

Atsushi Kiuchi

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Question: So when you left and you moved to --

Answer: Emmett, Idaho, yeah.

Question: And you went -- you started going back to -- were you in high school by then?

Answer: Hm-hmm, yeah.

Question: Did you face prejudice at that point? I mean --

Answer: No, no, it was a small town and I think there was a population somewhere around 5000. I think the entire county is 5000. But I think, I've got to give credit, because there was two Japanese families that lived there before the war. And they were not -- they were never involved, and they were very well known within the community. They were the DeSotas and the -- what was the other ones. And one of them -- they lost two sons --

Question: Fighting.

Answer: Fighting. For the United States Army. And they lost two so, you know, so the Japanese were -- I will say were accepted there or anything like that. But, yeah, I've had things happen that you don't talk about too much, really. One guy, he was -- I was at the local -- I was a senior in high school and I was kind of athlete, and in a small town, you know, it's like a big frog in a small pond like if you're the leader in Tenino, Washington. But I think I was -- I think -- I carried a chip on my shoulder and I never told anybody where I was -- where I came from. And I entered my high school in my sophomore year -- so I didn't tell anybody where I was from -- I just came from Hunt, Idaho. I called it Hunt, Idaho -- and that was a post office box -- there was -- the main Minidoka War Relocation Center was located at Hunt, Idaho. Hunt was the name of the post office stop. So I said I came from Hunt and that was about all I said. And I was -- and I didn't want anybody to ask. So I really -- I think all of us worked hard to be better than anybody else so I was very active in school and within the community and did a lot of things. But, yeah, I had more than once that, you know, people have sad something about being a Jap. And one time I remember my father and I went to -- Sunday afternoon, we lived about, oh, three miles from town, so we'd ride our bicycles to town and go see the movie, my brother and I. And we'd stop by the President's Fountain, which was the confectionery -- in those days in the '40's, '45, '46, '47, the local, you know back in the '50's, that whole bit, you know. But we used to -- so I was having -- so you know, we knew the owners by name and the son was in school, I think a grade higher than us so I knew them so we stopped and had a cherry Coke, everybody had cherry Cokes in that time, before we headed back. And this white gentleman came up, and he was obviously kind of drunk -- I think he was drunk. And he sat down next to us. We were sitting at the counter, we were talking to our friends and so forth and he says you ever see one of these. And he pulled out his wallet and he showed it to me and I said no, I've never seen one of those. It was a Jap hunting license issued by the State of California

Answer: It was fake -- it was a Jap hunting license give him the right to shoot. And, you know, what can you say, you're 15 years old. There's nothing you can say. And I know Mrs. Granton came over and says what's going on, and she told the guy to get the hell out of there, but I remember that. And there, oh, yeah, but it's very subtle, it's very subtle.

Question: Cause that seems -- cause there's a lot of interesting dynamics in that whole issue. In fact even as I've started on this project to find and talk to different Japanese-American citizens, and I may be reading it wrong but I feel a still a very, very close community and a lot of people that I've talked to, to find out what it is, don't want -- they

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either wanted to put it behind them, they don't want to talk about it -- maybe I'm misreading it.

Answer: That's part of the culture. I don't know how far that goes, but like I say, I'm unusual. That I've been interested in it and I always preface my remarks when I give a talk. Like I say, I didn't go public with this thing until about 1984. And I regret that I never told my daughter, who's 35 years -- she never - she picked up pieces and bits and it's kind of hard for her to understand. And here she's 39, well she's about our age, she's 42. That such a thing did happen. And so I always preface my remarks, this is part of the chapter of American history that you rarely hear about. You know, and many people would just as soon forget. And very few of the history books ever contain anything about it. Until just recently. With the redress and with the, I think, there's been a lot of terrible movies and books written. God, even Danielle Steel wrote one about this, you know. I couldn't get through it, but I've got it in my collection of stuff. I don't know, I think it goes back to my, you know, we don't make waves. My family, my talk is -- what I give is called Tugama

