

Who is Grant Pierce and where has he been?



Some of my own photos taken on this journey

Not too long ago I made a proposal of sorts to a group of people, and leading up to that I wrote a summary of what I had done. I thought I would share that summary with a few edits, for anyone that might be interested. The last 3 decades have been an interesting ride and the ride continues.

Grant Pierce, who is this guy? Well, I come from Louisiana originally where I grew up with a typical family I think (we all think our families are a bit abnormal), mine being no different. The one differentiator I can see that's not typical is that my parents pushed me to always ask questions, about anything and everything. They weren't the type to push their own ideas on me. I had free reign to make my own assessments about, well life. It's just myself and one younger brother; I'm 47 in December coming, and only brother is 5 years younger.

I graduated high school in 1993. I've always been an information gatherer. I had high enough grades and I consider myself intelligent enough in an overall sense, and likely could have done the conventional University (which was the norm then) and gone on to do some boring job, but I chose oil & gas, or perhaps it chose me?

I did complete 2 years of University and some of you will find this funny, but my initial focus was physical therapy, yes imagine me as a Doctor. Originally, I had aspirations to go to the Air Force Academy and become a pilot and had the recommendations I needed to perhaps even secure a position as a candidate in Officer Candidate School, but that wasn't to be my final plan. In the end, off to a regional University I went upon graduation (Northeast LA University then or ULM now).

Before I committed myself to 2 years of parties though (I'm 17 at the time), I happened to join a cased hole electric wireline company in Shreveport, LA where I was born and raised. This would be the point that set me off on this journey of the last 28, going on 29 years in oil and gas.

I did complete 2 years in Uni though I shifted my focus to environmental science in the second year and came back to a local community college since I was footing the bills myself. I continued working every chance I could for that same wireline company and at the end of 2 years of Uni I left book school behind for the school of life.

With that small wireline company, I moved to a different state, Arkansas, and was part of a small team that did a high volume of jobs from pipe recovery to perforating cavern wells for chemical

plants, to cement bond logging and perforating high pressure gas fields just East of Shreveport and Southern Arkansas; working on everything from 5k to 15k surface pressures.

I got to a point where I thought I was homesick, and when the transfer home wasn't in the cards, I made my own way. I ended up at BJ Services Company, which had just bought out The Western Company of North America & Nowasco.

So, at 21 I am a Frac grunt who knows the downhole portion relatively well and also had been around pumping so I had a grasp, but I would have never imagined that I would spend nearly 9 years surrounded with pumping. During the time I was with BJ we were doing a job per day, and sometimes if pump times were short, we would do 2. The Bossier City district had a very high turnover rate so if a person applied themselves, and I always have in everything I do, you could grow quite fast.

I went from hammering high pressure iron and running pumps to the backside (blenders & chemicals) pretty quickly because I wanted to learn. Before that time was up I had attained a lot of knowledge and been trusted to go run smaller jobs myself with 1 or 2 others on a team with me leading. The pay was crap, and the hours were long, so a friend, colleague, room mate started discussing, why don't we move to South Louisiana and go to work for someone there to work offshore? That ended up being Halliburton (Sand Control Pumping/Production Enhancement).

At that time Halliburton had stim vessels operational, but they didn't have a modular skid package for rigs, available to perform anything other than water packs, gravel packs, etc and looking back I think our Manager there saw an opportunity to utilize my friend and I as the catalyst to form a skid frac unit.

We both had our commercial drivers licenses of course and Halliburton New Iberia also had a few truck units to perform barge work so at first we went on those jobs and were trained in how Halliburton did things. But, it wasn't more than a few months into that position, when the Manager came to us and said, ok we are getting a package together, next week you will have a skid frac blender we have secured from the stim vessels and we already have horsepower on the way.

We were given a mentor who had been instrumental in building Frac businesses all over the world, and he set off teaching our small team of 6-8. That blender would soon be replaced by a state of the art (then, though still relevant) 25 barrel modular ARC blender as it was more suitable for our purposes, where the average pump rate was 15 bpm. This was the early days of what is now known as Fracpacs. We obtained quite a lot of rigs for Coastal O&G when they had 15 jackups working and we literally were jumping rig to rig. Until the downturn end of that year.

When that downturn came in 1998 or thereabouts we were given some breathing room to move around, where we could take our small crew of 8; we could go up to East Texas, Bossier City, etc and assist much larger Frac operations like we had been accustomed to with BJ. It gave the other guys who were never onshore and never seen that level, an idea how things operate.

