)  
But if I get involved, you damn  
well better raise the money and  
finish, no matter what.

Jim beams and nods.

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Jim weeds the flower bed. Lee walks into the yard.

LEE  
Watcha doin'?

JIM  
Raking.

LEE  
That's not raking.

JIM  
Why did you ask?

He keeps weeding.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Do you people ever follow rules?  
Why do you walk on my property  
anytime you want?

LEE  
Man, why you so hostile?

JIM  
Are you gonna steal something too?

LEE  
What the hell you talkin' 'bout?

Jim takes a beat. Quick glance up.

JIM  
Your people killed my father.

LEE  
What?

JIM  
A colored shot him in our store.

LEE

Really sorry to hear that but I  
wasn't part of it, just like you  
didn't bomb Pearl Harbor, right?

Jim looks back down, keeps weeding.

JIM

How about the last time we talked?  
You were a jerk.

LEE

That was a long time ago. I done  
moved on. What's your problem?

Jim scowls at Lee.

JIM

Like you said, maybe I shouldn't be  
talking to Negroes.

LEE

Hey, right here, just me an' you.  
Ain't nobody gonna find out so  
loosen up your underwear, man. I  
know we can both use a friend.

JIM

I'm busy.

Jim waves at Lee to go away. Keeps weeding.

LEE

I'll come back with a turkey for  
Thanksgiving.

JIM

Don't bother.

Lee shakes his head and walks away.

Jim bows his head, confused and embarrassed by his  
belligerent behavior.

EXT. DANIEL HOUSE - DAY

Jim walks up to the front door of a small house and knocks.

DANIEL (60's), a White man, answers the door. He's got gray  
hair, casually dressed.

JIM

Mr. Daniel, I'm Jim. I'll be your  
gardener for a few weeks.



DANIEL  
What's wrong with Bobby?

JIM  
I don't know. He asked for the  
Gardeners Association's help so I  
got drafted.

DANIEL  
Do you get paid?

JIM  
You keep paying Bobby. We just  
cover his jobs.

DANIEL  
You immigrants are so smart. Are  
you sure I can't pay you?

Jim shakes his head.

JIM  
It's how we take care of each  
other.

DANIEL  
Very nice.

Daniel nods and closes the door.

Jim walks away and shakes his head.

JIM  
Like it or not.

He turns back towards the front door.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Immigrants?

EXT. JIM'S HOUSE - SIDE YARD - DAY

Jim trims shrubs. Lee walks up to him.

LEE  
Hey neighbor.

Jim doesn't look at him, keeps trimming the bushes.

JIM  
What?

LEE  
You like livin' here?

Jim looks at him and scowls.

JIM  
Most of the time.

Jim turns away and keeps working.

Lee chuckles and looks closer at the shrubs.

LEE  
I like it. Nice neighborhood. Me  
and the missus. You?

JIM  
I'm married. A few months ago.

LEE  
Is she pretty?

Jim leans into a bush to take a closer look.

JIM  
You wouldn't want to look at her.

LEE  
You dog. She's pretty as hell then.

Lee laughs.

Jim keeps trimming, moves along. Lee follows behind.

JIM  
How about your wife?

LEE  
She's a nurse. Works nights, sleeps  
days, so we get along great.

Lee laughs some more.

JIM  
She pretty?

LEE  
No, but she sure can cook. You a  
gardener too?

Jim nods.

LEE (CONT'D)  
Can I use your fancy mower  
sometime?

Jim looks across the street at Lee's house.

JIM  
You can't cut Saint Augustine grass  
with that cheap pusher.

LEE  
I'm finding that out, man.

JIM  
I can't loan it but I guess I can  
cut it one time.

LEE  
I run an auto shop. How 'bout I  
tune your car if you cut my lawn?

JIM  
You any good?

LEE  
From how your yard looks, I'm a  
better mechanic than you a  
gardener.

Lee guffaws.

JIM  
Lawn was already dead.

Lee keeps laughing.

Jim's serious face breaks into a smile.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Okay, deal. But only until you get  
a power mower. I'll get you a  
discount from the shop.

LEE  
Great. Got any kids?

Jim shakes his head.

JIM  
We're talking about it.

LEE  
Good. Someday I can call you "Papa-  
san"!

Lee laughs.

JIM  
That's ridiculous.

LEE  
I like it, Papa-san.

They laugh heartily.

EXT. CITY LOT - DAY

Mr. Charles, Mika and Jim walk on a sidewalk. On the lot is a decrepit motel. The rest of the lot is empty with cracked asphalt everywhere.

JIM  
What do you think?

MR. CHARLES  
Should be able to get this cheap.

MIKA  
I hope so. Ughh.

Jim stops and looks at Mr. Charles.

JIM  
So, you're going to help me?

MR. CHARLES  
Don't make me regret it, son. And be ready for the battles.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Knock at the door. Jim opens it. Mas Uchida walks in.

JIM  
Mas-san. Thanks for coming by.

MAS  
Looking forward to meeting your business partner.

JIM  
He's in the kitchen getting a drink.

MAS  
We're getting lots of donations. How are you doing?

JIM  
I've talked to the Judo and Kendo clubs. They want space in the center. Mika talked to the women's *Ikebana* and *Chanoyu* clubs. They're in.

MAS  
That's great. Flower and tea  
classes are popular now.

JIM  
Don and I talked to the golf,  
baseball, fishing and bowling  
clubs. They're all donating.

Mr. Charles walks in from the kitchen holding a glass.

MR. CHARLES  
Hello.

Mas looks stunned and surprised.

MAS  
(to Jim)  
*Kono hito wa kuro-san da.*

(Subtitle: "This person is a Black man.")

JIM  
*So da na?*

(Subtitle: "Looks like it, huh?")

Mas regains his composure.

MAS  
Sorry. I'm... surprised.

MR. CHARLES  
No problem.

JIM  
Mr. Charles gave me a job in his  
restaurant in Little Tokyo. He  
knows a lot about business.

Mas and Mr. Charles sit down.

MAS  
Are you from Los Angeles?

MR. CHARLES  
My friend and I lived in Chicago.  
He got a job with a defense company  
in Los Angeles and so I tagged  
along. When we got off the train,  
we asked about rooms for rent. They  
pointed us to Little Tokyo.

