



# Library podcast

## Celebration of book launch of "John Okada: The Life & Rediscovered Work of the Author of No-No Boy"

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[00:00:37] And welcome to The Seattle Public Library. And thank you for attending. This talk on the life and work of Iconix Seattle writer the late John Okada and I'm Karen Maeda Allman. I'm with The Elliott Bay Book Company and we are co presenting in partnership with the Seattle Public Library today. So thank you to the Seattle Public Library foundations authors series sponsor Gary Kunis and to the Seattle Times for generous promotional support of library programs. We are grateful to the Seattle Public Library Foundation. So today's program will will be a talk by Frank Ave. It will be followed by a panel discussion. And and I'm going to leave it to the next person I'm going to introduce to talk a little bit about the program and the significance of this program. So one of our cosponsors today is Den's show. And Tom kidda is the founding executive director of Denge show. He's a sansei third generation Japanese American who was born and raised in Seattle. Tom's parents and grandparents were incarcerated during World War II. At Minidoka Idaho in addition to leading the organization for over the last two decades Tom has conducted over 200 video recorded oral history interviews with Japanese Americans and prior to working at Den's show. Tom was the general manager at Microsoft Corporation in the multimedia Publishing Group. He has received numerous awards for his historical contributions including the Humanities Washington award for outstanding achievement in public Humanities the National JCL Japanese American of the biennium Award for Education and many other awards and we're extremely pleased and proud to be here with Tom with Frank and with everyone and with you today at the library for this wonderful program so please join me in welcoming Tom McKetta

[00:02:46] Great. Thank you so much Karen. And you know she mentioned I've been doing this for over two decades and I've probably have done maybe a hundred book events in almost every one of them you know whether it's in the evening or on weekends you'll Karen's usually here you know helping support authors and books that come out on specially Japanese American history so Karen thank you so much for your your support and your dedication to this.

[00:03:10] So this is going to be happening.

[00:03:14] And thank all of you for being here on a Saturday afternoon because I think this is going to be a fun one.

[00:03:21] I want to start off with a personal story because you know we're going to talk about the John Okada book. But the reason we're talking about this book and I found this this is my old copy. It's because of the novel he wrote. And so I want to just give a really short personal story of how I got associated with this novel. It was it was back in 1973. I was a student at Franklin High School and I had just finished reading The Autobiography of Malcolm X and that book really rocked my world. It may be much more aware and that was lamenting to my English teacher that you know why isn't there something like this an Asian American sort of literature or what can I read that has a similar sort of you know tenor in terms of educating and looking at know real authentic experiences of Asian Americans and it so happened that my my English teacher at that point was Elaine Kimiko Norton con watertower a woman a teacher who was born at the Tooby lay concentration camp and as I was talking to her she smiled at me and said you know you should read this book. And so I did read it and and in many parts you know thanks to one of our speakers later on Sean Huang who published this ad under carp.

[00:04:45] You know I was able as a student to actually have access to this book. And again at a rock my world. You know for the first time I began understanding what happened to the Japanese American community and after reading the book they went and talked to especially my father about what happened and and he explained to me about the draft resisters about you know the the perceptions of of people who are in the military. World War II veterans of which my father was one. He talked about the loyalty oath during World War II and to Lee Lake and how it really divide the community. And so the book is about a draft sister so a very different perspective. But more than that story it also helped for me you know clarify really the myth of the Model Minority and and that was a powerful statement. So as I'm now going to college you know this was in my my memory and then 10 years later I reread the book because ten years later I had this very powerful conversation with my future father in law. You know Frank Yamasaki and so the woman I was dating at that time Sarah who you know became my wife. Her father was also a draftee sister. And I remember around the kitchen table spend the whole evening learning about his life and then talking about this book and recognizing that the portrayal of a draft resistor in this novel was very different than the experiences of Frank Yamasaki as a draftee sister.

[00:06:20] So again it really started challenge my thinking but again revolving around this novel and at that moment I recognized that I did have this this deep thought that you know going forward is going to be really important for the Japanese American community to really collect the diverse stories of the community that there was no one story and no one author could capture that. And that was actually in some ways the genesis of the origins of Densher which was started about 10 years after that and has now been going on for 22 years. So I just want to give you kind of a preface in terms of not as a scholar but as someone who has been involved in this work and the importance of this novel in terms of my life. And I think in terms of the community and so now we're going to have a treat. We're going to start first with the way this program's going to go. We have three panelists each one

will initially give a short presentation at the podium and then they'll go over here and then we'll have a conversation about some of the things that they talked about.

[00:07:19] So our first presenter is Frank Ahdaf and I first came across Frank because you know he wrote produced and directed the PBS documentary conscious and the Constitution. He is currently collaborating on a graphic novel dramatizing the resistance to wartime incarceration and brings it him. I'm sorry. Write some blogs resistors zom with Frank Chin. He helped create the first day of remembrance event and helped launch Chinn's Asian American theater workshop in San Francisco. Frank was a senior reporter for Cairo news radio and served as communications director for King County Executives Gary Locke and Dow Constantine and the King County Council. He's been published in Bloomsbury review Ammer Asia journal Frontiers of Asian American studies and many newspapers for this volume. The John Okada one he contributed an urgency to right the life of John Fukada so Frank please join us at the podium.

[00:08:18] Thank you thank you Tom.

[00:08:23] That's a really great story. Thank you all for being here today.

[00:08:28] Today I want to share O'Connor's early life in Seattle along with some of the events that led to his urgency to write what he hoped would be the great new se novel. Now this Seattle Central Library has a very special place in the life of John Hakata. It was here on this very site on the fourth floor of the old Carnegie Library building that Okada worked in the business reference section from Beckton 51 to 1953. It was his first professional job and he was hired by Doris Mitchell his mentor and the founder of the business reference section. Mr. Mitchell is memorably described in Frank Chinn's afterwards the paperback edition of NO boy. Today is also a special day. John akata was born on September 22nd 1923 and the merchants Hotel at first Yesler. Hotel management provided an early entry for Issei entrepreneurs in Seattle and his parents worked very hard. Here's the family. From the left is his mother Takeo. His brothers Roy Frank and Yoshitaka Robert. Arlene is baby sister and there's John next to his father Yossi told. When John was in grade school the family took over the Yakama hotel on Maynard Avenue just south of Dearborn site. Now of the Salvation Army's William Booth center just for reference. So from there it was a very short walk to Bailey Ganser school where principal Ada Mehan organized a good American citizenship club for these children of immigrants. And John evidently did not get the notice about class picture day

[00:10:08] Only child or the dark shirt and a bolo tie. It's here that John Akademik two lifelong friends Roy Kusaka and Frank Ashita their hometown of their homeroom teacher taught them how to diagram a sentence in English and learn the structure of a language heard on the radio listening in there in their hotel rooms.

