

Excerpta from

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Research location: South bank of the Aguarico river, along which most Cofán people live, in Ecuadorian Amazonia.

“I use ‘Texaco’ (Texas Petroleum Company) as the name of the corporate entity that explored and produced oil in the territory of the indigenous Cofán people of Dureno, Ecuador, from 1964 through 1990. The actual corporate structure, however, was more complicated. In Ecuador, Texaco worked in a consortium with Gulf Oil until 1977. In 1974, Ecuador’s state oil company, whose original name was *Corporación Estatal Petrolera Ecuatoriana* (CEPE), obtained a 25 percent share in the consortium. In 1977, Gulf transferred its share to the state company, which became the majority owner. In 1989, the state company changed its name to Petroecuador. In 2007, the state company again changed its name to Petroamazonas.

Importantly, Texaco was the main operator in the consortium’s concession. As the environmental lawyer Judith Kimerling has methodically noted in a 2006 journal article, Texaco was responsible for the design, construction, and maintenance of the petroleum-related infrastructure, including the pipelines, oil well’s roads, and waste disposal system. In 1990, Texaco transferred the operator role to Petroecuador and left the country entirely in 1992. In 2001, Texaco merged with Chevron.” (xi)

“Ever since Texaco began searching for oil on their land in the 1960s, Cofán people have been living in a petroleum-soaked environment. For the past five decades, the social, ecological, medical, and political problems that accompany oil have plagued their lives. Spills of crude and other toxic wastes have covered their streams and rivers. Black ash from burning well pits and gas flares has rained down on their gardens, homes, and bodies. The colonizing farmers who followed the oil roads have stripped the Cofán of nearly all their traditional territory.” (4)

“In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, the layer of crude on the Aguarico was sometimes as thick as a fist. The river was unusable for weeks or months at a time.” (5)

“Cofán people are not in search of savior, and they do not trust individuals who present themselves as such. Over the past three decades, hundreds of outsiders have come to Dureno and said the same things I did. The Cofán could never figure out what their motives were: Why did they care about people they did not know? Why did they produce dozens of articles and films that had few if any results? And why did they fail to provide real material goods –and money- rather than verbal lessons that were repetitious, scripted, and out of touch with the reality of Cofán lives? [...] A surprising number of Dureno residents have died of cancer.” (9)

“Despite how depressing their condition seems, the people of Dureno are poor examples of the ‘suffering savage’. [...] Even though their tiny island of forest lies in a sea of oil infrastructure, settler farms, and colonist towns, the people of Dureno manage to hunt, garden, and fish for much of their food.” (10)

“Some residents express approval of the state company, Petroamazonas, the main operator in their territory. During my fieldwork, Petroamazonas’ true chief was Rafael Correa, Ecuador’s president from 2007 to 2017. The left-leaning economist committed to increasing resource extraction in Amazonia and dedicated millions of dollars in government spending to social, medical, and educational projects in places like Dureno. In one of the most extreme examples of oil-enabled largesse, the Correa government funded the construction of a “millennium community” in Dureno, one of a few such projects to house indigenous populations in Amazonian Ecuador. The housing complex provides a \$45,000 home for each

Cofán family. The structures are hybrids of the modern and the traditional. They have stilt legs and bamboo walls, but they are equipped with potable water and safe sewage systems. [...] None of the Cofán’s environmentalist allies have given them a fraction of the resources Correa marshaled. Nevertheless, as many Cofán people realize, anything they accept from Ecuador’s government is an implicit promise to allow even more oil development in their land.” (11)

“The West demands too much of contemporary native peoples, the Cofán included. It hopes to make them into tragic symbols of its worst crimes while portraying them as wise beacons who offer a superior and authentic way of life, even today. [...] Non-Cofán people have produced the best-known accounts of Cofán struggles against oil. The most highly publicized derive from the Cofán’s role as plaintiffs in a transnational lawsuit against Chevron. First filed by an international legal team in 1993, the case has moved back and forth between Ecuador and the United States for more than two decades. In 2011, an Ecuadorian court awarded the Cofán and other residents of Amazonian Ecuador roughly \$ 19 billion for the damages Texaco had done to them. Although multiple layers of Ecuador’s judicial system have reviewed and affirmed the ruling, Chevron has spent more than a half-billion dollars fighting it. In 2014, the company’s lawyers convinced a US federal judge that the Ecuadorian verdict was the product of fraud. In 2016, the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit upheld the judge’s decision in favor of Chevron. The case’s next stop might be US Supreme Court. [...] Meanwhile, the plaintiff’s lawyers are trying to collect the Ecuadorian court’s judgement by having Chevron property seized in courts across the world, including in Canada, Brazil, and Argentina. By 2007, Chevron had pulled its assets out of Ecuador, making it immune to judgments in that country.” (12)

“The Cofán [...] would appreciate any outcome that would give them better health care, a remediated environment, sustainable income sources, and enough money to buy back as much of their homeland as possible.” (12 – 13)

“I believe that we have an obligation to know what our dependence on petroleum means for the earth’s most marginalized inhabitants.” (15)

“Alejandro Criollo is almost as old as Ecuador’s oil industry. He was born in Dureno in the late 1940s as Royal Dutch Shell conducted seismic exploration along the Aguarico River. Shell never found significant reserves in the area. A decade and a half later, Texaco succeeded where its predecessor failed. In 1967, it discovered a large petroleum field upriver from Dureno. When Alejandro married Lucía Quenamá in 1972, Texaco began extracting commercial quantities of crude. Soon thereafter, Ecuador joined the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and a dense system of roads, wells, pipelines, and production facilities encircled Dureno. [...] Despite his awareness of the harm the petroleum industry had done to his people, Alejandro decided to begin working for an oil company in 2013. Desperate to find money for daily necessities and his son’s schooling, he took a position with the Chinese National Petroleum Corporation as a guard at a seismic camp inside Dureno’s territory. After decades of opposition, the community had finally decided to allow oil exploration on their land. Alejandro, like so many other Dureno residents, no longer saw the possibility or wisdom of standing in oil’s way.” (18)

“The Cofán homeland is one of the most biologically diverse places of the planet... Cofán people once lived even higher into the Andes, but a series of wars pushed them down and reduced their numbers. They first fought off the Inca Empire. Shortly thereafter, the Spanish arrived. In the sixteenth century, the colonizers battled Cofán warriors and captured many slaves. Jesuit missionaries attempted to round up the remaining Cofán into concentrated communities with the intent to ‘civilize’ and convert them. Epidemics soon decimated the Cofán population. [...] Toward the end of the nineteenth century, rubber workers battled for Cofán labor and Capuchin priests struggled for Cofán souls. In new mission settlements, hundreds more died. The Cofán population hit a low point of little more than three hundred individuals

after a 1923 measles epidemic struck a large mission of the San Miguel river. From a precolonial population of as many as thirty thousand people, the Cofán were on the edge of disappearance.” (24)

“Along the Aguarico river’s east-west axis, Dureno is the mid-point of Ecuadorian Cofán territory. In 1978, the community received title to 9,571 hectares of land from the Ecuadorian government.” (25)

“Most Cofán people now live in zinc-roofed, hand-hewn, stilted houses that do not look very different from the abodes of the newcomers who have surrounded the village... People in Dureno used to live in one central settlement. Over the past three decades, families split off to form new population centers within the community’s territory. [These new] clusters now have their own names and government-funded schools. In the late 1980s, Pisoríé Canque (Village on the Pisoríé River) was born along a road that Texaco built through the community to drill a new oil well. After the Cofán forced Texaco out, a group of families decided to make gardens and homes along the road to guard against invaders. Totoa Nai’qui (White Stream) formed next. [...] An old man named Luciano Lucitante then settled Bavoroé (River of the Bavoro Catfish) to plant bigger gardens on less crowded land. The last settlement was Opirito. [...] Opirito was a natural extension of the original Dureno settlement. By the first decade of the millennium, the new homes that stretched downriver were a bit too far for children to walk to the old center’s school. With a new settlement, their lives became a little less difficult.” (26-27)

“The Cofán have been living at Dureno for more than seventy years, but the central settlement has moved multiple times. It was originally an island. Then it was downriver. Now it sits on a stretch of riverbank that was once the middle of the forest. Someday, thanks to the capricious ways of the Aguarico, it will move again.” (27)

“Curing through plans and curing through shamanism are separate practices. Each ailment has its own plant *na’su* (master), which has the same name as the condition it is supposed to treat. [...] If the illness is a historically introduced disease, Cofán people are more than willing to utilize pills, injections, and treatments at clinics and hospitals. [...] There is a clinic open to the Cofán directly across the river from Dureno in a colonist town also called Dureno. [...] Many families eat just one meal a day. It is common to eat none. [...] The inability to pay for medicines or specialist health care is even more painful.” (39 – 40)

“Alejandro is one of a few shamanically competent Dureno men whom people pay to cure them. A much larger number of residents share his off-and-on occupations of park guard, fiberglass canoe maker, and oil company employee. Hardly anyone has stable employment, and many individuals have none. Other jobs sometimes held include elementary schoolteacher, worker in the municipal or provincial government, worker in the municipal or provincial government, assistant on scientific research projects, member of a musical or dance group, worker with environmental or human rights organizations, child care supervisor in the community’s infant care center, security guard for businesses in Lago Agrio, and occasional paid help aiding other Dureno residents to weed a garden or construct a house. [...] The few Cofán men who own fiberglass canoe workshops can easily make thousands of dollars a month when business is good. [...] The community has collective sources of income, too. Seven thousand hectares of Dureno’s territory are part of the Ecuadorian government’s Socio Bosque program, which pays landowners to protect standing forest. During my research, Dureno received \$ 54,000 a year through the program. The community also received \$ 35,000 a year for letting a company dredge rocks from the bottom of the Aguarico River to build roads. Recent agreements with two oil companies created additional sources of income. The contract with a Chinese company doing seismic exploration netted more than \$ 500,000 for the community, distributed to families in the form of cash payments and outboard motors. An agreement with Petroamazonas to allow work on the western edge of Dureno stipulated that the company would buy eight trucks for the community and then rent them back for three years. Cofán leaders decided to disburse the income to each Dureno householding in the form of a \$100 monthly food allotment at a newly created, Cofán-owned grocery store in Lago Agrio. [...] Other uses for community income include paying

for park guards, the travel expenses of elected leaders, medical emergencies, parties and festivals, accounting services, and various other items, including a Cofán-staffed child care center for women who choose to work.” (40-41)

“Outsiders’ interest in the survival of Cofán culture is something they do not quite understand. [...] Sometimes as individuals and sometimes as groups, North Americans, Europeans, and urban Ecuadorians come to Dureno to take pictures, see the forest, watch a dance performance, or hear tales of Texaco’s atrocities. Sometimes they stay for weeks or months to do studies, workshops, and projects, and sometimes they arrive and depart on the same day. Sometimes they pay people for their aid and give the community concrete goods, and sometimes they leave nothing. One day Lucia laughingly asked me: Why do tourists want to see our customs? Why do they take pictures of us as if we’re woolly monkeys?” (46)

“Outsiders are far more obsessed with the idea of Cofán cultural purity than Cofán people are.” (47)

“The indigenous peoples of the Americas have long had to negotiate the consequences of nonindigenous perspectives on how they should think, act, and look. In one chapter of his book *The Predicament of Culture* (1988), James Clifford examines the case of the Mashpee people of Massachusetts. Like many Native Americans, the Mashpee have struggled to meet externally imposed criteria in order to be recognized as a ‘native tribe.’ ” (53)

“In Dureno, the most admired and missed *atesu’cho* (knowledgeable one) is Yori’ye, whose legal name was Guillermo Quenamá. In 1941, he founded Dureno and became its chief. People called him Yor when he was alive and Yori’ye after he died in 1966, as the A’ingae suffix –ye is attached to a person’s name after they pass... He was about sixty when he perished near Texaco’s base camp, which would later become the city of Lago Agrio. He was fat, healthy, and at the height of his power. Although four Cofán people were present at his death, no one knows exactly what happened –except that three Texaco workers were there, too... During most of his life, Cofán people did not live in large, permanent settlements. Communities were often little more than the houses and gardens of an extended family or two... Atanasio, who was born in the mid-1920s, told me about the old-time settlements. He said family groups lived together in one large house, which they built on the ground rather than on stilts as is the custom today. To guard against attacks from wild animals and Tetete people, the Cofán used palm wood and bamboo to fence in their homes. They slept on mats or in hammocks. They held up their cooking pots with stones or ceramic stands. The only people who slept outside were menstruating women, who had their own small houses on the edge of the forest. Two groups of people stayed in the seclusion huts for longer periods: girls at menarche and postpartum women, who kept their babies with them... Periodically, extended family groups consolidated at larger settlements, the biggest of which was Cuvoé, near the contemporary town of Cascales... It is clear that many people lived at Cuvoé for centuries, if not millennia. Cofán oral history describes periods when hundreds or thousands of people lived in large communities on the Aguarico and San Miguel.” (59 – 60)

“Cofán people were already familiar with the site that became Dureno before Yori’ye made a community there. There was even a small school staffed by Capuchin priests in the 1910s and 1920s. The hills close to the river are still covered with pottery shards, and people continue to find old stone axes in their gardens.” (63-64)

“Yori’ye... took the strange step of telling people never to leave Dureno, even after his death. Before, the death of a great *na’su* –almost always a great shaman- was an especially urgent reason to abandon a settlement.” (64)

“On June 8, 2013, I visited the work camp of the seismic company that had recently entered Dureno to complete a study of the oil deposits beneath the community. Cofán people called the company BGP, the

acronym for its full name, Bureau of Geophysical Prospecting. It is part of the China National Petroleum Corporation, which had begun exploratory work for Ecuador's state oil company, Petroamazonas. Alejandro had taken a job as a BGP guard. For twenty-two days at a time, he stayed at the company's camp and watched over its equipment while other workers cut trails and laid cables, sensors, and explosives across Dureno's forest and rivers." (86)

