



This publication is dedicated to the memory of:

**Indigenous leader Eduardo Mendúa of the Cofán – an Amazon nation leading the fight against the Chevron Oil Company - the owners of Texaco.**

**Eduardo was murdered in his village on Sunday 26th February 2023. He was leading a campaign to block new oil wells on his ancestral lands.**



# What we are trying to do...

1. Highlight the various ways in which fossil fuel companies, in this case Texaco, use sports and the arts to attempt to soften and polish their image and to insinuate themselves into the artistic and social fabric of the country.
2. Confront the storyline that Texaco promotes of itself as a supporter of community values and endeavour and to outline the company's record as a significant global polluter and as an abuser of indigenous communities, their rights, and their environments across the world.
3. Generate a broad coalition of support among arts, sports and non-governmental organisations for a boycott of all Texaco and other fossil fuel companies' sponsorship schemes and agendas.
4. Encourage those associated with the Texaco art competition (including schools) and its sports grants scheme to reflect on the direct threat that fossil fuel companies represent in terms of environment, rights, and climate change and to disassociate themselves from Texaco without delay.
5. Challenge those who ignore, promote, or defend the Texaco agenda and to highlight how that conflicts with other agendas such as children's rights worldwide.

**We are urging all participants, schools, arts centres and sporting organisations across the island of Ireland to withdraw from all Texaco agendas and competitions and to refuse all Texaco funding.**

# Antonio Guterres...

“We seem trapped in a world where fossil fuel producers and financiers have humanity by the throat. For decades, the fossil fuel industry has invested heavily in pseudoscience and public relations – with a false narrative to minimise their responsibility for climate change and undermine ambitious climate policies.

They exploited precisely the same scandalous tactics as big tobacco decades before.

Like tobacco interests, fossil fuel interests and their financial accomplices must not escape responsibility.”



Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations - November 2022.



# SpoArts Washing - What is it?



David Beckham promoting the 2022 Qatar World Cup - Photo: LinkedIn

“It’s not enough to go to a country like Qatar and say that it looks wonderful, like David Beckham, and share a video that everything on the surface looks okay. It’s not okay.”

Craig Foster, former Australian soccer captain and human rights activist

**S**portswashing has been labelled the ‘great deception’ where fossil fuel companies most responsible for irreversibly heating the planet spend millions on advertising and sponsorship to assert that their business models and plans are driven by the idea of sustainability.

**A**rt washing is a term that has been popularised to describe the ways that major polluters and other organisations that cause environmental damage use the arts to clean up their public image.

On average, for the past 50 years, fossil fuel companies have made an average profit of \$2.8 billion a day. They need to invest only a fraction of this money in politica to buy every politician and every political decision they need. We know that the easiest way for a politician to secure power is to appease those who already possess it, those whose power transcends elections, the oil barons, the media barons, the corporations, and financial markets.

George Monbiot - The Guardian, Saturday 19 November 2022

# Arguing the case...

## For the past 30-plus years, I have been involved in activism on environmental, social justice and human rights issues.

Tom Roche

As a woodworker, I have always been close to wood. I love the feel of wood. I love its texture and its smell. I love what it is and what it can become. It is one of nature's bountiful gifts. Sometimes I think, I think wood. I think a lot about people who work with wood, woodcarvers and wood turners, boatbuilders and shipbuilder, carpenters and luthiers. I also think about all those who can make wood sing. Gabriel's Oboe, Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 3, George Harrison's gently weeping guitar.

It is the way I look at the world. I also feel a strong affinity with all of those who work with wood. It is a gift that enhances our quality of life. In an ideal world, it is a gift that all of us can share.

**It is easy to be silent. Turn a blind eye. For me that wasn't an option. It was like an itch. Scratching away. This is who I am. I can't leave things be.**

All my life, I have been committed to the responsible management and conservation of our forests. Not just here in Ireland but across the globe. Stewardship. It's a word I like. It's about management, protection. Care too. Care for trees. Care for the forests. Care for the people of the forests. Stewardship. A good word. Both noun and verb. One that frames what I do and how I do it. We, all of us, are but stewards of the natural world, or ought to be. These are our lungs. The air that we breathe.

Sadly, as we all know, that is not always the case. Wanton waste and destructive practices have been the hallmark of the way in which the bulk forests have been and are treated. It is the dominant economic imperative. Slash and burn.

Corporate burning for short-term gain. Burning for profit. Not that all those who engage in such practices are to blame. The poor and dispossessed of the world are often left with no choice. No blame rests here.

Over the years, I have thought a lot about these things. Privately and publicly. And over the years, I have become a public advocate for wood. For the forests of the world. For the people of the forests of the world. In 1989, I founded Just Forests, an advocacy organisation that speaks to hands, hearts and minds. This is my political work. Social Justice in a time of climate emergency.

It is easy to be silent. Turn a blind eye. For me that wasn't an option. It was like an itch. Scratching away. This is who I am. I can't leave things be.

This is what brought me to fossil fuel companies. Sportswashing. Long before I knew of the existence of the word. Long before the word became common currency. Artswashing too.

**Stewardship. It's a word I like. It's about management, protection. Care too. Care for trees. Care for the forests. Care for the people of the forests.**

Texaco's children's art competition. A shameless exercise in artswashing. This is what has exercised me for a long number of years now. The fossil fuel footprint across the world. The reality and the fantasy. A fuzzy feelgood competition for Irish children, while children in other parts of the world where Texaco extracts its oil painfully suffer from its extractive practices.



Above: Tom Roche - craftsman, environmental/human rights activist and founder of Irish NGO Just Forests

And then Texaco's sports grants. Paltry sums of money expended on local sports clubs. Sportswashing. Texaco might have provided the impetus for this publication but they are not alone. Applegreen has their own copycat version. But this is not just an Irish phenomenon. It has become a global practice. Coca Cola's jaw-droppingly brazen sponsorship of Cop 27, UN's climate conference. A conference that is taking place in a country under political dictatorship. Politicalwashing.