To give you all an idea, picture 40-50 pieces of heavy equipment spread across a football field, 2 transfer blenders, 2 downhole blenders, 50 frac tanks on location, loaded with 30-35 pump trucks putting a million to 2 million pounds of sand and fluid downhole at 100 bpm; moved in, spotted, rigged up, pumped, rigged down same day.

Its a huge operation to say the very least. Thats what we did at BJ Bossier City, so thats where my pumping knowledge started from; large scale operations and very dynamic. Not like today where they do these shale clusters over months on a pad, but vertical well work getting after it. Rig up 3AM, going downhole at 7AM, finished pumping by 8-9AM, and rigged down by lunch time. Fast shit.

Downturn continued and I asked could I perhaps transfer to another location as 40 hour minimums were stifling to say the least and I didn't move to Lafayette to sit around. That wasn't to be though. I wanted to learn and grow, which now that I look back, have been my intentions all my life. I was offered a chance to go to work for ProTechnics, injecting radioactive tracer (irradiated encapsulated sand).

Next 6 and a bit years, 1998-2004, I spent with ProTechnics initially starting out injecting RA Tracer on jobs in the GOM, but training began in East Texas and North Louisiana where I came from, where the jobs were quite large as I described above. A typical job I would be given a treatment schedule we needed to pump in at, (we used dystaulic pumps much like a heart pump where we injected into the low pressure side of a treatment line) and I would acquire the Frac treatment schedule from the Treater.

I would then make calculations on how fast I needed to inject 3 main isotopes and follow along on the radio with the pressure pumping company. After 1 year of doing purely tracer jobs a position came open to run their memory based logging tools that would be run after the Frac, or during the Frac in washpipe, like a downhole BHP/BHT gauge.

I was given so much opportunity once I moved into that logging position and soon would be entrusted by Shell and BP mainly, but also Chevron, and some others on some of the largest assets and deepest wells that they were working on in the GOM. We would soon be running our tools in washpipe on so much work, it was hard to keep up.

I got to a point where I was also sometimes jockeying from the rig to the Frac vessel, first installing my tools in the washpipe when lower completion was run, then down on the vessel to run tracer job, then back to the rig before we picked up the service tool to capture log of the zone we had just stimulated and injected tracer into, while pulling the service tool and washpipe. Built quite a name for myself until I thought I was burned out on the oilfield, so I left for a short stint (6 months).

I soon found out I wasn't burned out like I thought so back to it I went. For about 8 months I moved around trying to find my home. Downhole Video International, the first real downhole camera which was commercial. Then back into pumping with a local pumping outfit, A to Z Pressure Pumping Services, doing barge jobs, land jobs, some shallow water work offshore, and

also remedial cementing. I had never pumped putty before so it was good to get a grasp of that portion. Negative tests, drawdowns, etc.

Mid 2005 I was offered a position with Welltec based to start in Houston though with intentions of opening a base in Louisiana. That first base went in New Orleans at the same time Katrina hit. We started building that first base literally 3 months prior to hurricane Katrina so little did I know that though we would get built and opened up post Katrina things would change for my direction.

I had been working in the GOM at that time for approx. 8-9 years and I was presented an opportunity to go to help out in Angola. My room mate and colleague had been given an opportunity, but he was a young compared to me and after 1 trip to Africa, he said nope, I'm not going back. So he took over the New Orleans base totally and after 1 trip to Angola, I was hooked Internationally and had been offered a rotational position there 28x28 on a 2 year contract.

For the next 9.5 years, I helped set up bases from India, Vietnam, Equatorial Guinea, Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, moving from Field Engineer to Region Technical Manager. Most of those bases were remote with the exception of Vietnam so the skills required were to run your own business which meant being fully focused.

Yes, there was typically a sales guy who covered the area, but we also sat in the Operators office, were given the engineering work to assess how we do technically challenging jobs, so basically we were inside salesman as well. With Welltec I worked and travelled the world and I wouldnt be in Vietnam today with my family (Vietnamese wife and 2 daughters if it were not for the opps I had been given).

In 2014 it was time to move on. I had decided it was time for a change and considering I had been in this industry for as many years as I had, I thought best to go independent as a completion & well intervention consultant. After 6 months of sending out cv's constantly I was asked if I would be interested in joining a newly formed company, FTO Services, which was a combination of Edison Chouest/Island Offshore vessels, FMC (with Well Control Package), and Halliburton as a service partner.

