



What if the world paid attention before it was too late?

"A movie about crime and shame, 'Sweet Crude' is also a classic example of urgent, righteous-indignation agitprop cinema that succeeds in being not just angry, but art... d.p. Sean Porter's painterly shooting, Julie Wolf's funk-ethereal music and helmer Sandy Cioffi's frighteningly gentle narration, all...blend to seductive psychological effect, suggesting gossamer dreams about paradise lost, with an undertone of unrefined fury."

John Anderson, Variety

"Add the petrohorrors in the Niger Delta to the 'price of oil.' There is nothing 'sweet' there, but the oil industry's profits.

Ralph Nader

"A provocative portrait of human devastation ignored in the name of commerce and oil."

Sean Axmaker, Seattle Weekly

"It's typical of the film's calm fury that the arrest of the filmmaker last year by Nigerian authorities is relegated to a brief epilogue; the real story is more significant than that."

Film Critic Robert Horton

"An incredible film that is moving, effective and is by far the most powerful educational and motivational tool that I've ever seen regarding the Delta."

Steve Kretzmann, Executive Director, Oil Change International

Interviews, reviews & press coverage: www.sweetcrudemovie.com/getTheNews#MediaCoverage

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Tech Specs

Shooting format: Digital Video - DV24PA

Exhibit format: HDCam 1080 60i and DIGIBETA

Aspect ratio: HD 1:77

Color

TRT: 93:34

Sound mix: Stereo

Production Company: Sweet Crude LLC

Production Team: Directed by Sandy Cioffi; Produced by Kate Wolf and Sandy Cioffi; Producers Leslye Wood and Tammi Sims; Executive Producers Menno van Wyk, Jody Hall and Elizabeth Rudolf; Cinematography by Sean Porter; Written by Leslye Wood, Jill Freidberg and Sandy Cioffi; Edited by Jill Freidberg; Original Score by Julie Wolf.

About the Film

The documentary film *Sweet Crude* is the story of Nigeria's Niger Delta – the human and environmental consequences of 50 years of oil extraction, the history of non-violent protest, and the members of a new insurgency who, in the three years since the filmmakers met them as college students, became the young men of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

Beginning with filmmaker Sandy Cioffi's initial trip to document the building of a library in a remote village, *Sweet Crude* is a journey of multilayered revelation and ever-deepening questions. It's about survival, corruption, greed and armed resistance. It's about one place in one moment, with themes that echo many places throughout history.

The current crisis is a powder keg. Left unchecked, it will have worldwide implications – including for the U.S., which by 2015 is expected to get 25% of its oil imports from western Africa. What happens in the Niger Delta ripples through African political stability and global economic markets. Yet barely anyone outside the region knows what's really happening.

Sweet Crude shows the humanity behind the statistics, events and highly sensationalized media portrayal of the region. Set against a stunning backdrop of Niger Delta footage, the film gives voice to the region's complex mix of stakeholders and invites the audience to learn the deeper story.

Film Synopsis

In the summer of 2008, militants from the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) declared an "oil war" in Nigeria. This was one of the biggest spikes yet on a radar screen dotted with conflict and tragedy.

The documentary film *Sweet Crude* is the story of the Niger Delta; of the villagers of Oporoza, headquarters of the insurgency; and of members of the armed resistance who, in the three years since the filmmakers met them as college students, became the young men of MEND.

The Niger Delta is a powder keg. Escalating unrest and kidnappings by militants have shut down as much as 40% of oil production in the region. The Nigerian government continues to make and break a long string of promises to resolve the crisis. The international community is standing by while impending war looms.

Meanwhile, the people of the Delta are suffering as they have for half a century. Billions of dollars of crude oil are pumped out from beneath their feet, while they live in desperate poverty – without means of livelihood in a decimated environment. Oil spills, dredging and acid rain from gas flaring have destroyed habitats, killed the fish population, fouled the soil and poisoned the villagers. Their villages lack potable water, sanitation, infrastructure, healthcare and schools. Job prospects are bleak and people die young.

There is a long legacy of non-violent protest in the Delta. But it has consistently been met by the Nigerian government with violence – not only against individuals who spoke out, but against entire communities. By late 2005, the people had had enough. A new armed resistance, MEND, emerged. They began kidnapping oil workers to bring international attention to the crisis and in the years since, the region has become increasingly unstable. Yet they have repeatedly stated their desire to negotiate. In this moment, there is an opportunity to tip the scales toward peace.

Sweet Crude is about the humanitarian, environmental and economic devastation in the wake of 50 years of oil extraction – and the opportunity for the international community to do something. The film also raises broader issues of oil politics, mass media agendas and the role of independent journalists in getting the truth out.