"Around the time Lucía was born, a *cocama* trader would come from Colombia to exchange goods for the gold her family panned in the Aguarico, upriver from Dureno. They stored the gold powder in the quills of curassow feathers. In exchange, the trader gave them cloth. They also gave the trader peccary hides, bundles of women palm-fiber string and baskets of the cottonlike substance that falls from kaok trees in the dry months." (94)

"Most Cofán people say they desired to remain distant from *cocama* for two reasons: to avoid being killed and to avoid being captured. For centuries, Cofán people had learned to fear *cocama* because of the epidemics they brought and the violent acts they committed... When *cocama* visited Cofán communities or Cofán people traveled to *cocama* towns and missions, epidemics often broke out. The residents of Dureno tell vivid stories of the illnesses that ravaged their ancestors—smallpox, measles, tuberculosis, whooping cough, cholera, chicken pox, malaria, and influenza. They know they have always suffered from fevers, headaches, and diarrhea, which they consider their own illnesses. They say the familiar ailments usually respond to treatment with plants and shamanism. All other sicknesses, though, are "of the *cocama*." Historically, Cofán people had little immunity to them; the most virulent viruses and bacteria could empty a village of its inhabitants in a matter of weeks or months." (96-97)

"Priests have been coming to northeastern Ecuador to round up, convert, and ostensibly civilize the Cofán since the arrival of the Spanish in the 1500s. First came the Jesuits. Later, others arrived, Franciscans, Capuchins, Josephines, and Carmelites. The people of Dureno speak mostly of the Capuchins whom their parents and grandparents encountered. Coming mainly from Colombia, the Capuchins entered the area in the late 1800s. They tried to concentrate the Cofán at a mission on the San Miguel River in 1914. The effort fell apart nine years later due to a massive measles outbreak. The Capuchins also established residential sites at Santa Cecilia and the mouth of the Dureno river. At the latter, they built a school in the 1910s and, often accompanied by soldiers, tried to "enroll" as many Cofán students as they could find." (97)

"Most Cofán people who entered the Dureno school or other Capuchin sites described them with hatred. The priests berated and beat the students and made them labor on the mission grounds. They were also the reason measles killed so many Cofán people." (100)

"When Royal Dutch Shell arrived to explore the Aguarico region for oil in the 1940s, at least four Dureno men decided to work for them... Despite their trepidation, the men's desire for commodities motivated some to accept jobs as boatmen and seismic-trail cutters... Shell's main camp was far downriver. There, the company's amphibious Grumman Goose airplane landed on the Aguarico." (102)

"From the mid-1940s to the late 1960s, few *cocama* came to Dureno. There were occasional visits from river traders and priests. By the 1940s, the priests were Josephines... Everything started to change in 1964. That year, Texaco began its campaign of seismic exploration on Cofán land. It contracted a company named Geodesic Survey Incorporated (GSI) to do its testing. Texaco and GSI built a base camp at Santa Cecilia, the site Cofán people occupied before coming to Dureno. Santa Cecilia was near the center of Texaco's planned operations, and it allowed access to the Aguarico and San Miguel Rivers by a portage trail. In short order, the *cocama* workers carved a huge space out of the forest. They built a concrete runway big enough to handle CD-4s and DC6s. The planes began a near continuous round of flights between Santa Cecilia and Quito, where they loaded up with seismic equipment, supplies, and everything

else Texaco needed in its search for oil. The planes even brought tractors and trucks; they were the first automobiles most Cofán people had seen.

In a matter of months, teams of *cocama* workers, alongside some Napo Runa men, spread across Cofán territory to clear land for seismic trails. They moved by motorized canoe and helicopter. The first step was to build forest camps at which the workers could eat and sleep during each phase of trail cutting. Every day, they departed from the camps and used axes and compasses to cut three-meter-wide trails through the forest... Sometimes, one or two non-Cofán people were hired to hunt game to feed the workers... At the end of it all, the workers had built a grid of compass-straight, intersecting trails across the forest. During the next phase, another team came through with small drilling rigs they used to punch holes at regular intervals. On the initial round of seismic testing, the trails overlapped every 250 meters. On later rounds and in special locations, trails could cross as close as every 75 meters. After the drilling team dug holes, other workers came through to lay cables along the paths, put sensors in the ground, and drop packets of explosives into each hole, with the detonating wire attached. When the trails were cut, the cables were laid, and the sensors were arranged. GSI detonated the explosives in specific patterns and studied the ensuing seismic waves. The results told them where oil deposits might be located.