Edison Chouest also owned a large portion of Island so they took control of the Island Performer LWIV which was a newly purpose built vessel meant to be the first monohull in the GOM market. I was hired as a consultant as Well Intervention Supervisor, much like a Completion & Well Intervention Supervisor for an Operator.

My first task was to go to Norway and oversee the FAT that was soon to be happening with FMC RLWI Stack IV, move the vessel around from Islands shipyards where it was being modded, load all the FMC equipment onboard, have it sea fastened, and transit across with same with a skeleton crew, the core FMC team, an OIM, QHSE guys, and of course marine crew. We were going to be team building on the journey while we wrote documentation for upcoming SOP's, helped build the vessel QHSE mgmt system, and just get familiar with each other.

We brought the vessel into Fourchon, Louisiana after 21 days of transit from Norway down through the English Channel across the big water East of the GOM. From there we began building the vessel to suit operations there in the GOM specifically. We were of course doing shipyard type work where we had construction crews onboard which we got equipment installed and functional.

We performed wet tests and got the system to optimal levels and also the teams to what I would call optimal levels. At the same time, things in the oil business crashed, and due to project costs, FTO started down manning, so myself and the other consultant Well Intervention Superintendent (DSV in common terms) were released.

Now, funny thing (but not haha) was, that an Operator in Oman, had offered me a position at the same time as Well Test Specialist. I had done an interview with the team and had been accepted. I had accepted the offer, but the sign off from corporate never came on the position, as the market kept deep diving. So I set out building a network of key people in the Light Well Intervention business. I tried not to leave any stones unturned and that's the way I operate today. I worked on ad hoc projects for those next 2 years from 2016-2018.

In 2018 I joined E Plug (multi set retrievable Electric wireline plug) to assist them in Qatar on their first major project award abroad. I got in touch with 3 ex Welltec colleagues, who I had spent much time with throughout the years who also were looking for new projects. The thought being, surround yourself with the team you want around you and build from there.

I did about 1.5 years rotating back and forth to Doha, establishing E Plug with Qatar Shell, setting up their systems, writing documentation, going to client meetings daily and weekly to make sure things were up to spec and we were doing things the way Shell wanted. We did 2 exploration DST's on what were projected to be the highest gas rates in the world at the time. Those 2 wells took the length of that time I was in Qatar.

I left in 2019 as I had an offer from one of the new LWI vessel providers coming into the scene where I would help man their new LWI vessel conversion; August 2019 that was. The day after I resigned I was told the project with that provider had just pushed for 6-8 months minimum, so what to do.

Well, I set about making contacts & I created business cases for specialty oil and gas services, mainly to do with what my experience focused around, well intervention, well services, & well integrity technologies. I had a Vietnamese company instruct me to start making these cases to the list of companies I had accrued (all based in US/Canada/UK) who could make an impact on the market here due to the type of services they could provide at a cost point agreeable to Vietnam/Asia Pacific.

Well, after working diligently somewhere in the neighbourhood of 20 hour days for a solid 5 weeks, that VN company was full of it and they had zero intention of putting me within their ranks, they simply wanted to acquire what I did for free. I rescinded all those business cases immediately and informed those guys in those respective companies what had happened.

I was made to look like an ass, but that ok, my integrity is all I have so in the end, they understood what had just happened and they chalked it up as “at least we found this out now and didn’t get fully committed first”. I shelved this idea at that point, but I knew I would be revisiting it and if need be I would do it alone. This was into October of 2019 so I set about making myself known on LinkedIn and doing a lot of networking.

January 2020, I was offered a position with SNEPCO (Shell Nigeria) as Sr Deepwater Wells Supervisor. I approached the then Well Operations Manager directly as I heard there was a workscope coming where they would be in a vessel share contract between Exxon, Shell, Total, Chevron to complete what was intended to be 1-1.5 years in total work for the Q7000. When I approached Shell, I did so knowing that if they needed more people, one of my friends and colleagues was also here in Vung Tau and he was aggressively pursuing opportunities along similar lines.

It just so happened Shell would take on 3x consultants and they had 1x guy nailed down already so I told them, ok here are 2 of us. The benefit being, we are like minded, we know each other and how one another works, and it makes things easier for the contract agent, being we are coming and going through the same airport, route.

Upon arrival in Lagos, a week later enter covid lockdowns and we all know what happened from there. Contract cancelled due to force majeure leaving Stan and myself in Turkey and then Cambodia for 9 months last year before returning home under our own steam in December.

Nine months after returning home and many conversations with a lot of people, I write this long winded description of this journey I have been on. Why would I do that? Well, to give people an idea of what I have experienced and as a primer for what is up next.