"Taka"

By

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SCENE 1- IN BLACK

Images of the attack on Pearl Harbor fade in while a radio is playing in the background.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V/O)

Breaking News, Today, Sunday December 7, 1941, one of the worst attacks America has ever seen, happened. Many Japanese Bombers attacked one of America’s largest Air Force bases, Pearl Harbor. Four Navy battleships were sunk, and four more were damaged. Three destroyers were demolished, and 2 cruisers were severely damaged. We know that 100 aircrafts were destroyed, and we are awaiting reports for the total damage. 1,000 people were killed and another 1,000 were wounded. Facility, fuel buildings, and submarine headquarters were also decimated. The Japanese damages were minimal with not many casualties. Tune in tomorrow at five o’clock eastern time for an update on this breaking story. This will conclude our broadcast for tonight.

Fade out of pictures to Taka’s parents listening to radio.

SCENE 2- INT. TAKA’S LIVING ROOM

FADE IN:

A Japanese wife, Akira, and husband, Takasu, sitting on a couch looking shocked. They have been listening to the broadcast.

INT. TAKA’S BEDROOM

We see a boy, TAKA, sitting up in bed looking at a photo album. There are pictures of him holding hands with his parents: first in front of a traditional Japanese house, then another photo holding hands in front of a typical New York City tenement building. It is apparent from the photos the family members love each other very much.

INT. TAKA’S LIVING ROOM

We see the couple on the couch again. TAKASU reaches out and turns off the radio. They sit in silence for a moment.

TAKA’S MOTHER AKIRA
(worried)
Should we tell him?

TAKASU is bottling up his emotions. He does not look at his wife because he wants to provide support for her, but if he saw her upset he would be too.

TAKASU
(blankly)
No, it can wait until morning.

TAKA’S MOTHER AKIRA
(worried)
How will this will affect his life?
He’s just a child!

TAKASU
(calmly)
He is not anymore. I don’t know how this will affect him, but for now we will have to hope for the best.

TAKA’S MOTHER AKIRA
Okay... I’m going to bed.

TAKASU
Okay... I’ll be there in a second.

Taka’s MOTHER leaves, leaving TAKASU to sit and ponder what will happen to his son the next day.

SCENE 3- INT. KITCHEN

The next day. Taka gets out of bed and walks into the kitchen and sits down at the table awaiting his breakfast.

The kitchen is small and clean. Akira is making pancakes for Taka on a hot plate on the table near the sink. TAKASU is sitting at the table drinking coffee and reading the newspaper in his work suit.

When Taka walks in, Akira and TAKASU exchange looks. Taka looks over at his father's newspaper, and TAKASU hastily folds up the paper and puts it on the table to cover the headline. Akira turns down the heat and looks over expectingly at TAKASU. TAKASU clears his throat. Taka looks at his father, but his father fails to speak. Akira leaves the hot plate and steps up to the table.

TAKA'S MOTHER AKIRA
Son, a very terrible thing happened last night.

TAKA
What do mean?

TAKASU
It is very hard to say this.

TAKA'S MOTHER AKIRA
Son, last night the Japanese bombed Pearl Habor.

TAKA
Pearl Harbor?

TAKASU
It's a US military base located in Hawaii. Many people died last night. Americans.

TAKA
So you're telling me that Japanese bombers flew to Hawaii and attacked an American base?

TAKASU
Yes. We knew this was coming--well not this, who could have known this-- but Japan getting deeper into this war. Son, this is why we had to leave Japan.

(CONTINUED)

TAKA
It wasn’t because of your new job here?

TAKA’S MOTHER
(Shaking head "no")
We told you that because we thought you wouldn’t understand. Taking you away from your home. But we couldn’t keep living there. We thought New York would be a safe location.

TAKASU
But now nowhere is safe. Especially for Japanese people. America is now involved in this war.

TAKA MOTHER
Listen we don’t know how this will affect us yet. (pause) Just be careful.

