

"Man-on-the-Street", Burlington, North Carolina, December 8, 1941

AFS 6365A

[conversation is somewhat unintelligible; also difficult to discern some voices from one another; there seem to be about four men talking]

Unidentified Man: But to think that up until the present time that we've had so much opposition, you see, there are two thought one way then there'd be one thought different. But to think that a thing like this could happen, everybody could come together so quick —

Unidentified Man: To think that a thing like that could happen and catch them when they're off their guard, that's what I think about it. They ought to have known what Japan did to Russia in 1904. They'd all had attacked them and did all the damage they could before they ever declared war they might have known they'd do the same thing again. You don't have to — if a dog bites you once you don't trust him the next time surely.

Unidentified Man: Well, there's just one thing that I wished had happened and I think under the circumstances since this is a record-breaking affair, that they should take old Kurusu and his partner over here holding up the works like they have. Fact is, they was stalling the congress and the president. Just going along pleading for time and meantime bound to have known just what was going on. I think they should have taken them jokers out there this morning, or yesterday, immediately after he handed over this note to Hull, and tied them behind an automobile, and started up and down Pennsylvania Avenue at about, let's say, five, six, seven miles an hour.

Unidentified Man: That'd been all right if our ambassador had gotten home, all our people had gone out of Japan at the time, but you kind of hate to — they put a worse penalty on Americans who were there, that's the only question.

Unidentified Man: Yeah, but there never has, the American people would have never done a thing like this.

Unidentified Man: I know, but they had had the same chances that our ambassador ??? had and he's still there and he hadn't gotten out either, you see.

Unidentified Man: You think the fella's dirtier than that fella that would stay over here do a thing like that. There ain't no telling what he'd do over there.

Unidentified Man: No, no.

Unidentified Man: Just give him a half-way chance, that's what you got to put up with.

Unidentified Man: Well, it's an all-time record. The thing that's going to do me most good is when I know that, that the British, and Russian, and American long-range bombers — Russia's got enough of them over there to Siberia and around to ???.

Unidentified Man: Yeah, but if Russia comes in there though, and I suppose they will —

Unidentified Man: They're bound to now, you see.

Unidentified Man: ???

Unidentified Man: You see, they're bound to now, because look what Hitler's doing. He's pulling his forces back. He says that he's up against it until spring, you see?

Unidentified Man: Well, he might be.

Unidentified Man: And they're backing all the time. The radio says so today, they're backing. And Russia is pushing them right on.

Unidentified Man: That's another strategic move that he's got in mind, he's either going to try to land and invade Britain or England, or else he's going down into Africa ??? and leave enough men there to defend what they've already taken as much as they can and then go down into Africa.

Unidentified Man: Well, they can't defend it ??? take much out, but we're going to have to fight Hitler you see right on.

Unidentified Man: Well they might have stronger defenses back a ways, if they move back farther, you know, maybe keep retreating back slowly and give Hitler a chance to pull his troops out and go into Africa or else invade Britain or England.

Unidentified Man: No, I just don't think they can, I don't think they can whoop the whole John Brown bunch, that's what I say about it.

Unidentified Man: Well, I don't think that Japan will last a long time. I don't think it had any chance to win against the United States.

Unidentified Man: They haven't got a chance and I don't think that with all the dirty little tricks that the Japanese, the present government, that that's the reason that they changed [cabinets (?)] ??? so

much the ones that they had wouldn't stand [pushing (?)], and that's the reason they laid down the [island (?)]. Well this fella they got over there now, they aren't anything more but a mouthpiece for Hitler. That's where all that trouble comes from.

Unidentified Man: Yeah, [you don't want to (?)] fight Japan like you'd fight anybody else, you know. If I'm going to fight a gentleman I'll give a gentleman a break, but when I know I've got to fight a bastard like . . . Japan, the Japs, I started laying for him just as soon as I know I got to fight him. I start watching every minute and that's what they ought to have done in this case.

Unidentified Man: Yeah I think they kind of let it slip up one them just a little bit.

Unidentified Man: Well which one of those Congressmen asked the question yesterday, he says, "Where was our patrol forces over in Honolulu and these places?" It seems to me that they must have been caught off guard there. They let them get too far in. Of course they were making that night trip, you see, coming in by —

Unidentified Man: Well, I don't know what's going on down there of course there might be planes flying around down there more or less all the time. They probably, until the bombing started, probably didn't know what was happening until they were on top of them and then they probably dropped a few in the vital spots and kind of gummed up the works before they could defend it probably.

Unidentified Man: They certainly just didn't know what steps to take right for a few hours there.

Unidentified Man: Just wasn't all set right there ????. They should've been though, they should've been for the last several weeks. They knew that they should have known that Japan was going to swallow that pill [if they had to (?)] because they had give up everything to hope to gain.