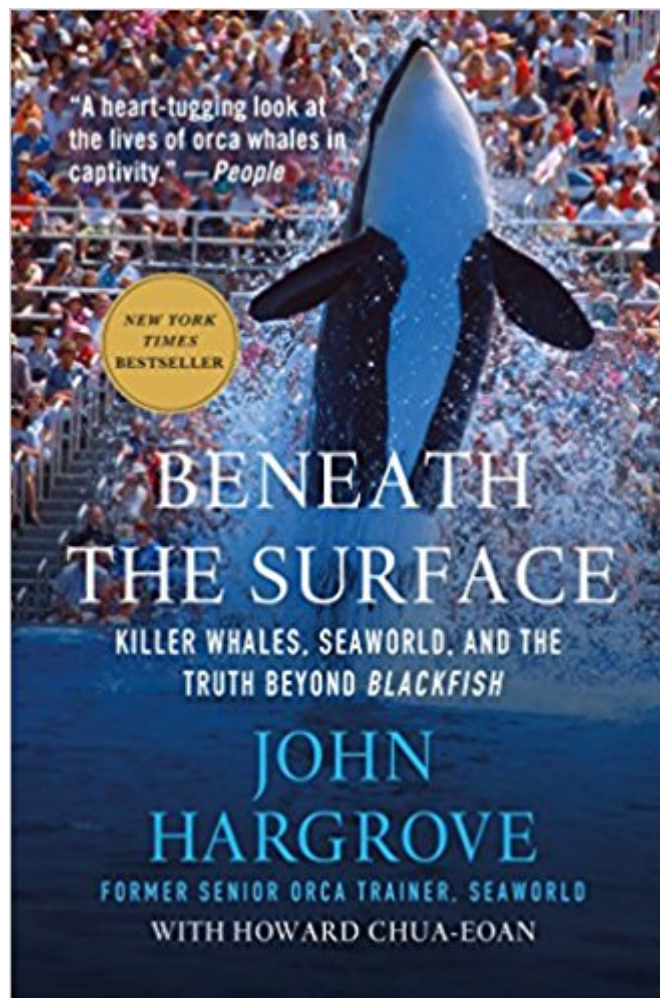




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# Beneath The Surface: Killer Whales, SeaWorld, And The Truth Beyond Blackfish



## Synopsis

**\*Now a New York Times Best Seller\***Over the course of two decades, John Hargrove worked with 20 different whales on two continents and at two of SeaWorld's U.S. facilities. For Hargrove, becoming an orca trainer fulfilled a childhood dream. However, as his experience with the whales deepened, Hargrove came to doubt that their needs could ever be met in captivity. When two fellow trainers were killed by orcas in marine parks, Hargrove decided that SeaWorld's wildly popular programs were both detrimental to the whales and ultimately unsafe for trainers. After leaving SeaWorld, Hargrove became one of the stars of the controversial documentary *Blackfish*. The outcry over the treatment of SeaWorld's orca has now expanded beyond the outlines sketched by the award-winning documentary, with Hargrove contributing his expertise to an advocacy movement that is convincing both federal and state governments to act. In *Beneath the Surface*, Hargrove paints a compelling portrait of these highly intelligent and social creatures, including his favorite whales Takara and her mother Kasatka, two of the most dominant orcas in SeaWorld. And he includes vibrant descriptions of the lives of orcas in the wild, contrasting their freedom in the ocean with their lives in SeaWorld. Hargrove's journey is one that humanity has just begun to take toward the realization that the relationship between the human and animal worlds must be radically rethought.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"You might have watched the documentary *Blackfish*. This is more powerful...."

Psychology Today – “A heart-tugging look at the lives of orca whales in captivity.”

People – “I highly recommend *Beneath the Surface* to readers of all ages, including those youngsters about whom Hargrove writes, who want to be just like him when he trained orcas to perform stupid and unnatural tricks. Hargrove is a very courageous man, and his book is open and honest and we should all thank him for taking the time to write it.”

Marc Bekoff, The Huffington Post – “A story of both dread and wonderment... books such as this have the ability to shine a light into the inner workings of corporate greed and redirect efforts from selling tickets to preserving, nurturing and enhancing the orcas’ lives.”

The Huffington Post – “Elaborates on...[Blackfish’s] claims but also testifies to the thrill of standing athwart four tons of muscle rushing through the water at 30 miles an hour. And, equally, the nearly mystical experience of bonding with an intelligence eerily similar to our own, yet ultimately unfathomable-and uncontrollable.”

Smithsonian Magazine – “As Hargrove’s love for and knowledge of [orcas] increased, he gradually concluded that the work he was part of at SeaWorld was harming them... Hargrove covers both the joy of his own experiences with orcas as well as the case for why such interactions in captivity should end.”

Scientific American – “How would you cope if you felt that your life work contributed to a cause in which you no longer believed?...Blends natural history and corporate indictment into an emotional story about a man changing sides in the argument over human domination of the animal world.”

Booklist – “It is with this same unique amalgam of 'dread and wonderment' that Hargrove characterizes both his longtime, high-ranking professional relationship with orca whales and his astonishment at how broken the performance animal arena has become--particularly at SeaWorld.

A shocking, aggressively written marine park exposé.

Kirkus Reviews – “*Beneath the Surface* instantly grabs the reader’s attention with a vivid description of an aggressive incident between a captive orca and former SeaWorld trainer John Hargrove. Clearly there is still much to reveal about the grim reality behind the ‘glamorous’ orca show. This firsthand account may be the final push that ends the inhumane practice of keeping the world’s largest marine predator and one of the most intelligent and social mammals on the planet in concrete tanks.”

Naomi A. Rose, Ph.D., Animal Welfare Institute – “This deeply personal look at the lives of whales in captivity will open your eyes and tug your heart. John Hargrove’s work as a senior trainer at SeaWorld made him understand how we need to rethink our relationships with the animal world.”

Walter Isaacson, author of *Steve Jobs* and *Einstein: His Life and Universe* – “In *Beneath the Surface*, John Hargrove flawlessly unravels the trainer’s dilemma of loving an animal with all your heart while

working at a place that doesn't. It is as much a razor sharp indictment as it is a story of a broken heart.

— Gabriela Cowperthwaite, director, *Blackfish* “A deeply honest personal account of a man's awakening from orca trainer to orca advocate as he learned the painful truth about what lies beneath the surface of SeaWorld.”

— Lori Marino, Ph.D., Researcher and Founder, The Kimmela Center for Animal Advocacy “The thin veneer of SeaWorld's fantasy that the orca are happy in their tanks is peeled back in this mesmerizing and compelling book about Hargrove's work as a trainer and his journey to become one of the few speaking out against the cruelty being conducted even to this day.”

— Ingrid N. Visser, researcher and founder of the Orca Research Trust “Hargrove takes us inside his life as a former SeaWorld devotee, his 14 years as an orca trainer, and especially his deep respect and affection for the orcas he has worked with. No short phrases can adequately summarize the personalities and idiosyncrasies of the 20 orcas he performed with and cared for, but this book gives us great insight into their piercing intelligence and keen awareness. Perhaps most interestingly, Hargrove reveals the complex emotional lives of the orcas he came to know, and how they brought out his own feelings toward them.”

— Howard Garrett, Director, The Orca Network “Details the disturbing practices SeaWorld has become known for...Hargrove is careful to emphasize that his bond with the captive whales he spent years interacting with was real and powerful, even 'some of the deepest and most magnificent relationships I've had in my life.'”

— The Dodo “[Hargrove has] delved deeper into the ethical issues surrounding orca captivity, convincingly making the case that these intelligent, sentient animals can only be free in the wild.”