Answer: (?) Gama(?) is Japanese -- means to endure. Or what is it we say around here to -- to, I mean, to endure, to tolerate - yeah, yeah, to suck it up. Suck it up I think is one of the things we would say today I guess, maybe you might. But yeah, there's a -- and there was a lot of shame. Somehow or the other, I was ashamed that I was in the camps. And we're, you know, we -- I always grew up anyway, my generation, my mother's generation, my folks' generation, not to make waves. Don't stick up high. Don't stick up high and my sister used to be really upset with me because I was so forward. I'd go -- after we left Emmett, you know, I went to work for newspapers and I was on my own, went to the service and so forth, and so I got out of the service and I came back here, worked in newspapers, and so on. So I used to go to my sister, she married, she got kids and family, I'd go, open up the refrigerator and see what the heck there's to eat. So, I mean, that's unheard of. My sister would say, you know, calm down, you know, slow down, Geez, you know, if you want I'll give you something - I'll do it. But you don't do that. You don't just walk in a guy's house and -- even if your sister's house -- and open the refrigerator and see what the hell there is to eat. In the fridge, for yourself. And she was -- and I lived in a white man's -- I should say this, but I lived in a white man's world, working for the newspaper, and I was -- and I've had, oh professionally, I've had, who the hell's that Jap, you know, who does he think he is, why is he stirring up all this trouble, and who wants to know and so forth. And I was one of the early -- I think I consider myself one of the early media-types, Asian-Americans in the media

Answer: Although it never, you know was in the time or all of a sudden was, you know, on the 5 o'clock news or anything like that. But I worked my way and one of the things I wanted when I worked for a newspaper. Couldn't afford to go to college; there was no way and I told my dad I wasn't going to -- which was probably the biggest mistake I ever made in my life. Apply for -- if we did what my dad wanted me to do was to lease the ranch and then buy now I probably, you know. But no, I was too smart for that. No, I want to be a professional. And I couldn't go to college, there was no money for that, so I went to work for a small weekly newspaper in Emmett, Idaho, and I worked 60 hours a week for -- about 60 hours a week, working in a small daily, weekly newspaper, you do everything, including taking photographs with a 4x5. But it was an educational process so - so I did that and I learned how to -- and I worked for \$45 a month. This is 1948. So instead of working toward the farm and ranch and leasing the ranch and everything like that, I decided to make something of myself cause there weren't many Japanese in the business and I wanted to -- I don't know, hands, somehow -- (inaudible) But it's been rewarding, but it's an interesting to also get involved -- after we moved to Olympia I got involved with state government, and there aren't that many Asians at that time. I gave a talk to Leadership -- Leadership Thurston County about two weeks, two, three weeks ago, And tell them how it was alarming to me that when I first

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started working for the state, most of the Asians and blacks, people that are non-white, that are -- were in state government, all lived in Seattle or Tacoma in the community. Very few, very few lived in Olympia

Answer: There's more now of course, there's a lot more now.

Question: Well, yeah, but if you go back even the '70's it was still --

Answer: The -- there was actually redlining by the realtors. In Thurston County, I challenge anybody in the realty business to tell me that I'm wrong. There was a very subtle -- you couldn't get -- if you -- and I very deliberately, when I moved here in 1964, I very deliberately picked the North Thurston School District to live in because that's where a lot of the non-whites, population, of course, North Thurston is about 30% are non-white kids.

Question: I mean Olympia is still a pretty white community.

Answer: Yeah, there -- there -- I've got figures on those. I looked it up and the statistics, I think, yeah, they're basically white. Tumwater's whiter yet.

Question: Yeah.

Answer: But, yeah, and it exists. I'm -- my wife and I have been married 37 years or something and that makes us one of the earlier ones of interracial marriages. And we -- and my daughter went through it too. But we tried to shelter her, but then -- little subtle things go on, I don't know. I don't know what this has to do -- but subtle things happen. Like you're walk and wait in line to eat at the Budd Bay Cafe or some of the nicer places around here, so-called nicer places, and they kind of -- so we always make reservations and I always make it under Bev -- cause Beverly, that's my wife's name.

Question: Yeah, yeah.

Answer: If they see Atsushi -- but they can tell, I'm sure, my accent and everything. They say I have an accent. I can't believe it, but they can tell I'm Asian. But I -- it's funny -- I see myself through white people's eyes. I don't see myself as being different, I never have. I see myself as being white, strange? Maybe it's a protective coloring that you do.