[00:10:29] Once public school ended at Free the Nisei students would troop one block east or Wohler street to continue their schooling at the cook who got cool a Japanese language school and Rainer Avenue which is still their course. John excelled with the rigor of Japanese school just as he did at Broadway High School where the student body was one quarter safe. This of course is now the site of

a Seattle Community College. John was elected class officer his sophomore year. Made our society three years in a row shy retiring and but industrious was how his Latin teacher described him. So the 18 year old had just started to the University of Washington in the fall of 1941 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

[00:11:19] That night in Seattle his classmates saw the FBI arresting those of their fathers who were community leaders on the basis of some connection with our new enemy to the bedroom of a yacht from the hotel Ocado tried to put down his thoughts for a class paper. But he wrote My mind was in such a state of confusion and entanglement that I was unable to produce and organize in real unified paper. He tried his hand instead with poetry and developed a short piece called I must be strong and in it you can hear the voice of a college freshman who aspires to be a writer and only needs a subject.

[00:11:57] I know now for what war I was born. Every child is born to see some struggle. But this conflict is yet the worst for my dark features are those of the enemy and my heart is buried deep in Occidental soil. People will say things and people do things. I know they will and I must be strong. It goes on.

[00:12:18] This is the first surviving piece of creative writing we have by John Okada. We've never known about it until now because it was published anonymously four days after Pearl Harbor on the front page of The Daily and it was only a passing reference in his government file. That led me to discover it. But why anonymous it could have been Manistee of course but more likely John Scott had needed to protect his family from retaliation. In the hysteria that followed Pearl Harbor here in Seattle. Now this summer we heard a new term vocabulary family separation. We were all upset. I'm sure to see the U.S. government separating children from their families at the southern border and putting them into detention camps. As I said then you'll never again is now right. While the Japanese American experience was one of family separation in reverse in our case it was the father's innocent men like Yoshito Okada who were ripped from their children and wives. She escaped arrest on December 7th. But two months later the FBI made a second sweep on another Sunday morning in February 1942. FBI agents backed by two King County sheriff's deputies came to the door knocked them out with a warrant for the arrest of Yoshito Ocado. This was a family separation and would eventually inform the heart of the novel John Hakata would write.

[00:13:50] Mr O'Connor was held for weeks at the immigration detention center on Airport Way still there between the hawks stadium and what you might have. On March 20th he and 100 other whosay men were paraded on a King Street Station. Street Station while on the other side on the right you can see the families were crying out to them. The Seattle Times was there to get this picture. Now look at the right. The arms of the wives and children reached through the iron bars to scream out their goodbyes in English and Japanese.

[00:14:23] And you can see that's just what happened this year at the southern border. Some were in the darkness on the left was Yoshito Okada and somewhere behind the fence on the right. Had to be John Okada his mother his brothers and sister.

[00:14:39] Because as you know Maynard in Dearborn is just two long blocks away from King Street Station now one man in this crowd when you see a man said for the first time it hit me that I might never see my wife and children again. These men were put on a train for the Department of Justice camp at Fort Missoula Montana the Dakotas were forced to sell their hotel business and 7000 others from King County. They were imprisoned at the fairgrounds inside Camp. Their first priority was to reunite the family. I was the writer in the family. John O'cado types this urgent letter to William McAllen's one of their boarders at the Yakama whom Roy described as being like a second father to them. John asked Mr Collins to vouch for their father. Give your honest opinion about him. Several men have been returned to their families in this manner. It may be that your letter will result in the happiest moment of our lives.

[00:15:33] This letter works as within 1 month their father is allowed to rejoin them in all up. He arrives just before their family is moved to the permanent camp at Minnetonka Idaho in Minidoka roughly leaving roughly the center of camp Okhotsk gets a job as a waiter in the block 28 mess hall plays poker with guys like Pete Fujino with someone nicknamed mutt and Frank Yamasaki who was Tommy catus father in law. John's younger sister Connie is born here but John spends only three weeks here and a DOCA before he finds a way out. He's among the first students released from camp to attend Scottsbluff Scottsbluff junior college in Nebraska along with Roy Kusaka and Frank Ashita. If you numbered Chapter 1 of known boy the two families that each rose mother takes him to visit on the very first bedeck back from prison or kind of given the names to moussaka and Ashita in the novel that once their year of school is up and with JCL urging the draft for the say the three friends figure the only way they get to stay together is to enlist for the military intelligence service they are assigned to Camp Savage Minnesota to study as Japanese interpreters. John builds and the Japanese he learned as a child and is ticketed for service in Guam with an Army Air Force's eighth radio squadron mobile nicknamed The Flying Eightball on Guam. He volunteers for an elite team that flies 24 dangerous missions over the Japanese coastline to intercept radio signals as he describes in the preface to another boy.

[00:17:07] His job is to is to crawl into the belly of a modified B 24 bomber put on a pair of earphones attached to a high frequency set and jot down air ground messages spoken by Japanese pilots or Radio Shacks on the ground. These 10 volunteers earned the nickname The Flying Nisei John sends this photos to his brother Roy and his back he writes myself in Guam with plane. I've made missions on the 24th the look clumsy and ugly but my respect for them will never die out. At least this one brought us all back safely every time from the plane I saw on Mt. Fuji in July 1945 and the clustering of bombs on Tokyo during night raids when war ends or caught us briefly in Tokyo as a translator for the occupation is discharged in 1946 and he and other Amyas soldiers are told to keep their mouths shut about their secret operations. So John rejoins his family in Chinatown now managing the Pacific Hotel at 6 than Weller. Later the sight of Ocean City Restaurant in Mongolian hotpot John returns to dub and with his G.I. Bill. He takes courses in creative writing. He writes a one act satire about his occupation service which was not classified and in a span of four months in 1847 he publishes five short stories in a new Seattle newspaper. Northwest times safer vernacular founded by journalist Bud Fouquet are our co-editor John I'm sorry requited.