MAS

Why?

MR. CHARLES

Y'all were kicked out and put in those prisons. I used to run a jazz club before the war so I rented a restaurant. Lots of my folks moved to Little Tokyo and we call it Bronzeville.

JIM

But he's losing his lease since we're coming back.

MR. CHARLES

Well, it's business.

MAS

What's in this for you?

MR. CHARLES

I'm getting paid for helping Jim.

Mas sits up a little straighter.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)

It will be a very fair amount, don't worry.

MAS

I'm not accusing you of anything. But, Jim, let's keep this a secret until construction starts.

(to Mr Charles)

Don't mean to insult you.

MR. CHARLES

No offense taken. It's business.

MAS

Speaking of that, I read in the paper about "drive-in markets." It's a new thing.

JIM

What's that?

MAS

Everybody is driving now so it's a place where there are a bunch of businesses close together with lots of parking.

JIM  
 People go to buy groceries and stay  
 to eat or get a haircut?

MAS  
 Pharmacies, bookstores, whatever.  
 You can put the community center  
 there too.

JIM  
 We can only afford to build the  
 center now.

MR. CHARLES  
 Too bad. Keep thinking on it,  
 though. Life's too short to think  
 small.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jim and Mika sit in the living room listening to music on  
 the radio. The telephone rings. Jim answers.

JIM  
 Hello?

INT. CURLEY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Mr. Charles sits at the bar holding the phone.

MR. CHARLES  
 Hey, it's me.

INTERCUT phone conversation.

JIM  
 Mr. Charles. How are you?

MR. CHARLES  
 Good news. I got a lease on that  
 property. Guess what? The owner is  
 Mrs. Turner.

JIM  
 How was she?

MR. CHARLES  
 Fine, but that husband of hers,  
 wow, what a piece of work.

JIM  
 (sarcastic)  
 What? He was so warm to me.

MR. CHARLES

He really hates you people. Good thing I didn't tell her why I was interested.

JIM

She seems to know her business.

MR. CHARLES

You gotta raise more money quick. I'll throw some in too.

JIM

Mr. Charles, you're the best.

MR. CHARLES

Don't you forget it, son.

END INTERCUT.

Jim hangs up. He beams at Mika.

MIKA

We have work to do, *neh?*

EXT. LEE'S HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Jim cuts Lee's lawn while Lee watches.

JIM

You taking notes?

LEE

I can see what ya doin'.

Jim stops in front of Lee.

JIM

Good, because I'm not cutting this lawn anymore.

LEE

I know I'm gonna do better than you. White folks pay you to do this crappy job?

JIM

You call yourself a mechanic? My car sputters all day long.

Lee laughs. Throws his hands up in surrender.



LEE  
Okay, okay, truce. Damn, you never  
let anything go, do you?

JIM  
You can't be a success if you give  
up.

Kyle drives up, stops his car in front of them, rolls down  
his window.

KYLE  
Well, shut my mouth. A Negro and a  
Jap together. You should get the  
hell out of town cuz something  
bad's gonna happen to you boys.

Kyle throws a soda bottle at them. Before they can respond,  
he peels away.

JIM  
What the hell?

LEE  
Calm down, Papa-san. Let it go.

JIM  
You take that crap?

LEE  
That was nothing. Where I grew up,  
it was worse.

Lee picks up a broom and sweeps the sidewalk.

JIM  
How do you handle it?

LEE  
When I boxed, I tried to beat my  
opponent one round at a time.

JIM  
But we're so far from winning the  
fight.

LEE  
Can't overcome if you don't gain  
some ground.

Lee drops the broom and pretends to box Jim. Jim laughs and  
pretends to hit back.

LEE (CONT'D)  
Not all Whites are like that. Find  
the right ones.

JIM  
Can't be helped, huh?

LEE  
Yeah, that's it. So - - what was  
the word you taught me? *Gambare?*

JIM  
Keep on going.

LEE  
That's how we handle it.

JIM  
Ask you a question?

Lee nods.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Why is your skin so dark?

LEE  
Damn! I was gonna ask you the same  
thing.

Jim looks surprised.

Lee picks up the broom and hands it to Jim.

LEE (CONT'D)  
Merry Christmas, Papa-san.

He laughs really loud.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jim, Mika and Lee sit around the dining table. It's covered  
with *jubako*, multi-tiered lacquer food boxes holding  
assorted New Year's food.

JIM  
Glad you could come for New Year's  
dinner. Your wife couldn't come?

LEE  
She had to work tonight.

MIKA  
We'll pack a plate or two for you  
to take home.

LEE

She'll appreciate it. But what is all this pretty food?

JIM

Traditional Japanese New Year dishes.

Jim points as he describes the food.

JIM (CONT'D)

*Datemaki*. Sweet omelet rolls with fish paste. *Kuromame*. Sweet black soybeans. *Kamaboko*. Fish cakes, and *sashimi*, raw fish.

LEE

Wait a second. Raw fish?

JIM

Try it. You'll like it.

LEE

Hmm. I don't know. I don't want my food to have any chance of moving on me, you know?

MIKA

Try a small piece. Use the soy sauce and *wasabi*. That's Japanese mustard.

She puts a piece of *sashimi* on his plate with the *wasabi*.

JIM

Here, I'll show you.

Lee watches Jim take the fish with chopsticks, put the mustard on it and dip it into the soy sauce. He puts the whole thing into his mouth.

LEE

Man, I don't know. Looks easy enough.

Lee looks anxious but copies Jim. His eyes light up as the *wasabi* hits his sinuses.

LEE (CONT'D)

Woo! Mercy me!

Lee drinks a cup of water, his eyes water a little.

MIKA

Are you okay? Too much *wasabi*.

LEE

No, that was good. I'll have another.

Jim smiles.

JIM

We have a lot to celebrate. We're gonna break ground next week. Happy New Year!

Lee exhales quickly to cool his mouth.

INT. PASADENA RESTAURANT - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

At the side wall, Kyle and Mayor Randy Turner talk alone in hushed whispers.

Chris and other members of Keep Pasadena Ours sit and mingle while they wait for the meeting to start.

Randy and Kyle shake hands. Randy leaves.

The back of the door has a sign that says "Easter Specials" on it.