Question: I was going to ask that -- what - I mean, because -- or do you see color -- you know they always say, we should be color blind but no, we can't be color blind, because there are black people, there are white people, there are Asian people, and there are, you know, there is color, I mean, you know, so being color blind doesn't. But so, growing up, I mean did you think of yourself as Japanese, as American -- do you see your --

Answer: I think it's a good question, Karl, because I think when we lived in -- when I was growing up in Seattle and stuff, we always knew ourselves to be Japanese. Cause we were Japanese, and that was the people we worked with and dealt with and everything. And camp -- that's all there was was Japanese. And so making that transition to the white world is what I call it. I mean I'm not a sociologist, obviously, you know. But I made the transition to the white world by moving to Emmett, Idaho, relocating. And suddenly I became white, I thought I was white, and I didn't see myself as being anything else. And -- and, you know, I'd had very little to do. I used to speak Japanese but I've forgotten it completely -- just about completely. Because I never used it. Yeah. It's kind of. But, that's another issue, I think, for another day.

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Question: Do you know whether your dad -- when Pearl Harbor happened, I mean, is it like you think of those Japanese and these Japanese, meaning those Japanese that are in Japan and grew up in Japan and these Japanese who moved to America, or is it just all the same?

Answer: I think in my -- I think as you got older, I think, there was a connection with the home country, you know, but not for me at my age. I know a funny thing happened when the war -- we had to turn in all our seditious materials and records of Japanese songs and cameras -- we had to turn in the cameras. And radios and the powerful short-wave radios, cause we would be spying and all that stuff, right, according to General DeWitt. But anyway, funny thing happened. My -- my mother, I told you she was five daughters, five sisters, and then she had this brother, the baby brother who took over. But he was in the Manchurian War. And he was in Manchuria

Answer: Shino, Chinese -- not Shino, when they were a Japanese -- were conquering, taking over Manchuria and all that stuff. And he was this officer. And so we had this picture of my brother -- my -- my -- with my uncle, right, with his sword and dressed -- and that was -- not dressed in his dress uniform but he was -- and my mother had this -- we -- we kept that picture -- we hid it -- they were against it cause we had an uncle that was in the Japanese Imperial Army, you know. And it was really kind of fun -- it was kind of humorous, but we kept that all during the war. And my mother, my mother went back to Japan. Remember she came here when 18 years old. And after the war things, you know, tada, 1942 or.. 1952 or '53, the Japanese Buddhist Church, which my mother was a - Boy Scout troop of which my brother-in-law and my nephews belonged to -- made a tour to -- to Japan. And so my mother hooked on at that -- at the lower rate as a package deal, and then she went back to the village, she went back to the village. And I said, and so it's always been, you know, and so, you know, and in my own mind, I said, well, Mom, you know when she came back, how was it, dada, dad

Answer: And I said, Mom, you know it's been the tradition that Issei, after they die, their ashes are taken back by one of the members of the family, back to their home to be buried at their home. So one day I said to my mom, well, if you -- when you die, you know, you want us, somebody or me, or somebody take you back -- you know, your ashes back to Japan. Says no, I don't have no reason to go back there. I don't want to live out there. This is where I live. This is my country. Says, she says, no, I don't want to go there. But that was tradition, you know, take the ashes back, what not.

Question: Did you have -- do you know if your dad had relatives that were fighting in World War II?

Answer: Oh, yeah. I don't know that -- I've got to assume they did, I don't know, I don't know.

Question: Cause that seems that would be --

Answer: Oh, there's been some stories about how people went -- older people, older people meaning 18, 19 years old, that's - that's -- there's a story, couple stories going around Garfield High School, Broadway High School, classmates, that went back to Japan and fought - - and met -- there's a classic story -- met one of the white guys that went to school with him. That was not unusual. I've heard some more instances of that kind of incident occurring.

Question: See and those are the two things I've tried to find -- which I haven't yet -- Japanese-American citizen who fought for the 442nd -- is that right -

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Answer: -- 442, yeah.

Question: - 442 -- to get that perspective of it, and I'd also like to find a Japanese soldier who fought, which would be more difficult, I think --

Answer: Yeah, would be more difficult -- course they would have to come back --

Question: And some of them don't want to talk about it either. Like --

Answer: You shouldn't have any trouble with the 442. Cause they're well organized. Call the Nisei vets and they can tell you all, you know, they can lead you to a whole bunch of people.

Question: Cause we've been trying to track --

Answer: Nisei Vets organization -- I have -- matter of fact I've been invited to the, upgrade, you know, the Congressional Medal Honor thing on March 25th. And the Nisei Vets - - I'll leave you a message and give you a phone number.