[00:18:43] Greg Robinson was scrolling through microfilm at the Suzdal library when he stumbled upon all these pieces. One of them this one. What can I do. Features a character who prefigures both Ichirō and congee and Novoye. These appear to be versions of stories Finnish versions of stories that he perhaps started in class. We've collected all of them our book. These stories were exercises in style and form and they that Okada had not yet found a story that mattered to him. That changes when a guy he knew from Broadby High School is released from federal prison. Haji Geom acute Su had resisted the draft Minidoka. He was convicted of draft evasion served two years at the federal penitentiary at McNeil Island. John and Jim go out to eat on Ménard Alley and clubs like the Wame club. And the question is asked about no boy. What business does a Nisei soldier like John Hakata have writing about and they say drafters Sr. One reason is the gag order that are not disclosing military secrets but I think the other is that John Takada wrote about what he saw when he came back to Seattle after the war and through a Kutsu he saw his high school and college buddies who served in the military fighting with his buddies who refuse the draft on principle. And he looked at it and you looked inside his heart and he came down on the side of the resisters so over drinks at the wall may Club John discovers that he and Jim also share the same painful experience of separation from their fathers.

[00:20:23] That group of men put on the train in these little Montana. Jim's father was in that group along with Mr. bestrode Okada of both arrested on the same day in February. Both men had been fingered for subscribing to a Japanese language magazine on an FBI list. But Jim's father was not so lucky. Mr. Coutu was head of a Justice Department camp at Fort Missoula for nearly two years possibly due to a informant's report when he was finally released back to civilian life. Both artists just can't admit it. OK I should say both father and son had changed so much that neither recognized the other over drinks at the Ouandié club. JOHN O'cado takes notes as Hodgen image accrued sewage spills a story and when it came time 10 years later to write his new se novel John draws his protagonist as a draft resister in the first draft of the character is even named Hajime because in their shared experience of family separation John Okada could see himself. I urge you to read the preface to Novoye again and Okada inserts his own persona as an Army enlisted man sitting in the belly of a 24 and thinking about his friend who didn't volunteer for the Army because and I quote his father had been picked up in the second screening after Pearl Harbor.

[00:21:43] The enlisted man then goes on to think in this novel about how his friend refused the draft because a judge would not release his father from a Justice Department internment camp to rejoin his mother and sister in a civilian uare camp. This friend pleads with the judge in the novel that his mother was quote an old woman. But Mrs. the father enough to want to sleep with him. As the preface transitions to chapter one with a point of view the novel shifts from the enlisted man in the 24 to that of his friend in prison. And in that cinematic dissolve. The author who was a soldier imagines himself I believe in the shoes of his friend a Coutu who was a resister and known boy can be read as the author acting out the script from there. John O'Connor makes this leap of nation. While living in this house in Detroit where he takes where he had taken a new job with the Detroit Public Library an inscription on his story he drew upon a precise memory of the geography of Seattle. And this is stuff that only a Seattle audience can appreciate truly. Chapter 1 The draft history. Each year Yamada is

released from McNeil Island and steps off the bus its second in Maine and Pioneer Square walks south past the clock tower at Kings Street Station east Jackson pass the pool halls. Then he walks more and finds the amount of groceries. Now like many readers I really wanted to locate the imaginary store where much of the novel takes place and theres a clue on page 123. The character of Kenji parked his car outside the grocery and gazes at a nearby hotel quote emblazoned with a flood flood that sign for 444 rooms.

[00:23:30] I was watching Shannon jees film about Frank Nishimura for the Seattle channel and I fell out of my chair when I saw this. Still you can see 40 or 44 modern rooms low rates. That wasn't Nishimura as Puget Sound hotel at 6 in Dearborn the second largest hotel in Seattle at the time and certainly the one that only only one I know can Chinatown with that many rooms. It's a place where John akata went to play poker with Frank Nishimura and friends after the finished work while managing their home families hotels so in chapter 1 when each your first enters the grocery store and hears the doorbell tinkle quote just as I knew it would. Just as he had done a thousand times when they had lived farther down the block sure enough Yakima hotel was just one block south of the Puget Sound hotel. So this is the Puget Sound hotel from the Dearborn Avenue side. Stay with me here. On the far left corner of this photo you'll see a grocery store and a Japanese owned storefront grocery on the corner of six in Dearborn. Which means that in all likelihood in John's imagination he saw the amount of groceries in a spot that places today on the southeast corner of watching my village parking lot. One last piece each year calculates that his mother walks 14 blocks to the Wonder Bread factory at 19th and Jackson to buy day old bread to resell. Now the old bakery was indeed 14 blocks uphill from six in Dearborn bakery was demolished a decade ago. But thankfully preservationists save the giant neon sign that could be seen from Chinatown now sits atop in the same space atop the Pratt apartments.

[00:25:09] There's much more in our book. I haven't touched on John's later careers as a aerospace technical writer and county executive at an advertising agency. It turns out that John Okada was a chain smoking 1960s Nisei madman who may have written ad copy for Tide detergent and clean toothpaste I mentioned. John worked here at Seattle Central Library. He died young at age 47. A year later his youngest brother Frank Okada painted a tribute to him which hangs upstairs in the 10th floor reading room titled Shiva to Frank donated it to the Seattle library as a gift to the artist. In honor of his brother John Ocado that's suffused Deshon and family meant a lot to John and one can't tell a story without including that of his family. And I could not have pieced together this biography without the patience and generosity of John's family. So we're honored to have with us today in conclusion. It's one introduce if you wave in the front row just walking in. John katas brother was Roy Okada and his wife Mary and Roy also assured the rest of the Flies later that the ones you missed.

[00:26:27] Also Mary's sister is here and I believe John's sisters Arlene and Connie maybe somewhere here. I'm not sure but also his cousin Emeco may be here. And John's niece Pam and nieces Pam and Cathy are somewhere maybe parking their car. OK. Thank you all for joining us.

[00:26:48] Remembering John Okawa Thank you Frank.

[00:26:54] I mean just as someone who has you know read Frank's article I mean the the detail you could see in terms of the history the connections to Seattle.

[00:27:03] That's all in the book and much much more. It's a really great read. So the next speaker and I mentioned him earlier in terms of you know one of the people who sort of republish.

[00:27:14] No no boy so that you know a high school Francken high school could could read it later. So our next speaker is Sean Wong.

[00:27:21] Sean is author of the novels home base and American niece and co-editor of the ground breaking i.e. an anthology of Asian American Writers and the big i.e. he is a professor of English at the University of Washington.

[00:27:36] A former chair of the Department of English and a former director of the University Honors in creative writing programs for the book. This volume Shawn contributed the chapter re publishing and teaching. Aboy. So please welcome Shawn Wong.

[00:27:55] Thank you Tom. Thank you Frank for a great introduction and great research into John O'Connell's life. My story involves the discovery and rediscovery of John O'Connor's novel known oh boy and eventual republication of that novel. Here is the original copy of no no. Boy that was published in 1957 by Charles Tuttle company. And let me start a little bit further back almost exactly 50 years ago when I was a junior at UC Berkeley.