KYLE

Let's get the meeting started. Brothers, those Japs have been building for a few months. Even though it's where those coloreds live, we can't let them build anything that makes them think they're home.

CHRIS

If we can't stop them, what are we gonna do?

KYLE

We're gonna make them wish they lived anyplace else. We can do what Americans do - picket the place. But if they don't quit, we'll use stronger measures.

CHRIS

Are you sure? I don't want anyone to get hurt.

KYLE

We'll show'em what a hot summer in hell looks like. Our friends in high places are counting on us to keep the Japs out any way we can. Are we gonna let them down?

The groups shouts "No! Ban the Japs! Ban the Japs!"

Kyle smiles menacingly. Chris looks anxious.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Jim, Lee and Don sit around a fire burning in a sand pit. They hold plates with scrambled eggs, fried potatoes and sashimi. A grill with a frying pan on it sits over the fire.

LEE

Damn, it's cold. Can't we fish daytime?

JIM

Am I the only one who thinks fishing is a waste of time?

DON

That's cuz you never catch anything. I bet mine's was a three-pounder.

Don points to the sashimi.

LEE

Man, I'm just getting used to eating *sashimi* for dinner. Breakfast too?

They all laugh.

LEE (CONT'D)

How's the building?

JIM

The money is still coming in, framing is half done.

LEE

My friends are giving. It's at the barber shop.

JIM

We're having problems getting carpenters so I'm gonna help.

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

The racists are scaring the crew,  
so we don't have enough. We're  
falling. Any ideas?

DON

When will this crap stop?

LEE

I know a construction crew. Always  
looking for work.

JIM

Great. We want to finish framing by  
summer.

LEE

Count me in. I can swing a hammer.

DON

You better get back on schedule.  
Everybody's watching, including  
your baby.

LEE

Mika's pregnant?

JIM

That's what the doctor says.

LEE

Congratulations! You may not be a  
fighter but, damn, you're a lover.

He laughs heartily.

JIM

Quiet down. We don't talk about  
that stuff in public.

LEE

I'll do it for you.

(shouts)

Right here! Papa-san! Papa-san!

Lee and Don jostle Jim and laugh. Jim looks embarrassed but  
manages a little smile.

INT. JIM'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Jim, Mika and Lee sit around the dining table. DAVIS FINCH  
(20's), a reporter for the Independent Star newspaper, sits  
with them. He holds his reporter's notebook and pencil.

DAVIS

I got all the information I need.  
What are you celebrating this week?

JIM

*Obon* is a summer festival where we honor our ancestors, so this is a perfect time to show off our community center. It's fully framed but we have more to do.

DAVIS

I hear that Keep Pasadena Ours is going to be there to protest. Maybe Mayor Turner will be there too.

JIM

I hope they don't act up.

DAVIS

I'll be there to cover the story but you might want to let the police know.

JIM

They said they can't send anyone unless there's a problem.

DAVIS

Well, good luck.

Davis gets up and leaves.

LEE

I'll be there with the crew and some other guys. Just in case.

JIM

You don't need to do that.

LEE

The good thing about being a boxer is that you get to pick your fights.

JIM

You're a good friend.

LEE

Friend? Did you hear that, Mika? He called me "friend."

MIKA

That's because you fix our car.

Lee laughs.

JIM  
I'll deny it if you tell anybody.

LEE  
It's our secret.

He winks at Mika.

LEE (CONT'D)  
I better get home.

He shakes hands with Jim and leaves.

MIKA  
You two have come a long way.  
I want to go to the celebration  
too.

JIM  
I think you should stay home.

He pats her belly.

MIKA  
I'll stay in the back, okay?

JIM  
Sam can stay with you. It's going  
to be a beautiful evening.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - NIGHT

Jim and dozens of Japanese American men stand in front of the fully framed community center. Everyone sweats from the summer heat and humidity.

Jim, Don, Nak and Tosh stand together.

Lee and a group of Black men stand with them. They look nervous.

Thirty feet behind them, several women watch, as anxious as the men. Mika is in the group and Sam stands next to her.

Twenty feet in front of them Jim, dozens of angry White men march in a circle on the sidewalk with anti-Japanese signs. They chant and shout provocative slogans. Some of them hold baseball bats.

CHORUS (V.O.)  
Ban the Japs! Ban the Japs!



Kyle, the president of Keep Pasadena Ours, leads the chants and stares at Jim the entire time.

JIM

We don't want any problems. Why don't you nice men go home and cool off? It's too hot to be outside.

KYLE

We'll leave when all you Japs leave our city.

JIM

Like I said, we don't want trouble. We're celebrating.

KYLE

What a coincidence. We're celebrating too. Even brought some candles.

Kyle turns to Chris.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Tell'em.

CHRIS

We really have to do this?

KYLE

Soldiers do what they're told.

Chris hangs his head.

Kyle glares at Chris and shouts to his group.

KYLE (CONT'D)

Light it up!

The men stop circling and all face Jim and his group. They shout louder.

Jim and his group watch helplessly as a flaming bottle is thrown over their heads at the structure. They jump and down to stop other bottles.

At the base of a wood stud, BOOM! A Molotov cocktail explodes. The gasoline splatters all around, igniting the new wood. It spreads quickly to the rest of the structure.

JIM

What are you doing?

KYLE  
Get out of our country.

DON  
We're gonna smash your faces.

KYLE  
Finally, a real fight.

DON  
(to Jim)  
Get back. You can't protect  
yourself.

KYLE  
Yeah, run, Jap run.

The White men rush forward. The fight is on.

Jim retreats to the back.

The sound of blistering wood fades as the dissonance of  
people shouting becomes louder.

The Japanese Americans run around, some with buckets, some  
with blankets. They cough from the smoke and ash.

Mika, Sam and other women scramble around a hose bib. They  
fill buckets with water and pass the buckets to the men  
running by.

In front of the burning structure, Japanese-Americans and  
Black men fight Caucasians. Knives and baseball bats. Blood  
flows like it's a war zone.

Shouts, curses, screams of pain.

Jim stands alone, looks scared and nervous as he watches the  
battle.

Jim sees a White man punch Don. Don falls to the ground and  
drops his broomstick. The man continues to pummel Don.

