



## *Crude Independence*

*By Christine Whittaker*

Crane Street Studio  
46-23 Crane St. LIC, NY. 11101

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***Contact:***

***P.O. Box 1229 Church Street Station  
New York, NY 10008 – 1229  
H: (718) 361-2381***

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My family has been involved in oil and gas, the Military, Military R&D as well as the civil rights movement. Involvement in the Military spans several generations. As a result of being exposed to these industries I have insights into the associations between fossil fuel resource acquisition, military advancement and Capitalism. It's interesting that how in the last two decades how the term "Capitalism" has been seamlessly replaced by "Democracy". In the last decade alone the power of our "Capitalistic" system seems to be based in the technological advancements of our military system. The last decade the agenda of the military has been to obtain fossil resources" or "oil". Today our political agenda shapes who we are as Americans and thusly how we are perceived by the rest of the world.



*Pictured are several generations my family involved in the Military. Pictured to the right is my grandfather Robert W. Garwick in 1943 at the age of 21. He was a B-26 bomber pilot and squadron leader (one of the few members that returned). Robert flew 68 Missions (67 before D-Day and 5 on D-Day) focused on the bombing of the bridges leaving Paris and Southern France (as the Germans were moving thru Paris towards the English Channel).*

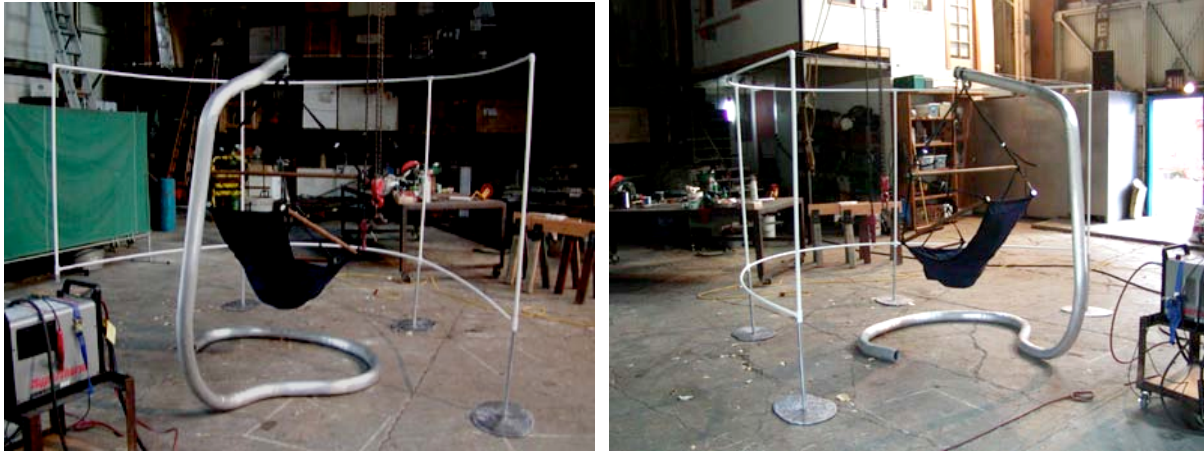
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My father is an aerospace engineer. His career started with the invention of the argon gas laser (a collaborative venture), he went on to NASA to follow his passion in the investigation of space. He worked on the last Saturn V and once the space program was cancelled he moved into the Military and R&D development. He has worked for 35 years on the nuclear warheads, Star wars, infrared night vision systems, mapping systems and nuclear tanks. His specialty is missile guidance systems and to date has 22 laser Patents with the Pentagon. He is one of the premier developments specialists for lasers in the United States.