[00:28:41] I decided to be a writer. I wanted to be a novelist and almost exactly the same time that I made that decision. I realized quite soberingly that I was the only Asian American writer I knew in the entire world.

[00:29:02] And I wasn't very good I didn't even know any other young Asian American students who wanted to be writers. I think at the time there were eleven hundred English majors at UC Berkeley and I was the only Asian Major. And so I knew there must have been a literary history that preceded me. And in order to understand my place as a potential writer of Asian American history and culture I needed to study the literary history of Asian America. But it wasn't taught at my school. There was no Asian American Studies at that point. I took a whole year of American literature and my professor never once mentioned the name of Asian American writer and we certainly didn't read any books by Asian American authors. So I decided to major in Asian American literature although there were no classes and no teachers and no credit and no grades. And so where do you look. How do you find it. UC Berkeley had a huge library. So I went to the card catalog. I know some of you remember card catalogs. And there was no such subject as Asian American literature there was Asian literature in the card catalog but no such thing as Asian American literature. So everybody was basically telling me it did not exist.

[00:30:46] And I went to one of my professors and I said I want to read American literature written by Asian Americans and he thought for a long time and he said oh wait there's an anthology that I



remember like oh great. And he said it's the anthology of the tongue dynasty poets. I was taking a class on Spencer at the time and I said the Tang dynasty is older than Spencer. No I don't want to study the Tang Dynasty.

[00:31:26] Besides I had already read their poems you know and they wrote about writing poetry under the willow tree by the river and drinking wine and getting drunk and falling in the river and being the sixties. I had already done that.

[00:31:45] So I set out on a quest I set out on a quest and I knew it had to be outside of academia.

[00:31:52] And I started looking and I knew they were out there.

[00:31:56] I just knew they were out there and I ran into the first Asian American writer and ran into was also unpublished a guy named Jeff Chan and Jeff Chen said to me oh there's a guy that lives actually two blocks away from you in Berkeley and he's published a short story a short story.

[00:32:18] And his name is Frank Chin.

[00:32:19] Here's his phone number.

[00:32:21] And so I called him up and I met Frank chid who was 28 at the time 29. I was 19 and Jeff and Frank and I set out on a quest to find Asian American literature and to make a long story short.

[00:32:42] We found this book in a used bookstore. No no boy I think it was for sale for 50 cents and up to that point we had read a lot of really bad racist books about Asians in America things like Chinatown inside out stories about fake stories about Chinatown things like that. And then we found this book and as you can see there's a guy on the cover behind barbed wire going like this. And the title was no no. And we're going no no that can't be good. You know it's probably a book because we are experts at literature. We just judged it by its cover. And so we didn't read it actually for a while because we were so discouraged by the books that we did fine. In fact I have the books on my bookshelf in my office here at the UW. And if you ever want to read a whole shelf of racist books I have them. They didn't cost very much twenty five cents 50 cents.

[00:33:52] But anyway we eventually read it and we realized it was Japanese America's first novel we couldn't believe it and we wrote to the publisher Charles Tuttle in Japan.

[00:34:07] And he sent us his entire correspondence file with John O'Connor. And as a much longer story but we got in contact with Dorothy Okada his his wife and she informed us that we had just missed John. He had just died a few months prior. And we said Well Frank and I said we'd like to come down and see you and interview you know that was our serve our version of literary research.

[00:34:42] So we jumped on an airplane and we went down and visited Dorothy Ocado and began to learn the story of John Akana and his the there is much more in the anthology that Frank coedited.

[00:35:00] But I want to skip ahead to Frank and Jeff and I eventually met last in the not a Japanese American poet and the four of us continued our search for Asian American literature. And one of the things that we realized is that there were works out there. We eventually found 14 books and we decided that in order to make sense of our own literary careers we had to educate an audience to the literary history and the generation of writers who came before us. And so it was necessary for these books to be published or read published and come back into the mainstream of American literature. And so we set out on a quest to find publishers to republished a lot of classic Asian American works of fiction and poetry etc.. We eventually published a coedited the very first trade anthology of Asian American literature at Howard University Press. Actually no accident that African-American presses were the first presses too to acknowledge and republish and to publish Asian American writers. But nobody would publish. No no boy at first. And so we felt so strongly about this book. We decided well let's publish it ourselves and the copy that Tom has as example of the first printing. The very first printing of no no boy. Was published by Charles Tuttle in an edition of 1500 copies. And when I discovered it 15 years later in the early 70s it had not sold out. Fifteen hundred copies and 15 years had not sold out.

[00:36:57] Nobody wanted to read this book. In fact it was actively rejected by the Japanese American community because that particular experience was too raw. And so Frank and Jeff and last night being business entrepreneurs we decided to go into publishing business and we contacted a printer and the printer said it would cost five thousand dollars to publish the book. And so we raised twenty five hundred dollars because we half down half on delivery. And so we went to press not knowing where the other half would come from. We were just going to gamble and so we persuaded the Pacific Citizen the Japanese American Citizens League newspaper to run a free ad for us and they did and we offered two dollars off if you send in an order preorder copy of no no boy and there the response was amazing. We started to receive checks in the mail. And they started to flood in and they came from almost entirely Japanese American people you would see the order form copied and Xeroxed and passed down the street and Gardena California you know from one neighbor to the other because I was getting all the checks in the mail and I. And by the time the book came off the printers we had enough for the second payment few and we also realized that the entire first printing of 3000 copies were sold entirely by mail was sold out before we came off the press. And I personally mailed them all

[00:38:54] During Christmas. It's still traumatic

[00:39:02] Anyway to make a long story short we went into a second printing and we started to we still didn't sell to bookstores because we had to give them a discount.

[00:39:13] And so I moved to Seattle and I through all of the boxes of no no boy in the trunk of my mustang and I moved to Seattle in 1976 and then I got a brilliant idea and I came to town. I found this Japanese grocery store Gemayel and I thought wouldn't it be great. No no boy was sold by the checkout counter just like you see Pulp Fiction being sold at the Safeway. And so I took ten copies and I went down to buy Gemayel and I asked for the owner and told me no more Gucci came out and

I said I've got these books for sale because now as a traveling salesman and he looked at it and he goes oh no no boy.

[00:40:00] He goes You know I go over to my neighbor's house and she has an original copy. But every time I reach for it she slaps my hand the way. She says you can read it here in the house but you cannot take it out of the house.

[00:40:14] And he goes I'll buy these ten copies myself. He bought all ten gave me the money right on the spot

[00:40:23] And he said you bring more down I'm going to take these and give them away. And so no no boys. Time had come and it was great to see Japanese American community embrace it and eventually we gave the rights to known ole boy to the University of Washington Press.

[00:40:46] I believe now that they have surpassed 200000 copies from 1800.

[00:40:58] And so the only downside is John never got to see his novel embraced.

[00:41:07] Luckily his family got to see his novel finally embraced by his own community.

[00:41:14] You thank you so much.

[00:41:21] That's a really great story. I really love the story about Tomie especially that he and the third speaker is Steven Sumida. Steve is Professor Emeritus of American ethnic studies University Washington where he studied and taught courses in Asian American literature. Hawaii's literatures Asian American theater and comparative American ethnic literature. His professional career of teaching universities in the United States and occasionally in Japan spanned 48 years including his presidencies of the Association for Asian American Studies and of the American Studies Association chairmanship of his UW Department a year long Fulbright grant and his current roles as a stage actor.

[00:42:05] Sumida first read no boy in 1975 at the beginning of his work in Asian Pacific American air disciplinary literary studies for this volume Stephen contribute a chapter questioning Nonno boy text context and subtext.

[00:42:20] Please welcome Steve Sumida thank you Tom.

[00:42:27] You're the real guy here. You didn't need the visual aid projected on a screen. Shawn and I were each given ten minutes. We knew couldn't stick to that but I did want to stick to a text so that's going to present it. And also I mentioned last week in our gathering that we had at the UW press that this new book of ours is filled with controversy that is to say we contributors agree with each other. Do you not know this unless you read our pieces because you know nobody is out there saying Hey Steve disagrees with Sean Sean disagrees with Greg Robinson. Something like that.

[00:43:11] You know what we do disagree. We got to fasten your seatbelts I'm going to walk through this cut predecessors Lono boy is not unprecedented and al Qaeda did not write it all along.

[00:43:28] First the main cultural environment in boys so pervasive that we take it for granted. It is American popular culture at the time the novel is set for the fall of 1946 to the following spring as well as the years of Ichinose growing up in America from 1921 to the present. In the scene in Nonno boy when Kenji first introduces Cheatle to Emmy it sits comfortably at the piano in Emmy's living. He plays sentimental journey and Ocado names this illusion with no explanation necessary in the context the song as usual is about taking a sentimental journey on a train headed back for Okara implies a question Can Ichirō and all other Nikkie ever return sentimental journey was a big hit in the American concentration camps an especially poignant setting for deeper still sentimental journey a normal boy draw thematic from another related tradition and culture.

[00:44:33] Concerned with social justice and expressed in Swing low sweet chariot coming for to carry me home.

[00:44:49] References to his predecessors in pop culture are peculiarly easy like this and serious at the same time. A second category Carter's cultural precedences American literature. His brother Robert tells Hall John's room was piled with books Ocado was a reader. The Mattingley Okara echoes Hemingway in the Manly ways. His male characters act and speak or seem expected to in resistance to the epithet Bway in counterpoint to Hemingway utils monologues sound like Faulkner. No he said to himself as he watched her part the curtains start into the store. There was a time when I was your son.

[00:45:30] There was a time I no longer remember when you used to smile a mother's smile and told me stories about gallant and fierce warriors who protected their boards of blades of shining steel and a balti old woman who found a peach in a stream and took it home and when her husband split it in half a husky little boy tumbled out filled their hearts with boundless joy. I was that boy in a beach and you were the old woman and we were Japanese.

[00:45:56] Japanese feelings and Japanese pride and Japanese thoughts because it was all right then to be Japanese and fuel and thinking all the things that Japanese do even if we'd lived in America this monologue recalls how Faulkner's novels ponder a civil war American self and its myths of a self. Before the war cut us no more parallels Faulkner's Light in August with each Cheadle like the character Faulkner names.

[00:46:24] Jewel Christmas running from yet wanting to be punished for a crime he didn't choose to commit the crime of being born the wrong race deeper still is tweens. Huck Finn who like UTL thinks himself wrong for doing the right thing.

[00:46:44] One of the moments in Moyal caught it evokes the unspeakable violence of racism and racist self-hatred occurs in what is now the parking lot behind type restaurant one of each utils

attackers pins into the ground snaps open a switchblade knife and slides under it until belt in Faulkner's novel Joe Christmas dies from bleeding by castration like this at the hands of a lynch mob.

[00:47:14] Third or katas drawing from predecessors in American literature includes his probable reading of the writers in the Filipino American classic where Seattle is a setting Carlos Glosson explicitly cites two Asian writers who inspired the protagonist of his America's in the heart. They are young and young Hill Kang without seeing or Kado may be influenced by Nick Cave writers such as Monica asone also Seattle Scheele Maureen Shelley Manushi moral author and any number of others. Greg Robbins identifies in his chapter of the new book from Shoni authors upon their shoulders about Ysaye and Nisei in Hawaii and published in 1951. The earliest historical novel about Nikkie in English by Nikkie author Ocado may have found to his liking that a Japanese American novel of immigration need not be propaganda about an American dream. From Monica Sunis Mnisi daughter 1953 he may have gotten excited about how even a bright few notches of Japanese American experience as seen from a cold war perspective could be about Seattle and also be so well received that it became a book of the month selection from a mortal short stories in journals nationwide. After the war or Kadomi have found support for using a strategy of an unreliable narration to tell the story of a depressed traumatized Mnisi young man whose life was shared by most Nikkie in history with Toshio Moreen or Cottam have savored a myth of Japanese America. Before the war a time when life was Hohl when characters in a community were variously idiosyncratic and good bad ugly beautiful even indifferent. And yet cohered into a budding and blooming Japanese American community society and culture. This is a time both remembers and forgets in his monologue a time when it was alright to be Japanese. This is a time of touchy Ammori a time before the war but for Ocado in 1957 a time and we cannot return to fourth

[00:49:45] Quarter lose to Japanese sources. There is Momotaro the boy in the Peach will fill their hearts with boundless joy. Explicit words in Japanese appear when Mr. Kerik and later Mr Morrison ask each UTL cutting Musca you can closely reread the novel and see if there are any other Japanese words in it.

[00:50:09] Maybe the same cut US strength from having character speak in Japanese except for those two white men and why only the calls to question the near absence of Japanese words and explicit cultural references. Five years later Monica's 5 years earlier Monica sonnet titled her autobiography A daughter standing tall in her Japanese American gender and family identity is the title of no boy or a sign for being in a dialogue with Sony. Japanese cultural sources fly deep and silent underneath the beginning of his text. On that first page following katas preface we read that two weeks after his 25th birthday she got off a bus at second and main passage as he walked toward the railroad depot where the tower where the clots on all four sides was. It was a dirty looking tower of ancient brick. It was a dirty city dirtier certainly than it had the right to be after only four years. Is a solid the full tilt would Ashima Pato is about a 14 year old boy who helps to support his grandmother and mother in a fishing village Metallo is so earnest the boy that if he were here today he would be on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout. Warding off her good deed. A sea turtle takes him down to the undersea world where the princess of the ocean entertains him. After three days she asked the

princess if they return to the surface world to resume care for his elders. The princess has to farewell gifts for him. She takes Ashima into an atrium lined with forward doors entering each doorway.