Jim runs over, picks up the broomstick, runs behind the  
attacker. He strikes him across the back of his knees with  
the stick. The man falls to the ground in pain.

Jim steps in front of him and raises the stick. The ATTACKER  
(20's) flinches in fear, cowers, and covers his head.

ATTACKER  
No! Please!

Jim's anger turns to pity.

JIM  
Go home!

The man looks thankful, nods, and scampers away.

DON  
What you doing? Get back and stay  
with Mika. You're not a fighter.

JIM  
I am now. You gonna be okay?

Don nods, looks surprised at Jim's new attitude.

Jim moves on, looks to defend more of his compatriots.

Lee sprints next to him. Blood drips off the oil stains on his well-worn mechanic's uniform and off his fists.

Lee puts his hand on Jim's shoulder. Jim turns to swing but stops when he recognizes Lee. They turn and stand back-to-back and yell over the commotion.

JIM (CONT'D)  
We gotta stop these guys.

LEE  
I'm with ya. Where your samurai  
buddies?

JIM  
Putting out the goddamn fires!

Jim swings the broomstick like a sword, whacks faces and arms. Lee fights like an experienced boxer, calm and with purpose, like a professional among amateurs.

LEE  
Just stay focused, Papa-san. We're  
gonna keep your dream alive.

A group of assailants surround Jim and Lee. They close in slowly, circling like hungry wolves.

From out of the dark, Kyle appears in front of Jim and Lee. He's got a crazy smile, hair dripping with sweat, determined.

JIM  
(to Kyle)  
Call off your guys.

The sounds of sirens approaching.

Kyle points a gun at Jim.

Lee sees the gun.

LEE

Jim!

They make eye contact. Fear.

Lee turns and runs towards Kyle.

Jim runs at Kyle too.

SLOW MOTION

As they get within five feet, Lee puts his arm out to keep Jim back. Jim pushes Lee's arm down.

Lee leaps at Kyle, twisting his body to protect Jim.

BANG! Gunshot.

END SLOW MOTION.

Lee falls to the ground.

Jim immediately swings the stick and crushes Kyle's skull above his ear. Kyle falls.

Jim leans over Lee and puts his hands over the wound to slow the bleeding. The chaotic sounds of screaming, sirens, wood sizzling are drowned out by Lee's weakening heartbeat.

JIM

No! Lee! Help, over here!

Mika sees Lee on the ground, runs towards Jim, her face full of panic and fear. Sam tries his best to keep up with her.

A man running to get away pushes her and she tumbles to the ground hard. She clutches her swollen belly in pain.

MIKA

Jim!

A man pushes Jim away to tend to Lee.

Jim rushes to Mika's side as Sam reaches her.

JIM

Help! Help!

Jim sees worry and sadness on Mika's face. Jim cradles her. She cries. Everything hurts.

Firetrucks, police cars and ambulances arrive, sirens blare over the sounds of people yelling and cursing. Police lights flash with blinding intensity, even through the billowing smoke.

The buildings burn as the firemen spray water all around.

Chaos continues everywhere except the island where Jim holds Mika in quiet mourning solitude. As he holds her, he turns back to gaze at Lee, tears in his eyes.

All his dreams turn to ashes.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Jim, Hatomi, Sam and OFFICER POULOS are in the waiting room.

OFFICER POULOS (40's) is a seasoned officer. He's sympathetic to the Japanese-Americans.

It's quiet inside but there is commotion in the hallway with gurneys moving injured people back and forth.

Hatomi sits but her eyes go back and forth as she watches Jim pace in front of Officer Poulos. Sam sits quietly across from Hatomi, lost in his thoughts.

POULOS

I'm sorry we have to do this now  
but I need to know what happened.

JIM

It was so fast. Man had a gun. We  
ran towards him. He fired, I hit  
him. That's all I remember.

POULOS

I know your people are having a  
tough time. My family are  
immigrants too.

JIM

(distraught)  
He shot my friend.

A NURSE (40's) enters the room. She looks tired and calls out.

NURSE

Mr. Iguchi?

Jim walks to her.

NURSE (CONT'D)  
Your wife is asking for you.

JIM  
Is she okay?

Nurse swallows.

NURSE  
We need to keep her here for a  
while.

Jim looks at Poulos.

POULOS  
We can finish tomorrow at the  
station. My advice: don't talk to  
anyone.

Poulos walks away.

Jim looks back to the Nurse.

JIM  
Did her radiation affect the baby?

NURSE  
It's hard to know.

Hatomi stands up.

HATOMI  
Go see Mika. I'll check on Lee.

Jim nods and leaves the waiting room.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jim enters Mika's room. She's in bed with an IV in her arm  
and the usual monitoring devices around her.

Mika sees him and starts to cry.

MIKA  
I'm sorry.

JIM  
No. Sorry you had to see that crap.

MIKA  
The doctor said we're okay.

Jim nods.

MIKA (CONT'D)  
I panicked. Just wanted to be with  
you.

JIM  
Don't. It's okay.

MIKA  
The smoke, fire, people screaming.  
Hiroshima memories.

JIM  
We're okay. Rest.

He looks over to the door and sees Hatomi. She cries  
silently.

The Nurse comes in.

NURSE  
I'm going to give her a sedative.

She turns the knob on the IV tube. Mika calms down.

HATOMI  
I'll be in the waiting room.

Jim nods. Holds Mika as she falls asleep.

NURSE  
She should be okay for awhile. Why  
don't you get some rest?

Jim stands, kisses Mika on the forehead and leaves.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jim walks slowly and looks up to see Bobby's friends, Mits  
and Rocky. They walk towards him with sad expressions.

MITTS  
Heard about your wife.

JIM  
What are you doing here?

ROCKY  
Seeing Bobby. You know he has  
cancer?

JIM  
No one told me.

Mits and Rocky look at each other.

MITS  
You fought tonight.

JIM  
No choice.

ROCKY  
So you know how.

Jim glares at him. Mits puts his hand out to stop Rocky from saying more.

MITS  
We're surprised. We were wrong about you.

JIM  
I don't feel good about it.

MITS  
Bobby told us to lay off and help you. Said you're an ass, but your heart is in the right place.

Jim looks surprised and touched.

