

Excerpts from unpublished manuscript: CAMELOT'S ARCHITECT Life, Love and Modern Architecture, A memoir by John Carl Warnecke. All rights reserved.

**TRAILER
FOR
H.R.H THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAUDI ARABIA**

Another lucky early commission which established my office in San Francisco was the design for a \$250,000 trailer for the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. The chance to design a trailer for the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia presented a dynamic potential to bring fame to my burgeoning young firm. My neighbor, an executive of the Bechtel Engineering Group, who was responsible for bringing this project to my attention claimed that there was no one at Bechtel capable of designing it.

I decided to step forward and offer to undertake the design. In no time, the design commission was mine. The design of the exterior of the trailer has been governed by the desire to keep the structure strong and simple, at the same time expressing the function of the vehicle while stationary, as well as in motion.

As the trailer design was nearing completion, I could not help becoming positively impressed with my own design. It contained an elongated meeting room with a regally centered place for His Honor, the Crown Prince, to be seated on a grand sofa at one

end, overlooking other grand sofas on either side. A bath and kitchen occupied the middle and a large bedroom with two sizable beds for himself and members of his harem were on the other end of the trailer. The purpose of the trailer was to take the Crown Prince and his entourage out into the Saudi desert.

Once the project was finished, I marketed the drawings, and sure enough *Life* magazine was eager to photograph and publish a story on this splendid trailer. What more could I ask for? Then from out of nowhere I got an angry phone call from Steve Bechtel, Sr. He warned me that he would personally see to it that I would never obtain any future projects in the Bay Area if a story and photos of this luxury trailer were ever published. This trailer gift of the Bechtel's to the Saudi Royals, turned out to be instrumental to the Bechtel Company's obtaining what was practically a monopoly of lucrative future construction projects in Saudi Arabia.

I was quickly learning about the inner workings of corporate America in foreign countries where the US had oil interests. I decided to heed Steve Bechtel's threatening words and not to publish photos of the newsworthy trailer. Undoubtedly the magazine feature would have been fantastic publicity for me. What I got instead was a valuable lesson for which I was very well paid.