— Nature World News “Eye opening... a story of personal discovery, ambition, broken dreams, and hope for a better future for animals that are complex beyond our understanding, YET like humans in many ways”

— Helen Bailey, *A Wild Life*

JOHN HARGROVE has 14 years' experience as a killer whale trainer. His experience spans both SeaWorld of California and SeaWorld of Texas where he was promoted to the highest ranking Senior Trainer. John also has an international reputation, having been a Supervisor with MarineLand in the south of France. He resigned his position with SeaWorld in August 2012 and currently resides in New York City. HOWARD CHUA-EOAN was News Director of TIME magazine from 2000 to 2013; he is now a Deputy Managing Editor at Bloomberg Businessweek.

John Hargrove's *Beneath the Surface* is an honest, in-depth look at the reality of his childhood dream of becoming an orca trainer. Having worked at two separate SeaWorld parks,

as well as Marineland Antibes, Hargrove has seen these animals that he loved put into the most unnatural situations. He has also experienced his safety and the safety of his friends and co-workers compromised repeatedly for the sake of the show. The book opens with a terrifying experience with Freya at Marineland Antibes, as he narrowly escaped her aggression and was reminded that in the end the whales are in control. As Hargrove moved up the ranks to be one of the top trainers, he came to realize that killer whales are not suitable for captivity and the park stops at nothing to hide that fact from the public. He grew tired of incidents being blamed on trainer error, even in their death. He grew tired of seeing female whales being turned into baby-making machines with no consideration for their health and well-being. While out on medical leave after work-related injuries, he finally realized that it was time to move away from the whales that he loved. Hargrove was featured in the film *Blackfish*, and was able to co-sponsor California's "Orca Welfare and Safety Act" and support New York's "Blackfish Bill." You can find out more at <http://johnhargrove.nyc/index.html>

It's hard to be a whistle blower in an industry fueled by greed. It's hard to be a whistle blower when your childhood dream becomes a reality and your entire heart and soul accept that you've finally made it. It's hard to be a whistle blower when you've invested so much time and energy and heart into caring for creatures that you inherently know are as intelligent, if not more-so, than you. Knowing that if you walk away, you might be silenced. I ordered this book, but then, could not wait so purchased a kindle and the ebook just to be able to read it. Mr. Hargrove speaks poignantly about his career and it was easy for me, as a reader to connect to the personal investment he had made with these animals. I am not a PETA supporter. I am not an unemployed wing nut with nothing better to do with my time. I am a teacher. I teach with the passion I have for this planet and I do my level best to educate young minds about the incredible rare gem they live on and how they need to share it with the other non-human persons on this planet. Mr. Hargrove's book took me back to that one childhood visit I had to Seaworld. I remember begging my mother, a nurse, a single mother with 2 kids, to take us to Seaworld when we moved to Florida. I had grown up on the Flipper TV series. I dreamed of becoming a marine biologist and working with dolphins and their cousins. I remember that day when we finally went to Seaworld and how I could hardly contain my excitement as the music built in the Shamu stadium. I remember shouting in awe each time a whale made a jump and as I sit back and look over the pictures from what I had assumed would be the happiest day of my young life, I remember the tears streaming down my face. They are clearly visible in all of the

pictures my mom took of me. Something inside of me died that day. I left Seaworld with tears in my eyes and a broken heart after something inside of me, that I could not name, told me that what I had just witnessed was not right. That visit to Seaworld changed me. It was not until I was in junior high and had met a girl, a Florida native with a boat, who took me out into the estuary and showed me dolphins in the real world that I began to know what had changed. In college, I took any course that would put me in contact with animals, especially marine mammals. I remember one time, sitting in the north Atlantic in a small Zodiac recording Humpback whale calls for a college professor. I had motored a little too close to a feeding whale and suddenly I saw the huge jaws opening right in front of my tiny boat. Without so much as a ripple those jaws, truly capable of crushing both me and the boat, disappeared beneath the water. I could see the whale beneath my boat just under the surface. I angled around some more and soon I saw one of the whales roll over where it broke the surface, and I was staring eye to eye into a consciousness. I knew that day, these animals were intelligent. Reading Mr. Hargrove's book brought all of these memories to the surface. I, like him, entered my career searching to fulfill a childhood dream. His is a tale of sorrow, but also enlightenment. As I read I made a connection to what he must have been feeling in his time as a trainer. I fully felt, through his account, what must have been the hardest choice he ever made, to walk away. I am glad he wrote this book; that he has given substance to those childhood feelings I could not explain the day we left Seaworld forever. This is a book I highly recommend to everyone. It points out how corporate greed is come alive and how a glorified circus uses their greed to imprison another sentient species, how they use their wealth to lie to the public, and how they put their employees in harms way. It is obvious that Seaworld sees both it's trainers and it's whales as nothing more than statistics on some corporate spreadsheet; certainly not the "family members" they tout in their false advertisements. If you're looking for a tell all tabloid like expose, this book is not for you. If you are however, looking for a book that will make you take off the corporate blinders Seaworld has so stealthily placed on the public, a book that will fill you with emotion and leave you with a lump in your throat and a desire to get involved, this book is definitely for you.

