

For Immediate Release

# ***Coral Ghosts***

**World Broadcast Premiere Sunday, May 16 at 9 p.m.  
ET/PT on *documentary* Channel**



**Feature documentary by Toronto filmmaker Andrew Nisker Tells the Story of Dr. Tom Goreau's Remarkable Life's Work Saving the World's Coral Reefs**

Digital Media Site:

<http://www.coralmovie.com/>

Watch Coral Ghosts trailer:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0UY\\_wrGKo4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0UY_wrGKo4)

Download Photos & Press Kit:

<https://bit.ly/2QaI7CU>

Visit documentary Channel's website:

<https://www.cbc.ca/documentarychannel/docs/coral-ghosts>

(Toronto, May 10, 2021) Tom Goreau is a driven man, in a race against time. For over 50 years, the marine biologist's life has been consumed by two passions. One is honouring his father & grandfather's remarkable photographic legacy by cataloguing and preserving their decades of extensive, ground-breaking scientific and nature photography, including many early underwater shots of coral reefs going back to the 1940s. His other passion, connected to the first, is his lifelong crusade to preserve those coral reefs, which have been steadily dying for the past half century, devastated by pollution, man-made development and the climate crisis.

Goreau's passionate, single-minded efforts towards these two goals, spanning several decades, is told in the remarkable feature-length documentary ***Coral Ghosts***, which will have its worldwide broadcast premiere, **Sunday, May 16 at 9 pm ET/PT on *documentary Channel***.

***Coral Ghosts'*** broadcast premiere is especially timely, with World Oceans Day on June 8.

Toronto-based filmmaker Andrew Nisker, who wrote, directed and produced ***Coral Ghosts***, chronicles these two intertwined stories, beginning with Goreau spending time sorting and cataloguing his family's voluminous professional nature and science photography, much of it cutting edge and of historic importance. Soon after, Goreau embarks on a worldwide odyssey prompted by his twin obsessions with coral and his family's photography. That journey takes him and Nisker's film crew from Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands to the Canadian Arctic, from Jamaica to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, and finally to Bali in Indonesia.

Goreau's life-long passion to save corals is in his family DNA. Goreau's grandfather, Fritz Goro, fleeing to America from Nazi Germany, became a renowned photographer for Life Magazine. On assignment as the official photographer at the 1946 atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll, part of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific Ocean, he became fascinated by the coral reef offshore. Building his own pioneering underwater camera, he started taking pictures of them. This pioneering underwater photography was the foundation that determined Tom's father's career and his own, working with corals.

Later, Tom's father, having spent a great deal of time in the water while photographing the corals off Bikini Atoll, died of cancer in his mid-40s, an assumed victim of radiation poisoning.

The Goro/Goreau photographic archive, taken mainly by Tom's father and grandfather, are perhaps the only scientific photographic evidence we have of how rich and diverse these coral environments once were. Coral has been referred to as 'the rainforest of the sea'. Corals function the same way as trees: they build the physical habitat and provide the food for all the other forms of life: clams, worms, fish, everything else. Although it covers only a tiny fraction of the world's oceans, coral harbours over 25 per cent of all marine life on our planet. As Tom says, "Corals are beautiful, fascinating creatures. They come in many different sizes, shapes and colours. Their skeletons accumulate for hundreds and even thousands of years, creating huge living reefs."

But coral is very sensitive to high temperatures, and when coral dies, all the life forms that depend on them vanish, too. Coral reefs are the first ecosystem to collapse as a direct result of climate change. The photographs that Tom, his father and grandfather have taken chronicle the progressive devastation of the corals that has occurred over a 70-year period.

Tom is extremely aware that time is running out for the coral, and for him. "As I age, I feel a sense of urgency as the climate crisis worsens, to preserve the past in an effort to save the future." One way he's doing that is in Bali, Indonesia. Goreau shows how reefs can act as natural wave barriers, protecting shorelines from erosion at only a tenth of the cost of cement

blocks. And, in 2000, Goreau started a reef restoration project with a process called biorock, sinking metal structures offshore and attaching ‘starter’ corals to the biorock’s wire frame, with the aim of creating, over time, a new coral reef there. Now, there are more than 150 restored coral reefs there. This reef restoration can play a really important role, maintaining the functioning of the ecological systems while also supporting the social, the cultural, the economic values, such as fishing or tourism, which are so important to local communities.

Told through never-seen-before archival film and photographs, and stunning underwater photography, this character-driven film takes viewers from a dusty attic in Boston, Massachusetts, to the shores of Jamaica, Australia, Bikini Atoll and Bali on a scientist’s journey to protect the coral his grandfather first photographed, and his father died documenting.

“***Coral Ghosts*** is intended as a wake-up call”, says filmmaker Andrew Nisker. “One man has devoted his entire life to what he knows is a global crisis, and now we need to listen.”

***Coral Ghosts*** is written, directed and produced by Andrew Nisker. Producer is Diana Warmé. Editor is Roland Schlimme. DOP is Iain Robinson. Music Composer is Rose Bolton. Executive Producers are Andrew Nisker and Andrew Rivkin. The executive in charge of production for documentary Channel is Jordana Ross.

***Coral Ghosts*** is produced by Take Action Films in association with *documentary* Channel and with the participation of Ontario Creates, the Canada Media Fund, Rogers Telefund, Rogers Documentary Fund, and the Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit.

Take Action Films was founded in 2008 by documentary filmmaker Andrew Nisker. Since 2008, it has produced seven feature-length documentaries on global environmental issues. Its award-winning films have played at world-renowned film festivals and been shown on Netflix, Sundance Channel, CBC and dozens of other prestigious outlets. Films include: *Garbage! The Revolution Starts at Home*; *Chemical*; *Orange Witness*; *Dark Side of the Chew*; *Dad and Dandelions*; *Ground War*; and *Coral Ghosts*. <https://takeactionfilms.com/>

- 30 -

**Note to Editors:**

There will be repeat broadcasts of ***Coral Ghosts***:

Sunday, May 16 at midnight and 3 am (ET)

Tuesday, May 18 at 9 am, 2pm and 7 pm (all ET)

**For preview screener link and interview requests, please contact:**

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