[00:52:07] In turn they in for instance experience spring and summer autumn and find the winter in parting the princess gives jewel box and telling him that it contains memories of his visit. She cautions sin's never to open the box or his memories will be lost. The turtle returns to the surface world huge trees grow where there were none before. Only the contours of the distant mountain seem familiar. He cannot find his house. He is a stranger an alien some kids tease him. They summoned an ancient elder who Smet says comes and lips closes his eyes and intoned.

[00:52:55] She or she long long time ago with a boy named Rochambeau who abandoned his grandmother and mother. We teach our children not to follow his bad example. That was 300 years ago he disappeared.

[00:53:15] In despair she slumps under a towering tree that was a mere weed 300 years ago. He holds his only possession the jewel box.

[00:53:26] She opens it up flood his memories. The ghosts of its undersea visit yesterday 300 years ago would assume instantly ages and becomes a pile of dust under the tree. If not actually my grandmother's than say collectively told the next two generations. This delightful story.

[00:53:51] Why did they pass this one on among dozens or scores they might have known from Japan. The most thorough story tells us that contrary to a stereotype the Japanese came to America to make money and return home rich easily understood that you cannot return. If you think you can return you'll find that Hong has changed and you have changed. This parable was further rewritten by history about that time. You say we're succeeding in feeling newly at home in America. They and their children were taken to the undersea world that was a desert. The concentration camps when again they tried to return home. They found that Seattle other cities were once they lived and America had changed. People themselves were changed by the passage of time by history in history that they too had participated in making so I say that the first page of a novel is itself a profound sign an allusion to Montoro. The difference is at the end of the Japanese till she dies or from the very beginning of Caro's novel it Udal most of what a brooding Reidel caught on must he thought so deeply about his sources that he found Weasel's telling the story of each and all without ever lecturing as I have done about these sources and by wisely departing from them to make with his predecessors and their readers literary cultural community populated by many so thank you Steve.

[00:55:43] We're going to have Steve Shaw and Frank now you come up to the front and we're going to have a conversation as part of the conversation. Think of any questions that you may have for either the panel or any one of them.

[00:56:00] I mean it started off as as you know Steve comes up here to be as Steve mentioned and I now also I read the essays and you know there are different perspectives and I want to ask the panelists has there kind of.

[00:56:13] You're getting ready to think about where they think the disagreements are when you think about either the novel or al Qaeda.

[00:56:22] You know when people start writing in and talking about him where are those areas where people disagree in terms of maybe the significance the importance of the messaging of that story.

[00:56:33] But as you're thinking about that I I want to also you look at the the front of the book I got in I just found out recently the origins of this of this of this cover and I'm not sure if Frank or Shawn should tell the story but how how did how did this cover come about.

[00:56:55] Instead it's 75. I was hanging out with Shawn and Frank in theatre workshop after the production called honey bucket and the the the photograph of myself with the theatre lights shining down caught my cheekbones like that. The artist Bob Wonderbra took a photograph of me and used that as the graphic design for the cover of the novel. It's me asking. It's me. We wanted somebody that looked tormented

[00:57:22] That was me. Now I was tormented anguished hungry OK.

[00:57:29] So back to the question that I prompted the panel.

[00:57:34] I mean whether it's anything that either one of you wrote or maybe someone else I mean what are the key areas that we think are we disagree on.

[00:57:46] I've I've had a lot of experience now with one very particular and very very deep difference among readers and I can go all the way back to when I first read a boy in 1975 to talk about an incredible misunderstanding between me and a professor at dub of the novel and that is there are those who read not only normal boy but a lot of ethnic American literature especially when it's written in a first person.

[00:58:23] And in this case normal boy strikes people as if it were written in a first person that this is it util's voice and not many I Chinese voice. But this impression is that it is the author the author's experience and someone at the University of Washington said to me the book is so raw in its bitterness as if you know 10 years had not passed since the war and the release from the camps because John Yukata was an old boy.

[00:58:54] And I said. He was a veteran.

[00:58:58] He was a war veteran and this professor said Well I mean that's the first lesson the faculty would teach in the Department of English. You do not assume that the speaker though the voice the character the main character preterit you'd never assume that it is the author never and he was a professor very very highly reputable professor told me that he read it as autobiography.

[00:59:29] So people who read it like that read documentary The read reportage that is as if it was journalism. They read as if it was a statement of fact and then things got very murky and difficult because people start off that way. There's something else going on here. So then there's another way of reading. No no we're basically now that this is a work of fiction where the details are selected by the author and they are presented in a certain way for us to understand the experience that we cannot get from real life reportage or documentary but we can get at. By way of creating a plot creating characters putting them in interaction with each other using language that will reach people and teach people at the same time.

[01:00:24] And this I thought would be taken care of by my 35 years of teaching. No no boy No I said why.

[01:00:31] By then everybody in the world will know how to read. Boy you know. But no it's still going on and.

[01:00:37] And I'm not any more upset about this because that's what gets the life out of the novel going. It keeps people going with it. You know it doesn't go away because there's stuff that still needs to be questioned and try and figure it out and there's stuff that cannot be figured out. But that's OK that's the life of this novel.

[01:01:01] I think there is a tendency to dismiss writings by writers of color particularly in the early 70s as just being social history. Their only value was as social history not as art. And when my co-editor and I were finished the manuscript to our anthology of Asian American writers. We were trying to get it published and I remember an editor at Doubleday who was actually Summerset mom's editor. He said to us after reading our anthology he thought the least ethnic pieces were the past. And I remember sitting there looking at them going what does that mean the least I think pieces were the past. And then he says that he encouraged us to read edit the anthology because the most interesting thing about it was not the fiction and the other artistic works but he said it should be just presented as an anthology of social history. And we said no no no no. This is an anthology of the literary history of Asian America.

[01:02:17] And so it was difficult to fight that battle you know at the beginning.

