

THE TICKLING DRAGON'S TAIL

Beyond the Betrayal at Bikini Atoll

BASED ON TRUE EVENTS

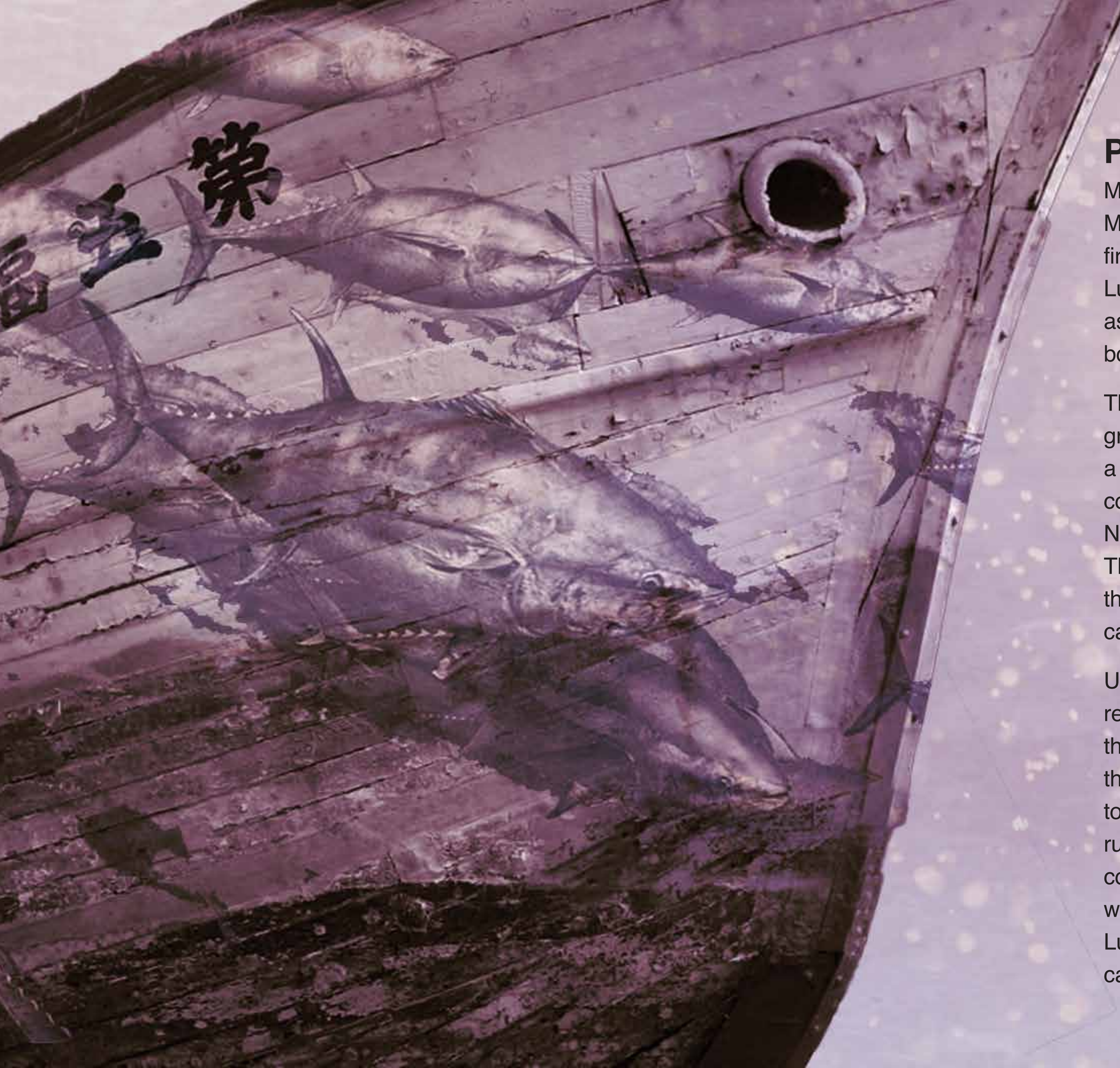


Pitch Deck



LOGLINE

Inspired by a teenager’s passion for justice an ex-fisherman exposed to radioactive "death ash", former crew member of the Daigo Fukuryu Maru, Matashichi Oishi, breaks his silence and together they embark on a dangerous mission to uncover the hidden truths and scope of the American H-bomb tests at the Bikini Atoll.



PRODUCER'S STATEMENT

My journey on this project commenced with the reading of Oishi Matashichi's harrowing memoir, "The Day the Sun Rose in the West." This firsthand account vividly details the horrors endured by the crew of the Lucky Dragon No. 5, who were unwittingly subjected to the perilous "death ash" and the catastrophic aftermath of the world's inaugural hydrogen bomb test.

The 15 months that these young men endured in a Tokyo hospital, grappling with the insidious ramifications of radiation sickness, constituted a harrowing and grueling ordeal. The daily anguish of their families, coupled with the haunting recollections of the horrors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, accentuates the enduring trauma wrought by the atomic age. The tragic dimension of their narrative is further underscored by the fact that these fishermen became the first Japanese citizens to confront the catastrophic effects of nuclear weaponry during peacetime.

Upon their eventual release, these survivors faced the challenging task of reintegrating themselves into communities that were largely unfamiliar with the realities of radiation sickness. Tragically, many of the fishermen found themselves ostracized by friends and family and were ultimately compelled to go into seclusion. Oishi, relocated to Tokyo, where he spent decades running a laundry business, leaving behind his passion for the ocean and commercial fishing. Nevertheless, whenever he could steal a moment, he would make his way to the sea to join his two steadfast comrades from the Lucky Dragon days, Honda and Yamaguchi, for the solace, joy and camaraderie of fishing.



PRODUCER'S STATEMENT (cont)

Oishi's heart-rending book, coupled with my fervent aspiration to play a part in forging a world devoid of nuclear weapons and my abiding love for fishing, acted as the driving force that propelled me to initiate the process of writing and producing this film.

Initially, my goal was to recount the narrative of the Lucky Dragon, but then fate led me to Haruko Nagatsu. Haruko, a screenwriter residing and creating in Japan, brought to the table a unique blend of skills, encompassing fiction screenwriting and the craft of nonfiction drama with a journalistic approach to writing and production. Her adeptness in tackling challenging subjects and her determination to “swim against the current” made her the ideal partner to help write this compelling story.

Haruko approached the research with the rigor of a journalist, immersing herself in the task. She delved into an extensive array of books and declassified U.S. confidential and diplomatic documents about the United States' nuclear bomb program in the Marshall Islands. Her quest for knowledge led her to maritime museums, the Lucky Dragon Exhibition Hall, where she engaged with museum curators and directors. She sailed around Japan, tirelessly seeking out individuals affected by the bombs, conducting interviews with fellow hibakusha fishermen and their families from Yaizu, Kochi, and Okinawa as well as those impacted on the Marshall Islands. The scope of her research extended to meetings with Oishi's daughter, a doctor and lawyer who supported the national compensation in Kochi, historians, and experts.



PRODUCER'S STATEMENT (cont.)

Her relentless pursuit of information was evident in her constant email updates as she uncovered the vast extent of injustices that had occurred. Haruko's revelations opened our eyes to the fact that the impact of the Castle Bravo blast extended far beyond the 23 crew members of the Lucky Dragon. We decided to introduce fictional, younger characters who would join forces with the historical figures, collectively shedding light on the unjust and harrowing treatment endured by these peacetime hibakushas.

This transformation allowed "Tickling the Dragon's Tail" to evolve into an urgent, entertaining, and compelling narrative, addressing the perils of nuclear testing and emphasizing the critical need for advocacy on behalf of victims affected by various forms of nuclear incidents.

With Oishi's parting words, "Be seriously scared," reverberating in my thoughts, my objective is for this film to serve as an inspiration to a new generation across the globe. I hope that it motivates them to take action and collectively strive toward a world devoid of nuclear weapons.

—Larry Jay Tish, Executive Producer



SYNOPSIS

In 2011, 16-year-old high school student and manga artist Nagi Sakamoto sneaked into the Radiation Effects Research Institute at Hiroshima University with Matashichi Oishi (76), Takashi Honda (78), and Yuichi Yamaguchi (75). These elderly men were former crew members of the fishing boat Lucky Dragon No. 5, which was exposed to radioactive “death ash” during the U.S. hydrogen bomb test at Bikini Atoll on March 1, 1954.

They had gathered to retrieve preserved medical samples of the late radio operator Aikichi Kuboyama, which could expose the hidden truth about nuclear tests. However, their plan failed, and Oishi and the others were detained by the police, while Nagi was briefly held at a child consultation center. When asked about her connection to Oishi, Nagi began telling the story, returning to her mother, Hana.