Within two years, Texaco was drilling exploratory wells at sites it detected during its seismic campaign. Its first exploratory well was at Lago Agrio in 1967. The exploratory wells closest to Dureno were at Parahuacu and Atacapi in 1968 and Dureno in 1969. The Lago Agrio well was drilled about four kilometers inland from the Aguarico and the historical Cofán village of Amisacho... Texaco constructed the wells next to streams into which it could dump the drilling muds used to pressurize, lubricate, and cool wells, along with other waste by-products of the exploration process. Cofán people used the streams for hunting, fishing, and drinking. All of the waterways emptied into the Aguarico. Texaco used helicopters to haul the necessary materials and equipment from Santa Cecilia and later Lago Agrio. The workers bulldozed large clearings in the forest for drilling rigs. They constructed houses and landing strips for small airplanes that took over much of the transport work from the helicopters after the initial construction... After the drillers hit a petroleum reserve—an event that could send thousands of barrels of oil spewing into the forest—workers capped the wells and waited for roads and pipelines to be built.

With the sites proven, Texaco began to construct roads, pipelines, and other processing facilities such as separation stations to remove water from crude. By 1972, Texaco completed construction of the trans-Ecuadorian pipeline, which brought Amazonian oil over the Andes to a refinery and export facility on the Pacific coast.

In 1972, Texaco finished the road from Quito to Lago Agrio. Over the next decade, the road system continued to expand through Cofán territory as Texaco built more wells and put them into production. By 1974, the road extended east from Lago Agrio and across the Aguarico from Dureno. By the end of the decade, Texaco had expanded roads, wells, and pipelines to the south and west of Dureno. The Guanta-Dureno field, including the Dureno exploratory well, did not go into production until the 1980s.

By 1972, Lago Agrio had replaced Santa Cecilia as Texaco's base of operations. There were company buildings, equipment, workers, stores, and prostitutes. There was also a landing strip that could accommodate larger planes. Lago Agrio was quickly becoming a city. Initially, Lago Agrio's official name was Nueva Loja. Everyone called it Lago Agrio, though—"Sour Lake," the name of the Texas town where Texaco struck oil in 1903.

As the road system was constructed, Texaco built the majority of its production wells. When they began to produce, the exploratory wells were typically numbered "1" (e.g., Parahuacu 1). Every production well in the same field became a later number (Parahuacu 2, and so forth). Next to the wells, Texaco dug pits where, without lining them, it dumped drilling muds and chemicals, excess crude, and formation water, a brackish liquid that mixes with oil underground and is extracted with crude. All of the substances were toxic. When it rained, the pits overflowed and the wastes poured into streams and rivers. Slowly, the wastes sunk into the groundwater as well. Texaco also spread sludge from the pits onto the region's gravel roads. The roads became dusty under the tropical sun, and the tarlike waste material helped keep

the dust down. Unfortunately, it also was a key form of contamination for local people who walked on the roads in bare feet.

Texaco built flares to burn off the natural gas that emerged with the crude. The flares burned twenty-four hours a day, sending smoke into the sky, killing insects and birds, and drying out nearby vegetation. Workers sometimes set fire to the waste pits to burn off waste oil and other flammable liquids. Huge plumes of thick smoke rose and mixed with the clouds. From miles away, people saw the ominous black pillars. Occasionally, workers also burned crude that spilled from broken pipelines, leaking tanks, or damaged valves. It was the cheapest and easiest way to dispose of it.

Initially, the underground pressure was enough to get the oil to the surface. By the mid-1980s, the pressure was decreasing, so Texaco built a pumping system to help move the crude out of the ground. By 1990, Texaco and other oil companies were injecting water into wells to help raise the oil.

Within months of their construction, the roads ushered in a stream of *cocama* settlers. Most were poor Ecuadorian from crowded Andean and coastal provinces. Some moved to Amazonian Ecuador spontaneously, and others were part of government colonization programs. They occupied any territory to which the roads provided access. They built houses and planted coffee crops and cattle pasture. Shortly after the road passed Dureno to the north, the Cofán abandoned their homes and fields on that side of the Aguarico. They were too afraid to live next to the *cocama*. The outsiders took Cofán land without warning or permission.” (103-107)

“The Cofán concept of property is completely different from the *cocama* concept, although they seem superficially similar. Cofán people hold that if a person builds a house or garden on a piece of land, that land is theirs as long as they work it... Apart from the crops one planted or the house one constructed, the resources were for everyone.” (113)

“Bub and William arranged a meeting with a representative of Ecuadorian President Guillermo Rodríguez Lara to discuss the Cofán land claim... With the authority of Rodríguez Lara, the representative extended Dureno’s legal claim west to the Cujavoé River, south to the Eno River, east to the Tururu River, and north to the new road. Deji said the revised claim was approximately forty thousand hectares. The president’s office promised it would immediately send employees from the Ecuadorian Institute of Agrarian Reform and Colonization to mark the community’s limits... [The Cofán] decided to restrict their territory to the south side of the Aguarico... The government officially recognized their reduced territory in 1978. In 1981, it granted the community full legal personhood as a *comuna*, with land held in common by its members.” (114-115)

“Most Cofán people are not sure what to make of oil contamination and its effects on human health. They tell many detailed stories about detecting the smell, sight, taste, and feel of oil in water, air, soil, and the flesh of fish and game animals... They also do not know what happens once it is inside their flesh and organs. After hearing their stories, any impartial listener would find it hard to deny that the Cofán of Dureno have been living in an oil-saturated world for decades. It is difficult to prove the health effects of the contamination, but it is even more difficult to believe they do not exist.

