

Director's Statement

In the summer of 2004, I traveled with the Pachamama Alliance, a non-profit organization, to visit the Ecuadorian rainforest and the Achuar people that have lived there for millennia. An astoundingly beautiful place, the rainforest is literally teeming with exotic life and at the same time peaceful beyond measure. One afternoon, on a walk through the forest, an Achuar, our guide, stood by a majestic kapok tree that seemed to reach to the canopy over a hundred feet above and astounded us by saying "I would defend this tree with my life".

There started a personal odyssey that led from the rainforest through a pile of books that would rival the Encyclopedia Britannica in size; books on the history of oil extraction, on peak oil, on food production, population growth and more. At some point along the way, I decided I wanted to tell the story of how oil had impacted the earth, humanity, other species and the climate. Film seemed to be the most powerful medium to deliver the story, but I had never been a filmmaker. So along with learning all I could about oil extraction, I began to learn as much as possible about filmmaking. And it has been a joyous, frustrating, often surprising journey.

Oil development, as it turns out, is what the Achuar fear. As do many people in many countries around the globe. Reading the history of oil development, I understood why.

After several months of preparation, in January, 2005, with my director of photography, Sharon Anderson, and sound designer, Pamela Spitzer, we began filming. As is always the case on such explorations, you have a vision of what the story is, but people surprise you and lead you down paths you never imagined. Brilliant people with whom we met, such as Amy Goodman, Thom Hartmann, Dr. William Rees, and Richard Heinberg, had singular and surprising ideas about the interconnection of oil and our planet. And so this story wove itself in to a web connecting countless aspects of our existence, because nearly everything we have, and everything we do, is somehow connected to oil and fossil fuels.

CRUDE IMPACT

For over a year we interviewed the people we felt best understood the history of oil's impact on our world and the issue of peak oil. Peak oil is the point in time where the quantity of oil extracted from the earth begins to irreversibly decline. The ramifications of peak oil are terrifying, and they reverberate through the Amazon rainforest and all across the globe.

I am immensely pleased with the journey that is the film **CRUDE IMPACT**. It's the story I thought *SYRIANA* would tell, but didn't. From so many sources came great inspiration, brilliant ideas, feedback and much needed encouragement. And I think the end result is an informative tale that will change the way you think about oil.