This is what has brought me to co-edit this publication. This is the reason I approached Colm Regan and Peadar King to work on this with me.

Together we are inviting all who facilitate fossil fuel sports and arts washing in Ireland to stop doing so. We are calling on all arts organisations, sports clubs, non-governmental organisations and individuals to join with us in ending their attempts at washing away the stains they have left across the planet.

No more will we be their mouthpiece. No more will we turn a blind eye to their nefarious extractive activities across the globe. We will not and cannot ignore the crimes that fossil fuel oil companies have done and continue to do in some of the poorest and disfavoured communities across our shared world.

We will not be silenced. We will not be bought. That is our request to you. Not to be silenced. Not to be bought.

# The great deception...



Photo Just Forests: School strikers gather outside the Customs House in Dublin in preparation for their march to Government Buildings to protest the Irish Government's lack of action on climate chaos and declining biological diversity.

**Sportswashing, has increased in scale and importance in recent times. It has become one of the latest tools used by multinational oil companies, big pharma, and by dictatorial regimes in attempting yet another image make-over.**

Images sell. Create feelgood feelings. A sense of belonging. A sense of place. Family. Community. That we are all in this together. Multinational oil companies, big pharma, and dictatorial regimes know this and invest heavily in the creation of soft images. They fully understand the soft power of soft images

Images that divert attention from profiteering, human trafficking, exploitative worker practices, destructive environmental practices projects, crimes against humanity. Images that attempt to scrub away all the associated stains.

The Power of the Right Image. The Right slogan. Benetton's United Colours. Nike's Just Do It. L'Oréal's Because I'm worth it. The holy grail of marketing executives.

The right image. The right campaign. A public relations bonanza. For public relations companies and for the sponsoring companies. Images loved by company executives, shareholders and bankers. Particularly executives, shareholders and bankers. At stake: a priceless public image.

Clean, smiling workers in pristine locations bringing sustainable energy to our homes. What's not to like? Fossil fuel companies attempt at positioning themselves as champions of the environment. Concerned citizens of the world.

The evidence tells another story. Over the past five years, research from scientists from a wide range of universities, science institutions, governments, and international organisations (including the UN) have argued that not only have such companies polluted the earth, but they have also done likewise to the information landscape.

Sportswashing: 'an application of soft power that results in the normalisation of states with poor human rights records within ordinary conversation', according to Kristian Coates Ulrichsen a Middle East scholar at the Baker Institute in Houston, Texas. Sportswashing: Complicity and Corruption argue Kyle Fruh, Alfred Archer & Jake Wojtowicz in Sport, Ethics and Philosophy, 2022. Sportswashing: the grim game of our times, wrote Laura Slattery in The Irish Times in 2018.

And there's more. Lots more voices that challenge the great sweep of sportswashing.

We are not immune to the practice here in Ireland.

Texaco seeks to have its brand closely associated with schools and sports. Children, young people and their parents. Key demographics.

Keywords litter their PR blurbs. Eco, Sustainable, Renewable. Net zero target. Transition, Low(er)-carbon. Part of the challenge, part of the solution. Carbon capture. Responsible. Green.

Both greenwashing and sportswashing are very active components in what has been labelled the 'great deception' where those fossil fuel companies most responsible for irreversibly heating the planet spend millions on advertising and sponsorship to assert that their business models and plans are driven by the idea of sustainability.



“We’re currently witnessing a great deception, where the companies most responsible for catastrophically heating the planet are spending millions on advertising campaigns about how their business plans are focused on sustainability,”

Johnny White, ClientEarth



**€5,000 AWARD FOR A CLUB IN EVERY COUNTY**

*Any sport. Every county.*



**Above left:** Texaco promotional posters at forecourts around the country announcing the Texaco Sports Funding.  
Photos: Just Forests.



**Above right:** Texaco promotional poster at one of their forecourts inviting children around Ireland to enter their 2022 Children's Art Competition.  
Photos: Just Forests.



# Texaco & Arts Washing...

Billed as ‘a wonderful childhood experience’ Valero Energy launched the Texaco Children’s Art competition in January of this year. “A magical memory” is how batik artist and former winner Bernadette Madden described the experience followed by “Thank you Texaco”.

The competition has been lauded by former Presidents Robinson and McAlleese. Former Labour Party leader and government minister Ruairi Quinn claimed that it had a profound effect on his life. Guests of honour have included former Taoisaigh, Lord Mayors, Diplomats and other persons.

All of which is recorded in the Texaco children’s arts page. If you want further information on the

competition ‘go to Texaco service stations throughout the country’. It’s the kind of publicity money can’t buy. So much so that Texaco claim that Texaco Children’s Art Competition can no longer be viewed simply as a commercial sponsorship. Now in its 69th year, the first competition was held in 1955. Its motto was ‘Keep it Quiet’, a reference to one of Texaco’s products. Now, almost 70 years later, Texaco wants us

to keep quiet about its behaviour worldwide and its impact.

Now is not the time to be quiet. Texaco offering a wonderful childhood experience. Indeed.

Keep it quiet. Indeed.

Texaco offering a wonderful childhood experience. Indeed.



**Photo:** Texaco campaigners Tom Roche and Peadar King hand in a letter to the Director of Highlanes Gallery in Drogheda, Co Louth, requesting that Highlanes Gallery discontinue their association with the Texaco Children’s Art Competition.



# Texaco & Sports Washing...

No evidence is offered by Texaco of its opening gambit in its promotion of its SUPPORT FOR SPORT initiative. ‘Rekindling a cherished relationship that exists between Texaco and generations of Irish sports enthusiasts...’.

And there’s more... ‘Few things bind Irish people together better than our love of sport!’ And few things give expression to that love better than the many sports clubs found in townlands, villages and cities up and down the country’. And it continues... ‘Sports clubs instil in all of us a strong sense of identity, deep feelings of belonging and the reassurance of being part of the ‘team’.

