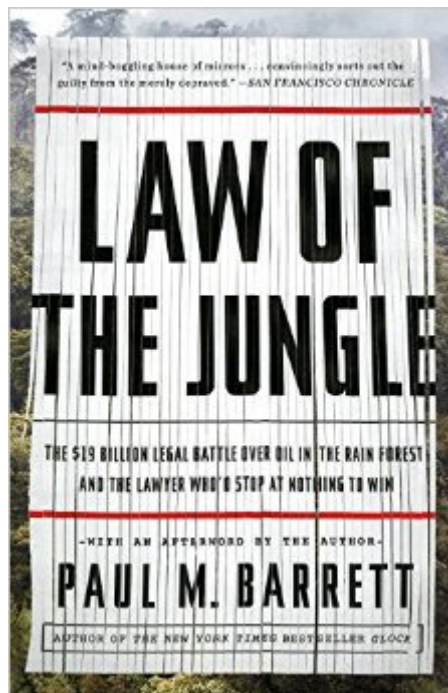


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# Law Of The Jungle: The \$19 Billion Legal Battle Over Oil In The Rain Forest And The Lawyer Who'd Stop At Nothing To Win



## Synopsis

The gripping story of one American lawyer's obsessive crusade "waged at any cost" against Big Oil on behalf of the poor farmers and indigenous tribes of the rainforest. Steven Donziger, a self-styled social activist and Harvard educated lawyer, signed on to a budding class action lawsuit against multinational Texaco (which later merged with Chevron to become the third-largest corporation in America). The suit sought reparations for the Ecuadorian peasants and tribes people whose lives were affected by decades of oil production near their villages and fields. During twenty years of legal hostilities in federal courts in Manhattan and remote provincial tribunals in the Ecuadorian jungle, Donziger and Chevron's lawyers followed fierce no-holds-barred rules. Donziger, a larger-than-life, loud-mouthed showman, proved himself a master orchestrator of the media, Hollywood, and public opinion. He cajoled and coerced Ecuadorian judges on the theory that his noble ends justified any means of persuasion. And in the end, he won an unlikely victory, a \$19 billion judgment against Chevron--the biggest environmental damages award in history. But the company refused to surrender or compromise. Instead, Chevron targeted Donziger personally, and its counter-attack revealed damning evidence of his politicking and manipulation of evidence. Suddenly the verdict, and decades of Donziger's single-minded pursuit of the case, began to unravel. Written with the texture and flair of the best narrative nonfiction, *Law of the Jungle* is an unputdownable story in which there are countless victims, a vast region of ruined rivers and polluted rainforest, but very few heroes.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"This is a tale with no shortage of knaves and villains." -- Paul Barrett, *Law of the Jungle*

Paul Barrett has written a very good primer to the saga of Steven Donziger's guerrilla war against Chevron and Chevron's relentless carpet bombing counter-attack. It could be tougher on Chevron, it is true. But, Barrett is fairer than I would have thought when in background I read furious denunciations of the book by Steven Donziger and people sympathetic to him. I can safely say that I have never done as much background material reading and research for any book review as I have for this. I read Judge Kaplan's opinion and appeals of it. I read articles by the Chevron legal team on the use of Section 1782, and, frankly was impressed by their tenaciousness. I read Karen Hinton's twitter feed and Huffington Post article. I spent some time on Steve Donziger's webpage. I read the (rather clearly ghostwritten) affidavit of Pablo Farjado. With all that, although I think that Paul Barrett could have given more time over to Chevron's misdeeds, for the most part, his narrative was faithful to what I learned from my own research. The topic is also incredibly polarizing. I am sure that a researcher at an agency hired by Chevron will soon be typing up an analysis of my comments along with a summary of my biography and my perceived biases and weaknesses. And, some earnest intern at Watch will probably be doing much the same, though with less attention to the order of the email addresses of the recipients that she sends it to. (You may think I'm exaggerating, but take a look at the wikipedia page of William Langewiesche.

**Conflict of Interest: Businessweek's Paul Barrett Now An Advocate for Chevron In Ecuador Dispute**

With his track record of bias in favor of Chevron already part of the historical record, Businessweek's Paul Barrett appears to have become a full-blown public advocate for the oil giant in its legal dispute with Ecuadorian villagers over the massive contamination of their ancestral lands. Just this week, Barrett testified about his take on the litigation before the House of Representatives in a hearing that was arranged in part by Chevron lobbyists. He appeared at the side of a lawyer from the oil giant's controversial outside law firm, Gibson Dunn & Crutcher. And he repeated the usual Chevron talking points about the Ecuador case that have been rejected by three layers of courts in Ecuador, including that nation's highest court in a unanimous opinion last November. Barrett's testimony in favor of Chevron is "completely improper for any independent journalist" follows multiple reports that Chevron is quietly helping to promote his forthcoming book about the case, *Law of the Jungle*. We can't say we are surprised after reviewing an advance copy from a source who indicated Barrett is trying to flog it in Hollywood. The effort by Barrett to cash in on the misery of Ecuadorian villagers by promoting Chevron's

campaign to evade accountability is hardly surprising. His book falls far short of fact-based responsible journalism. Barrett adopts wholesale most of Chevron's fraudulent plot points and ignores the overwhelming scientific evidence – most provided by the oil company itself during an eight-year trial in the court of its choosing in Ecuador – that was relied on to determine liability for the dumping of billions of gallons of toxic waste into the rainforest.

"Law of the Jungle" by Paul M. Barrett is a fascinating reconstruction and analysis of the famous class action lawsuit filed against Texaco (later Chevron) on behalf of the indigenous people of Ecuador. Mr. Barrett is a best-selling author who has written extensively about the landmark case including research gathered first-hand in the U.S. and Ecuador. This highly readable, engaging and dramatic book narrates an epic struggle for justice against entrenched corporate and governmental power, vice and corruption. Mr. Barrett focuses much of the story on the attorney, Steven Donziger who championed the cause of the tribal peoples of the rainforest. Donziger's flair for public relations in the 1990s helped gain attention for the lawsuit including support from celebrities around the world (in fact, I was one of those inspired by the struggle and co-wrote Save the Rainforest, a tune featuring Larry King on vocals, that made a passing reference to these events). But Mr. Barrett shows us that, sadly, there was much more to the fairy tale, David-versus-Goliath story than most of us realized. Mr. Barrett details the many cynical twists and turns that ensued over twenty years of proceedings as Donziger did whatever he felt was necessary to win. Mr. Barrett allows the reader leeway to consider whether it may have been a personal desire for wealth, prestige or some other character flaw that might have driven Donziger to the point of recklessness, a Harvard graduate whose acquaintances include some of the most powerful people on the planet. Mr.

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