

Good Citizen

**Prologue**

PROJECTION: March 28, 1941, Los Angeles.  
MOONLIGHT through a window casts dim light into an office. SCRAPE of metal outside the door, then the door swings in. Five men enter, dressed in black.  
WATCHMAN tapes a cloth over the door window. K.D. RINGLE, MITCHELL, and SULLY click on flashlights. One beam catches a portrait of Emperor Hirohito.  
SULLY's flashlight catches a safe. Voices low.

Sir!

SULLY

He gestures toward the safe. Ringle and Iceman join him there. Iceman crouches down to crack the safe.

You need light?

K.D. RINGLE

Don't insult me, okay?

ICEMAN

He opens the safe while Ringle clears space on a desk. Mitchell and Sully bring documents and Ringle photographs them. The men return them to the safe. Suddenly...

Bogey!

WATCHMAN

He whips the cloth off the window. Everyone flattens. A dim light through the window makes a pass around the room. The door RATTLES, and the light moves on. Watchman rehanges the cloth. The men go back to work.

You said the cops were keeping watch.

MITCHELL

Outside and at the elevators, not in the hallway.

WATCHMAN

What happens if we get caught?

ICEMAN

Well, technically, this is Japanese territory, so...technically ...they could have us shot as spies. Didn't they tell ya?

MITCHELL

ICEMAN

---

Jesus.

Ringle studies a document.

K.D. RINGLE

Mitchell. Look at this.

SULLY

(to Iceman)

Don't let him shit ya, Corcoran. We're not at war with the Japs yet. You're probably just looking at life in prison.

MITCHELL

(to Ringle)

Itaru Tachibana. Has to be the same guy.

K.D. RINGLE

We've had our eye on him, but nothing definite till now.

MITCHELL

(going through papers)

Names, addresses, everything. Christ, Commander Ringle, we've hit a jackpot.

**Scene 1**

PROJECTION: MARCH 28, 1942. Downtown Portland.  
A COP stands near a STREETLIGHT. MINORU YASUI  
crosses in front of the cop, stops in the light.

MINORU YASUI

Would you happen to know the time, Officer?

COP

Ten o'clock.

MINORU YASUI

Of course. Thank you. Nice weather for March.

COP

That it is.

MINORU YASUI

My name is Yasui. (Beat) Y-A-S-U-I. Just, um, taking a walk.

COP

Would that be a Jap name?

MINORU YASUI

Japanese, yes.

COP

You speak very good English.

---

MINORU YASUI

I was born here. I'm an American citizen.

He shows the cop a document.

My birth certificate. See?

COP

That may well be. But you should be off the streets these past two hours.

MINORU YASUI

Ah, yes, the curfew. Well, I find your curfew to be inconvenient.

COP

Nevertheless, Mr.-- ?

MINORU YASUI

Yasui.

COP

I must tell you to run along home now.

MINORU YASUI

If I may ask, what is the penalty for violating this curfew?

COP

Violators are subject to arrest.

MINORU YASUI

Well, officer, as I have no intention of going home, I must ask you to do your duty.

COP

Now, Mr. -- sonny boy, we don't want any trouble, it being such a lovely evening and all. No, better you just run along home, like a good citizen. Before the storm comes.

The cop exits. POET revealed as Yasui exits.

POET

And can you feel, my friends, the coming storm?  
 Storm upon storm, families lightning split,  
 Father, mother, sister, brother  
 Spread from Arkansas to Idaho.  
 Split each from each, Topaz to Manzanar  
 to Gila River to a rail siding called Minidoka.  
 See in time a tar-paper city  
 of rusted wire and rattlesnakes,  
 A false home of barren walls,  
 bulbs hanging naked,  
 six-hole indignity.  
 But first, the government has business to conduct.

## Scene 2

A NEWSREEL (film or live on stage)

NEWSCASTER, A LA NEWSREEL

---

War is on the march. February 19, 1942. Seventy-four days after Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt takes steps to protect America from enemies within:

ROOSEVELT

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, and Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy, I hereby authorize and direct the Secretary of War to prescribe military areas from which any or all persons may be excluded....

NEWSCASTER

March 2, 1942, General John L. DeWitt, commander of Western Defense, declares the Pacific Coast to a point 100 miles inland be specified as Military Area Number One:

DEWITT

“The whole West Coast is particularly subject to attack, to attempted invasion, and to espionage and acts of sabotage. Therefore, all persons of Japanese ancestry will be subject to exclusion from this area, at a time to be determined in the very near future.” Now, speaking for myself, I don't want any of them here. It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen, he is still a Japanese. American citizenship does not necessarily determine loyalty... We must worry about the Japanese all the time until he is wiped off the map.

REPORTER

But in the meantime, General, what do we do with the Japs?

DEWITT

The enemy is clever, gentlemen, but even he can't bomb a power plant if he's confined at home every night.

**Scene 3**

PROJECTION: April 3, 1942. Yasui enters FBI office: American flag, portraits of FDR and J. Edgar Hoover. He waits. FBI AGENT MIZE finally enters, nose in a file.

RAY MIZE

Okay, Mr....

MINORU YASUI

Yasui.

RAY MIZE

Right. Now, let's just make sure I have this right. Two nights ago, you came in to the Portland Police Station at eleven um...

MINORU YASUI

Eleven-twenty.

RAY MIZE

This was March 28, the day after the curfew on your people was put into effect.

MINORU YASUI

My people?

RAY MIZE

---

Japanese people.

MINORU YASUI

Oh, I see. I thought perhaps you meant Methodists.

RAY MIZE

And you demanded that they arrest you.

MINORU YASUI

I believe I requested, not demanded, but yes. For violating the curfew.

RAY MIZE

Um-hm. And you told the Desk Sergeant, um William Maas, that you had approached several cops on the beat, but none of them would take you into custody. Is that right?

MINORU YASUI

It is. And so, as a good citizen, I was forced to arrest myself.

RAY MIZE

Sergeant Maas notes here that you told him you wanted to challenge the constitutionality of the curfew law. Is that the behavior of a good citizen?

MINORU YASUI

I think so. Don't you?

RAY MIZE

You are an attorney. An officer of the court. You have an obligation to the law.

MINORU YASUI

To the constitution, yes. May I ask you a question, Mr....?

RAY MIZE

Special Agent Ray Mize.

MINORU YASUI

Thank you. "Mize." Would that be German by any chance?

RAY MIZE

I'm not sure.

MINORU YASUI

Mize, Meisel, Maysel. Does that sound right, Mr. Mize?

---