



"WE WANT GUTSY, HEROIC
IMAGES, BECAUSE

THAT'S HOW IT IS.

GIVE IT POWER,
YES!

BUT GIVE IT ELEGANCE
AND STYLE, TOO."

ENERGY

Industry: Energy - Location: Gulf of Mexico - Story: Exploration Drilling on New Lease Sector

A helicopter picks us up at 4:30AM in the small coastal town of Cameron, Louisiana. For several hours, the flight drones on across the empty Gulf and into the gray morning mist. As we approach the platform it looms enormous before us -- an island of steel tethered to the ocean floor, drilling for oil that may lie miles below.

I need a full-page vertical of the drilling action, and at least two off-rig beauty shots as soon as the weather breaks. When we get to the drilling floor, there's slippery mud everywhere, and even with ear plugs the noise is deafening. The crew is making pipe connections as huge diesel engines drive section after section into the well. The whole rig is vibrating violently with the effort.

I climb up the sides of the derrick and into the superstructure. The higher I go, the more the rig shakes, making it impossible to frame my shot.

Looking down, I see two roughnecks "pushing pipe into the hole", a heroic image that I think captures the spirit of this rough and complex industry. I yell into my walkie-talkie, asking them to stop the engines so I can set up and focus.

The overcast is lifting and beautiful filtered sunlight rakes across the drilling floor -- giving me a great shot of the two mud-spattered roughnecks trying to muscle "black gold" from the depths.



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