Texaco sees itself as part of ‘the team. Our Texaco Support for Sport initiative is designed to recognise the important contribution that sports clubs make within society by supporting them in a manner that can benefit them most.

In a manner that can benefit them most. ‘We wish sports clubs throughout Ireland the best of luck in their pursuit of our €5,000 award!’ Their! A key element in the judging process will be according to Texaco ‘their ability to show how their ambitions will be materially advanced through the receipt and proper use of funding.’ This is what clubs run by volunteers have to do to secure €5,000 from Texaco. In total Texaco is grant aiding €130,000.

I’m very excited to take part as I truly believe that a fund of this size can make a very real difference to the betterment and running of any

club in this country Texaco brand ambassador and former international rugby player Donnacha O’Callaghan announced in an interview with CHECKOUT magazine in December 2020. I truly believe that... 5,000 from Texaco ... can make a very real difference to the betterment of any club... Only 26 clubs were that lucky in 2022.

We believe that the Texaco Support for Sport ... will help ... the Texaco brand...” James Twohig, Director of Ireland Operations, Valero Energy (Ireland) Limited.

**UNICEF and Mr O’Callaghan were given the right to reply but chose not to, which is, of course, within their rights.**



Texaco and Unicef IRELAND Ambassador, Donacha O’Callaghan promoting Texaco Sports Project.

Photo: Texaco sport website - <https://texacosupportforsport.com/>



**Texaco DUMPED** 18.5 BILLION gallons of cancer-causing toxic oil waste in community forests in Ecuador

**Texaco CAUSED** a cancer epidemic that has maimed & killed thousands of indigenous people

**Texaco FLED** Ecuador after a court found it guilty

**Texaco REFUSED** to pay the court-ordered compensation & cleanup after the devastating pollution it caused

**Texaco DEMONISED** human-rights defender Steven Donziger as a means of scaring and silencing other defenders

**Texaco PAID** millions of dollars to a corrupt US Judge to put Donziger under house arrest and behind bars where he was held unlawfully for almost 1000 days

#### Sources for the above:

**HERE...** <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/feb/08/chevron-amazon-ecuador-stein-donziger-erin-brockovich>

**HERE..** <https://theintercept.com/2020/01/29/chevron-ecuador-lawsuit-stein-donziger/>

**and HERE...** <https://www.forbes.com/sites/morgansimon/2022/05/26/courts-are-not-a-weapon-how-corporations-like-chevron-use-the-law-to-get-their-way/?sh=19a82e4628c2>

**We argue that Texaco USED** school teachers & children in Ireland for decades to clean up their image through childrens art and they want to do the same through sport.

# Comments on the issue...

‘Many thanks for your email, which we have considered carefully, we agree that the time has come to withdraw from the Texaco art prize as it no longer aligns with our position on sustainability. We have given notice that going forward we will no longer participate as jury members in the competition. Kind regards.’



**Annie Fletcher - Director, Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA)**  
(email Thursday 19th May 2022)

‘Regarding the issue around UNICEF Ireland and the Texaco ‘support for sport’ programme, I think you are raising a very valid concern. I saw, at first hand, how Shell operated in Mayo and the way in which they divided the community by handing out large sums to the local GAA club etc. It’s the way in which they ingratiate themselves with local communities.’



**Joe Murray – AFRI (email 14 January 2021)**

Aoife Ruane, Director of Highlanes Gallery in Drogheda, Co Louth, has confirmed that she will step down as one of the judges for the Texaco Children’s Art Competition and will not host the exhibition anymore in Highlanes Gallery.



**(in person meeting Friday 1st October 2021)**

‘Our policies, operations, partnerships and programming must align with sustainability, with justice and fairness for people and nature at the core, therefore we would not develop programme or sponsorship arrangements with fossil fuel companies such as Texaco or other companies that do not align with this goal.’



**Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre,**  
(email 23 November 2022)

‘In the face of their inexcusable and catastrophic impact on the planet, fossil fuel companies like Chevron-Texaco are desperate for a ‘social license’ to operate. In Ireland they hope to boost that license by coughing up €130,000 – peanuts to them. Irish sports, famous the world over, are better than that. Please don’t take their tainted money.’



**Patrick Alley, Co-Founder of campaign group Global Witness (email 14 December 2020)**

‘My family business has been involved in the Texaco Children’s Art Competition for the last 33 years - in the capacity of a contractor. But on learning about Texaco’s operations in Ecuador from 1964 to 1992 - the atrocities and environmental devastation they left behind, which has ruined the lives of the “indigenous people” and children, we as a family decided to sever our relationship with the Texaco Children’s Art Competition in 2021.’

**Patrick Abbott, email Friday 28th November 2022**



# Texaco & Unicef Ireland...

“Meeting children who fled their homes in Zimbabwe and travelled on their own as far as Johannesburg for a chance to go to school was life-changing. It has made me determined to do as much as I can to help, Mr. O’Callaghan said following a fact-finding mission to South Africa.

Having one of its brand ambassadors act as ambassador for and serve on the board of an international agency that seeks the protection of children serves the interests of Texaco.

Independence and objectivity are important values in life. Representing an international children’s charity while also representing a company that has been found to have had ruinous impacts on the environment and on the health of individuals, families, and communities (children included) raises fundamental and important human rights questions. Is it possible to credibly do both?

When contacted to establish if he saw any conflict between representing Texaco that a 2011 Ecuadorian Supreme Court fined \$9.5 billion in a class action brought by 30,000 Ecuadorians for polluting a large part of the country’s Amazon region while also helping the ‘children in the greatest need’, Mr. O’Callaghan did not reply.

No reply was forthcoming either from Peter Power, former TD and former Minister of State for Overseas Development (2008-2011) current Director of UNICEF Ireland on the appropriateness of having a Texaco brand ambassador on its board and as one of its ambassadors.

