

Stone's Throw From the Ocean

*World-Renowned Oceanographer Dr. Gregory Stone
Now Calls Pacific Palisades Home*

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Contributing Writer

It might seem baffling to find Harrison Ford endorsing Dr. Gregory Stone's latest book, "Soul of the Sea: In the Age of the Algorithm"—the actor has been famously more associated with air and space *a la* "Star Wars."

However, Pacific Palisades resident Stone, one of the world's leading oceanographers, has been called an "oceanic Indiana Jones."

Stone has led expeditions for *National Geographic* to Antarctica, Thailand and the Pacific Islands, and has gone on 7,000 dives in every ocean.

So, it's only fitting that Ford, who also played the famed archeologist-adventurer in four films directed by Palisadian Steven Spielberg, is quoted in Stone's new book.

In reality, there's another reason: For nearly two decades, Ford has been a trustee of Conservation International, at which Stone currently serves as executive vice president and chief scientist for oceans.

"He's a friend of mine and he loves the ocean," Stone said, adding how Ford has been very active in trying to shape the organization's agenda.

Released this month, "Soul of the Sea" puts into context the nexus of science, economics and business strategy in order to outline mankind's relationship with the ocean as a key to its survival.

Given how ocean health has been in a serious state of decline for the past century, Stone's book makes the imperative case that understanding the ocean and its various ecologies, resources and mysteries will unlock the secret to the innovation and governance necessary for humankind's future.

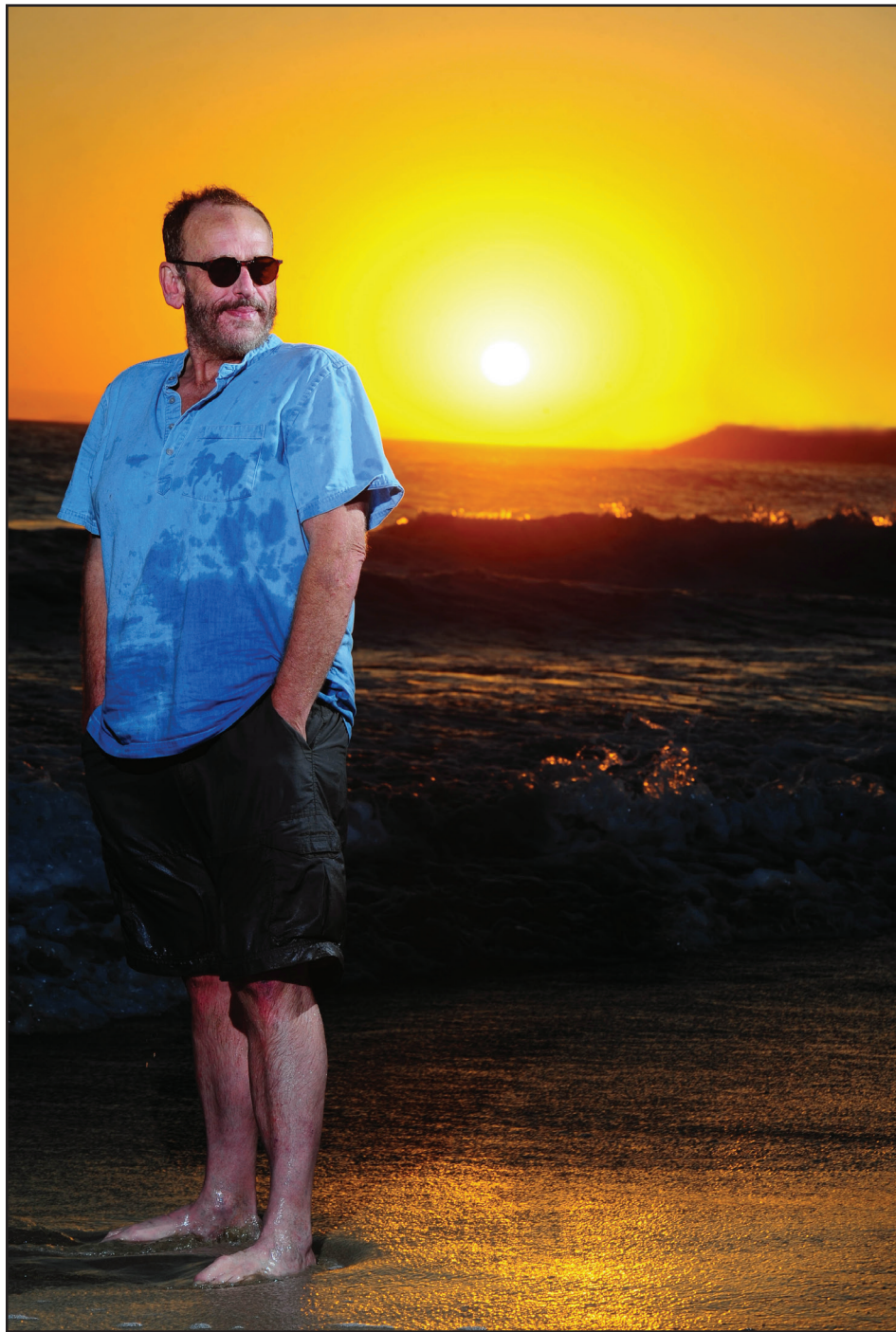
"The book is a manifesto," Stone said of "Soul," which he co-authored with Nishan Degnarain, and addresses the 21st century's obsession with "Big Data" and artificial intelligence. "It's an opportune time to think about this age of tech."

Stone purposely teamed up with Degnarain, special advisor to World Economic Forum on Oceans and the organization's Global Agenda Council's recent past chair.

"My co-author is an economist. We brought very different perspectives. He comes from a country that is 98 percent ocean," Stone said, referring to Degnarain's Republic of Mauritius, a French island nation in the Indian Ocean.

While Stone said his book "youth; Mark Zuckerberg and youth culture, becoming successful in your 20s," he also warned, "We really have no idea what [it] is going to mean. Things are changing every day."

Take plastic for instance. First developed in 1909, plastic initially proved ben-



Dr. Gregory Stone recently moved to Pacific Palisades.

Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

eficial, creating consumer convenience and saving industries millions.

"But look what happened," Stone said. "It got away from us. It escaped our control. By the year 2050, there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish."

Given the forces taking hold on our planet, Stone said the ocean holds all the cards in solving our issues regarding climate change and food supply. And yet, Stone said his field of expertise continues to be roundly ignored.

"It's basically the lungs of our planet," Stone said. "The ocean has not been featured in the international climate discussions. We're 100 to 200 years behind its management."

Meanwhile, in Australia near where Stone worked for many years, "the Great Barrier Reef is going to be a sand bar in a couple of years," he said.

It's nature's ability for regeneration, in addition to sustainability, that is a central, crucial theme of Stone's book and

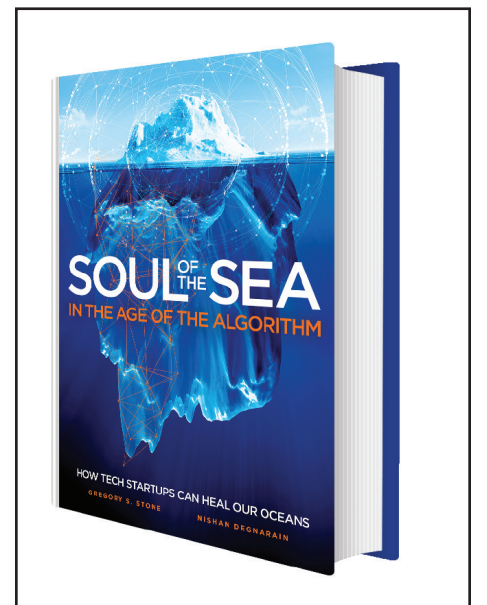
offers a strand of hope for our future.

Growing up, the Boston-bred ocean scientist was not so much inspired to enter his line of work by the Atlantic he grew up by as much as by watching the exploits of deep-sea diving television docu-hero Jacques Cousteau.

After years teaching and conducting research in New Zealand, Stone moved to Pacific Palisades last year. One might posit the aquatic scientist relocated here to be closer to the Pacific or, perhaps, locally headquartered ocean conservation groups such as Santa Monica's Heal the Bay.

Actually, Stone moved to town largely out of convenience, noting its LAX proximity, as he travels frequently and globally to lecture on sea and climate change.

Living in the Palisades "has been personally rejuvenative for my spirit, for my soul," continued Stone, who is spending October in Europe, addressing



The book

Photo courtesy of Gregory Stone



A man and his ocean

high-level organizations about oceanic developments, the ecology of sea mountains (there are way more mountains underwater than on land, he said) and advocating adaptation to climate change, which includes rising sea levels threatening to wipe out entire countries.

In the South Pacific islands, where Stone spends much time researching, there are nations existing "for tens and thousands of years that will be unlivable in 50 years," he said, citing the island country of Kiribati. "It's a big problem, seemingly going unnoticed by the world community."

If there's a takeaway from "Soul of the Sea," Stone said it's that "humanity's destiny has always been linked to the ocean throughout history."

Ultimately, his book—and his view of the Earth's future, despite its challenges—is not all doom and gloom: "Like most books, it's a reflection of the author, and I'm an optimistic person."