Incredible account. Couldn't put it down! If you saw Blackfish, you have to read this book.

Full disclosure: I am against animals in captivity. I demonstrate at the entrance to Seaworld as often as my work schedule will permit, educating visitors and passer-by's alike--I am NOT A PETA MEMBER. For me, it's not about loving animals; but rather about loathing injustice. With that said, John Hargrove did not get an automatic free pass from me with the release of this book. I am too

well aware that preaching to the choir has often done more harm than good in this "movement." Not the case with "Beneath The Surface." From beginning to end, This book revealed things to (even) me about whales, and Seaworld, etc. that I was ignorant about. I used to love Seaworld when I was a kid, and, although I have always been uncomfortable with the confinement of animals, I didn't absolutely refuse to go until my parents gave me a "choice." One vivid memory I have while sitting in Shamu Stadium is watching the whales and dolphins wade in their small, concrete enclosures; waiting to be called out to the "bigger pool" to do their tricks. I always thought those smaller pools were merely "holding areas" before/during "show time." Little did I know that THOSE WERE IT! There were no huge swimming areas "behind the scenes" etc. It's hard for me to imagine anyone reading "Beneath The Surface" and still buying tickets. Absolutely mind-blowing. And after reading John talk about the (too well known) aggression in captive whales, I don't wonder why Tilikum kills his trainers, I wonder why he doesn't kill ALL of them. (Except for the fact that he can no longer interact with people...and he doesn't even understand why!) I watched Blackfish a dozen times and cried every single time. I was mesmerized, traumatized, heartbroken, stunned. I learned a world of valuable information about Orcas that I never knew before. Seaworld surely isn't teaching it- and they put the CON in conservation. I think "Beneath The Surface" goes even deeper than Blackfish, because we are reminded about a little boy who's whole dream of life was to understand and work with the whales he loved so much. And how this same boy (at heart) left the animals he loved so much so he could create a platform and speak for them, shedding truth on corporate psychobabble. (Another main thing I got out of the book was that Seaworld cares little more for their trainers than they do the animals that they "employ.") EVERY SINGLE PERSON ON THIS PLANET SHOULD BE REQUIRED TO READ THIS BOOK... (including age-appropriate children -- especially -- age-appropriate children.) I still hold resentment to those who misled me when I was a child. Who lied to me? Who taught me that it was ok to kidnap, enslave and even kill whales and dolphins, as long as it makes big corporate bucks? Was it only my parents? My school; IE: fieldtrips? My church? HOW ABOUT TEACHING TRUTH AND COMPASSION NOW...? AND NOT WAIT UNTIL OUR KIDS GROW UP before they learn that this disgraceful treatment of animals is not standard operating procedure. Why wait another day? Every human who has ever used these breathtaking, awesome, highly familial and intelligent creatures to make money should all serve prison terms: confined for 25-40 years in a concrete bathtub.... inside a prison cell. They can get out of it for a half hour 'show' every afternoon walking on their hands in the prison yard- maybe. Bravo, John Hargrove & Palgrave Macmillan. Change is coming. Thank you for opening our eyes and hearts and for giving us the determination to fight even harder---until every tank is empty.

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