That one of its members had a fossil fuel brand ambassador was deemed not a matter of interest by Dochas, the umbrella organisation for development non-governmental organisations in Ireland.

“It is an honour to be asked to become a board member for UNICEF Ireland, Texaco oil company brand ambassador Donnacha O’Callaghan stated in 2012, three years following his appointment as a goodwill ambassador for UNICEF. “I am hoping to use my international sporting career to bring a new dimension and breadth of experience to the work of the Board of UNICEF Ireland.”



Above: Brand Ambassador Donnacha O’Callaghan, Texaco Support For Sport and UNICEF Ireland Ambassador and Board member.

Photo: Checkout.ie



Above: Texaco campaigner Tom Roche of Just Forests outside the offices of UNICEF Ireland in Dublin

Photo: Just Forests

“ I appreciate the great humanitarian work Donnacha O’Callaghan does on behalf of UNICEF Ireland, but I urgently ask him to withdraw from any association with Texaco, a company with an appalling human rights record around the world. Chevron-Texaco is responsible for human rights and environmental abuses against indigenous communities in Nigeria, Ecuador, and other nations.”

Rex Weyler, Co-founder GREENPEACE International

# Business as usual...

The arguments and the evidence could not be clearer. The latest report (October 31 2022) from the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) argues that simply tweaking our social and economic systems ‘is not going to get us to a climate resilient future’.

Colm Regan

Instead, we need ‘transformational changes... everything from our food to our energy to transportation, but also our politics and our society’. There is much else in that report in a similar vein which space precludes outlining.

The core message is crystal clear – more of the current status quo will not do, we need transformative thinking, politics, and action. For those of us engaged in development, human rights, justice, or sustainability education, what should this call from the IPCC mean? How might it challenge or change how we go about our agenda. Should it, can it be business as usual; how can we up our game?

Surely it cannot simply mean yet more conferencing and academic articles written in incomprehensible language. What of our other traditions and practices – those of generating and promoting appropriate and informed political action? What of our traditions of challenging economic, political, corporate, or cultural power that continue to promote unsustainable ‘development’, injustice, and the abuse of rights? How do we translate the IPCC evidence into popular judgement and action?

**Surely it cannot simply mean yet more conferencing and academic articles written in incomprehensible language.**

Being more specific again, what might it mean for our engagement with one of the greatest abusers of nature and a prime contributor to climate change – the immensely powerful fossil fuel industry with its current and <sup>1</sup>future agendas? How can we credibly talk about engaging climate change without confronting this ‘vested interest’ (IPCC description)? To paraphrase US environmental sociologist Robert Brulle, of Brown University, doing

so would be like Star Wars without Darth Vader.

Allied to this, what could our response be to the increased rise of <sup>2</sup>greenwashing to promote a supposedly ‘softer’, ‘more caring’ and ‘greener’ fossil fuel sector. There is no shortage of detail and analysis on the immensely negative impacts of fossil fuels; the IPCC report (and the process leading up to the latest report) unequivocally asserts that ‘big oil’ must be directly challenged if the changes urgently needed are to be realised.

Despite the greenwash, the fossil fuel industry is not a credible partner in the sustainability agenda. In this context how should we respond to an agenda that now involves a global fossil fuel giant (Texaco) sponsoring a children’s art competition in schools, one promoted by a celebrity sportsman who is also an ambassador for UNICEF? The latter claims in banner headlines on its <sup>3</sup>website that ‘Climate change and environmental degradation undermine the rights of every child’. And yet, most of us are strangely silent on the subject.

**This issue should become a common and shared agenda item – it should not be left to individual activists and organisations who can be readily ignored, ridiculed or pushed aside.**

Surely, minimally we should be encouraging schools and students to consider and debate the issues involved (and to use the art competition to illustrate the role of fossil fuel companies such as Texaco in generating and sustaining environmental damage)? This would amount to familiar and well-tested territory.

Perhaps we could go further and encourage schools and students to challenge the exhibition organisers on the uncritical



Above: Colm Regan - founder of Irish NGO 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World

acceptance of fossil fuel sponsorship? The same would apply to sports clubs benefitting from Texaco’s <sup>4</sup>support for clubs greenwashing.

We should, as a matter of course, be encouraging those students and members of sports clubs to research and critically reflect on Texaco’s track record, its behaviour, and its future plans on a range of key issues such as climate change, discriminatory practices, human rights abuses etc. They could begin such investigations <sup>5</sup>here and <sup>6</sup>here and <sup>7</sup>here. At an absolute minimum, we should be encouraging critical reflection on the issue.

Individually and collectively, should we not be challenging Donncha O’Callaghan and other celebrities to use their influence positively not just on publicity for Texaco but on the vital and urgent issue of climate change and the role of the fossil fuel industry? Donncha O’Callaghan could and should be an important ally in this agenda.

And should we not also be challenging one of our own – UNICEF – to live up to its own analysis of climate change and its causes and to reflect on the glaring conflict of interest it has on its own doorstep with one of its brand ambassadors? UNICEF has the power and influence to do something on this issue without delay.

Overall, we ought be individually and collectively engaging in a far more robust way with the climate <sup>8</sup>denial machine and with the fossil fuel industry’s future strategy which has immense and irreversible negative implications for nature and for all.

# Forest resistance...

For thousands of years, the Achuar lived largely undisturbed lives deep in the rainforests of Ecuador. At the end of the second millennium their ancient community-based lifestyle was brutally upended. All in the name of oil.

## Peadar King

Essential to our world, it threatens the end of theirs. In 1998, the Ecuadorian government gave US-based multinational ARCO a licence to explore oil on their tribal land. Six years later along with other crew members, I travelled to meet with members of the Achuar who were resisting the oil company's incursion on their land.

Every day from our missionary base deep in the Amazonian forest, we trekked three kilometres to meet with a community of Achuar. Later, I wrote in my diary...