[01:02:25] And as I mentioned it was only until African-American presses you know who were the first to recognize oh this is a legitimate literature and it has its place in American literature. It's interesting when our anthology came out. More people learned about known ole boy but our anthology was reviewed everywhere it was reviewed in The New York Times and a New York or even a Rolling Stone. And we got two negative reviews and they were both from Asian American journalists. One was in the Honolulu Advertiser and one was an Asian American magazine called Bridge. And both reviews took exception for our premise that there was such a thing as Chinese American English and Japanese American English that the authors were using and putting on the pages of these works. And both of them both of these Asian American critics said there was no such thing. As an Asian American English. So it was curious that the only two bedroom views we got from Asian Americans



so that goes back to this idea you know that there were not everybody was on the same the same plane.

[01:03:49] Great. So this question is for Frank. Frank you as you did the research for your article you interviewed and talked with your very Strafford sisters about both the novel and John Okada. What were their feelings about John and the novel.

[01:04:09] Nonno boy this is really covered in more than I can go as a chapter on the false constructions of loyalty.

[01:04:15] And it is simply this that the draft the draft resisters hate war the novel your father in law Frank Masaaki didn't like the portrayal of the razors the Novoye because it's not the principled heart problem Fairplay committee who took a stand refused the draft and because they were happy to serve if their families were released from Camp and there were Restoril other constitutional rights.

[01:04:42] It was a test case. A last ditch attempt to contest the incarceration itself. Two years after the fact. John Okada didn't get all that because he was serving in Guam. He was in Nebraska and then us and then Guam. So he spent six months in Camp Ashraf Mendonca. He got all that all of his information about the draft sisters from Chima HootSuite. And they were drunk you know at the wall make love or drinking.

[01:05:11] And so a you know John conflates the draft resisters with the Nonno boys who were not in prison for two years I mean you referring to Lyle Leavenworth the draft the Woonona boys are historically those to the lake and other camps who answered no to two questions on the government's loyalty oath and it will be 1943 and were segregated from the tent camps into the lake. And the two Lake Segregation Center on the California Oregon border. And so there are two distinct groups of. And so John conflates that of course he calls the type of novel Novoye further heightening this confusion historically.

[01:05:57] So and also you know the character of Ichiro is a tormented figure who is questioning searching trying to find meaning in a post war Seattle 1946 47 where again you know it would take at any point in the novel in 1957 10 years later your Japanese mother who was still 20 years away from the redress day of remembrance here in Seattle 20 years away from understanding finally what had happened to us in camp and reclaiming the experience and and you know reframing the draft resistance not as so-called just loyals or troublemakers or draft or draft delinquents but as the early 20th mid 20th century example of American civil disobedience in the finest you know classic American tradition. So I think if there is the question actually. But but but the resisters it's all portrayal was himself.

[01:07:05] Projecting himself into the character of Jim Macoute into the character of a draft sister with no knowledge of the real draft resisters at heart mountain for example book chronicle in like 2000 filled put another way some minutes ago I mentioned Twain and Huck Finn and how it Cheatile like Huck all is suffering and are under some notion that he is wrong when actually he is right. Let me

expand on that a little bit. OK. In Huckleberry Finn and I assume that Okara in all of his pile of books read Huckleberry Finn I don't mean to be sassy in putting it this way but he must have read Huckleberry Finn. There are a couple of lines that really are very striking in the study of American literature.

[01:08:03] One is that when when when Hawke tries to decide whether to turn in the runaway slave who is his companion Jim should I turn him in. Or should I protect him. And we continue our journey down the river on a raft. Returning in or should I protect him.

[01:08:29] And Aw he says that to to protect him means that he's doing a bad thing the wrong thing all right soul to protection means that I'm going to hell in the eyes of society. And then he says. Well then I'll go to hell.

[01:08:54] He decides to be a bad boy. You see the same applies to it should all like you know at some point you decided you couldn't have been a resister without knowing that he was being resisted big time by the powers that be right. So he decided that he was going to be a bad boy. Then there is another character to reinforce this idea in the novel and that's Emmy's brother in law Mike. He says well if to treat me a world war one Army veteran as a Jap well then I'll be a Jack you know like their noses and are. And it seems to me to be such an American declaration to say something like that except that it has yet to catch on. That may be. Maybe he has done the right thing which I think people would like your father in law are assuming that he himself did the right thing by resisting. You see so you don't need to. Something's happened to him to brainwash him into his depression and thinking that he was wrong for doing the right thing.

[01:10:13] Right.

[01:10:17] You know Roger Daniels and I'll kick this around trying to establish you in broad terms. It was a bureaucratic mix up your credit efficiency between the War Department looking for a way to get the say soldiers to clear them for combat and only say combat troops. So it was. There was an element of volunteering for the army. On one hand and the war relocation authority needed administrative means to clear the Japanese. The young Nisei men who they wanted to who wanted to go to college like John to leave camp and go to college or jobs maybe some in the Midwest in the east. So they put these two questionnaires together in early 43 into the application for leave clearance questionnaire and it asks a lot of written questions and their two key questions in the middle you know are you willing to serve in the armed forces of states that serve in combat to have ordered. That's the Army's part. And then the Warriors part 28 you know are you willing to forswear any allegiance to the emperor of Japan which was a trick question because of course the they had never sworn allegiance to the Emperor Japan.

[01:11:24] And so there was a total of a bureaucratic mix up meant to be efficient to create efficiencies which led to the worst nightmare for the administrators of the camps. And they spent years to clean up this mess and never really did. And of course the traumatic effects of the families

argument over these questions of the young men who answered no were segregated to the lake and were further embittered by this experience. Those traumas last with us today.

[01:11:55] Yes.

[01:11:55] In short time and time you could answer this probably best of all you get that impression. Question time is simply connect.

[01:12:04] He runs 1942 to what's happening today with the current administration and the targeting of religious minorities and ethnic minorities.

[01:12:14] Well you know for what I see and Frank mentioned this earlier in terms of your tagline that we use at Denko is never again.

[01:12:22] Now that you know when this happened to Japanese Americans 75 years ago it was clear when especially taking sort of a historian look and looking at you know the real causes of what happened in terms of the racial prejudice the hysteria or fear and the failure of political leadership that led to the removal incarceration of Japanese Americans that led to things like the loyalty questionnaire that divided the community. You know things like these draftees sisters to the federal penitentiaries. So in terms of today what I would do whether it's in the Middle East or or in our country today whether it's about the immigrants or how we're doing like you know American Muslims or things like that the why I oftentimes go back to these underlying causes. Are we seeing one fear. And with that fear are tools and strategies to actually amplify the divisiveness and fear that we're seeing in our country today. Is there a is there prejudice is there. We have racism. And do we have a failure of political leadership to really identify these things. Help us navigate this because I think you know it's easy to look at individual things happening here or there and start having opinions about it but I always specially when I go to classrooms I really can ask them these questions and for them to think about how we think about this because I think when we started doing that we start recognizing what we have to do in terms of forward. So I I hope that what you're asking but in terms of yeah. So I do believe there are similarities and what's happening today in our country is very similar in terms of the rhetoric. You know the amplification of fear divisiveness that we're we're seeing the failure political leadership all of those factors are happening today.

