

*A story that dates back to the Perry Expedition
Based on the Akutagawa Prize Winning Novel*

COCKTAIL PARTY



a film by Regge Life

Based on the Akutagawa Prize winning novel by Tatsuhiro Oshiro

Tadashi Mitsui, Tatsuo Ichikawa, Saori Goda, Sheldon Brown, Andrew Spatafora,
Jan Mizushima, Michael Niederer, Yoshiro Kono, Jason James, Rika Akanishi and Yasu Suzuki

Music by Marc Aramian

Directors of Photography Harlan Bosmajian and Jordan Hall

Edited by Michelle Tsaltas

Story for the Screen by Regge Life, Tatsuhiro Oshiro and Katsunori Yamazato.

Produced by Sayuri Nakata-Alsman, Written and Directed by Regge Life

www.cocktailpartythemovie.com

"In Cocktail Party, writer-director Regge Life takes on the controversial subject of the American military presence on Okinawa and renders it powerful and personal. The essence of effective historical drama is to translate large geopolitical abstractions into concrete human interactions – and that is exactly what The Cocktail Party does. US-Japan relations, racial tensions, military presence in civil society, violence and rape, guilt and innocence, justice and injustice, truth and deception ... all these forces come into play in this compelling new film."

—Peter Grilli, Japan Society of Boston





When the daughter of a Japanese businessman in Okinawa charges that a U.S. serviceman assaulted her, the serviceman claims the encounter was entirely consensual. The ensuing civil and military investigations bring to light persistent resentment going back many years on both sides about the human toll of accommodating long term military occupation.

WHAT NOTED JAPAN SCHOLARS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT COCKTAIL PARTY

Cocktail Party is not simply a rape story, one of the unfortunately many emerging from Okinawa: it is subtle and delves into the complexity behind injustices of advantage, insensitivity, violence and explores the nuances of culpability. The dramatic performances are excellent and there's not a wasted emotion or moment. Arrogance and indecision, truth and ambiguity all come into play around a moment of passion and dominance or something dreadfully lost in translation. Applause to Regge Life for another excellent film appearing to be "about" Japan but about so much more.

— *Merry White, Boston University and recipient of Order of the Rising Sun*

Cocktail Party illustrates the complexity of life in Okinawa, an island in which the significant presence of American troops since the end of World War II factors into much of daily life. Based on over 10 years of research, the film focuses in on the rape of a young woman by a US Marine to highlight the deeply emotional, conflicted, and complex state of life in contemporary Okinawa. Regge Life, the film's Director, has spent the last 25 years interacting with Japan and examining ways to improve US-Japan relations, enabling him to understand and capture elusive tensions and topics in this relationship. Educators, policymakers, and those interested in US-Japan relations should watch this film to deepen their understanding of the challenges facing Okinawa and the ways in which macro-level policies in the US and Japan impact lives on the ground.

— *David Janes, United States-Japan Foundation*

When I first began work in 1972 on translating Oshiro Tatsuhiro's novella "Cocktail Party," winner of Japan's most prestigious literary prize, I never imagined that the issues it addressed in the 1960's—frequent crimes committed by American soldiers in Okinawa, then under U.S. occupation, and the American military's interference in prosecuting them—would continue to plague local residents even after Okinawa's return to Japanese administration that year. As dramatically portrayed in Regge Life's film version of the novella, updated to the present-day context, four decades after "reversion," American occupation of Okinawa continues. Life's film provides valuable insight into the world-wide issues of rape and the subsequent pressures imposed on its victims.

— *Steve Rabson, Professor Emeritus of East Asian Studies, Brown University*

I enjoyed the film a lot. I thought it was interesting to have the woman be Japanese, but involving a history of rapes of Okinawan women by US military. Making the woman Japanese complicates the picture, I think. It is not only Okinawans vs US military, but adds another element that is midway.

I do want to emphasize that I enjoyed the film and reinforced what I was trying to do in my class, which was to talk thought the many complex issues facing Okinawa. Sexual assault is not unique to Okinawa, of course. But unequal power relations and layers of these are endemic to the Okinawan situation vis a vis both Japan and the US.

— *Christine Yano, Professor, University of Hawaii*

Regge Life's new feature film *COCKTAIL PARTY* tells a story that is about real life. Just following the story as it unfolds will keep you entertained, with its drama, its twists and turns. The drama is compelling because all the people involved want to do the right thing, but of course their goals are not the same. As the story evolves each turn brings the appreciation of a new perspective. One of the strengths of Regge Life's story-telling is that he wants to welcome his audience on a thoughtful and adult journey through a world we can understand even if we've never been to an American military base overseas. Life's film is not polemical, not biased for one side against the other, but like all of his work, it is thoughtful, and insightful, and satisfying.

— *Ronald Suleski, Director, Rosenberg Institute for East Asian Studies, Suffolk University, Boston*

Life has judiciously pared down Oshiro's tale to the essentials of the original, to an anatomy of the rape incident and, as is to be expected of an artist, he designed a surprise by placing the time not in the 1960s or earlier but in the present. Therefore the post-reversion, SOFA criminal indictment system had to come into play, and we are treated to a graphic explanation of what detention is like under the Japanese policing and detention systems. In his novella "Cocktail Party" Oshiro challenges self-perception, modifying the Okinawan victimhood discourse by suggesting that Okinawans in the Imperial Japanese Army may have been involved in atrocities in wartime China (and elsewhere) side-by-side with mainland soldiers. That insight does not emerge in the film scenario, but there is a hint, by way of metaphor, that the 1945 rape of Okinawa persists in the experience of Naomi Ohashi, albeit a Japanese mainlander. But is there more there than that metaphor; is there any message in the relationship between Okinawa and mainland Japan in that a mainlander and thus wartime and post-war Japan can also fall victim to rape? The questioning and interrogation of the supposed victim and the alleged suspect is well developed, cutting back and forth to highlight and explore the problems of the effects of the demon alcohol, risk taking, the urge to prolong 'a good time', the instinct to justify oneself, equivocation, fear of family and battalion reaction and the prevaricating refuge in 'I have no memory of that' gambit. This is a film that was 13 years in the making and one which has some very powerful moments. It was worth that wait.

— *Anthony Jenkins, Professor Emeritus of Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts, Fellow of the Royal Historical Society*