In 1985, 16-year-old Hana Sakamoto lived with her mother Yoko, who ran a diner for fishermen in Kochi. Hana’s father had disappeared at sea, and local fishermen became father figures to her. While researching the U.S. hydrogen bomb tests for a school project, she discovered that many local ships had also been affected. Determined to help the victims, she sought out Oishi, a former crew member of the Lucky Dragon No. 5, now running a dry-cleaning shop in Tokyo.

Oishi had never shared his story with his family. He had just learned that his friend Honda, who had cancer, was denied compensation by an American insurance company. Outraged, Hana contacted the company’s U.S. headquarters, which led to a visit by investigator Tom. “Honda was exposed to radiation aboard the Lucky Dragon No. 5, so he’s ineligible for compensation,” Tom said.



SYNOPSIS (cont.)

Honda had taken out cancer insurance in 1980 but didn't disclose his radiation exposure. However, the U.S. and Japanese governments had never officially recognized the crew as hibakusha (radiation victims), so he hadn't technically hidden anything. Frustrated, Oishi and his friends ask Tom to help them find the proof that the governments have hidden evidence that they are indeed hibakusha. Tom agreed.

Hana's youthful passion for creating a better world for her generation and future children broke Oishi's 30-year silence. The five united to pursue the truth and restore their crew's honor. Despite their untiring efforts and sense of mission, the government steadfastly refused to acknowledge their radiation exposure. Frustrated by the government's refusal to hear their story, Hana and Tom lost hope and gave up their fight for justice.

Then, 30 years later in 2005, Hana, who became a college professor, collapsed while teaching and passed away. Her daughter Nagi, 10 at the time, went to live with her father and grandmother, Yoko. Oishi continued fighting for compensation and support for former crew members, but the government still denied any connection to their radiation exposure. Mocked by others, Honda and Yamaguchi eventually gave up. Oishi became isolated as many crew members died around him, until finally he suffered a stroke, falling into despair and losing his will to live.

In 2011, Nagi found Hana's notebook, which revealed that ships in Kochi had been affected by the tests too, and began seeking answers about her missing grandfather as well. Her mother's resolve to protect future generations roused Nagi's determination. She heard of a fisherman who had continued to speak out in Oishi and went to Tokyo to talk to him.



SYNOPSIS (cont.)

Her arrival at the same time as the Fukushima nuclear disaster, 26 years after her mother Hana first approached him, shook Oishi to his core. The nuclear accident revived his hopeless heart, and he called upon Honda and Yamaguchi to try again! Together, they resumed the investigation, beginning with their plot to break into the Radiation Effects Research Institute as sushi delivery men.

Tom, after Hana had awakened him to the fight for justice, became a lawyer for nuclear victims and continued to fight alongside them for decades. Tom uncovered documents revealing that Yoko's husband had been exposed to radiation during the 1958 hydrogen bomb test. His remains, including his teeth, showed high radiation levels, proving the intergenerational effects of nuclear bombs. Faced with overwhelming evidence, the Japanese government finally had no choice but to recant and admit the connection between the crew's deaths and their radiation exposure.

Seventy years after the Bikini incident, in 2024, Nagi runs the diner with her grandmother Yoko while continuing her fight for justice and a world without nuclear weapons. She is creating a manga to tell Oishi's story, titled with his final warning to the world: **"Be Seriously Scared."**



OUR STORY UNFOLDS OVER THE COURSE OF DECADES

Nagi, Oishi, and the members of The Sunflower Six initiate an investigative journey that plunges into the heart of nuclear tragedies and the subsequent efforts to obscure the grievous toll on the fishermen and their families hailing from Yaizu City and Kochi. Their crusade encompasses the H-bomb tests of 1954, notably the Castle Bravo incident, and extends to the heart-wrenching Fukushima disaster. In the process, they unearth a somber legacy of pain and concealed truths that spans over the course of several decades.



OUR STORY BEGINS WHERE OPPENHEIMER ENDS

Joseph Teller left his dream to build a hydrogen bomb at the doorstep of Los Alamos. Nine years later his deadly vision became reality when the United States detonated the world's first H-bomb, Castle Bravo, at the Marshall Islands on the Bikini Atoll. This is where our story begins.

It is not necessary to bury the truth.
It is sufficient merely to delay it
until nobody cares.