Short Synopsis

Sweet Crude is the story of Nigeria's Niger Delta – the human and environmental consequences of 50 years of oil extraction, the history of non-violent protest, and the members of a new insurgency who, in the three years since the filmmakers met them as college students, became the young men of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND).

Sweet Crude Festivals

OFFICIAL SELECTIONS

Full Frame Documentary Film Festival 2009 – World Premiere
Seattle International Film Festival 2009
Palm Springs International Film Festival 2010
Galway Film Fleadh 2009
Vancouver International Film Festival 2009
United Nations Association Film Festival 2009
Rhode Island International Film Festival 2009
DMZ Docs: Korean International Festival 2009
Strasbourg International Film Festival 2009
International Documentary Association DocuWeeks LA and NYC 2009
Artist Film Festival 2010
Corona Cork Film Festival 2009
Festival Millennium Brussels 2009
Newburyport Documentary Film Festival 2009
Bahamas International Film Festival 2009
Big Sky Documentary Film Festival 2010
Rocky Mountain Women's Film Festival 2009
Red Rock Film Festival 2009
Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital 2010
Tiburon International Film Festival 2010
London International Documentary Festival 2010
Pan African Film & Arts Festival 2010
Ashland Independent Film Festival 2010
Through Women's Eyes, Sarasota Film Festival 2010
Dutch Environmental Film Festival 2010
Green Film Festival in Seoul 2010
Berkshire International Film Festival 2010
DocuWest Film Festival 2009
Tallgrass Film Festival 2009
Northwest Film and Video Festival 2009
Ellensburg Film Festival 2009
Tacoma Film Festival 2009
World Community Film Festival 2010
ReFrame Peterborough International Film Festival 2010
Everett Women's Film Festival 2010
Syracuse International Film Festival 2009
October 2009
CounterCorp Anti-Corporate Film Festival 2009
Maine African Film Festival 2009

Sweet Crude Awards

Lena Sharpe Award for Persistence of Vision

Seattle International Film Festival 2009

Special Jury Prize

DMZ Korean International Documentary Festival 2009

Best Feature

Newburyport Documentary Film Festival 2009

Best Documentary

Strasbourg International Film Festival 2009

Best Documentary

Bahamas International Film Festival 2009

Audience Choice Feature Film

Tallgrass Film Festival 2009

Best Documentary

Ellensburg Film Festival 2009

Grand Jury Prize Best Documentary Feature Director

Red Rock Film Festival 2009

Programmer's Award Best Documentary

Pan African Film & Arts Festival 2010

Winner Best of Fest

Everett Women's Film Festival 2010

Best Female Images in a Movie

Women Film Critics Circle Awards 2009

1st Runner-up Best Documentary

Seattle International Film Festival 2009

1st Runner-up Best Documentary

Galway Film Fleadh 2009

Second Prize Best Feature Documentary

Rhode Island International Film Festival 2009

Finalist Jury Award Best Documentary

Ashland Independent Film Festival 2010

Nominee Best Picture

Maverick Movie Awards 2009

Nominee Best Chronicle

Maverick Movie Awards 2009

Nominee Best Original Score

Maverick Movie Awards 2009

Nominee Best Progressive Documentary

Progie Film Awards 2009

Director's Statement

Nigeria. My first reaction was vague familiarity, but I couldn't put my finger on any specifics. I thought I remembered the musician King Sunny Ade was Nigerian. Then it hit me: Ken Saro-Wiwa had been executed there. He had been the Nelson Mandela of Nigeria, defending the rights of his people, the Ogoni of the Niger Delta, against "big oil." The dictator Abacha had ordered his death while the world community begged in vain, then watched helplessly. That was a decade ago, and it seemed – at least in the "first world" – that the story had died along with him. I had to Google it to be sure I had it right. And then I remembered an NPR story I'd heard more recently about Niger Delta women protesting on oil platforms – literally putting their bodies on the line to make a statement that perhaps the world would finally hear: For all the wealth generated from their land, Nigerians were living in desperate poverty in a decimated environment. The deeper I went in reviewing Niger Delta events and issues, the more I understood just how high the current stakes were.

I said yes.

I had been asked to travel to Nigeria with American nonprofit organization Global Citizen Journey, to videotape a "citizen diplomacy" trip and the building of a library in a small Niger Delta village. The library would be a place where people from previously warring tribes could share a new and thrilling resource. Nigerians and Americans would work side-by-side to build it and oversee its use. In the past ten years, Nigeria had seen escalating interethnic conflict. Tribes had been pitted against each other, some believe intentionally, as they struggled to carve out the tiniest piece of the vast resource base created by the crude oil flowing from their land. Despite enormous profits for the oil companies and the Nigerian federal government, most villages still had no running water, electricity or healthcare. Villagers were not hired to work on the platforms. And traditional livelihoods like fishing and farming were in serious jeopardy as unregulated oil production took its toll on water and land. I learned that the library project was being partially funded by Chevron and that a student organization had made a substantial contribution to pay for the roof. I had a bunch of questions about that.