MITS (CONT'D)  
He has a message for you.

Jim cocks his head in anticipation.

MITS (CONT'D)  
"Go for broke."

They all look at the ground and nervously shift their weight. Uncomfortable silence.

JIM  
Damn, I hate that guy. Thanks.

Jim half smiles at them. They half smile back.

Jim walks away quickly to the waiting room.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hatomi paces. She looks sad and agitated. Jim walks up to her.

JIM  
Mom, did you hear about Bobby?

She hesitates. She looks down.



HATOMI

Lee died.

Jim's eyes open wide. He slumps, grabs a chair for support.

HATOMI (CONT'D)

And so did the man you hit.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jim sits alone on the ground. He's distraught. Head in hands, sways back and forth.

Officer Poulos slowly approaches him.

POULOS

I was just leaving when I heard about Kyle Westerly. We can talk tomorrow but you're probably facing murder charges.

JIM

He killed my friend.

POULOS

It sounds like a racist operation, but you have some expert skills.

JIM

Expert? I just reacted.

POULOS

The Japanese haters will be demanding your arrest for murder. Watch your back, okay?

As Poulos leaves, Mr. Charles appears at Jim's side.

JIM

What did I do?

Mr. Charles appears at his side.

MR. CHARLES

Doesn't matter, son.

Jim jumps up, startled. Mr. Charles puts his hands up.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)

Didn't mean to interrupt you.

Jim sits down slowly.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Sorry about your wife and Lee, and everything.

Jim nods, looks at the ground.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)  
I know you're not Christian but there's a verse from Ecclesiastes that helps me. Wanna hear?

Jim looks up and nods.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)  
There's a time and season for everything under heaven. A time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build.

A time for love and a time for hate, a time for war and time for peace.

Jim wipes away more tears.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)  
You went through most of that in one night. It's not whether you fight, it's what you fight for.

Jim looks down.

MR. CHARLES (CONT'D)  
Look at me. You did the right thing. I'm proud of you, son.

Mr. Charles pats him on the shoulder and walks away. He passes Hatomi. He nods to her.

Hatomi walks to Jim, looks at him, thinks of what to say.

HATOMI  
Mika and the baby are okay.

Jim looks away.

JIM  
But I'm not. Mika's in pain. Lee died saving me. I killed a man. And the community center, ashes.

HATOMI  
You are a good husband, a good neighbor, a good person.

JIM

I wasted so much time on that damn building.

HATOMI

Lee was proud of you, of your friendship. Don't let that go to waste. Try again.

Jim stands.

JIM

A new building? More Negro friends?

HATOMI

What's going on?

Jim looks down, body slumped. Tears in his eyes. He wipes them away.

JIM

I'm tired of being mad, being pushed around and pushing back. Everyone is against me. I can't finish Dad's dream.

Hatomi steps closer to Jim.

HATOMI

As an engineer, Dad understood that after the war, the whole world has to rebuild. And he knew we have to rebuild here to heal our differences.

JIM

I tried. I'm - -

HATOMI

Did samurai quit? Did the 442nd quit? We don't quit.

JIM

I know, Mom. But - -

HATOMI

I love you. Your father loved you.

JIM

I didn't get to tell him. Maybe I was wrong.

HATOMI

He respected you, Jiro. He knew you believed in your principles, not what other people thought. Your brothers believed they had to fight. Everyone was right.

She turns to leave.

HATOMI (CONT'D)

Make something to be proud of, that all of us will be proud of.  
*Gambare.*

JIM

But my dream is gone.

HATOMI

Find another one.

JIM

Why?

HATOMI

When you stop dreaming, a big part of you dies.

JIM

You have a dream?

Hatomi swallows, tears up.

HATOMI

That my family stays together.

Jim takes a beat to absorb that.

JIM

I love you, Mom.

Hatomi nods and walks away.

Jim closes his eyes. He holds his head and rocks.

A WOMAN (30's) and her young CHILD (10) walk hand-in-hand past him.

CHILD

Mommy, look at all the stars.

WOMAN

Isn't the universe big?

CHILD  
Is it getting bigger, mommy?

WOMAN  
I don't know. What do you think?

CHILD  
Yeah, bigger. More stars. That's better!

The woman and child walk out of range.

Jim opens his eyes, looks to the sky and sees twinkling stars. His eyes light up.

JIM  
A time to build. Bigger is better.  
*Gambare.*

INT. CURLEY'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Mr. Charles and Jim stand and talk in the dining room.

JIM  
I need a couple more favors.

MR. CHARLES  
For what?

JIM  
Your lease about up?

Mr. Charles nods.

JIM (CONT'D)  
Have you thought about building your own place?

MR. CHARLES  
Under the right conditions.

JIM  
Remember what Mas said about "drive-in markets"?

Mr. Charles sits, thinks.

MR. CHARLES  
Little bit.

JIM  
Let's do that.

MR. CHARLES  
You mean build a store and a  
community center on the same  
property?

Jim sits next to Mr. Charles, nods.

JIM  
And your restaurant. It will be a  
one-stop shopping center.

MR. CHARLES  
But if it's for Japanese, why would  
they eat at my place?

JIM  
Because you'll serve Japanese food  
along with your southern menu. Just  
like here in Bronzeville Little  
Tokyo.

MR. CHARLES  
(laughing)  
And how am I going to do that?

JIM  
What do you say?

MR. CHARLES  
I'm intrigued. By the way, Lee  
raised several thousand dollars.

JIM  
Lee was a good man.

MR. CHARLES  
He was doing right by you. What you  
need from me?

JIM  
Let's buy the whole block.

MR. CHARLES  
That may be tough. Good ol' boys  
ain't gonna make that easy.

JIM  
Can we get a loan?

MR. CHARLES  
Bank of America, maybe. Started by  
an Italian immigrant family. They  
loan to small businesses.

JIM  
Think big, right?

INT. POLICE STATION CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Officer Poulos, Jim and Chris Jones sit around a table.  
Chris looks anxious and Jim looks determined.

POULOS  
Chris picked you out of the lineup  
so I guess there's no mystery about  
who hit Mr. Westerly.

CHRIS  
You killed my friend.

POULOS  
Jim, you wanted this meeting so  
let's get to it.