...we slowly made our way through soft muddied tracks under the most awe-inspiring canopies penetrated by shimmering light, through a narrow, cloister-like pathway surrounded on either side by tree-pillars. In this most sacred of cathedrals ... trees towering above us for countless metres that had our heads titling upwards, our necks straining to the sky...

This is the world, the Achuar are seeking to protect. While we filmed the daily rhythms of their lives, they told us of their mammoth struggle with Burlington Oil Company. "We know that if the oil company comes, it will lay waste to the rain forest and to everything we have", Luis Freire told us. "If they come to destroy everything we have, we will do everything we can to protect ourselves. If we have to punish them, we will apply the ancestral punishment, which is to put chili in their eyes".

In 2000, in violation of Ecuadorian and international law, Burlington Oil Company repeatedly entered indigenous ancestral lands without prior consultation with recognised tribal authorities. Convention 169 of the International Labour Organisation clearly states that indigenous people have rights to the land where

they have lived for thousands of years. As a result of a case taken in 2012 by the Achuar to the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, Burlington withdrew their contractual claims.

Following a four day shoot with the Achuar, we travelled north to Lagio Agrio, close to the Columbian border where 40 years previously Texaco oil company began drilling for oil. The contrast between the pristine forests we had experienced and the devastation that unfolded could not be more startling. From the Garden of Eden to Armageddon. Notes from my diary describe the scene...

All around us is scarred land. Smoke and balls of fire bellow into the air. Rivers and lakes shimmer in an unnatural kaleidoscope of rich oil-slick colours. Sludge oozes up from the ground at every twist and turn caking our boots in its black debris.

This is Texaco's footprint on what was once unspoiled forest. The contrast with my notes from the Achuar territory in stark relief. And this is how Fidel Aquinda Mastracon, leader of the Cofan people summed up the impact of Texaco oil company on Cofan territory.

Texaco brought many illnesses to our country. We did not know what cancer was. The water is contaminated. The animals die. We die.

It is easy to make a film. It is easy to be horrified watching a film. It is easy to feel helpless. But we have agency. We can make a difference. This is the affirming decades-long message that non-governmental organisations have been making. Over and over again. Challenging the power brokers of the world. In many respects that too is the easy part.



Challenging ourselves is an altogether different proposition. The silence surrounding Texaco's involvement in a schools' art competition is deeply troubling. Troubling too is Texaco's involvement with sport. Troubling, the unchallenged Texaco sportwashing. And deeply troubling is the silence of non-governmental organisations and people who represent them, people and organisations claiming to work for the rights of the oppressed people of the world, on Texaco's attempts at sportwashing. Put simply: it is not possible to serve the interests of Texaco oil company and the rights of indigenous people. It really is that simple. We have to choose.

It bears repeating. Complicity in Texaco's sportwashing is not compatible and can never be compatible with the furtherance of human rights. It is that simple. It really is.

Just ask the Achuar and the Cofan.



Above: Peadar King and Mick Cassidy during filming in Ecuador. Fires rage during oil drilling in the Lagio Agrio region of Ecuador. Photo credit: Ken O'Mahony What In The World RTE television series 2004



# Pester power...

## Pocket Forests co-founder and award-winning writer, Catherine Cleary takes issue with APPLGREEN'S 'BioDive' project.

Reprinted by kind permission

Sometimes greenwashing comes in industrial strength. Picture a tobacco company launching a campaign to promote lung health. An illustrated poster is produced with space for stickers to show the parts of our amazing respiratory systems. Yes, yes everyone knows smoking causes cancer. But now the "health-focused" tobacco company looks like it cares more than those other tobacco companies.

No tobacco company would get away with this, of course, but the floggers of fossil fuels have yet to face similar regulation. This month [February 2022] an Irish forecourt company began a campaign to get its marketing material home in the school bags of Irish primary school children.

Classroom walls will be adorned with its logo. There are illustrated posters and books. Pictures will feature an imaginary carless world, populated with storybook foxes and hedgehogs (none of them roadkill) butterflies and birds (none of them dying because of the seasonal shifts caused by unleashing all those "furry-friend loving" fossil fuels).

We are in an uncharted greenwashing torrent here. A deep-pocketed forecourt company harnessing the pester power of children is next level. "Daddy I need more stickers for my biodiversity poster. Can we go to the petrol station to get them?"

Fossil fuel companies and their friendly-neighbourhood forecourt chains are pedalling madly (throttling is probably the better term) to cloak themselves in caring. A campaign like this one involves many clever people who know precisely what they're doing and are highly paid to do it. They understand the urgent drive to wrap us in a disastrous delusion that it's somehow green to top up the tank

and drive on as usual. "We are unstoppable," the Fridays for Future schools strikers chant regularly. "Another world is possible." The heartfelt and hopeful chant has been echoing in my head since I started thinking about other unstoppable forces and how to stop them.

People power is powerful and it's up to the grown-ups to be clear-eyed when waters are muddied. I hope primary school principals, teachers and parents will opt out of this and make their feelings known. Let's spend it better and fund biodiversity education without oily black fingerprints all over it.



Catherine is an award-winning writer who loves living in a city but hankers after the solace of nature. She writes a weekly blog in the Irish Times Weekend Magazine.

She is co-founder of Pocket Forests



"Half of humanity is in the danger zone, from floods, droughts, extreme storms and wildfires. No nation is immune. Yet we continue to feed our fossil fuel addiction." He added: "We have a choice. Collective action or collective suicide. It is in our hands".

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres



# Steven Donziger & Chevron-Texaco...

**“Chevron Tightens the Screws on Steven Donziger. With the aid of two federal judges, the oil giant continues to torment environmental lawyer Steven Donziger”, wrote James North in The Nation in May 2020. Donziger’s case has become a cause célèbre not just across the United States but across the world.**

Steven Donziger, pictured below, is the first and only person in US legal history to be privately prosecuted by an oil company.



In 1993, recent Harvard law school graduate, human rights attorney and former classmate of Barack Obama, Steven Donziger began working on a class action on behalf of 30,000 indigenous Ecuadorians against Texaco oil company. At issue was the deliberate polluting of the Ecuadorian Amazon rainforest.