[01:14:25] You know Steve the race hatred to put us in camp was something the Jonno caught in the preface called the indignation the hatred the patriotism of the American people and you flash forward to the present and you seen the same things happening today. There you see the normal normalizing of racial prejudice religious prejudice and nativism at the highest levels of our government. We have a government that is aggressively moving to criminalize minorities based on religion race or immigration or immigration status. And I believe those now in the White House are continually testing us every day pushing the boundaries to see how much we American public will accept. The analogies are not precise but the mass evictions carried out in the name of national security by the Western Defense Command here in Seattle 1942 are disturbingly echoed by the deportations carried out today by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. The question was what was David Hershey's role and

rediscovering known boy a pivotal pivotal in the reporting of not boy because he or his office his bookstore was a central headquarters for getting the checks probably getting mail although that was their number and sexually yeah OK. But David Ishy had a shrine to John Okara in his bookstore. So the photographs were used on the cover of the book is actually a scan of the photograph that hung in David's store right when you enter it and it is bookstore it to run to First Avenue South Parnas square and are now closed and you walk in and there be this framed photograph of John Okada. He bequeath that to me.

[01:16:09] When he passed in 2011 and we scanned for for the cover David Deasy's bookstore was a place where Asian American Writers sort of gravitated toward you know not only because our pictures were on the wall but it's true.

[01:16:27] But you know I would often send him things that to sell you know things that I edited I had free copies and things like that I would send it to them and then I would go to a store and I wouldn't see those copies out on the shelves.

[01:16:44] And he goes oh I have them in the drawer and I go What are they doing in the drawer.

[01:16:49] And he would say well people have to ask for them. You know you have to know that he has something for sale and then he has to decide whether you're worthy of even buying.

[01:17:02] So there was sort of you know an exam before when you had to know what he had for sale hidden in his drawer. And then two you had to prove that you were going to use that book or that magazine for for good purposes and then what he would slap your hand like he was in the bookstore was an Asian American literary Central where Steve and Shawn and I would hang out there and Franco Kaddu would come by Franco would John's brother would be there all the time smoking cigars and talking about jazz.

[01:17:41] And he even sold me a few paintings just standing there and David's store.

[01:17:48] Yeah sounds great. Now the question so I have another question for the panel. I was thinking back. So in 1973 when I first SOS your high school student and you know just learning about how maybe how politics or the system works you're reading things like you know boy the Autobiography of Malcolm X if you were to point students today to a book written by an Asian American you know that that story captures your kind of a feeling of how we should stand up for our rights whether it's literature or nonfiction. What what would you recommend. I think if you know we have this opportunity have the three of you here who are really well versed in Asian nature would still be no no boy or were to be something else.

[01:18:44] Or I guess to put in a plug in this is just kind of off the top of my head. And you have to draw from books that I've used in my classes. There is one book that I think really calls for more of a readership I don't know how much it is sold but I think it's very widely known. It's normal job killers comfort women from the late 1990s mid 1990s. It's a story told by two different narrators mother and

daughter about the life of the woman who was a comfort woman in Korea under the rule of the Japanese military. And in fact it's not her telling the daughter the story was trying to keep from telling the daughter such a traumatic story. And it's about this relationship that they have. But it's is an awful lot that is still in the air when you consider how in that part of the world the issues and the hurt and everything that it has to do with comfort women is still around. There's still justice this being sought. So that that's something of course not to a huge increase in Korean American population in the schools in the universities in the Ivy League. This book ought to be known or I should add when it came out the New York Times book reviewer which Tony said that this book is comparable with Toni Morrison's *Beloved*.

[01:20:29] And I said that Mara this is your first call.

[01:20:33] You get comfortable. Toni Morrison a Nobel Prize for it.

[01:20:38] I want to put in a mention for you yet Tom when we're spoken here before and yet Tom Edwins works especially the sympathizer which won the Pulitzer Prize because he gets work examines for Vietnamese American perspective the idea of the refugee and what it means to be a refugee in America.

[01:20:56] And the connection here is that yet always cites John Akata and the other serious and far other Asian American literary predecessors upon whom's whose shoulders he feels he stands and I really appreciate that and he gets in gets conversations Soviet tongue when the sympathizer I should mention to just last that no no.

[01:21:25] Boy and the subject unknown no boy is still very controversial among Japanese Americans.

[01:21:33] I was married Japanese American family my late wife of former father in law was a veteran. He was spent the entire world war II in the army. And he you know I marry into the family and I'm the one who republic know no boy. And and we would have spirited discussions about

[01:21:57] Draft Resisters you know and he's still you know in his 80s and 90s. Did not forgive those who who didn't serve you know. And there is there's no sort of amnesty you know and the very you know very bitter and and sometimes I would purposely sort of just get them riled up by. You know by talking about

[01:22:25] The resisters you know and it was time to forgive and stuff like that. And luckily he would just blame it on the fact that I was the only Chinese person to marry into the family.

[01:22:41] But.

[01:22:44] And then I would eventually relent and say No I used to be Chinese. Now Japanese

[01:22:51] But it I make light of it because we had great conversations.

[01:22:57] But my father in law attack you know he was you know he went to the war he fought in the war.

[01:23:05] He took an inflatable raft into Berlin across the Rhine River you know and and he and his into his dying days could not forgive those who didn't serve and those kinds of orders still exist. And no no. Boy you know try to tell that story and through one of the people that we didn't mention as a character in that story is Kenji the war veteran in the book I won't some of you may not read the book so I won't tell what happened to Kenji but it Cheerio the draft resister and Kenji the war veteran strike up a friendship. And there isn't a lot of hope in this book. It's very depressing.

[01:23:54] It takes place in the winter in Seattle. I students hate to read it in the winter and see all because it's so depressing.

[01:24:03] But there is that one friendship that's sort of a ray of hope there I encourage you those who have read notably book buy a copy from Karen and read the book.

[01:24:15] So at this point this concludes this program and let's give a hand to the panel.

[01:24:24] Thank you all for coming. Thank you so much Tom. Thank you. Esteemed panelists

[01:24:32] This podcast was presented by The Seattle Public Library and Foundation and made possible by your contributions to The Seattle Public Library Foundation. Thanks for listening.