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Curse of the Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in The Niger Delta

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Curse of the Black Gold: 50 Years of Oil in the Niger Delta takes a graphic look at the profound cost of oil exploitation in West Africa. Featuring images by world-renowned photojournalist Ed Kashi and text by prominent Nigerian journalists, human rights activists, and University of California at Berkeley professor Michael Watts, this book traces the 50-year history of Nigeria's oil interests and the resulting environmental degradation and community conflicts that have plagued the region.

Now one of the major suppliers of U.S. oil, Nigeria is the sixth largest producer of oil in the world. Set against a backdrop of what has been called the scramble for African oil, ***Curse of the Black Gold*** is the first book to document the consequences of a half-century of oil exploration and production in one of the world's foremost centers of biodiversity. This book exposes the reality of oil's impact and the absence of sustainable development in its wake, providing a compelling pictorial history of one of the world's great deltaic areas. Accompanied by powerful writing by some of the most prominent public intellectuals and critics in contemporary Nigeria, Kashi's photographs capture local leaders, armed militants, oil workers, and nameless villagers, all of whose fates are inextricably linked. His exclusive coverage bears witness to the ongoing struggles of local communities, illustrating the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty.

The publication of ***Curse of the Black Gold*** occurs at a moment of worldwide concern over dependency on petroleum, dubbed by *New York Times* journalist Thomas Friedman as "the resource curse." Much has been written about the drama of the search for oil—Daniel Yergin's *The Prize* and Ryszard Kapuscinski's *Shah of Shahs* are two of the most widely lauded—but there has been no serious examination of the relations between oil, environment, and community in a particular oil-producing region. Curse of the Black Gold is a landmark work of historic significance.

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