

Peru

This job was in southeast Peru near the borders of Bolivia and Brazil and on a main tributary of the Madre de Dios River, the Topolobampo. The oil block had been recently proposed for a national park that would fill in the pristine jungle between Manu National Park and its sister park the *proposed Parque Nacional de Tambopato*. The client was Mobil, soon to become Exxon-Mobil, and if there was ever an *ad explum* of corporate evil it is this particular

marriage between the two most heartless corporate bodies in the history of American business. They were panting to prove oil reserves so they could put off the preservation of the absolutely pristine area and have it all to themselves. We in the seismic business called them the Dogshit Sisters because anyone who was not a member of their immediate corporations was considered to be dogshit by them. Very bad people, don't buy their products

In the interest of full disclosure, they fired me from the crew because I chose to oppose their crew policies that were designed to appease the environmentalists at the risk of the health of the men working in the field. Details upon request.



Embarking an Otter for flight from Puerto Maldonado to Puerto Mazuko



View from the Otter of the magnificent Madre de Dios (Mother of God) River



Base ops at Puerto Mazuko, no expense spared. Mobil was under the gun to meet deadlines that would curtail their operations so they paid the highest price ever in South America to date – \$10,000 per kilometer – for which they would demand the blood and the health of the workers who labored for them in virtually impossible conditions



The Canadian guy on the left adopted a boy he found sleeping in a doorway.
He's my hero



Puerto Mazuko, a bare bones jungle town built to support gold placer mining nearby



Part of our ops compound, with radio transmitter tower



That damn Curry again!



Everyone *loved* my safety lectures



A dinner plate-size Bird Spider, a member of the tarantula family. It jumps from tree to tree, leaving sticky loops of silk that trap birds flying between the trees!



Deadly Palm nut viper I caught. She had eleven eggs inside her



The guy who found the eggs



Very young Bolivian macaw who fell in love with me



"¿You take me to ze States, si?"



A kiss from the mistress



Daughter of the mistress



Jungle LZ



Entrance to jungle camp from LZ



Precious hardwood log from a Purpleheart tree



This was planked with a chainsaw and bunks made with the planks



And so, I slept on a bed worth about \$4,000, and it smelled so good!
The jungle is a sultry mistress



Helicopter crash, on top of 700 lb of explosives!



Skid sunk into ground from impact



Yet another storm roars in from Antarctica



A 300m-wide river runs 1500m wide overnight



River beach scene



River beach scene



We leave upriver with a ton of helicopter fuel



Me and one of two incompetent Mobil safety men.
This guy was the grossly fat and smelly one from Canada



Mr. Curry and river pilot checking treacherous currents from the bow



Me with motorman and crew, including a Peruvian River Marine Lt. Colonel



Placer miners from whom I bought two ounces of *charpa*,
gold dust melted into nuggets



This woman was the wife and sister to the miners. She loaded the two children on a log and was found floating down the rain swollen river



This is where refugees from the exhausted potato fields of the high Andes find a home



Communal human life at the baseline



village at terminus of world's worst road that connects this impossible place with Cuzco, fifteen thousand vertical feet up from here!



The last town up the Topolobambo River, a den of thieves, murderers and smugglers of precious hard woods



Uphill to the village center



Exotic hardwood lumber



Gathering info on local logistics



Colonel chatting with hardwood smugglers after receiving payment of their "taxes"



The guys in the back are the tough ones, the lumbermen