The person who alerted the public to the environmental destruction done by petroleum in eastern Ecuador was Judith Kimerling, a lawyer, legal scholar, and professor at Queens College in New York City. In 1989 and 1990, she traveled through Amazonian Ecuador and interviewed everyone she could find about the nature and costs of oil extraction. Based on her own research and an extensive review of existing literature and archival sources, she published *Amazon Crude* in 1991.

As Kimerling notes, for more than two decades Texaco dumped oil wastes directly into the Amazonian environment with no treatment. There was the crude itself, but many other substances were also involved: formation water, natural gas, water- and oil-based drilling muds, industrial solvents, chemical additives to enhance petroleum recovery, and produced water, created when formation water is removed from crude at separation stations. In horrifying detail, Kimerling lists the typical toxic components of the materials: ‘aluminum, antimony, arsenic, barium, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, magnesium, mercury, nickel,

zinc, benzene, naphthalene, phenanthrene, and other hydrocarbons, as well as toxic levels of sodium and chlorides' (in drilling wastes); 'sulfates, bicarbonates, hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide, cyanide, and heavy metals such as arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, vanadium, and zinc (in produced water); 'oxides of nitrogen, sulfur, and carbon, as well as heavy metals, hydrocarbons, and soot, or carbon particulate' (in burned gas, oil, and oil waste); and crude itself, which is 'very toxic.' Many of these substances are known carcinogens. Many also bio-accumulate in animals, including the tissue of fish and game. Most of them entered the water that Cofán people drank and used to wash their bodies, dishes, food, and clothes. And many entered the air that Cofán people breathed.

When Kimerling did her research in 1989 and 1990, the amount of oil wastes that were entering the Amazonian environment was astounding. When each well was drilled, approximately 42,000 gallons of waste oil and 4,165 cubic meters of muds and mud-coated drilling wastes were generated. At separation stations, 4.3 million gallons of produced water were released and 53 million cubic feet of natural gas were burned each day. Routine well maintenance involved the dumping of approximately 5 million gallons of wastes each year. Spills from secondary pipelines sent 17,000 to 20,000 gallons of oil into the environment every two weeks. From 1972 to 1990, the thirty major recorded spills of crude from the trans-Ecuadorian pipeline totals 16.8 million gallons –much more than the 10.8 million gallons spilled during the *Exxon Valdez* disaster in Alaska. During the same period, approximately 19 billion gallons of produced water entered the environment.” (126-128)

“The most cited information on oil’s medical consequences in Amazonian Ecuador, however, comes from a series of peer-reviewed studies published in the early 2000s. The studies’ main authors are Anna-Karin Hurtig and Miguel San Sebastián of the Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine at Umeå University in Sweden. Together, the findings they present are troubling: elevated levels of cancers of the stomach, liver, rectum, pancreas, throat, skin, blood, soft tissue, gynecological systems, lymph nodes, and breast. Some of the high rates they detected occurred across demographic groups, and some were specific to men, women, or children. Rates were especially high among people who lived close to oil-producing facilities.” (128)

“By the 1980s , many Cofán families had acquired tanks –sometimes nothing more than used oil barrels- to collect rainwater for drinking and cooking. The Bormans had taught them that untreated water from the Aguarico and most other rivers was far too contaminated for consumption. Oil wastes were one problem; the sewage and garbage that emptied into the river from Lago Agrio and smaller colonist settlements had also become impossible to ignore. When rain fell from zinc roofing sheets into barrels, people thought it was safer, and it probably was. But Texaco and other oil companies were still burning many of their waste products. Next to all production stations and many oil wells were flares that burned off the natural gas that emerged with the crude. And when waste pits grew too thick or high or an unexpected spill occurred, workers often set fire to them to get rid of the unwanted materials... The natural gas from the wells and production stations burned twenty-four hours a day on all sides of the community –and it still does... The tanks intensified the experience of pollution. The collected water could look strangely dark... At times, people noticed nothing strange about the water, but when the levels got low during a dry period, they saw a thick layer of dark sludge at the bottom of the barrels... Some people say that toxic rain has caused garden crops and forest fruits to become smaller and less plentiful.” (144-149)