— Napoleon Bonaparte

Hiroshima



Nagasaki



Bikini Atol

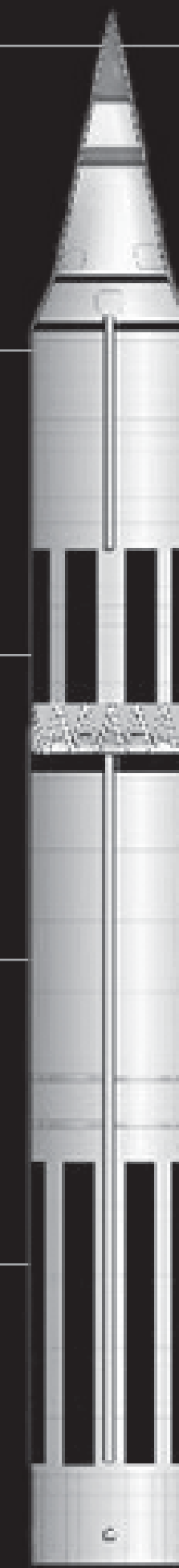


**MAKE MOVIES,
NOT MISSILES.**

Cost of Production

Tickling the Dragon's Tail
5 million

Nuclear Missile
100 million



We hope this film inspires reflection, dialogue and action
in creating a world without nuclear weapons and war.