Taka is stunned by the new revelation. He stands up.

TAKA
Okay.

Taka’s Mom looks at her watch.

TAKA’S MOTHER
Quickly son you’re going to be late for school.

Taka rushes into his room.

FADE OUT

SCENE 4- EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF TAKA’S HOUSE

FADE IN

TAKA exits his door carrying his school books and a brown paper lunch bag. He turns right down the street. He keeps walking and notices that every one is moving to the side of street. Every one on the street is whispering to each other as he passes.

Taka is confused, he scratches his head while walking. He opens his mouth slightly, in awe.

MEDIUM ON HEAD: PEOPLE ON STREET WALKING BEHIND HIM.

FADE OUT

SCENE 5- INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY

FADE IN. THE BELL RINGS.

TEACHER (V/O)
Alright class, now remember read chapter 5 in history book.

All of the kids go out of the room into the hallway. Many kids are in the hallway. The three bullies walk up to Taka

REX
Hey you. I said YOU!

Taka looks at Rex.

REX (CON'T)
Why don't you blow up this school just like your friends did in Hawaii!

Jason comes from the back of the TAKA and pushes him up against the wall. Rex, Jimmy and Jason laugh. One of the kids kicks him. TAKA falls.

TAKA
(Shoked)
Please stop!

TAKA tries to get up but Jimmy pushes him down

JASON
Stay down you Traitor!

The bullies laugh.

REX
Haha, we'll see *you* later. Traitor.

Jimmy spits and Jason kicks Taka one last time as they leave.

Taka gets up and walks to the lunchroom and enters.

SCENE 6- INT. LUNCHROOM

TAKA enters lunch room. He scans the room for his friends. He sees them sitting at a table alone. TAKA walks over to sit with his friends.

TAKA
Hey guys!

Taka’s friends exchange looks, and move to another table.

TAKA
What’s wrong?

TAKA’s friends don’t look back, and pretend not to hear him. Taka sits down alone with a troubled expression. His friends sit in a table with Rex, Jimmy and Jason. Taka concentrates on his food, but barely picks at it.

All of a sudden, food hits TAKA’s face. TAKA looks up and sees Rex with the piece of food in his hand. Rex is smiling. Rex throws the food at TAKA again.

JIMMY
Everyone get Taka!

A whole bunch of food gets thrown at TAKA. BIFF, the lunch aid, sees the mayhem.

LUNCH AID BIFF
Stop.

The whole cafeteria stops.

LUNCH AID BIFF
Who started this?

Rex stands up.

LUNCH AID BIFF
You clean this up!

Rex walks towards TAKA, and flicks a piece of food off TAKA’s shoulder, like he is cleaning him up. Everyone thinks he is going to apologize. Suddenly, Rex looks TAKA in the eye, and punches TAKA in the face. The two boys start fighting, as chaotic yelling breaks out. A hand grabs TAKA by the collar and brings him out the lunchroom into the hallway.

SCENE 7- INT. HALLWAY

Lunch Aid BIFF pulls TAKA out into the hall fiercely. He releases TAKA hastily, and TAKA leans on the wall.

TAKA
(Breathing heavily)
Thanks, I don’t know what I would’ve done without you back there.

LUNCH AID BIFF
Don’t think this’ll be a normal routine. You don’t think I did this for you do ya?

TAKA looks at Lunch Aid Biff confused, as if to say "you didn’t?"

LUNCH AID BIFF (CONT)
I had to stop the fighting in there! If I could’ve I might even have helped’em put a dent or two in ya. You know how many relatives and friends I lost in Pearl Harbor?

TAKA
(Raging out, hysterically)
Neither me or anyone in my family had anything to do with the attack on Pearl Harbor, we’re not those types of people!

LUNCH AID BIFF
(Starting to get defensive and offended)
I don’t care what "type of people" you are.