JIM  
(to Chris)  
Why are you guys so angry about us  
building a community center?

CHRIS  
We don't want you Japs in our town.

JIM  
What did we do to you?

CHRIS  
Pearl Harbor, the war, taking our  
jobs and land. You name it.

JIM  
But that's not us. I'm an American  
citizen.

CHRIS  
We don't care. You're a foreigner.  
You don't belong here. The  
government wouldn't have rounded  
you up if you weren't a threat.

JIM  
Was there anything we did during  
the war? Any spy stories?

CHRIS  
That's because you were in prison.

Jim thinks a moment.

JIM  
I'm sorry about Kyle. I was trying  
to protect my friend. Wouldn't you  
do the same thing?

CHRIS  
Maybe.

JIM  
But you saw me swing after Kyle  
shot Lee, right?

CHRIS  
Maybe.

POULOS  
It's important you remember  
clearly, Chris.

Chris thinks for a moment.

CHRIS  
Kyle hated you because he lost his  
cousin at Pearl Harbor. He said it  
was your fault.

JIM  
I didn't plan the attack. I've  
never been to Japan.

CHRIS  
That's what he believed and lot of  
guys who had family fighting the  
Japs feel the same.

JIM  
My family fought in the war too.

CHRIS  
Not you.

JIM  
My older brother did.

Chris tilts his head to think.

CHRIS  
Where?

JIM  
Eastern France.

Chris straightens up.



CHRIS  
He's part of the 442nd?

JIM  
How did you know?

CHRIS  
My brother was in the Texas  
battalion that was saved by them.

JIM  
Ichiro died in that battle.

Chris gets very quiet and bows his head.

CHRIS  
My family owes a debt to your  
family. Amazing bunch of soldiers,  
those boys.

JIM  
I don't know what happened.

CHRIS  
I heard the 442nd suffered two-  
hundred killed and eight-hundred  
wounded to save those two-hundred-  
eleven Texas soldiers.

Chris takes a deep breath. Turns to Poulos.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Officer, the truth is Kyle was  
trying to shoot Jim. He told me he  
was gonna.

POULOS  
That makes a difference. Are you  
sure?

Chris nods.

CHRIS  
Kyle was a little crazy. I'm not  
even sure he was telling the truth  
about his cousin.

POULOS  
How does this even happen?

CHRIS  
The mayor talked to Kyle all the  
time about making it hard for the  
Japanese.

(MORE)

CHRIS (CONT'D)

He gave us money, bragged he could get more from people he knew around town. He told us to burn it down.

JIM

Mayor Turner?

Chris nods.

CHRIS

He even said he would show up and help us. He lied.

Poulos gets up to leave.

POULOS

Jim, you're free to go. Sounds like self-defense to me.

JIM

Thanks, Officer. Chris, can we talk some more?

EXT. BUS STOP BENCH - DAY

Jim sits on a bus bench, looking around innocently.

Reporter Davis Finch walks to the bench and sits next to Jim.

DAVIS

Waiting for the next bus out of town?

JIM

Funny. I have some information about Mayor Turner.

DAVIS

That guy is scary.

JIM

I think he's doing illegal stuff.

DAVIS

Like what?

JIM

Taking bribes, kickbacks, paying people to harass us. His thugs burned down our community center.

DAVIS

I hear he has State and national ambitions.

JIM

Can you do some checking around to see? Could be a great story.

DAVIS

I'd love to but if I write it, I need your folks to stand by me. He has lots of influence. Like I said, he's scary.

JIM

I'll make sure we do. The truth is the best way to get this guy.

EXT. DANIEL HOUSE - DAY

Jim stands at the front door talking to Daniel.

JIM

Since Bobby passed, this will be my last day.

DANIEL

You can't stay on? I need a good gardener.

JIM

I'll ask around.

DANIEL

You know, Bobby admired you. He told me what you're trying to do.

JIM

Really?

DANIEL

He said he liked how you stuck to your guns. Said his people needed visionaries like you, guys not afraid to push back.

Jim looks down, embarrassed.

JIM

I thought he hated me.

DANIEL

In his honor, I'd like to donate money for your community center.

(MORE)

DANIEL (CONT'D)  
And I'm going to ask my business associates too. We should be part of helping your people get settled here again.

JIM  
I appreciate that, Mr. Daniel.

Jim walks away, shaking his head.

JIM (CONT'D)  
(to himself)  
Find the right people. Damn.

INT. NICE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tracy and Randy Turner have dinner. A waiter flits around them, laying out their napkins, pouring water.

Tracy beams.

TRACY  
Honey, I just got an offer for that dump in the northwest. A Negro wants to buy it.

RANDY  
You gonna sell it?

TRACY  
He's paying more than I thought I could get. And I don't have to worry about leases anymore.

RANDY  
Probably wants that shitty motel for his prostitutes and gambling parlor. Those coloreds are so predictable.

Randy laughs loudly.

TRACY  
Make sure the zoning stays the same, okay? That's part of the deal.

RANDY  
Anything for you, doll. Hey waiter, bring us champagne.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Randy Turner heads towards the coat rack when his chief of staff, Gordon, comes in.

GORDON

Our friends want you to introduce a resolution that will block the building permits so that Negro can't do anything with that property. We know he's working with the Japs.

RANDY

My wife won't like it. She says she's gonna make a mint on that sale.

He gets his hat and coat off the rack.

GORDON

Figure something out. This is a big deal to Ban the Japs and Native Sons of the Golden West. You wanna be governor, right?

RANDY

Just like Earl Warren.

GORDON

The power brokers are watching you. This is the kinda thing that will make you famous.

RANDY

Why this piece of property? It's in a shit location and only the coloreds want it.

Gordon casually walks to Randy's chair and sits down. He squirms around to get comfortable.

GORDON

Why don't you introduce the resolution and see what happens? I bet the public will support you big time. Hell, you're the mayor.

RANDY

Write it up, send it around. Make sure my friends know what I'm doing.

Gordon leaves. Randy puts on his coat and hat.

Randy looks at a picture of Governor Earl Warren hanging on the wall behind his desk.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Earl Warren, you're going to be a famous man someday. And so will I.

Randy tips his hat towards the picture and heads out.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The Southern California Gardeners Association meeting is done. Jim stands at the front of the stage as members keep passing by him offering congratulations and good luck.