I packed my bags.

As our boats arrived in Oporoza, we were greeted by the entire population of the village and a flotilla of canoes decorated with banners proclaiming "Community Not Conflict," filled with women singing and dancing. At the welcoming ceremony, I noticed a large group of young men. They looked to be in their early twenties and were incongruously dressed in DKNY, Calvin Klein and True Religion jeans. Their t-shirts identified them as members of the student group. I had a quick intuition they might be involved in activities beyond their studies and fundraising for a library roof. I suspected they were there in part to provide protection for us while we were in the "creeks," an area considered dangerous and seldom visited by outsiders.

I would later learn that all of this and much more was true.

As a filmmaker, I had documented in Northern Ireland, Central America and South Africa. My instincts had been honed in places and situations in taut suspension between war and peace, or newly on one side or the other. I know when I'm not in Kansas anymore. I had come to film the building of a library in a small African village. But I had unwittingly arrived at the headquarters of armed resistance militancy in the Niger Delta – at the exact moment in time the militants were about to embark on a campaign of kidnapping oil workers to get media attention for their struggle.

I returned home and the more I thought about it, the more stunned I was: *How could this story be playing out in the most populous country in Africa, the world's seventh largest oil exporter and arguably a strategic lynchpin in the stability of all of Western Africa – and not make the front page of every international newspaper? How could it be that this country, with its highly visible history of the Biafran War and the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, was building toward full-on armed struggle – invisible to most of the world? How is a volatile region that provides up to 20 percent of U.S. oil imports in a given year missing from discussions of foreign policy priorities? Sure, NGOs have*

been reporting on environmental damage and humanitarian issues in the Delta for years. But no one was really paying attention. The egregious gas flaring in the Delta was even noted in Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth." But the importance of this material had not been recognized or explored.

The resistance began taking hostages. They were known by the name MEND (Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta). I knew them as students turned militants. Their activities attracted some media coverage, but most of it was sensationalist and lacked depth about the complex issues and what could be done to address them. I thought about the urgency of the situation and its substantial implications for Nigeria, Africa and the world. I thought about the village kids we had met and what would happen to them if the violence escalated..

I knew that in this pregnant moment, the low level intensity struggle could either break into war or could veer toward the best case scenario – real peace talks. And I knew I had met the key players. I knew I had to make a documentary and make it immediately.

I packed my bags again.

We filmed in Nigeria for a month. We interviewed most of the region's stakeholders. Among the many things we learned was that the one thing the militancy would stand down for was the hope of true peace talks with a third-party presence to give them teeth. Suddenly the stakes were raised, my role as a filmmaker expanded. *Could telling this story actually impact whether this war started? If we threw a high beam spotlight on this moment and froze it for the world to see...what then? Could the people in a position to make a difference be moved to act?*

I held my breath wondering if this time, just maybe, an African tragedy could be averted.

Questions abound about the Delta. But for me the one that rises to the top continually is, *Could we change it just by looking with a humane gaze?* Documentary photographer James Natchwey has said, "If war is an attempt to negate humanity, then photography can be perceived as the opposite of war and, if it is used well, it can be a powerful ingredient in the antidote to war." I set out to make a movie about this place in this moment lured by this possibly quixotic hope.

—SANDY CIOFFI, JANUARY 2007

POSTSCRIPT

The *Sweet Crude* film crew made four trips to the Niger Delta. In April 2008, while traveling by boat on their way to a shoot, they and their Nigerian colleague were detained by the Nigerian military. They were imprisoned for a week and finally released after an international outcry, including a letter to the Nigerian president signed by 14 U.S. lawmakers. The footage from that last trip remains in the hands of the Nigerian government.

Political Issues

WHY THE NIGER DELTA

Oil extraction and corruption have left Nigeria's Niger Delta in an environmental, political, economic and humanitarian crisis. The region is seething with a recently emerged armed resistance – which has shut down significant oil production, while drawing a military response from the Nigerian government. The stakes are high, locally and globally. This region is iconic of the current convergence of environmental justice and human rights. And it represents an opportunity to address the resource curse reality that is today's most pressing frontier of war and peace.