“Traveling to Ecuador is probably the single most important aspect of my human rights work on the epic case that resulted in a \$9.5b judgment against Chevron”, Donziger has often stated.

Between 1972 and 1993, US oil firm Texaco dumped over 30 billion gallons of toxic waste and crude oil into the Amazon rainforest in the north east of Ecuador. This has since become known as one of the world’s greatest ever

environmental disasters. Vast swathes of forest were contaminated across a 4400 square kilometre region. Rivers turned black. Local communities’ health and livelihoods were severely affected, with a spike in cancer and birth defects among the consequences.

A legal case was launched against Texaco in 1993, brought by 30,000 indigenous and small-scale farmer Amazon inhabitants affected by the oil firm’s irresponsibility. In 2001, Chevron purchased Texaco, thereby taking on responsibility for the disaster. An Ecuadorian court subsequently found Chevron, now the third largest corporation in the United States, guilty of “extensively polluting” the Lago Agrio region in 2011, following an 18-year legal battle. Chevron was ordered to pay \$18.2 billion in compensation,

the largest judgement ever awarded in an environmental lawsuit.

As the case was coming to an end in Ecuador, Chevron’s lawyers and executives vowed never to pay the judgment and threatened the Indigenous peoples with a “lifetime of litigation” unless they gave up. The company also sold its assets in Ecuador so the Amazon communities would have nothing to collect. Chevron’s bad faith forced the impoverished Indigenous peoples to chase the company into courts around the world to try to collect assets to force compliance with the Ecuador court judgement. This has forced the communities to file lawsuits on top of the lawsuit they already won -- an expensive and open-ended cycle of litigation that Chevron has designed to frustrate the pursuit of justice.

The decision was upheld by the Ecuadorian High Court in 2012 (although the compensation was reduced to \$9.5 billion) and then the Constitutional Court in 2018. Yet contaminated oil pits throughout the region continue to seep toxic chemicals into rivers and streams that residents rely on for drinking water. Studies show that cancer rates have risen dramatically. And, to this day, no compensation has been paid.

Texaco/Chevron does not dispute that the pollution occurred and “freely admits that sludge pits still

dot the Amazon”, according to a January 2012 report in The New Yorker. The company argues that Texaco’s operations were “completely in line with the standards of the day” and furthermore that the Ecuadorian government released it from liability after paying for an earlier cleanup and that Ecuador’s state oil company Petroecuador was responsible for the damage. Courts have found that the clean-up was a sham and that the release does not apply to the private individuals that brought the lawsuit.

In 2008, a Chevron lobbyist in Washington told Newsweek (25 07 2008), “We can’t let little countries screw around with big companies like this.” One Chevron spokesman has said, “We’re going to fight this until Hell freezes over—and then we’ll fight it out on the ice.”

That fight took the case to a Manhattan court where Chevron sought to challenge the Ecuadorian court ruling. In 2014, U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan

refused to enforce the \$9.5 billion judgment that Donziger won on behalf of the indigenous people of Ecuador three years earlier.

In what The New Yorker described as an “audacious move” Chevron sued Steven Donziger, the architect of the suit against it on charges of extortion and fraud in New York.

Charged with contempt of court, on 6 August 2019, the second hottest year on record Steven Donziger left a Lower Manhattan courthouse with an electronic monitoring device newly affixed to his ankle. He was to remain under house arrest for 993 days - when the longest previous sentence for his supposed offence was 90 days. He was also prosecuted privately by a Chevron law firm after the regular prosecutor refuse the case.

Some 29 Nobel laureates, including nine peace prize winners signed a letter calling for “a judicial remedy for the legal attacks orchestrated by Chevron against

Donziger and for the defamation of his character.” More than 475 lawyers and human rights defenders worldwide signed another open letter, that called the struggle “one of the most important corporate accountability and human rights cases of our time.

Chevron is currently seeking over \$30 million for legal fees from Steven Donziger.

Meanwhile Chevron has invested millions of dollars in remolding its public image.

Elegant television commercials, narrated by the actor Campbell Scott (Singles, The House of Cards, The Amazing Spider-Man), emphasize that the company aims to “practice and espouse conservation.”

Imagine that -- an oil company as part of the solution,” intoned a 2007 TV spot in a new global advertising campaign, at the time the biggest Chevron had ever run.

**Imagine that.**



Photos: Steven Donziger

# Come join us...



**Photo:** In 2021 Just Forests wrote to all 26 sports clubs across Ireland who received funds from Texaco Support for Sport 2021 to inform them of Texaco's appalling human rights record and requested them to return the money in solidarity with the communities in Ecuador Texaco have impacted.

## We are inviting you to make contact with your local/national arts/sports organisation to boycott any Texaco funded initiatives.

(Here is a sample letter you might find helpful.)

Dear,

We wish to draw your attention to what we perceive to be a clear and cynical arts washing /sports washing advertising campaign undertaking by Texaco, owned by fossil fuel giant Chevron. Specifically these include the /Texaco Children's Art Competition and the Texaco Support for Sports.

Chevron-Texaco is responsible for human rights and environmental abuses against indigenous communities in Nigeria, Ecuador and elsewhere. Fossil fuel companies such as Chevron-Texaco are one of the major contributors to climate change worldwide. Most recently, Antonio Gueterras the Secretary General of the United Nations has described such companies as having "humanity by the throat".

Through their Texaco Support for Sport programme, and their support for the Children's Art competition, Texaco endeavour to use Irish sport and art organisations to greenwash their companies appalling human rights record. We have no doubt that if members of (please insert names of arts/sports organisation) were fully aware of the background to Texaco's abuses, they would not wish to be associated with what is clearly a cynical ploy of greenwashing.

We respectfully request that the management (please insert names of arts/sports organisation) refuse to engage with Texaco sport washing/art washing agenda.