Using his fingers to make quotations mockingly.

LUNCH AID BIFF (CONT)
Just because you’re not the actual people who did it doesn’t mean you’re any better than they are-- and I think I speak for everyone in the school when I say that.

The bell rings signaling the next period.

The LUNCH AID walks away. As the children file out of the lunchroom, Rex and his buddies shove TAKA as they pass him, some spitting on the ground by TAKA’s feet. They walk away laughing.

SCENE 8- EXT. STREET

The final school bell of the day rings.

TAKA leaves and we see him walking home. Same shots on the way to school.

TAKA walks with a normal pace, he is sighing and his face is down much of the time.

MOTHER ON STREET
(Whispered and aside to her children not directed at Taka)
Come along children. Don’t get too close.

She shoots Taka an evil glare and buses her children across the street.

NEIGHBORHOOD MAN
(Directed at his friend not Taka)
The kinds of things they allow on the street today, you ask me it should be in the camps.

He spits in Taka’s general direction, Taka acts as if it never happened.

NEIGHBORHOOD MAN 2
I hear ya Jim!

The gossiping whispers continue as Taka speeds up. Taka is now at a semi-jogging speed as he bumps into a taller figure.

TAKA
(Slightly scared)
Oh I’m so sorry sir, I didn’t mean to-

Taka looks up-- it is Rex.

REX
Well, well, what do we have here?

JASON
(Laughing hysterically making his low intelligence abundantly clear)
Haha.

JIMMY
Look, he’s scared!

Taka tries to walk out of the circle that Rex and his buddies have now put him in. Rex, Jason, and Jimmy keep him inside.

TAKA
Lemme go Rex.

REX
Heh, no.

Rex, Jason, and Jimmy start to close in on Taka

TAKA
No, no please. Please no! Please
I’m sorry, please NOOOOOOO!!!

They attack him, Taka hits the ground hard. Before he knows it he’s trying to get up from being punched relentlessly. After a while he hears sirens, Rex and his bullies run away as the police cars come but they do not stop for Taka, instead they go after Rex and the bullies. Taka passes out. When he wakes up the sky is a shade darker. Taka gets up and goes home.

SCENE 9- INT. TAKA’S APT HALLWAY

TAKA walks through his buildings front door with his shoulders down leaning on the wall every few steps because of his injuries. TAKA makes way to his apartment and sees that the door is already open.

TAKA
That’s strange.
(Squinting eyebrows and looking confused)
Mom.... dad? I’m home.

SCENE 9 (CONT’D) - INT. TAKA’S APT

Taka slings his backpack off of his arm, leans on the wall and shrinks down to a sitting position.

TAKA (CONT’D)
MOM! DAD! I’m home, are you there? HELLO!!!!!

Taka gets up faces the wall and pounds it with his fists while his head is on it and is crying.

TAKA (CONT’D)
AAAAAAAAAAAAGGGGGGGGGGGGHHHHHHH!!!

Lang comes down the hall and into the door of the apartment.

LANG
Hello? Who’s there?!

Taka stops banging on the wall and looks around confused as to whom was speaking. Taka cautiously starts to walk toward the person.

TAKA
I should say the same for you.

Taka walks close enough that the two can see each other.

TAKA (CONT’D)
Oh Lang, it’s you. What happened here?

Taka gestures to the mess in his apartment.

Lang steps forward and sees Taka’s face, bruises and recent cuts.

LANG
Look at you! What happened to *you*?

TAKA
Umm it’s a long story... the gist of it being that a bunch of idiots beat me up just because I’m Japanese. They think my family had something to do with Pearl Harbor being attacked! How ridiculous is that?

Taka shakes his head in disbelief.

LANG
Well they're not the only ones.

Taka looks back at Lang with his eyes widened and his eyebrows raised. Lang looks around acting as if he hadn't said what he did.

TAKA
(Inquisitively not with anger or disbelief)
What was that Lang?