Question: Great.

Answer: Yeah, oh, yeah, they're -- they're well organized and they're all dying off real fast, you know, like all World War II vets are, but they're still around -- around Seattle, yeah, I can give you quite a few people.

Question: My mom went to high school with a gentleman and they discovered later he was -- he left just prior to the war and he was a general over there. And of course he's passed away now. Called my mom oof-wam.

So, but -- do you think that -- for the generations that you're never going to meet and I'm never going to meet -- the great, great, great, great grandchildren. Is there a message from World War II to leave for those?

Answer: I think -- no, people said was the evacuation wrong, or was it right, and so forth. And I think it's like -- and having worked for government for so long, you now, I've been a pretty good bureaucrat. Emergency times take emergency measures, okay. But you should never forget the due process, that's the argument, due process. What else is there if there isn't due process -- if we can't do it by the Constitution? And in this particular case, this thing, this whole thing was prefabricated, the reason for doing that, and the courts have proven that -- our own courts have proven that. But the due process, and don't forget, the civil liberties -- civil rights -- the -- the Emergency -- what is it they call it -- that led to Executive Order 9066, that thing is still in the books. And they know -- and as you know, with the Saudi Arabia thing and all those things that have been happen, you know, there's always been threats. We should round those guys up. That's the first thing we always hear -- oh, we should round those guys up. Those terrorists -- that are killing -- and -- and so .. I, I thin.. you know, I was the same thing. I would have hated to have been in -- in Twin Falls, you know, we used to go down from the camp, and when they showed the movie The Purple Heart by Dana Andrews and all that about how the Japanese executed the Doolittle Bombers, you know, when things like that happened, man, they closed up camp. Nobody could get out. For our own -- basically for our own protection. So one of the things you have to look at is -- is -- in a community, in Olympia, what would happen, you know, if something like that happened and we were still out in the streets, you know, we were -- this thing that happened. So it worked both directions. We always used to see they had put up a little machine gun -- 30

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caliber machine gun at the corner of the camp post at Camp Harmony, what they called Camp Harmony -- it was Puyallup -- somebody with -- some bureaucrat with a -- with a -- you know what that reminds me of. Over in Dachau, and most of the camps says, work and you shall be free. "Arbeit Macht Frei" -- something like that. And this was -- so -- we saw this guy, this soldier had this 30 caliber machine there sitting right there near the berry patch along the perimeter of the fence. And we asked the soldier, what's that for? He says that's to protect us from them or them from us. (laughs) Which way you going to point it if you ever have to use it?

Question: That's -- we interviewed -- I don't know if you know Shig Honda or not, but we interviewed Shig -- had an article about him a couple months ago in the paper. And that's what he said -- he said yeah, they told us they were putting us here for our protection. My question was, if it's for our protection, why are all those guns --

Answer: Pointing in.

Question: Yeah, huh. Well, thank you very much.

Answer: Thank you. And so my mom, and so we brought all brand new clothes, right, but we bought heavy shoes, you know, heavy shoes, work shoes, and heavy warm clothing cause we didn't know where the hell we were going to go. And so we brought all this -- and this was May we're going right, to Puyallup. Anyway, it's in May -- it's spring, and it's a nice spring day. I said why are we buying all this heavy warm clothes -- she says it's easier to take stuff off than to not have it when you needed it.

Question: Wise woman.

Answer: Yeah, yeah.

Question: Do you remember -- cause each person got whatever you could carry, right?

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Do you remember what you had --

Answer: The one thing I got to take, you know, that was my own, other than you know, the clothes and so forth. But the one thing I got -- and each of us was allowed to take something -- and I took my little baseball glove. That's what I took with me.

Question: Another irony -- the American sport -- baseball.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: What -- was it -- now, when they -- you left by bus, right --

Answer: Yeah.

Question: From Seattle. Did they -- I know that on some of the trains that they put blinds --

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Did they do the same thing on --

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Answer: Yeah, when we went to --

Question: Idaho.

Answer: Idaho, yeah. And then the funny thing is - - they shoveled us off to the side all the time to get more high priority trains, and so one -- the morning we woke up -- we were around Nampa, Idaho or Caldwell, Idaho, somewhere around there. And it was kind of strange cause, you know you weren't supposed to raise the blinds so we looked -- peeked under there. And we were -- we had stopped at a railroad station. And it was either Nampa or Caldwell, Idaho, near Boise, and then we had another -- then we go down by Twin Falls. But there's Japanese out there watching us. They had to be located there -- they knew the Japanese were coming so they were there waiting for us to see -- get a view of us.