We look forward to hearing from you.

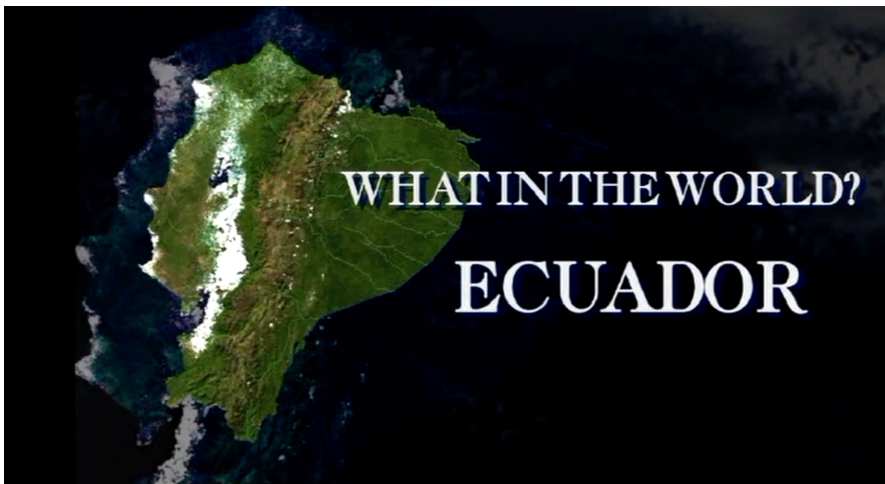
Yours faithfully,

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Your name]



# The Achuar...

The way of life for people who live deep in the Amazonian basin is under threat. From oil. Essential to our way of life, it could be the end of theirs. Oil has already ended the C6f6fan way of life in the north of the country.



You can view this documentary for free:

It can be accessed at:  
<https://vimeo.com/399290099>

Please enter the following password:  
KMF\_ECU

## Register your support...

We wish to record the names of arts and sports organisations along with youth and community organisations, non governmental organisations, primary and second level schools and third level colleges, other centres of education, trade unions, faith-based groups, women's and men's groups, sporting and cultural bodies and individuals who sign up to our Texaco arts and sports boycott. **To record your boycott please go to the Just Forest website: <https://spoarts.ie>** We will publish bi-monthly reports on the take-up of the boycott. **You can also register your support by sending an email to: [tomroche@justforests.org](mailto:tomroche@justforests.org)**

**Please note we are not asking individuals and organisations to boycott Texaco products or forecourt services as we are conscious that many people's livelihoods are dependent on Texaco.**

## Let Texaco know...

**If you support the call for Texaco arts and sports boycott in addition to registering your decision with Just Forests, we urge you to communicate your decision directly with Texaco Ireland. You may wish to consider using the following...**

In recognition of Texaco/Chevron's attempted arts and sportswashing of its reputation, its excessive profiteering (\$36.5 billion for the year ending 2022) along with its wholly destructive carbon footprint across the world, I/we (*insert individual name/organisation here and address*) are boycotting all Texaco-related arts and sports competitions in Ireland.

Your [Name and Date]

Their address is [customer care@valero.com](mailto:customer care@valero.com)



# Acknowledgements...

SpoArts Wash - exposing Ireland's fossil fuel sponsorship culture was produced, written and designed by:

Tom Roche, Environmental activist, craftsman and educator. Founder of Irish NGO Just Forests.

Colm Regan, Visiting lecturer, Centre for the Study and Practice of Conflict Resolution, University of Malta where he teaches a course on environmental conflict and human rights. Founder of Irish NGO 80:20 Educating and Acting for a Better World.

Peadar King is a documentary filmmaker and non-fiction writer. For over two decades, Peadar King has presented and produced the RTÉ global affairs series What in the World? Among his recent publications is War, Suffering and the Struggle for Human Rights described by The Irish Times as 'A Call to Humanity in a World Full of Atrocity', He is currently Adjunct Professor of International relations in University College Cork.

Published by Just Forests - April, 2023

## About Just Forests...

Just Forests is a not for profit company limited by guarantee (CLG). We target the market forces destroying nature, with particular emphases on forests, timber and people.

Ireland has the largest per-capita usage of tropical timber in the European Union. Since 1989, we have endeavoured to create and support new approaches to tackling local and global deforestation and associated human-rights abuses.

### Workshops & Presentations

Just Forests welcomes requests from schools and community groups to provide workshops and presentations on the importance of forests in tackling climate chaos and meeting the objective of the UN's Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030

### See our support websites

[www.rememberrio.com](http://www.rememberrio.com)  
[www.theraceison.ie](http://www.theraceison.ie)  
[www.burt.ie](http://www.burt.ie)  
[www.savekillarneynationalpark.com](http://www.savekillarneynationalpark.com)  
[www.killarneycelebrationoftrees.com](http://www.killarneycelebrationoftrees.com)  
[www.justforests.org](http://www.justforests.org) (archive going back to 1995)  
[www.tomroche.ie](http://www.tomroche.ie)  
[www.concernproject.tomroche.ie](http://www.concernproject.tomroche.ie)  
<https://spoarts.ie>

### Address:

Just Forests, Ringfort Workshop,  
Rathcobican, Rhode, Co Offaly,  
R35 X527, Ireland.  
Company registration number 612423.

SpoArts Wash is part of Just Forests Race Is On (RIO) Series of publications currently under development.

The RIO Series consists of updated and INTERACTIVE compilations of some of Just Forests original development education (DE) resources, such as, the Wood of Life hands-on exhibition, Thinking TREES and Good Wood Policy Guide.

A NEW re-ordering of the UN Global Goals entitled The Race Is On (RIO) is currently under development. The Race Is On will give very clear and justifiable reasons why we need to prioritise the Global Goals for sustainability in a particular order of preference if the human race is to survive.