Lang copies Taka's motion but not mockingly.

LANG
What? Oh no no I was just saying how sorry I was to hear that this happened to you.

Taka steps forward semi-intimidatingly and squints eyebrows starting to get a little angry and suspicious

TAKA
No, no, that's not what you were saying, what do you mean they weren't the only ones?

Lang pauses, uncomfortable, and looks as if he will not tell Taka. Finally he takes a deep breath and plunges in.

LANG
A few hours ago, I guess you were still in school at the time- a couple of F.B.I. agents came over to talk to your parents. They asked them questions about what they knew about the attacks on Pearl Harbor-- something about being members of Tachibana spy ring?-- Your parents told them they knew nothing. When the F.B.I agents told your parents that they were under arrest and going to a prison camp your father lashed out at them.

Lang pauses to see how TAKA is taking it so far.
Eventually they took him by force. You're lucky that your father distracted the F.B.I.-- had they found out about you, you would probably be with your parents right now. I'm so sorry, I would've tried to help but then they would've
(MORE)

LANG (cont'd)
arrested me too. They don't care if you're Japanese or Korean right now... I'm sorry Taka but I just couldn't get arrested, I have a family to look after. Oh I'm so sorry, so sorry.

Lang buries his face in his hands and starts to lightly sob.

Taka sinks to the ground confused and upset. They both stay like this for a while. Then Taka gets up.

TAKA
Hey.

Taka points his finger at Lang strongly, but Lang does not look up at first.

TAKA (CONT'D)
HEY!! YOU!!!

Lang looks up at Taka.

TAKA (CONT'D)
I have been called names, thrown food at, abandoned by my friends, viciously attacked, and as if that isn't enough my parents have been arrested and I have no one to look after me so don't you, you cry alright! The only one who should be crying here is, is me.

Taka falls to the floor and starts balling uncontrollably. Lang walks over to Taka, and puts a hand on his shoulder.

LANG
You're right, I'm being selfish. I know this is difficult. A child should never be put in this situation.

TAKA
I'm not a child!

LANG
(looks at TAKA sympathetically)
Of course. You're right-- this is hard for all of us. (pause) Why don't you come over to our apartment-- stay with us.

TAKA
What about my family?

LANG
We will be your family, Taka. You have to let go of your mother and father for now-- your father would want you to be safe right now. You'll be safe with us.

Taka doesn't move, but after a moment seems to soften to the idea.

LANG
Just come over to our place when you have packed up your things. The door is unlocked for you.

TAKA
(Gloomy)
Okay.

LANG walks out of the room. TAKA gets up and walks to his room.

SCENE 10- INT. TAKA’S ROOM

TAKA walks into his room and pulls out a big suitcase. He walks to his cabinet and pulls out some old clothes. As he walks toward his suitcase again he notices the picture album on his bed. He picks it up and sits on his bed. He opens the album and looks at the first picture: the picture of him and his parents in Japan. He sits there staring at the picture pondering it. Then he looks up.

FADE OUT

SCENE 11- INT. APT HALLWAY

FADE IN

Lang walks down the hallway carrying groceries bags. He opens his apt. door and walks in. He puts the grocery bags down and looks around.

LANG
Hey kids, I'm home.

LANG goes into house and kicks door back. We stay in the hallway and hear the following from the apartment.

LANG'S WIFE
(Off screen)
Honey, when is Taka coming over?

We see Lang re-enters the hallway. He briskly walks back down the hallway to Taka's apartment door. There is a note attached to door. Lang takes it off the door and reads it. We hear Taka's voice narrating the note:

TAKA (V/O)
Dear Lang, Thank you for your hospitality, but I have made my decision. I am going to the police in the hope that I can join my family. I know that it might be dangerous, but no matter how bad it is, we'll be together-- I hope. I hope we meet again. Good bye for now, Taka.

FADE OUT

CREDITS