Mas comes down from the stage and offers his hand to Jim.

MAS

Everyone is excited. They know what you did. I've heard from people who want to open a business in the drive-in market.

JIM

Donations are pouring in.

MAS

Between you and me, people still don't trust you. But you're making progress.

Mas waves goodbye and walks away.

Don runs up to Jim.

DON

People are talking my ears off. This is gonna be great.

JIM

For the first time since the fire, I'm feeling really good.

DON

But you know the White folks won't make it easy.

JIM

We're gonna fight.

INT. CURLEY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Jim and Mr. Charles talk in the back of the restaurant.

MR. CHARLES

The City Council's taking up a resolution that will stop us from building on our property.

JIM

What the hell!

MR. CHARLES

They say it's a public threat to safety cuz of the big fire and riot.

JIM

Their goons are responsible for that mess. Who's bringing this up?

MR. CHARLES

Your favorite mayor. Like my grandmother used to say, "Bless his little heart."

JIM

What a jerk. Good thing we have a plan.

Mr. Charles nods.

INT. CORNER MARKET - NIGHT

Sam, Mika and Hatomi sit in the lunch room.

Jim stands next to a property plan taped to the wall that has buildings drawn on it.

JIM

(points to map)

Mom, please sell this place and move here.

HATOMI

I don't know. There are evil spirits on that property.

JIM

We'll do a Shinto purification. This is our chance for a huge community center. You can be the main market there.

SAM

It's a big gamble. And you're talking about a bigger store. Can we handle it?

Jim stands and walks to Sam.

JIM  
You're doing a great job. Business  
is easy for you.

HATOMI  
If Sam agrees, okay.

MIKA  
I'll help, Mom. It's a great  
opportunity. And you'll be helping  
Jim with his new plan.

Jim walks towards Hatomi.

JIM  
You told me to make something. This  
is it.

HATOMI  
If we do, will you work at the  
store?

Jim turns away from Hatomi and walks a step. He inhales,  
exhales, turns around to face her. He nods.

JIM  
It's our family business.

SAM  
Let's do it.

Jim and Sam shake hands.

JIM  
One more thing. I need you to come  
to the City Council meeting and say  
something against the resolution.  
As a decorated war vet.

SAM  
No, no, I can't do that.

JIM  
Why not?

Sam stands.

SAM  
(stammering)  
I'm not good at talking in front of  
people. I don't have much to say. I  
don't know what to say.



Jim walks towards Sam.

JIM  
I'll write your speech. You're  
great at talking.

SAM  
No, I can't do it. I won't do it.  
Don't ask - -

JIM  
What's your problem? A soldier with  
a Purple Heart is a big deal. It  
will help - -

SAM  
I said NO! I'm not a hero!

Silence.

Sam limps in a circle slowly. His face contorts in agony,  
trying to make a decision.

He looks at Hatomi.

SAM (CONT'D)  
I'm a fraud. And a liar.

HATOMI  
What are you talking about?

SAM  
I heard about Ichiro right before a  
battle. I was upset. When the  
fighting started, I lost it. I  
didn't want to die.

Sam closes his eyes, takes a big breath.

SAM (CONT'D)  
So, I shot myself in the leg.  
Everyone thought the Germans did  
it.

JIM  
Can't they figure that out?

SAM  
Too many injured so they didn't ask  
questions. I can't stand people  
telling me I'm a hero anymore.

Hatomi walks to a distraught Sam and hugs him.

HATOMI

My boy.

Sam turns to Jim.

SAM

I've been a jerk. And between us,  
you're the honest one.

JIM

I've always been proud of you and  
Ichiro. Don't doubt that. We're  
gonna build a legacy, and that will  
never die.

Jim hugs Sam as he quietly cries.

INT. TRACY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jim and Mr. Charles sit at one end of a conference table  
with arms crossed. Tracy and Randy Turner sit at the other  
end.

Everyone looks angry and tense.

TRACY

(to Randy)

You introduced a resolution  
blocking the building permits for  
my property?

MR. CHARLES

Actually, my property, Mrs. Turner.

TRACY

Are you nuts? He can cancel the  
deal and you're going to cost me  
thousands of dollars.

RANDY

Shut up, Tracy. I have my career to  
think about.

JIM

You won't have a career if you  
don't change your mind. A reporter  
has been looking into how you've  
been working with the racists,  
taking bribes.

MR. CHARLES

And we're prepared to release it  
all to the public.

RANDY  
You don't have shit.

JIM  
We have a guy from Keep Pasadena Ours who says you were giving them money and encouragement to fight us. Rescind your resolution.

Randy stands up and points.

RANDY  
Who's going to believe that nonsense coming from a murderous Jap and an immoral jazz club-owning Negro?

MR. CHARLES  
The reporter is from the Independent Star. Your favorite newspaper, I believe. They endorse you every election, right?

RANDY  
You don't have the balls.

Jim stands.

JIM  
We're showing up to the City Council meeting and we'll see who has the balls.

INT. CITY COUNCIL HEARING ROOM - NIGHT

The five members of the City Council sit at the long table. Randy sits in the middle.

The room is full of mostly White people but there are a few dozen Black and Asian people. Many men wear their military uniforms.

Jim sits in the front row. Chris sits in the last row.

Randy starts the meeting.

RANDY  
Let's call this meeting to order. The only agenda item is my proposed resolution. It would prohibit a certain property from receiving any building permits due to concerns about public safety because of a prior fire and accompanying riot.

(MORE)

RANDY (CONT'D)

I don't think we should let anyone build anything that is so contentious that it leads to outbreaks of violence. And it's the fault of the Japanese who are instigating this.

Some of the people in the front row cheer and clap.

RANDY (CONT'D)

Let's hear public comment. Who's first?

A man gets up from the front row. DAVE SMITH (30's) wears a scowl on his face.

DAVE

Mr. Mayor, I'm Dave Smith of the Ku Klux Klan from your neighbors to the west. We support your resolution. These murderous Japs killed the president of "Keep Pasadena Ours" and started the race riot.

The people in the front row shout agreement.

DAVE (CONT'D)

We don't want Japs or any other coloreds to move here. Keep'em out.