WHY NOW

We're at a moment of hope and danger. After the election of President Y'ar Adua and Vice President Jonathan (a Niger Deltan) in Spring 2007, there was cautious optimism. Momentum was building for serious negotiations to resolve the crisis. In response, there was a tenuous truce in most of the Delta. But the situation on the ground is fragile. Criminal elements at the fringes of the cause are injecting volatility and jeopardizing the will toward a political solution. The stakeholders (villagers, militants, government, oil companies) seem ready to come to the table. But given the long history of broken promises, key players are insisting on talks with accountability, ideally under the auspices of an internationally trusted entity. Third-party monitoring is imperative – for transparency and for a transition to political legitimacy for the militancy.

WHAT WE BELIEVE IS NEEDED

It's going to take something different to cut through the seeming intractability of the current situation. While there is ongoing concern, reporting and action by a range of individuals, media, politicians, NGOs and even the oil companies themselves – these efforts are largely isolated. It's time to use the power of a united voice. We are calling for a coalition of U.S. and EU lawmakers, dignitaries, journalists and others of influence to request a model similar to the Good Friday Peace Agreement. Beginning with a fact-finding mission and progressing to negotiations, the desired outcome is a binding agreement for all stakeholders that could create a lasting blueprint for a peaceful resolution. We believe that the right path is preventive diplomacy rather than a covert military solution in yet another country devastated by the bounty of oil. The Niger Delta is expected to provide 25% of U.S. oil imports by 2015. Whether the agenda is to address the humanitarian crisis or simply to secure the oil supply, it's time for a new approach.

WHAT IT COULD MEAN

It is too easy to spend time in Nigeria and reduce the discussion to what a mess it all is. We reject that. This is the perfect place to actually and symbolically overcome the "resource curse."

- The Niger Delta would be demilitarized.
- The environment would be remediated with resources from the sale of oil.
- Volatility in the region would be reduced. The Niger Delta would become a stable democracy, anchoring the critical Gulf of Guinea.
- A model would be developed for future peace deals with groups that in the current climate are dangerously labeled as terrorists. The IRA became Sinn Fein. The original MEND leaders have been more interested in political power than perpetual violence.
- Oil conglomerates would have the incentive to do the right thing. Company officials admit they need binding agreements to show to stockholders.

About the Filmmakers

SANDY CIOFFI Director, Producer, Writer

Sweet Crude director Sandy Cioffi is a Seattle-based film and video artist. She has produced and/or directed several films, including the critically acclaimed *Crocodile Tears*, *Terminal 187* and *Just Us*.

Sandy has worked with human rights organizations in global hot zones before, during and after conflict. She first ventured into video production as a volunteer for Witness for Peace during the Contra War in Nicaragua. She traveled with students from the U.S. to film South Africa's transition from Apartheid in 1995. She used film as a documentation and verification tool to provide video evidence on compliance with the Good Friday Peace Agreement during the 1998 Marching Season in Northern Ireland. Sandy has worked extensively with the Hate Free Zone in Seattle, producing films about treatment of immigrants post-September 11th. She was Seattle Director for the video documentation of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride in 2003.

In 2005-2008, Sandy made four trips to the volatile Niger Delta in Nigeria to film *Sweet Crude*, documenting conditions there and interviewing the region's key stakeholders, including leadership of the armed resistance movement. In April 2008, she and her film crew were detained by the Nigerian State Security Services and held in military prison for seven days. Beyond the making of *Sweet Crude*, she has been active in political advocacy for the Delta's people, appealing to media, U.S. legislators, international diplomats and NGOs to raise visibility of the humanitarian and global economic issues.

Sandy has been a frequent guest on National Public Radio and is often called upon as a speaker to address independent media trends. She has recently been interviewed on CNN International, Marketplace, Democracy Now and ABC Nightline to discuss the current situation in the Niger Delta. As an artist, Sandy created media design for live performance at the Annex Theater, Hugo House, The Seattle Repertory Theater and On the Boards. As an educator, Sandy has worked extensively with young people – as an artist-in-residence at many middle and high schools in Washington State, and through the mentor/apprentice film program at the Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center. She is currently a tenured professor in the Film and Video Communications Department at Seattle Central Community College.

KATE WOLF Producer, Post Production Supervisor

Kate Wolf lives in Seattle producing film, video, music and interactive media, and raising her chickens. She also spends time on Cape Cod as a musician and altered Polaroid photographer. Her award-winning career spanning 15 years has been marked by its variety, light heartedness, and dedication to collaboration. *Sweet Crude* is Kate's first feature film. She's proud to be collaborating on it with her twin sister Julie and a number of longtime friends and colleagues.