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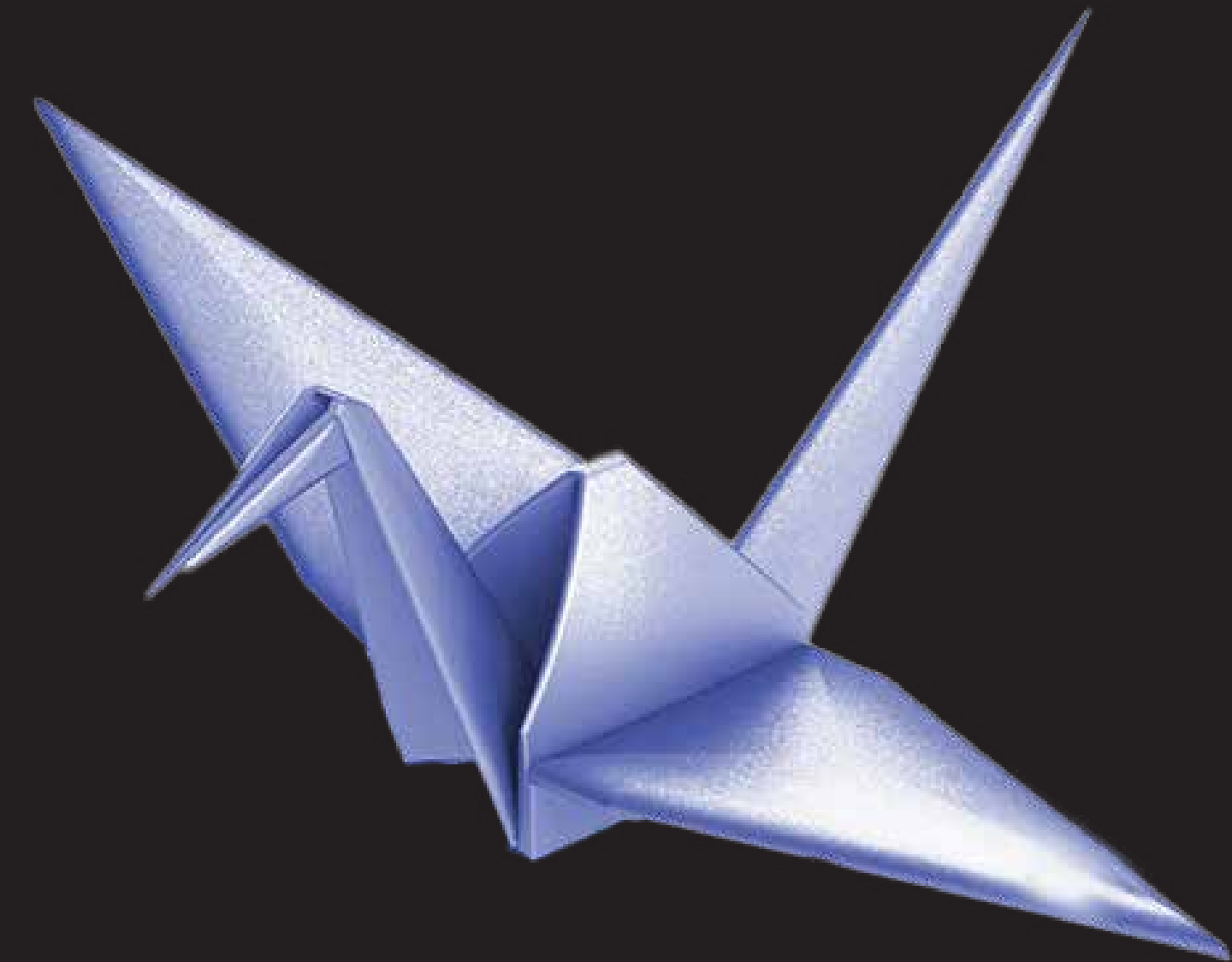
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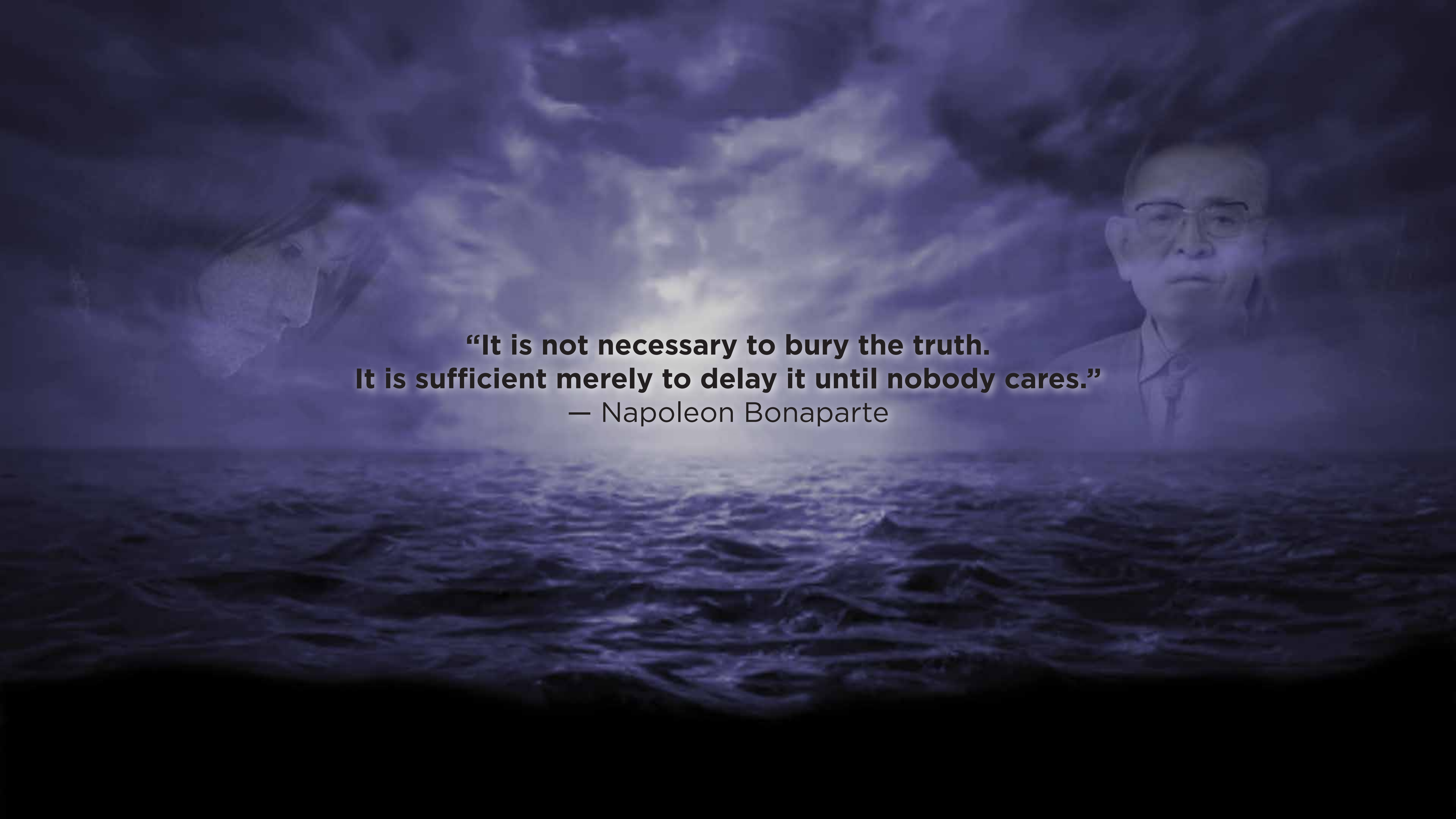
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It is sufficient merely to delay it until nobody cares.”**
— Napoleon Bonaparte