

## "Dear Mr. President", New York, New York, January or February 1942

**AFS 6410A**

### **Cut A1**

Unidentified Man: I don't have much, I wouldn't want to lose it though.

Interviewer: Well then, suppose we just leave your name off. Think it will be all right . . .

Unidentified Man: Well naturally, I'm interested in democracy as a black American should be, but I tend to feel that my primary problem is in America. You see I was educated, at least to some extent here, and I was taught that you solve first things first. Now, I'm interested in democracy in America. And I think that we're going about the thing all wrong. I believe that if we're going to establish world democracy why first we should establish it here and then let the zeal of our comrades carry it beyond our borders.

Another little interesting item that I have in mind is I read in the *New York Times* on Tuesday an account of the radio address by Prime Minister Curtin of Australia. At the end of his speech why he went on to say that Australia is a white Australia and with God's help, will always be a white Australia. I'm not particularly interested in that.

### **Cut A2**

Unidentified Man: Naturally, as a black American I'm very interested in democracy. However, I think that we are not going about the problem correctly. As a result of my education I feel that we should solve first things first. Now, in America we haven't got any democracy yet. I cite as examples of that the lynching down in Sykestown, Missouri, the other day. The disturbance in Alexandria, Louisiana, a couple of weeks ago. And other forms of more petty discrimination like inability to get jobs in defense industries based on color and things of that sort. Now I feel that before you can export a commodity you should at least see that it's used within borders of your own country. In America, you find that we all prattle and talk democracy, but we are trying to export something that we don't really believe in. This is awfully bad, I'm getting all balled up.

### **Cut A3**

Unidentified Man: As a black American I'm quite naturally interested in democracy. However, I do feel that what we should do is get a little democracy in America first. In the United States, we haven't achieved any democracy. Now, the result of my education, my learning in America has been that you

solve first problems first. Now we don't seem to be doing this. We are busy trying to bring the four freedoms to the rest of the world, but yet here in America they don't exist. I cite as examples of this the lynching in Sykestown, Missouri, the other day. The brutal shooting of several Negro soldiers in Alexandria, Louisiana, a couple weeks ago. And the ever-present and still continuing discrimination against Negro craftsmen in defense industries.

Now to my mind this is not democracy. The emotional drive will never reach a climax as long these things continue. A good idea for the sort of the thing that you have to contend with if you're a black soldier in the forces of democracy would be gotten from reading the speech delivered by the Prime Minister of Australia. It was reported in *New York Times* Tuesday. Thomas Curtin, Prime Minister of Australia, in ending his speech said that, "There is a white Australia now and with God's help there will always be a white Australia." Now you can't expect a black man to be enthusiastic over that.