LESLYE WOOD Producer, Writer

Leslye Wood has been a freelance writer, communications consultant and producer/project manager since 1997. As principal of Ij wood, she provides concepting, messaging, content development and scripting to a broad range of industries for both consumer and business markets. She also does extensive pro bono work for nonprofits. Before starting her own business, Leslye was in marketing in the corporate sector for 15 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in educational psychology and a master's degree in communications. Leslye lives and works in Seattle. She is a diehard movie lover, passionate about human rights – and in the making of this movie fulfilled a lifelong dream to go to Africa. *Sweet Crude* is her first feature length film.

TAMMI SIMS Producer

Tammi was thrust into her role as a producer on *Sweet Crude* after her first trip to the Niger Delta as a volunteer in November of 2005. What she witnessed compelled her to lend her time, talents and skills to the delicate task of telling the story of the region and its people. Tammi's previous work on human rights issues and event production combined with her love of travel served her well in handling the demands of travel and production in Nigeria. In addition to her work on *Sweet Crude*, Tammi is an administrator for a nonprofit organization that provides community-based services to adults with

developmental disabilities. Raised in a small town in north central Montana, she felt an affinity for community life in the villages. Tammi has lived in Seattle since 1995.

SEAN PORTER Cinematography

Sean Porter's visual style is a culmination of over eight years of cinematography, lighting and design experience working within a variety of narrative, experimental and commercial work. *Sweet Crude* is Sean's first feature length documentary. His recent projects include principal photography on the IFP Spotlight Award film *My Time with Betty* and *Bass Ackwards*, the upcoming feature by award-winning director Linas Phillips. Sean has shot music videos for artists such as The Blakes, Laura Veirs and the Saturday Knights, and his work has been screened at SXSW, Palm Springs, Toronto, LA and Seattle. Sean's commercial experience includes shooting for design firms such as Superfad, Microsoft, GLG, ZAAZ, MTV and MSN. Sean graduated from the University of Washington with a BA in Media Production and Design. When he's not on set, he runs an indie-friendly grip and lighting company, Swingset Film & Audio.

JILL FREIDBERG Writer, Editor

Jill Freidberg is a Seattle-based filmmaker and editor who has been producing and editing documentaries since 1995. Her three feature-length documentaries, *This is What Democracy Looks Like*, *Granito de Arena*, and *A Little Bit of So Much Truth*, have won numerous festival awards, screened in over 50 countries, been translated into eight languages, and aired nationally on public television in Canada, the U.S., Mexico and South America.

Jill's work as an editor includes the feature-length documentaries *Lady Be Good: An Instrumental History of Women in Jazz*, *Fisherman's Terminal*, and *Sweet Crude*. She has also worked on award-winning series for public television, including *Bill Nye the Science Guy*, *Life Beyond Earth*, *The Meaning of Food*, and the Seattle Channel's Emmy award-winning series *Community Stories*.

Jill has also been producing community radio for over ten years, in the United States and Mexico. She has been featured on numerous Pacifica and NPR affiliates, including Democracy Now, WBEZ, WBAI, KUOW, KBOO, KPFA, WORT and KPFK. She received a B.A. in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Oregon and a Certificate of Excellence in Film Production from the Vancouver Film School in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. More information about Freidberg's work is available at www.corrugate.org.

JULIE WOLF Original Score, Music Supervisor

Julie Wolf is an internationally acclaimed touring/recording musician and composer who has collaborated with Maceo Parker, Ani DiFranco, Indigo Girls and Bruce Cockburn, among others. In her work as a composer and music supervisor for *Sweet Crude*, she integrated her decades of experience in jazz, folk, funk, rock/pop genres with her passions for narrative storytelling, social change, and collaboration with dear friends. When not on the road, Julie lives in Oakland, California and runs Six Pounder Productions, specializing in film composing, sound design and record producing.

JOYCE McANDREWS Art Director

Joyce McAndrews is an art director for film, video and print. She is also a painter and textile designer. She enjoys collaborating with colleagues and clients to create customized artwork and rug designs. For the documentary *Sweet Crude*, Joyce connected with one of her favorite artists, Melinda Hannigan, to help create the brilliant textures and colors evident throughout the film. Joyce lives and works in Seattle.

BELLE & WISSELL, Co. Art Director

Belle & Wissell, Co. (www.bwco.info) is an award-winning design studio that creates imaginative experiences for content-rich media projects – in exhibit spaces, retail environments, for film and video, and on the Web. Founded by Gabe Kean in 2003, the studio focuses on art and concept direction, interactive exhibit design and development, content creation, information architecture, and graphic design for museums, media companies, and retail brands.

