

Transcript of an excerpt from the book: I Am an American By: Jerry Stanley

“Are you Chinese?” the man said to me.

I looked past him at the three empty chairs, the other two barbers watching us closely. “I’m an American,” I said.

“Are you Chinese?”

“I think what you want to know is where my father was born. My father was born in Japan. I’m an American.” Deep in my gut I knew what was coming.

“Don’t give me that American stuff,” he said swiftly. “You’re a Jap and we don’t cut Jap hair.”

I wanted to hit him. I could see myself—it was as though I was standing in front of a mirror. There I stood, in full uniform, the new captain’s bars bright on my shoulder, four rows or ribbons on my chest, the combat infantry badge, the distinguished unit citations—and a hook where my hand was suppose to be. And he didn’t cut Jap hair. To think that I had gone through a war to save his skin---and he didn’t cut Jap hair.

*-Daniel Inouye*