For more information on this initiative please visit:  
[www.rememberrio.com](http://www.rememberrio.com)

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. You are free to share (copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format); or adapt (remix, transform, and build upon the material); under the following terms:

**Attribution** — You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use.

**NonCommercial** — You may not use the material for commercial purposes.

**ShareAlike** — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original.



## About this publication...

The paper used in this publication comes from forests that have been certified as well-managed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). By using FSC certified paper in this publication Just Forests are providing incentives for responsible forestry, and we can be confident that our print projects are not contributing to the destruction of the world's forests. The use of FSC certified paper demonstrates our commitment to sustainability. FSC certified paper tells you that the recycled and/or virgin fibre content of the paper comes from sources that meet FSC international standards.

Not only does the use of FSC paper in this publication take due regard and consideration for people, wildlife and the environment, it is also printed by an award winning low-carbon eco-friendly printing company based here in Co. Offaly - The Factory. This means that the carbon emissions produced during the printing process are calculated to the smallest carbon footprint possible and offset by The Factory through their innovative people/nature-centred initiatives. All paper used by The Factory are offset by the <sup>9</sup>World Land Trust

You can learn more about <sup>10</sup>The Factory and their journey to a low-carbon and eco-friendly printing company at this link: [www.thefactory.ie](http://www.thefactory.ie)

**P.S.** As the former (first) FSC Contact Person for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) appointed in the Rep of Ireland in 1995 (retired), Just Forests is keenly aware of the international criticisms of the FSC currently taking place. While this is very concerning it is hoped that a resolution can be reached that will bring FSC back to its original mission. You can find out more <sup>11</sup>here.

## Endnotes...

- 1 Oil and gas majors are planning scores of vast projects that threaten to shatter the 1.5C climate goal. If governments do not act, these firms will continue to cash in as the world burns  
<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2022/may/11/fossil-fuel-carbon-bombs-climate-breakdown-oil-gas>
- 2 What is Greenwashing? <https://earth.org/what-is-greenwashing/>
- 3 Climate change and environmental degradation undermine the rights of every child.  
<https://www.unicef.org/environment-and-climate-change?msclkid=f3c7d75ecec311ecb18c327e6c002815>
- 4 <https://texacosupportforsport.com/second-texaco-support-for-sport-initiative-launched>
- 5 How Much Has Texaco Changed?  
<https://www.nytimes.com/1997/11/02/business/how-much-has-texaco-changed.html?msclkid=241ffe03cec211ecbee3e73446a56453>
- 6 Revealed: the 'carbon bombs' set to trigger catastrophic climate breakdown <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2022/may/11/fossil-fuel-carbon-bombs-climate-breakdown-oil-gas>
- 7 On climate change, oil and gas companies have a long way to go. A new report finds that all the new industry commitments don't add up.  
<https://www.vox.com/energy-and-environment/2020/9/25/21452055/climate-change-exxon-bp-shell-total-chevron-oil-gas>
- 8 THE CLIMATE DENIAL MACHINE: HOW THE FOSSIL FUEL INDUSTRY BLOCKS CLIMATE ACTION.  
<https://www.climatealityproject.org/blog/climate-denial-machine-how-fossil-fuel-industry-blocks-climate-action?msclkid=ed93aa1dcec211ecafe7ea2441a06ca1>
- 9 What Can I Do As An Individual? <https://www.worldlandtrust.org>
- 10 Ireland's award-winning eco-friendly printing company <https://thefactory.ie>
- 11 FSC Greenwashing <https://www.greenpeace.org/international/press-release/46802/certification-schemes-such-as-fsc-are-greenwashing-forest-destruction/>
- 12 Mendusa Murdered <https://insideclimatenews.org/news/28022023/eduardo-mendua-ecuador-shot-death/>

## Just as we were going to press...



Eduardo Mendúa (center), an Indigenous Ecuadorian activist fighting oil extraction in the Amazon rainforest, was shot to death in his garden on Sunday 26th February. Photo Courtesy of Kayla Jenkins via *Inside Climate News*

### **Just as we were going to press, news of the assassination of Eduardo Mendúa (40), a member of the A'i Cofan people and director of international relations for the Confederación de Nacionalidades Indígenas del Ecuador (CONAIE), broke.**

Eduardo Mendúa was part of a group of about 130 campaigners resisting the expansion of an oil access road built by Texaco that runs through A'i Cofan territory east of the oil town of Lago Agrio in the north-eastern province of Sucumbíos. The Ecuadorian oil company, Petroecuador, had been planning to build 30 new wells in a government-approved oil concession block that overlaps with A'i Cofan land, expansion Mendúa opposed.

The Indigenous community collectively holds legal title to around 9,571 hectares of land that is part of the only remaining intact rainforest in the region. Under both international (International Labour Organization Convention 169 adopted 1989 and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted 2007) and Ecuadorian law, companies and the government are required to

respect Indigenous communities' right to "free, prior, and informed consent" over projects that affect them. Instead of this "prior consultation" process taking place Mendúa and his comrades claim that oil companies have attempted to forcibly occupy Indigenous territories.

"It is with great sadness", Jose Cali, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples wrote "that I receive the news of the vile murder of brother Eduardo Mendúa, CONAIE's international relations leader."

On Sunday 26 February 2023, Mendúa was shot 12 times by two armed men wearing hoods while he was at his home garden in the town of Dureno.

Calling on international organizations to monitor and protect

the lives of indigenous leaders in Ecuador, CONAIE President Leonidas Iza recalled the ongoing threats to the lives of indigenous leaders. "This criminal act is not isolated as 10 senior leaders have received threats since June 2022".

In an interview with Cultural Survival in late January 2023, possibly his last interview, Mendúa emphasized the community's great need for international solidarity at this time of struggle: "We invite all the organizations that can join us because our struggle is not only to conserve the forest.

The climate crisis is affecting us and it is evident what is happening worldwide. To conserve the forest is to conserve for the common good of all people."

For more information see<sup>12</sup>





**Follow us on:**  
**@SayNo2Texaco**