Sweet Crude Main Characters

TIMI National Association of Gbaramatu Students (NAGS) Executive Council; Youth Leader

Timi is a member of the NAGS Executive Council. He served as the primary contact with the crew during filming. He received his degree in Religious Studies and was married in February 2009. Timi passionately conveys the complexity for villagers of deciding whether to address the crisis using non-violent resistance vs. militancy. Timi is an intense and earnest young man but also quite gentle, as seen with his mother and his young cousin, Sandra.

FANTY Delta Woman's Organizer

Fanty is an Ijaw woman who grew up in a village in the Gbaramatu Kingdom. She currently lives in Warri, Nigeria with her family. Fanty has done work for NIDPRODEV, a Niger Delta NGO, and ran for political office in 2007. As a community leader and organizer, she led the non-violent resistance of women who took over the Escravos oil platform in July 2002. Fanty is passionate about Ijaw rights and an articulate speaker about the issues. In addition to her on-camera interviews, she assisted the crew as a translator.

JOEL BISINA Director of Niger Delta Professionals for Development (NIDPRODEV); Peace Mediator

Joel left a career in banking several years ago to start NIDPRODEV, a Niger Delta NGO that works to promote peace throughout the Niger Delta. Joel works directly with villagers and traditional chiefs, oil companies, and local, state and federal government to seek solutions to the crisis. He has contracted with Chevron and Shell, among others, to do community development and security training. His organization provides women's empowerment training in the Niger Delta, which has resulted in women running for office and leading non-violent protests. Joel played a critical role in helping the film crew gain access to the region's stakeholders. He grew up in the Niger Delta and lives in Nigeria and the U.S. Joel was detained with the *Sweet Crude* crew in April 2008. He has since sued the Nigerian government and won. The detention was declared unconstitutional.

KESTIN National Association of Gbaramatu Students (NAGS) President; Youth Leader

Kestin was the President of the student group NAGS during most of the filming of *Sweet Crude*. He married in 2007 and has one child. Kestin is extremely articulate and shows strong leadership.

Sweet Crude Characters

CHRIS EKIYOR President Ijaw Youth Council (IYC)

Chris is a doctor and practices part time in addition to his role as President of the IYC. He is a strong, compelling voice for advocating non-violent resistance to oil oppression. He is also a voice for the history of the Niger Delta crisis and political strategies for resolution.

ORONTO DOUGLAS Human Rights Lawyer; Environmental Activist

Oronto is a Nigerian leader who supports non-violent resistance and dialogue. He was part of the defense team for Ken Saro-Wiwa and has been a leader of the movement ever since. He played a key leadership role during the Kaiama Declaration and now works as an Assistant to the Vice President of Nigeria.

MICHAEL WATTS Author; Professor, University of California Berkeley

Michael Watts is Chancellor's Professor and Director of African Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. His writing on the Niger Delta has been widely published, and he received a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2001 to conduct research on oil in Nigeria. His most recent work, *Curse of the Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in the Niger Delta* was a collaboration with photographer Ed Kashi. Michael lends international and academic breadth to the Niger Delta story. He lives in San Francisco.

OMOYELE SOWORE Reporter, Sahara Reporters

Sowore is an Ijaw man. He lives in the U.S. and is a reporter for Sahara Reporters, an online media source about events in the Niger Delta, which he founded and manages. As a journalist living and working in Nigeria, he was a victim of the brutal and oppressive tactics of the Joint Task Force (JTF), which contributed to his leaving the country to seek safety.

ANDREW ISIAYEI President Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), North American Chapter

Andrew is a Nigerian Ijaw man who lives in the U.S. with his family. He serves as the President of the IYC North American Chapter. Andrew's home village of Agge was completely burned to the ground by the Nigerian Joint Task Force (JTF) in August 2008.

ELIAS COURSON Lecturer, Delta State University

Elias is a Lecturer at Delta State University in Nigeria. He is currently studying at the University of California, Berkeley. Elias's interviews provide historical background and context to the current crisis, with particular emphasis on his apparent understanding of the MEND militants, or the "boys," as he calls them.

HELEN LELEKUMO Women's Platform Protest Leader

Helen is an Ijaw woman living in Warri, Nigeria. She is a mother of six children. Helen is Fanty's sister and was one of the Platform Protest leaders. In the film, Helen speaks authoritatively about mothers and non-violence vs. militant resistance. In addition to her on-camera interviews, she was a primary translator on location and provided valuable assistance to the crew.

IBIBA DON PEDRO Journalist, The National Point

Ibiba is an Ijaw woman, an award-winning journalist and Managing Editor of the National Point, a Nigerian paper she founded in Port Hartcourt. Ibiba has published two books about the Niger Delta struggle. She has served as an African Correspondent for CNN and was named CNN African Journalist of the Year in 2003.