“When I think about the company that for more than two decades threw billions of gallons of oil wastes into the Cofán’s streams and rivers and burned billions of cubic feet of natural gas and thousands of gallons of toxic substances into their skies, it is hard not to become enraged. Since 1993, Texaco and Chevron have spent hundreds of millions of dollars arguing that they are not culpable for the problems of the Cofán and their neighbors. I do not know how their executives and lawyers manage to sleep at night. Perhaps they are truly ignorant of the companies’ legacy in Amazonian Ecuador. Perhaps they have come to believe the narratives their expert witnesses have spun. Or they might console themselves with the conviction that scientists will never be able to prove a link between Texaco’s operations and Cofán

suffering. The idea probably assuages their guilt. It might also calm their fear that they will eventually have to pay for what the company has done. No matter what their beliefs and intentions, their words and actions amount to a 'labor of confusion' that multiplies doubts about oil's assault on human health. The people of Dureno are left to suffer the consequences and hope that the pain and sickness will one day go away." (162-163)

"In 1987, the people of Dureno blockaded a road that Texaco attempted to build into their territory without warning or permission. In 1993 and 1994, the residents of Zábalo kidnapped oil workers, burned a Petroecuador heliport, and closed an exploratory well. In 1998, hundreds of individuals from multiple Cofán communities came together to shut down Dureno 1, the well that Texaco drilled inside Dureno's territory in 1969... Lucía participated in the 1987 and 1998 actions... She was silent during the recent community meetings in which people debated whether to allow seismic exploration on their land. In 2013, they decided to do it—a choice that disappointed many of the Cofán's nonindigenous allies." (167)

"Before the 1980s, the Cofán were not familiar with 'protest.'" (169)

"Catholic priests, mainly Carmelites but also a few Capuchins, were critical in the politicization of Toribio and other Duren leaders. By the 1970s, Latin America's Catholic Church had become radicalized. Many young priests held left-wing commitments to liberation theology, social justice, and environmental activism. Toribio said a Carmelite named José Luis Trueba was an important influence on him... He taught them how to compose reports, letters of protest, and requests for aid from state officials and nongovernmental organizations." (174)

"Although indigenous groups may have title to land, the government claims ownership of all subsurface resources, including oil." (175)

"In the summer of 1987, Texaco began to build a road into the western edge of Dureno's territory. The company neither notified the Cofán nor asked their permission. The community had already cut and marked its boundary trails, but Texaco simply ignored them... By the time people went to see what was happening, Texaco had already made kilometers of road and a drilling platform... Although some people were afraid, everyone ultimately agreed to confront the Texaco workers. In October 1987, a group of Cofán men and women hiked to the platform in traditional dress. They spoke to the site supervisor, who was a *cocama*. Toribio told him the platform and road were on Cofán land. The supervisor replied, "No. This belongs to the state. You cannot prohibit us here. We are here to drill oil that belongs to the state..." Toribio and other leaders went to the Texaco office in Lago Agrio. They tried to begin a dialogue, but the company official refused to engage with them... Almost all community members moved to the site. Some say they were there for a month; others say their occupation lasted at least three months. The priests came to provide aid and supplies... The Cofán devised a plan to send word of coming threats through a set of imitated birdcalls they would use to relay messages back to the platform site, where most people were camped. At the urging of the priests and more experienced indigenous leaders, the Cofán decided to plant gardens along the road to solidify their presence. After the occupation was over, a few families decided to build houses next to the gardens and create the population center of Pisoríé Canque." (174-176)

"Texaco chief of operations... in reciprocation for Texaco's entrance and planned drilling, offered the community three cars, a schoolhouse, and 150 million *suces* (the Ecuadorian currency at the time). Toribio replied that he could not make the decision alone." The Cofán decided not to accept the offer. "Toribio returned to the Texaco chief. The man listened to Toribio's report, but he said that if the Cofán did not take his offer, soldiers would come and remove them from the site by force. Toribio told him to go ahead and send the soldiers. In the following weeks, however, the soldiers never arrived." (177-178)

In their 1995 article *The Shifting Middle Ground: Amazonian Indians and Eco-politics*,” Beth Conklin and Laura Graham “assert that many environmental activists view Amazonian peoples according to the stereotypical image of ‘the ecologically noble savage.’ The outsiders have little knowledge of the actual perspectives, experiences, and objectives of people like the Cofán. Portraying nature Amazonians as natural conservationists attracts significant publicity for indigenous causes. But the assumption creates a form of coalitional politics that is all too fragile. As soon as Amazonians make choices that conflict with the image of ecological nobility, alliances and collaborations can crumble to the ground.” (193-194)