Question: Now, if you'd been Japanese and lived in Idaho --

Answer: We probably done the same thing.

Question: But I mean you wouldn't have been --

Answer: Yeah, we wouldn't be in camp, no, no.

Question: Yeah, you'd be out --

Answer: No.

Question: See, that's where --

Answer: But then, see, it was a threat to the West Coast --

Question: Yes.

Answer: That's what it was, see. And Bainbridge Island guys, you know, they -- I've got copies of press clippings that I somehow accumulated -- I've got lots of -- if you want some photographs or some data, something like that, let me know to supplement.

Question: Oh, good.

Answer: Cause I've got stuff, and but anyway, yeah, I've got stuff like that. But anyway, it's kind of funny because this is just my perspective and you've got to understand that, see. If you talk to probably a 20-year-old guy -- a person that was 20 years old at that time, it would probably be totally different. Not different, but it would be -- it would be different approach.

Question: Well, and I look -- I built this project as --

Answer: Honda was older, wasn't he? Shig Honda?

Question: Yes, yeah. I bill this World War II as told by whoever's talking, because that's it. I want to see different perspective, different thoughts. Oh, that was my question. You talked about being a 12-year-old boy, girls, smoking and all that. Did the camps allow your adolescence to happen? Did you get that part of your childhood or did you get this --

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Answer: No, I don't think it was any different than if I lived in Seattle at that time, you now, growing up with your buddies and dada, dada, dada, and the one time we -- we were -- in the camp -- at the relocation center in Twin Falls, there was nothing -- you could go through the desert and the closest town was a town called, ironically, Eden -- Eden, Idaho. It's in the book. It's -- and we walked, and well you said something about fences, initially. Well they tried to put up fences, you see, and then after awhile they gave it up for two reasons. Because they saw how -- the futility of it. There's no place to go. I mean, you -- so one day, the gang of us, the boys that hung around, we played -- about five of us who were a gang from our block, we walked about 15 miles across the desert to go to Eden, Idaho. And we went to Eden. There was just a gas station there at that time, a gas station, maybe a restaurant or post office, I mean that's all. Just a wide spot in the road. And we walked into the gas station, and they have pop -- am I keeping you from something -- but you remember the pop machines, you put a quarter in or a dime --

Question: Yeah.

Answer: All right, and then you pulled it out to the right -- well, okay, good. And so we walked over there and we all had our dime and we put it in there and pulled out our pop, see. And big pop, big deal, I mean it was a big deal. And the guy came out to look at the three, well, four or five of us sitting there, drinking our pop, and he kind of gave us a dirty look. And so we drank our pop and very carefully stacked it up there and walked back, it took us about three or four hours, but we just did it to do it -- just like boys do. We just did it to do it, to say we could do it. Oh, yeah. Well, I was talking about the fences. So one day the Army announced -- the government announced, in their infinite wisdom, it worked in other camps, but they decided to put guard towers up, space them out about every five miles, about every three miles, all around, guard shacks. And the one thing that we needed really badly in camp was wood. Because we had to make our own furniture, you see. The rooms are 20x20, were about this big, about 20x20, and that's where one family lived and it depended how big the family were. In each barracks there was what, about oh, it's going much -- anyway, there were barracks and then there was A, B, C, D, E, and F -- there were six units. And they raised in size from 16x20 to 20x20 and then the smallest ones were about 14x20, okay, and so it depended on size of your family, see. So you had -- so you're in there and you have to build your furniture, right. And so we put all the beds, the room was just about here. And we put the beds all the beds here and put a protective, you know, screen, got sheet or something and run a wire and strung it up there to hide and for the girls slept on this side and then Mom put another one for the boys on this side and then there was a big pot-belly stove and then one light thing that came down. And that was it. That was the room that we had. But we had about a big family so we also had room A, we had Unit A which is like I say, oh, 14x20 or 16x20, around -- we had this big --at Room B. And so that's how we lived, and so we ate -- we were pretty -- cause we were a larger family, we had all this extra space. But you had to buy furniture, see, you had to get furniture, see. So we used the Montgomery Ward catalog to buy clothing and so forth and we had a canteen which improvised -- it was just a canteen, it didn't have any. So wood was the most valuable commodity. And we used -- made furniture, drawers, dresser drawers, and getas -- you know what a geta is? It's like a wooden -- it's like a wooden -- it's made out of a 2x4, it's a Japanese slipper --

Question: Oh, yeah, yeah, yes.