PAUL Student Leader

Paul is a member of the student group National Association of Gbaramatu Students (NAGS). He is a Youth leader and a spokesman.

JANET Oporoza Resident

Janet lives with her family of five in the village of Oporoza. She is an Ijaw woman and the mother of Sandra, the little girl who frequently appears in *Sweet Crude*. Janet goes out twice daily with the tides to bring in her fishing nets and check her catch. She has been forced to sell fuel and phone cards to compensate for the rapidly shrinking fish population, which does not provide enough food for her family.

SIMON LOWES Director Regional Development, Chevron Nigeria Ltd.

At the time of filming, Simon lived in Lagos, Nigeria and worked for Chevron as a liaison with villages for community development. He shows genuine concern and understanding about the Niger Delta region and its difficulties and strongly believes that Chevron is doing what it can. He has expressed a belief in third-party monitored talks and the opinion that the Nigerian government needs to do its job.

DENIS Student Leader

Denis is a member of the student group National Association of Gbaramatu Students (NAGS) and an articulate Ijaw Youth leader. His approach to resistance shifts over the three years of this film.

On Location

The filming of *Sweet Crude* spanned three years and included four trips to the Niger Delta. It began in November 2005 when filmmaker Sandy Cioffi was hired to document the building of a library by a Seattle-based nonprofit-Nigerian partnership. What began as two weeks of filming a volunteer project, resulted in a much larger commitment to tell the story of the people of the Niger Delta. *Sweet Crude* had its inception during that initial trip, fueled by the insistence of villagers that their story be told to the international community.

Three trips to the Delta followed – four weeks in August 2006, two weeks in December 2006 and two weeks in April 2008. In an unusual approach to filmmaking, five volunteers from the library project signed on as volunteers on the film. They wore many hats on the ground in the Delta and some eventually took on more traditional production and post-production roles. Additional interviews were filmed in New York NY, Floresville TX, San Francisco CA and Atlanta GA. More than 140 hours of footage were captured.

Filming in Nigeria was hugely challenging. It was fascinating and heartening to watch the crew's Nigerian colleagues negotiate the brutal conditions and constant uncertainty. Their help was essential. The location team was sparse but mighty. Each crew member had to be a jack-of-many-trades, and muster grit and brawn alongside professional skills and creativity. Before trips, crew members could be found at boxing gyms and fitness boot camps preparing for searing, humid weather and unending pounds of gear to haul and maneuver in and out of boats. On-the-ground logistics were daunting, and required ultra-flexibility to accommodate constant plan changes and infrastructure glitches.

Buying supplies in Nigeria is very difficult and in the "creeks" region of the Niger Delta, almost impossible. So the team set out on the waterways with just about everything they needed, including basics like batteries, bottled water, first aid supplies and some of their food. Nigeria is essentially an all-cash economy, and prices for goods and services are negotiated on the fly. This meant traveling with relatively large sums of local currency, making big wads that were difficult to carry discretely.

Maintaining delicate equipment in a humid, sandy environment was difficult but crucial, as there was no access to repair shops or supplies. Electricity was another challenge, requiring an ongoing preemptive strategy to keep the cameras powered through all-day shoots in remote locations. Villages lucky enough to have gas-powered generators only run them at selected hours to conserve fuel. In a region that supplies billions of dollars of crude oil to feed the world's power needs, this was a sad irony not lost on the crew. Nor was the enormous amount of energy spent on travel, including numerous boat trips in vessels that leaked fuel into the already oil-soaked river.

While in the cities of Lagos and Warri, the choice of lodging was often dictated by which hotel's "link" (internet service) was working. Nearly all communication was by cell phone. Purchasing "recharge" cards to replenish minutes was a daily if not hourly activity. Used cards are a common sight in Nigeria, littering the streets in most places. Texting was the cheapest and often most reliable way to reach people, and as a result a new breed of texters among the crew emerged.

Life in the cities and villages was marked with the constant hum of noise. The cacophony of audible input ranged from the relentless banging of construction and motorcycles in the cities to the sound of morning prayers and oddly, Celine Dion songs in the village starting at 6:00 am. And always, the chance for spontaneous drumming from the village children, using empty plastic jugs, water bottles or whatever they could find.

The crew's Nigerian colleagues and guides faced the overwhelming difficulties of daily life and filming with equanimity and humor. Their persistence and logistical savvy was key to getting the powerful footage seen in *Sweet Crude*. And their friendship will be treasured by the crew for a lifetime.