“By March 2013, BGP was everywhere in Dureno... By July, everyone was hearing the loud booms of the underground explosions... All non-Cofán BGP employees –who were *cocama*, Afro-Ecuadorian, and Napo Runa- slept and ate at the company camp on the Pisoré River... Community members chose to work mainly as camp guards and *motoristas* (transporters of workers in canoes)... Depending on the size of the canoe and motor, BGP paid the *motoristas* as much as \$ 2,000 a month... The work flooded Dureno with money. Even more significant was the compensation the community received. In exchange for the Cofán’s vote to allow seismic exploration on their land, BGP agreed to give a \$ 1,000 payment to each Dureno resident who was fifteen or older. The company also agreed to buy a \$ 2,000 outboard motor for each household. Some families, though, decided to use the \$ 2,000... to buy other commodities such as chainsaws, weed whackers, gas stoves, and refrigerators... Dureno residents could do whatever they wanted with with the \$ 1,000. Many used it to pay off debts. Others bought food, clothing, cell phones, or school materials... a number of young men spent most of it on beer. Alejandro and Lucía used the money to buy a \$ 1,500 fiberglass canoe and a bicycle for Roberto. By the end of July, BGP had completed seismic exploration, and the income disappeared. Later in 2013, the community signed an agreement with Petroamazonas for other oil-related work... The new operations did not provide significant work opportunities, but the community negotiated the purchase of eight pickup trucks as compensation. They immediately began renting the trucks back to Petroamazonas, which paid Dureno about approximately \$11,000 a month for them. According to the Petroamazonas agreement, the income would last for at least three years. In addition, Petroamazonas agreed to pay for truck-driving courses for five Cofán men... It also offered partial university scholarships for twelve community residents and full university scholarships for three. Furthermore, it arranged for a medical team to visit Dureno each month.” (196-199)

“BGP’s seismic trails were forty-five centimeters wide rather than three meters; the company agreed to cut down no large trees or useful species; it compensated the community when it destroyed valuable plants by mistake; it built its camp far from the main settlement; it replanted trails and its camp site with useful tree species; it offered employment to all Cofán individuals who wanted it; it prohibited workers from consuming alcohol or drugs; and it agreed to fire any workers who propositioned Cofán women or failed to treat any Cofán people, including those who worked for BGP, with respect... Most importantly, the company collected all waste liquids in secure holding tanks and shipped them offsite for reinjection into abandoned wells.” (199)

“Perhaps most significantly, in early 2012 the Ecuadorian government agreed to build a millennium community in Dureno. ... It would include a high-quality cement and bamboo house for each family, new schools, and improved infrastructure for potable water, a sewage system, and Internet and satellite TV connections for families willing to pay a monthly fee.” (199)

“Oil’s renewed appearance in Dureno also generated intense conflicts that threatened to rip the community apart... When Eduardo introduced the idea of allowing seismic exploration on Dureno land, the community split in half... The schism emerged along family lines. As it increased in intensity, it began to break families apart... The fighting also divided generations. At first, most young people wanted the company to enter, and most old people did not.” (200-214)

“There are were additional reasons” to accept oil exploration. “People knew there were oil wells on all sides of Dureno. They also knew companies could drill more along the community’s boundaries. With directional drilling, the wells could extract the crude from beneath Dureno without actually being in Dureno. Consequently, the oil would be gone and the Cofán would receive none of the benefits. Pollution from spills and flares, however, would continue to cross the boundaries in air, rivers, and contaminated fish and game. Many people argued that allowing the *compañía* to operate within Dureno would paradoxically create a better environmental situation. Not only would the Cofán receive work, money, and benefits; they would have far more power to monitor and influence company operations. In the event of unfulfilled promises or irresponsible actions, the Cofán would be able to halt work through small-scale protests that are much easier to justify and orchestrate on their own land.” (216-217)

“Some Dureno residents also agreed with Eduardo that they should take advantage of the political moment. President Correa offered a stick and a carrot. Although he claimed to side with Ecuador’s progressive social movements, he lashed out at many indigenous and environmental organizations. If people took to the streets and engaged in what some deemed violent acts of protest, Correa labeled them *terroristas* and sometimes imprisoned them. During his time in office, there were serious clashes between the military and indigenous protestors. People died... Cofán people no longer believe they can block roads and take over oil wells. Earlier administrations responded peacefully to such acts of resistance. Correa was different. Wit Correa’s ally Lenín Moreno now in office, the Cofán are afraid they would end up in jail –or dead- if they were to repeat the 1987 and 1998 actions. Some even fear the government would revoke their land title and evict them from their territory.” (217)

“Most Cofán people no longer believe they can say no to oil, but they do believe they can say how it will be extracted.” (217)

“Global political-economic sifts determine the commodity’s fluctuating price, which is often far more important than the power of a community or a nation-state to determine whether oil remains on the ground.” (231)