

3 Minutes in Manzanar
Conversational Prototype Script

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3 MINUTES IN MANZANAR SCRIPT PROTOTYPE

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MONTAGE OF 1942 JAPANESE INTERNMENT

Archival footage of camps, set to voice-over.

VOICE OVER

February 19th 1942, Franklin D. Roosevelt signed and issued executive order 9066 (nine-oh-six-six) which led to the incarceration of at least 125,284 people of Japanese decent, with 2/3rds of them American citizens.

These people were stripped of their livelihood and their homes, without due process, in violation of their fifth amendment rights.

In 1943, the incarcerated were further asked to answer a loyalty questionnaire, with questions 27 and 28 being most controversial.

Question 27 asked, whether they would be willing to serve in combat for the United States - the country that had irreparably damaged their lives.

Question 28 asked, whether they would forswear allegiance to the Japanese emperor - an emperor that ruled over a land that many of the 120,000 incarcerated have never seen.

Those who answered No and No to questions 27 and 28 were called "No-No"s. They were considered enemies of the state, they were taken to maximum security prisons, guns pointed at them all times, with orders to shoot if any made movements that suggested wanting to escape.

Footage of camp building. Which then slowly turns into color, and camera dollys into the building.

Today you will have a conversation with a digital AI playing the part of Ichiro. He is a fictional, representation of a Japanese American who had filled out the loyalty questionnaire but left the questions 27 and 28 blank. You will be playing the part of a war relocation authority agent. Your job is to ask him, what his answer is, to questions 27 and 28.

ICHIRO

What do you want? I've got a baseball game to catch.

WRA Agent is presented with a few suggestion chips, and also a freeform text field. Suggestion chips say:

"A. Hi Ichiro, I have a few questions about the loyalty questionnaire you filled out the other day."

"B. Let's cut to the chase. Why did you leave questions 27 and 28 blank?"

"C. [Ask question 27] Would you be willing to serve in combat?"

EXAMPLE CONVERSATION

WRA AGENT

(selects A)

Hi Ichiro, I have a few questions about the loyalty questionnaire you filled out the other day.

ICHIRO (CONT'D)

Yeah? What about it?

WRA AGENT

So, you left questions 27 and 28 blank.

ICHIRO

That's not a question.

WRA AGENT

We need an answer.

ICHIRO

Remind me. What were the questions?

WRA AGENT

Ok. Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?

ICHIRO

Willing? Or forced?

WRA AGENT

Uh... Willing.

ICHIRO

Just like we were willing to sell off our bakery that my father built from the ground up for pennies? Just like Just like we were willing to give up our home?

WRA AGENT

Willing. Yes.

ICHIRO

No. The answer is no. I won't die for a country that would take our things away on a whim.

WRA AGENT

Ok. Question 28.

ICHIRO

Yeah. Give me the question.

WRA AGENT

Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the United States from any and all attack by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance to the Japanese Emperor or any other foreign government, power, or organization?

ICHIRO

Forswear any for of what?

WRA AGENT

Allegiance to the Japanese Emperor.

ICHIRO

Let me ask you something. Where are you from?

WRA AGENT

Texas.

ICHIRO

Born and raised?

WRA AGENT

Yes.

ICHIRO

How about your father.

WRA AGENT

Same.

ICHIRO

And his father?

WRA AGENT

He came from London.

ICHIRO

So let me ask you this. Do you forswear any allegiance to the Queen of England?

WRA AGENT

Uh... yes?

ICHIRO

Oh really? So you used to be loyal to her?

WRA AGENT

No, I mean, I've never ever been in Britain.

ICHIRO

Same here. Never been in Japan. I can barely speak Japanese.

WRA AGENT

So... your answer is "yes"?

ICHIRO

No, no. It's not yes. If I say yes, that means I would forswear an allegiance. Which means, I would have had to have sworn an allegiance beforehand right?

WRA AGENT

I suppose.

ICHIRO

Yeah, again, never been to Japan. I don't even know that guy's name alright? Also, I'm answering this questionnaire for my father and mother. They are issei. Do you know what that is?

WRA AGENT

No.

ICHIRO

It means that they are first generation. They are Japanese. They've been paying their taxes, baking bread, and contributing to the local community of Gardena California for decades. But you know, they can't become American citizens. You know that right?

WRA AGENT

Yes, I'm aware.

ICHIRO

So, if I say yes here... Think about it. What does that mean? It means that my parents become stateless. Nobody's. No place to call home. So yeah, the answer is no.

WRA AGENT

So to confirm, your answers to questions 27 and 28 are No and No?

ICHIRO

Yeah.

The WRA Agent pauses. The WRA Agent is given one choice to say something on the screen. The WRA agent pauses longer.

ICHIRO (CONT'D)

So what happens to me and my family? I want to hear you say it. I know it's on your clipboard or whatever. Come on. Say it.

WRA Agent is only given one choice at this point:

WRA AGENT

As a result of your answers in the questionnaire, I here by determine that you are disloyal, and order you and your family to be relocated to Tule Lake.

ICHIRO

There you go. Good job. You're just doing your job, right?

It's a shame. You know? I throw a mean curve ball, I was gonna try out for the baseball team next week - guess they won't be seeing me play anytime soon.

Screen fades to black. Montage of Tule Lake Camp.

VOICE OVER

Tule Lake was a maximum security camp with explicit orders to the guards to shoot if they found any of the incarcerated showing any signs of what the guards thought was an intent to escape. Many of those were Japanese Americans who merely answered No and No to questions 27 and 28.

Picture of Shoichi James Okamoto

Shoichi James Okamoto was one such internee. On May 24th, 1944

While driving a construction truck back and forth between the camp and the worksite outside the camp, a center-gate sentry demanded that he step out of his truck and show his pass.

"Okamoto stepped out of the cab but refused to show his pass, whereupon the sentry struck him on the shoulder with the butt end of his rifle. The two exchanged words, and the sentry then shot Okamoto.

(MORE)

VOICE OVER (CONT'D)

At the court-martial trial, the sentry was acquitted of the homicide but was fined one dollar for the cost of a bullet fired in an "unauthorized use of government property." the next day, he died. He was 30 years old."

BLACK OUT