Production Credits

Virasana Productions and Vérité Coffee present

a film by Sandy Cioffi

produced by

Kate Wolf
Sandy Cioffi

producers

Leslye Wood
Tammi Sims

original score by

Julie Wolf

cinematography by

Sean Porter

edited by

Jill Freidberg

directed by

Sandy Cioffi

DIRECTED BY

Sandy Cioffi

PRODUCED BY

Kate Wolf
Sandy Cioffi

PRODUCERS

Leslye Wood
Tammi Sims

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

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Jody Hall
Elizabeth Rudolf

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY

Sean Porter

EDITED BY

Jill Freidberg

WRITTEN BY

Leslye Wood
Jill Freidberg
Sandy Cioffi

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Julie Wolf

ART DIRECTION BY

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Belle & Wissell, Co.

ORIGINAL PAINTINGS BY

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Cliff Worsham
Sandy Cioffi
Pamela Dore

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Laurie Hicks
Kathleen McInnis

ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS

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Ryan Hauck
Mary Ella Keblusek
Kendra E. Thornbury

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Meagan Walker

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Amanda Larson
John Hill

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Sean Donavan

PROMOTIONAL REEL EDITORS

Cody Alberts
Sean Donavan

EDITING ASSISTANTS

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Cliff Worsham

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Eric Frith

DIGITIZING ASSISTANTS

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Jeremy Mackie
Mark Mueller
Jeff Wilbur

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Jill Freidberg

ARCHIVAL ACQUISITIONS

Leslye Wood

MOTION GRAPHICS DIRECTOR

Scott Garner

MOTION GRAPHICS

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Scott Garner
Lee Grambush
Jin Kong
Alan Llave
David Ross
Alexis Smith

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Tupac Mauricio Saavedra – San Francisco

MUSIC SUPERVISOR

Julie Wolf

FILM SCORE ENGINEERS

Jon Evans
Jonathan Kingham
Deborah Pardes
Julie Wolf

FILM SCORE ASSISTANT & TECHNICAL LEAD

Deborah Pardes

SOUND TRACK ENGINEER

Ken Rich

CONTRIBUTING MUSICIANS

Randy Clark - Guitar
Jon Evans – Bass, Percussion
Allison Miller – Drums, Percussion
Scott Amendola – Drums, Percussion
Vicki Randle – Percussion, Vocals
Amy Ray – Guitar, Vocals
Hans Teuber – Horns
Julie Wolf – Piano, Keyboards, Sequencing, Percussion, Vocals

NIGERIA UNIT SOUND

Laurie Hicks

FIELD PHOTOGRAPHER

Kendra E. Thornbury

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Pamela Dore
Ryan Hauck
Leslye Wood

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Bad Animals

SOUND DESIGN ASSISTANT

Erick Diaz-Soto

POST PRODUCTION

Modern Digital

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Gabriel Stromberg

WEB DESIGN/DEVELOPMENT

Austen Hoogen
Lisa Kliman

LOGO DESIGN

Jason Sutherland

RESEARCH LEAD

Leslye Wood

RESEARCHER

Marisa Peña

PRODUCTION STUDIO

Microsoft Studios

STAGE MANAGER

Karen Howe

PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Sean Donavan
Maria Wardian

PROPS MASTER

Sarah Littlefield

ADDITIONAL SOUND MIXER

Steve Jones

PRODUCTION ATTORNEY

Kevin Traywick

POST PRODUCTION SUPERVISOR

Kate Wolf

POST PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS

Tim Christensen

Chad Cobain

Christian Hansen

Sarah Hughes

Cameron Rumford

Jon Paul Phillips

Julie Smith

Maria Wardian

Michael Twombly

"SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL"

by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards

Published by ABKCO Music, Inc.

www.adkco.com

Produced and arranged by Julie Wolf and Jon Evans

Performed by Amy Ray, Julie Wolf, Jon Evans and Scott Amendola

ADDITIONAL SOUNDTRACK COMPOSITIONS BY HALF PENNY

Jon Evans, Allison Miller and Julie Wolf, featuring Randy Clark, Jen Leigh, Vicki Randle

"Arching Chest to Sky"

by J. Wolf/J. Evans

Performed by Half Penny

"Cardboard Cutouts"

by A. Miller/J. Wolf

Performed by Half Penny

"Great Escape"

by J. Evans

Performed by Half Penny

"Levitude"

by J. Evans

Performed by Half Penny

"Thirteen"

by J. Evans

Performed by Half Penny

Archival footage courtesy AP Archive, Catma Films, CNN, The CONUS Archive, The Seattle Channel

Still photography courtesy AP, Ed Kashi

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It truly took a village to make a movie about a village.

Please spend some time with the appreciation page on our web site.

Every effort was made to find the most recent statistical and anecdotal research available on Nigeria and the Niger Delta, and to select the most accurate sources where data discrepancies exist.

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