And at that moment, two completely different parts of my brain start talking to each other:

“It’s so late we might not even get to do a decent interview!”

“A short interview is better than nothing!”

“I don’t even have the questions ready!”

“Just go with the flow!”

“What If I forget something?!”

“Just go from one question to another! Ask as many details as you can, and you’ll be fine!”

“Stop!”, I finally tell myself, “Don’t you realize what is happening right now?! Joseph Ricker is giving you the opportunity to interview him right now, and you’re going to turn it down?! Who do you think you are?! You may never get this chance again! He is a respectable, busy man! There is no tomorrow or after tomorrow! It’s either now or never!”

as one of its goals a project that has been announced and attempted by many, but never achieved.

That goal is

. Firstly, his ship, the *Titan*, will not be a complete replica of the *Titanic*, but a completely new liner, inspired by the great passenger ships of the 1910’s, 20’s, and 30’s, including the *Titanic* herself. Secondly, Mr. Ricker has repeatedly stated that the *Titan* is only the means of achieving a much larger, very noble goal:

however, is not about me, and it did not begin that February evening. It

a film that would sail into the hearts of generations: James Cameron’s *Titanic*. The touching love story of main characters Jack and Rose had become the epitome of romance for millions of people, and the epic true tale of the vessel it was set on was becoming rapidly popularized around the world.

The people especially delighted by this were those in the ocean liner enthusiast community. The fact that something they loved was now getting so much attention worldwide had them overjoyed.

a part of that community

He replayed the entire scene in his head: “Why don’t they just build a new one?”/“Do you know how much that would cost?”

Sitting in the theater with his mind racing to weeks before, Joseph Ricker had suddenly

At that moment, in that theater, in January of 1998, the mighty ocean liner *Titan* was first conceived.

The idea that was born that day had given him another getaway to achieve what he hadn’t before,

“Me and my…friend, we were both Titanic enthusiasts. We actually wanted to find the Titanic ourselves.”

Had caused a storm in the media, after he came out.

, the idea began to, as Mr. Ricker says, “fizzle out.” The two friends got their own lives, married, and had families. After the birth of his son in 1999, Joseph Ricker simply could not afford to devote so much time to the *Titan* project, and when an unthinkable tragedy struck the US on September 11th, 2001, the striving entrepreneurs felt lost “with what’s going on with the country right now.”

Over the next six or seven years, the dream of the Titan had somehow faded away, and the ambitious SS Titan, Ltd had practically ceased to exist.

However, the mighty liner of future generations had not sang her final song yet. In fact, her story was just beginning.

The year 2007 was a period when

somewhat busy, yet not really knowing what to do

it simply could not continue this way.

that seemed so awkward he said he was glad to have been alone at that moment. Feeling the need to finally end his personal quest, he asked himself: “

about the status of their operation, and the

It has been about half an hour into the interview. It is fairly late for both of us, even though Mr. Ricker is one hour behind me. Despite this, his voice is still full of energy, and I am not surprised. After all, however different we might be, what is happening here is that two ocean liner enthusiasts are discussing their all-time favorite topic. Our discussion had been mostly cheerful up to now, with the exception of a few sad remarks about unfortunate children, and events like 9/11. So here is Joseph Ricker, a man with a dream, telling me about his plans. But what he tells me next, is absolutely shocking,

A very loud bell rings inside of me, telling me it’s an opportunity to learn more about the person I’m interviewing, by delving into this personal tragedy of his. However, I ignore it. Sure, I love being recognized, but I’m not going to turn someone’s calamity into drama for the public.

After taking all of this into consideration, Joseph Ricker took immediate action, and

Having learned from his past mistakes, Ricker did not rush to make any ambitious public announcements this time, and limited himself to creating the foundation’s official Facebook page the following year.

However, 2009 did bring something important to the project: On October 2nd of that year, the Foundation reached the stage of “Preliminary Proposals for Project Feasibility and Execution Study” with shipyard Harland and Wolf in Belfast, Ireland. What this means is that the shipyard, although not able to build the liner itself, would assist Mr. Ricker’s foundation by conducting several studies that would ensure the project is feasible, and able to move ahead.

[Negative reactions from] relatives of victims and survivors

As we were now talking about the differences between Project Titan and other “Resurrect the Titanic” endeavors, I suddenly realized an unpleasant truth: Joseph Ricker might not know that the rival Australian billionaire’s project is still moving ahead. He tells me that Molly Brown’s great-granddaughter had, in 2012, been hired by the Blue Star Line, the company behind the Australian project, but, as we talk about thar

I may know something Joseph Ricker doesn’t. When we were discussing Clive Palmer’s project, Mr. Ricker had, at one point, remarked that: “I guess that project isn’t moving ahead anymore.” But as much as I support and praise the SS Titan Foundation’s effort, according to the information I have acquired, Clive Palmer’s Titanic II project isn’t dead. Originally announced in 2012 with a 2016 maiden voyage date, the ship was postponed to 2018 after Mr. Palmer ran into financial difficulties. However, this plan failed as well. In September of 2018, when everyone was convinced the project was either abandoned or a publicity stunt, Palmer announced his plan for the third time, with a speculated unofficial launch date in 2022. After this, Blue Star Line fell silent once again.

But although there have been no official news for over two years, a blog known as “Malcolm Oliver’s Waterworld” has been regularly posting updates, assuring Palmer’s project is still in progress. In fact, I verified this myself when, in August 2020, I personally contacted Deltamarin, the Finnish naval architects behind Titanic II, who informed me the ship is still in her design stage.

Mr. Ricker is entering very intriguing territory here, as, every time a similar “Titanic revival” project is announced, many relatives of survivors come forward with complaints that entrepreneurs are attempting to make a profit on the tragedy.

Although I was very surprised to hear that Mr. Ricker was seemingly unfamiliar with the reanimation of Palmer’s shady project, I saw it best not to inform him then, and decided to focus our interview on his own project.

somewhat tired, but never exhausted. I cannot hear any fatigue in my interview companion’s voice either. His is still the same cheerful voice of a man with a dream, although I do realize it is getting late, and a busy man like Joseph Ricker must be beyond exhausted.

, despite the lack of funding, even despite the current state of the world,

So here I am, a student, still a boy at heart, with many, many dreams, listening to this man on the phone telling me to not let them go. And that is when I begin to wonder: Is this interview simply a school project? Is it even simply a publication? Or is it something much, much more? My heart begins to sing, as I realize this is

lost after colliding with an iceberg on April 14th, 1912, taking with her 1,503 lives. However, the ship will only serve as the means to a much larger, very noble goal: