**Fred Korematsu**

My name is Fred Korematsu, I’m 25 years old. I was born in Oakland, California, my parents are Sansei, originally from Japan. My three older brothers and I are Nisei. When I was still young my parents owned and ran a flower business and once I graduated from high school I started working at the San Francisco shipyards as a welder. I was fired from that job shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Living in the U.S. as a man with darker skin and slanted eyes wasn’t all that pleasurable at times. I was denied many jobs and even seats at restaurants, there were bullies at school, and of course hearing “filthy jap” being yelled out of a car window as it sped past was never unexpected. I didn’t feel welcome all the time but I have always thought of myself as an American; I was born here.

When President Roosevelt signed the Executive Order 9066 I watched as everyone packed their things and marched their way to the evacuation centers. American police officers invaded our homes telling us what to do, how to do it, and to do it fast. They acted as if we were the enemy and they forgot, it seemed, that some of us are actually *American* citizens. My family did as they were told and were removed to Tanforan assembly center before being sent to Topaz, Utah on May 9th, 1942. I decided not to. I stayed home with my girlfriend.

I knew that what I did was highly illegal and so I changed my name to Clyde Sarah and got plastic surgery on my eyes to make me look more of European descent.

The disguise worked only until May 30th, 1942. The police caught me and turned me into the FBI. I was charged with violation of Civilian Exclusion Order No. 34, calling the exclusion of all Japanese people on the west coast and was accused of being a Japanese spy. I was taken to the San Francisco County Jail. While I was there I made friends with two men who, just like me, resisted the Japanese evacuation: Min Yasui and Gordon Hirabayashi. We saw no justification in what the U.S. was doing and that was the base of our friendship. One day, a man named Ernest Besig came to visit us in our jail cells. He asked all three of us to be part of his test case challenging the constitutionality of Executive Order 9066 in exchange for a $5000 bail out of jail. Immediately after my release, though, I was sent straight to Tanforan detention center. I stayed in an old horse stall transformed into a jail cell. My case was tried in the San Francisco Federal Court and I wad declared guilty for the violation of military orders. Now, I stand before the court one last time.

I think that the exclusion of all Japanese people and Executive Order 9066 is unjustified and immoral. Why should it be allowed for a few people to decide that all people of Japanese ancestry are evil and threatening? I just don’t follow that reasoning. I have been a loyal citizen and I defend and respect my country but I refuse to be criminalized because I look like or come from the people who dropped the bombs upon Pearl Harbor.