Answer: Okay, geta -- everything from geta to, you know, dresser drawer and stuff like that. But coming back, so the contractor guy gets out there and he's got this beautiful pieces of wood, you know, for the guard towers. And the guard towers are up -- the legs are about 16, or maybe 14 or 12x12 or 16 -- this beautiful wood, see. And he goes out there (gestures) off loading it, and he goes out there and he dumps all this to start construction, right. Pours

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the concrete stuff down and everything at the base, foundations now. And the next morning he comes down there, they're gone. And the guys are packing the stuff off. And the, you know, laboriously -- there's no electric thing - and they're laboriously cutting this 12x12 and 14x14 into useable pieces of lumber, you see. And so they -- the contractor had a hell of a time, and they call soldiers out in the desert to protect this lumber from a bunch of Japs that's going to steal all their lumber. And they finally gave it up -- they finally gave it up.

Question: Guard tower.

Answer: Yeah, guard tower. There was nothing -- it was not really feasible to put a guard tower because there was an irrigation ditch -- a big, huge irrigation canal, (inaudible) Canal, which was a main -- huge. On one side boundary, see, the rest was all sage brush.

Question: Well, like you said, where would you go. You know, you going to hike back to Seattle from there. It sounds like basically they did the same thing to you that they did to the American Indians -- big piece of land --

Answer: Big difference though. The American Indians have never been given redress.

Question: That's right.

Answer: I did a paper for Evergreen when I did the paper on this, also the blacks have never had redress. They're entitled to redress. Not compensation, they're entitled for what we've done to them.

Question: Yeah.

Answer: But we are lucky -- we are lucky because we had people -- it's interesting. I'm on the Capital Furnishings -- State Capital Furnishings Committee, but statutes and we're trying to protect. And the young lady that represents General Administration is a young lady named Mary Grace Jennings, very -- quiet, pregnant now, young lady. And one -- I didn't -- and so we went to committee meetings, we were talking. Am I keeping you from something - I'm just --

Question: No, you're fine.

Answer: Finally, small world. Because, and so we were working -- oh, we had a big fund raiser last Thursday for two -- to raise money to buy back and fix up all this old furniture and everything that's been given away, sold or stolen, or broken or discarded. Anyway, Mary Grace said to me one day, we were walking back to -- she was walking back to her office and I was going to -- anyway, she said were you in the internment camps? I said sure, I said, yeah. She says that's strange -- I was on a member of the committee on civil rights that drafted -- that had the public hearings -- Congressional hearings throughout the United States. She said I really learned a lot about -- just being a staff member, just, tada, tada, you know, with her college degree. She had a college degree in Asian history or something, and she was in California and she got the appointment, blah, blah, blah, but she'd been knocking around and she's still a young lady, I think she's probably in her 40's now, 39, 49, but anyway. She said yeah, I was traveling --

Answer: I said tell me this. Confirm this one story for me that I heard about -- about the signing of the redress. And this is the \$20,000, blah, blah, blah. And I said, I heard this from one of the people in Seattle -- Japanese people that were involved in the redress movement. That they passed a bill, Congress passed a bill and they had to get President Reagan, he was

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the president then, to sign it. In an appropriate ceremony. And he was of course the governor of California, and he became a big shot through the rich and influential people in California, the golden suns, the native and golden suns of California