*Pictured my father Thomas Whittaker demonstrating a gun designed to hit a target a mile away with perfect accuracy. The gun is composed of canon optical components equipped with a laser guidance system.*

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*Pictured is the Building of Passage2 during my fellowship at Mark DiSuvero's Athena Foundation.*

From 2002 to 2003 I became an Athena Fellow courtesy of Mark DiSuvero and Spacetime. The fellowship started during America's invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. In general my conversations with Mark seemed to stem from daily news reports. Our conversations revolved into the topics deeper issues of the military, civil rights, energy resources, science and physics as well as extensive conversations concerning the arts. I especially loved

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he conversations that specifically involved the arts and sciences. As I have always been into the ideas of collaborative arts and science projects. I find these types of creative investigations the most provocative. Due to my extensive conversations with Mark I believe he is one of the greatest minds of the 21<sup>st</sup>. century, always active always stimulating, always questing and further trying to question and understand the construct of nature and the universe. These questions take shape in physics, math and science. Speaking with Mark I started to think more about these topics, as well as my ongoing interests in politics and world history.

toured Europe in the summer of 2001 and made a detailing trip investigating my interests in politics and world history. In 2004 during a conversation with Mark I said “political history is extremely important it tells us who we are in the world today”. I truly believe this. Thusly, It’s greatly important to also try to comprehend and understand the histories of other cultures in order to comprehend how and why they function. Overall, humanity is constructed of many pieces, there are pieces that are very beautiful, fantastically interesting, relatively complicated as well as fragments of darkness that sometimes seem incomprehensible. Regardless these pieces are woven together into a fabric that we call humanity. It’s from these thoughts that I started building these works.

While building these works I listened to the daily radio broadcasts of America’s invasion of Iraq thusly I witness a bizarre change in American policy and politics. I have witnessed a new America where citizens have become frozen as well as their constituents in the Senate and House, which the only opposition in 2003 was voiced from war protestors and “The Dixie Chicks” (country vocalists). It has really taken a long time for Americans to thaw the fear started on September 11, 2001 and presently there seems to be no end in sight. This is not the America that I grew up in but some sort of new America which “power” is completely immersed in “military might”.

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On September 11, 2001, I watched the Trade Centers fall in New York (as many New Yorkers) I felt as though I was watching history in the making. I was. I witnessing the physical shift from the tail

end of “the cold war” into “Global Terrorism”. “Global Terrorism” was a political construct primarily created by the Bush administration. “Global Terrorism” has fueled the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq. “Global Terrorism” has also motivated major budget expenditures into the military. At this point the monies invested into these military conquests (more than \$220 billion dollars) are starting to have a devastating effect on the economy and oddly enough graced associates of the “bush” family.

In the early 70's due to America's increasing needs oil exploration started to shift outside of the United States into the Arab nations. Thus OPEC was born. Through this dependency America has entered into reliance on Arab and Islamic nations. The Arabic nations operate under entirely different belief systems and political constructs. America has started to veer into conflicts due to these differences. In the last decade the nature of war has been completely redefined by the variables surrounding the quest for “fossil fuel resources”. The “Gulf War” and “Operation Freedom” were born out of the complex variables that have to do with our needs for “fossil fuel”. Thusly, the face of war has been redefined this process will continue to evolve.

The Bush family out of Midland and well known in Texas for four decades has obtained great wealth due to its involvement in the oil industry. At this point the Bush family involvement in “oil” has made them one of the richest families in the world (“an oil dynasty”). The wealth from the oil has gained great political power. Thusly, they have become tightly associated with similar “oil family dynasties” in the Arab Nations (Saudi Arabia).

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*My grandfather Robert Garwick pictured in a Texas oilfield early 1970's.*

In 1981 and 1982 I assisted in my grandfather Robert W. Garwick oil corporation working on maps plotting wells in the Texas Louisiana and Oklahoma territories (using Schlumberge well logs). In 1982 I remember when the price of a barrel skyrocketed to \$36 as the average drilling range was approaching a mile. At the time most geological firms were small entrepreneurial-based corporations thusly exploration costs were absorbed in geological research and exploration (drilling).

At the time, the government was making moves to monopolize the industry by implementing the “Windfalls Profits Tax” (the fourth of four industry taxes) and moving large corporations into the Texas territory. These proved to be successful government strategies in monopolization of the oil industry. In the end, the government put many entrepreneurs out of business (such as my grandfather). In the end, the costs of these large corporations far outweighed that of the previous entrepreneurial system and jettisoned the cost of the barrel.