As he returns to his seat, the front row cheers.

RANDY

Well said. Who's next?

Jim walks to the speaker's lectern. A few boos come from the audience.

JIM

Mr. Mayor, Councilmen, I'm Jim Iguchi.

You want a good life. We want a good life. You want to make money. We want to make money. You want happiness. We want happiness. If you won't help us, all we ask today is stay out of our way. Please, councilmen, vote down this racist resolution.

RANDY  
(indignant)  
Excuse me. Are you calling me a  
racist?

JIM  
Whatever you heard is probably  
appropriate, sir.

The people in the front row boo at Jim.

RANDY  
Anybody else?

Randy visibly flinches when he sees Chris walk towards the  
lectern from the back of the room. He leans forward in his  
chair.

Chris stands in front of the microphone while Jim stands  
next to him.

CHRIS  
Mr. Mayor and Councilmen, I'm Chris  
Jones and I'm here to ask you to  
vote against the resolution. I was  
a part of a group that was as anti-  
Japanese as you can be.

Chris looks down, sad and embarrassed.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
I'm ashamed to admit that I even  
took part in the fight. And the  
Japanese didn't start it.

He looks at Jim.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
I've had a change of heart. The  
Japanese-Americans fought for us  
against Germany and Italy. In fact,  
those boys saved my brother and his  
men in France. Their hearts are  
with the United States.

Chris pulls out a piece of paper.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
I'm not the only one to feel this  
way.

He gets emotional and can't talk. He hands the paper to Jim.  
Jim moves to the microphone.

JIM

This is from a letter written to Time Magazine in 1943. "As a United States Marine, I am not in the habit of begging anyone for anything, but ... I beg my fellow citizens to give the loyal Japanese-Americans their God-given right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness that, I sincerely hope, is guaranteed by our Constitution."

Applause from the audience.

JIM (CONT'D)

Building this community center and drive-in market is a big step in giving us those Constitutional rights. It's a step in helping us heal. Isn't pursuing happiness what we all want?

Chris moves back to the microphone.

CHRIS

Other veterans are here who feel the same. They fought so all Americans can enjoy these rights. I ask that they stand to show their support for the Japanese-Americans.

Half the room, all White men, stand up. Then, two dozen Black men stand. Finally, several Japanese-Americans stand.

Everyone looks around at each other. The men in the front row sit but most of the audience stands. Most of them wear their military uniforms.

RANDY

Thank you all for your service. You may be seated.

They sit. Chris steps aside for Jim.

Randy glances at the other councilmen. They look like they disagree with him.

Jim looks directly at Randy and returns to the lectern.

JIM

Racism exists because individuals keep pushing it.

(MORE)

JIM (CONT'D)

I have information about what the mayor did to help - -

Randy jumps up.

RANDY

I've heard enough. I'm a big enough man to admit when I've made a mistake. I rescind my resolution. I thank the speakers and our brave veterans for their moving testimony. Meeting adjourned.

Randy gives Jim a big stink eye. Jim smiles knowingly.

A cheer goes up from the crowd. People rush to shake Jim's hand. Mr. Charles comes over and pats him on the back, hard.

Jim looks at Chris, nods thankfully. Chris nods back.

JIM

(to Mr. Charles)

What are we doing with the reporter?

MR. CHARLES

Tell him to print the story, of course. We didn't make any promises.

Jim looks stunned, then breaks into a huge grin. Mr. Charles lets out a loud guffaw.

EXT. NEW CURLEY'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

SUPERIMPOSE: "One year later."

Jim, Mika and Don stand in front of New Curley's Restaurant looking out at the parking lot. Mika holds a baby.

The parking lot is almost full.

On the left, there's a large market with a "New City Market" sign. Across the lot, the "Japanese American Community Center" sits with a sign advertising a special show tonight.

On the right, several shops are built in a long row, including a beauty salon, a bookstore, shops selling musical instruments, cameras and other things.

People walk around going in and out of the stores. They wave to Jim, offer thanks, say polite things as they go by.

As Jim talks to Don and Mika, he acknowledges the compliments by nodding or waving back.

JIM  
(points to parking lot)  
We can have the Obon dance right here.

DON  
How's the market doing?

JIM  
Sam is doing great. He and Mr. Charles figured out what rents to charge so we can repay the loan. Mom can retire whenever she wants. And Mika is taking care of the accounting now.

MIKA  
Never thought I'd have such an important job.

DON  
I'll meet you inside. Have to pick up Susan at the beauty salon. She wants me to be the first to see her new hairdo.

MIKA  
New girl? She's getting pretty for you. You better marry her.

Don rolls his eyes. They laugh as Don walks away.

INT. NEW CURLEY'S RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Jim and Mika walk inside the restaurant.

There is a sign welcoming people to eat "new Southern style and Japanese cuisine." The specials include Curley's Fried Chicken and *oyako donburi* (chicken mixed into scrambled eggs over rice).

Jim glances at the decor.

JIM  
Wow.

MIKA  
Lovely. Nice to eat here before the show.



JIM  
That's what I told Mr. Charles.

Mr. Charles ambles up to them.

MR. CHARLES  
Two and a cute baby for dinner?

JIM  
Depends on what kind of sushi you  
have.

MR. CHARLES  
Any kind you want. I got authentic  
cooks now, you see.

JIM  
You must have good connections.

MR. CHARLES  
The best.

They laugh.

JIM  
I really owe you, Mr. Charles.

MR. CHARLES  
It was your vision, young man. I  
just did my part. You brought your  
community and mine together to make  
this happen.

Mr. Charles directs them into the dining room.

JIM  
Lee helped a lot.

MR. CHARLES  
Nice touch, putting plaques out  
there for him and your father.

Mr. Charles points to a table. Jim and Mika sit. She puts  
the baby into a baby seat.

JIM  
Can't ever forget them. Do you have  
good service? We're in a hurry.

MR. CHARLES  
The best. Jim, what time is it?

Jim looks at his watch.

JIM

I'm not that late, Mr. Charles.

Big smile from Mr. Charles. He rubs the ceramic statue of the Asian waving cat and gestures "come here" to Jim.

MR. CHARLES

Partner?

Jim jumps up, hustles over and rubs the statue.

They laugh and shake hands vigorously.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.