Answer: And they're the ones -- and don't forget now, our very liberal Supreme Court -- Douglas -- not Douglas, the Supreme Court Judge that became Supreme Court Judge that was governor of California, oh Orrin, -- the great, great liberal, right? And he was the governor that pushed to get the Japs out of -- during World War II, see, you know, pushed the Japs -- moved them out of there. Anyway, so all of these politics are going on. I said, that story I asked Mary Grace, it became very tricky because it passed, see, and they weren't sure what side of the plate Reagan was coming on this thing because of his California background and all that stuff, see. And he said, and this is the story I got and Mary Grace -- he wasn't the brightest, quickest president we ever had. And he said, and he -- the way to get him to do something was to get him to associate things that happened in his younger days, or his prior commitment -- you know, if you brought up something that has to be signed, sign today, tada, tada, and we're doing this today, you know. His -- what you call memory, long-term memory, was better than his short-term, what's happening. So to brief him on it, not to embarrass, you know, they said what they did is one of his cabinet members briefed him. Basically said this, Governor -- President, Mr. President, do you remember when you were a governor? And the California legislature honored the soldier from California, you know, Japanese-American soldier, you know, for his heroic deeds or whatever it was, and you signed the proclamation. He says oh, yeah. Said, well, Mr. President, his family will be one of these people that would benefit. And he said two and two clicked and that's all I need to know. And I said to Mary Grace, just a couple weeks ago, did this really happen? She says that really happened. And she was on -- she was just one of the aides or whatever you want to call her -

Question: But was there and saw that -- wow. It's interesting that -- how the politics all -- on top of everything else, played a role.

Answer: It's interesting. It's like when you adopt a child, you never tell anybody that, you know, generally, it's none of your damn business right, and we did that. But anyway, then later, somehow you get around, some how or the other way, some casual conversation, you bring up that your child's adopted. And you'd be surprised the number of people that adopted children, you never know about. And same thing about this thing. This war thing, you know. You just mention to somebody drop something, oh, even if she's -- even if he's hakuji, white person, somehow -- people, people say, oh, yeah, I remember that, we had that. I've always wondered, Evelyn Eritania (?) I think that's her name, used to be a PI reporter, business reporter, and she wrote a book about Port Angeles and the James River -- James River Company, who bought -- who sold out to Daishowa -- in Port Angeles, well, you'll get that when you go to Port Angeles. But that was the old Crown Zellerbach mill and --

Question: Yeah, Crown Z.

Answer: Yeah, Crown Z. But Evelyn wrote the book. I forget the name of it but it's still around. But it tells us how Daishowa, the Japanese influence, you know, tada, tad

Answer: But then -- then she goes back to the Asian ties -- how the fact the first Asians from Japan washed up on the shores of Neah Bay on Shishi Beach.

Question: Yeah, okay, now, answer this then, cause my brother heard the story that they were taken us as slaves.

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Answer: Yes, for the indians, yes.

Question: Okay, because a lady from Neah Bay was telling us, a couple of years ago, this tour bus pulls up and about 150 Japanese get out --

Answer: With camera (laughs)

Question: They were going to look and see where they were slaves.

Answer: Yeah, that's right, that's right.

Question: Golly what a small world.

Answer: Yeah. But, so I was interested, so I started reading Evelyn's book, and it's all about Port Angeles, see and he quotes Sam Hagwood. Sam Hagwood, if you've been down Port Angeles, used to be Hagwood's Restaurant, right on the dock, there. He and I played ball. We were all -- I was what, 23 years old when I moved from Oregon, was working for the paper in Oregon, working for the Port Angeles paper then. Anyway, and so we we're all about 23 to 27, we all played ball, we were JC's -- we were JC's -- and we really made -- we were always stirring up things and doing things for the community. Sam was one of the older guys, Sam Hagwood, and when I first met Sam he said to me, you know, there used to be a Japanese family that used to live here -- and tadada, and they're in that book -- Evelyn's book, okay. Matter of fact he's one of the leading people in Evelyn's book. And then all of a sudden, he was gone. He said, he was gone and he said, you know, Sam said, I don't know where he went. I understand the government moved them or something. He said, did you ever hear about these people? I said, oh, you know, yada, yada, how am I supposed to know who it was, like I was Smith or Jones or -- but --

Question: But you're Japanese --

Answer: You should know, you know. Oh, God, you know. But Evelyn in that book talks about this Japanese family and he was quite a guy, I guess, and he ran with Sam. They were part of the guys that stir up -- in high school, stirred up things. And then Sam went on to Whitman College. And anyway, so I met him after, you know, he and his dad was running a restaurant by then, but he always said to me I always wondered whatever happened to that family. And so in the book, the book talks about Sam and talks about -- and it was one of the gangs, Japanese kids that grew up with Sam, and one of the young shakers and movers of the community at that time. I remember Sam say, I've always wondered whatever happened to them. And I don't know, Sam is dead now, but oh, well, anyway.

Question: Such a small, small world.