Today to produce oil in the state of Texas could range from \$50 to \$80 a barrel due to the costs involved in exploration. Factors like this have forced America to become more dependent on foreign soil. Compiled with the cost of war that knows what the cost of a barrel is.

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A barrel could be the equivalency of 15 300 rounds, an Iraqi life, an injured American, civilian lives, several gallons of jet fuel or two hummer tires. Looking at all of these factors it is easy to see that increasing dependency is the problem and Americas problems will become more complicated. What Americans doesn't seem to realize is how vulnerable these choices make us as a nation as we become more deeply involved with the Middle East on a daily basis.

Paralleling "Operation Freedom" I noticed consumer frenzy in the purchase of "Oversized Utility Vehicles". Oddly enough American consumers consider purchasing Oversized Utility Vehicles "patriotic". When "Oversized Utility Vehicles" parallel the gas consumption of vehicles built in the 60's and 70's. Rather than shed light on these issues the media in America seemed to be compliant to the "patriotic" aspect. Recently, consumers have been tapering off the purchasing of "SUV's" due to rising gas prices. "SUV" sales are plummeting, auto manufactures have had to drop "SUV" purchase prices. The federal government has stepped in to rescue the auto industry in offering \$25,000 tax deductions for small businesses that purchased "SUV's" in 2004. This tax deduction is equal and in some cases greater than the purchase price.

I believe "Global Terrorism" is a front for George Bush to launder monies into military associates as well as establish gains in obtaining cheaper "fossil fuel resources" via Iraq. In this way that "Operation Freedom" becomes a subversive way to cloak an imperialistic conquest. Rather than supporting more "Theater Wars" such as "Operation Freedom" or "Desert Storms" Americas needs to look at our energy consumption realistically. In order to counter this trend America must evaluate the way we use our resources, redefine the way we use energy and actively support the development of new energy programs. Auto manufacturers need to finally open the door to the patents that engineers have been submitting for years involving higher combustion engines and alternative energy resources.

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Basically these trends make America increasingly dependent on other nations; thusly we have started to operate in a way that may be very destructive to the fiber of our own nation and the rest of the world. Today the

question of energy development is answered by a military engagement, rather than new explorations in our vast resources of science, engineering, physics and genius (which are readily available in the United States). America has the greatest resources in the world to deal with the problem of "energy", yet as a nation we prefer to invest in nanumissions, missiles, fighter jets and the slaughter of thousands, this of course comes at the cost of our infrastructure as a nation and further compromises our safety in the world.

The definition of Independence as written in the Declaration of Independence as signed in congress July 4, 1776 (last verse) reads as follows:

*We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.*

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The British imperialism that once controlled the colonies should not become a template for America to do business with the rest of the world. Thusly, Imperialism should also not be cloaked in the guise of “freedom”. It is also very arrogant to think that the rest of the world is not watching and comprehending what we are doing. It is dangerous that we have overstepped The United Nations destroying the delicate political infrastructure that binds us together as nations and in the end none of this will resolve the problem of energy.

The issue is energy, the amount of energy that it takes to run a nation. Dually, in resorting to barbaric methods to obtain resources we have somehow forgotten our greatest attributes. America has tremendous communities in engineering, science and physics that have not been tapped. There is absolutely no reason not to utilize the resources rather than further finance military conquests.

It is time that we reflect on what is really happening and reinvest into the infrastructure of America in energy development and education.



*Pictured is Barrel a 1200 lbs sculpture composed of 15 smashed barrels, 4 transformers and 9 fluorescent tubes.*

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In 1960 John F. Kennedy stated “by the end of this decade we will walk the moon” and by the end of the 1960’s it happened. John F. Kennedy was a visionary and understood the power of the human spirit.

It takes vision in order to understand possibility. The human spirit itself is the most powerful resource for knowledge, innovation and change. Its time for America set some new visionary goals for its future and stability.



*Pictured Passage2 in my studio 2004, the tree chair is suspended by 30 ft. bent aluminum tubing, surrounded by a flexible video screen. To the left is the accelerometer and microprocessor that alter the projected visuals.*