

[FIRST IN A SERIES]

Big tobacco says the payoffs stopped years ago. So why are Hollywood's biggest names still shilling for the world's deadliest industry?

Schindler's List. The Killing Fields.

Hollywood is famous for commemorating mass murders after the fact.

Yet some of Hollywood's biggest names aid and abet the darkest killing machine of our own time: a multi-billion dollar industry that sends *three million* men and women to their agonizing deaths each year.

Yes, tobacco is a legal product. But advertising tobacco brands on TV has been illegal since 1970. Instead, some of the world's leading tobacco firms paid cash and in-kind to place their cigarette brands in Hollywood movies.

In 1989, under threat from lawmakers, this abuse was "voluntarily" banned. The problem? Ten years later, Hollywood is promoting smoking and tobacco brands more intensely than *before* the 1989 ban.

And America's charismatic actors are now even more directly involved.

Of America's 25 top-grossing movies each year, 9 in 10 dramatize use of tobacco. More than 1 in 4 depict a particular brand. Eighty percent of the time, the featured brands are the same ones most heavily advertised in other media.

Actors now display or smoke featured brands *ten times more* than before the 1989 payola ban — celebrity endorsements the size of billboards. Videos and cable expose Big Tobacco's prime younger markets to these images over and over, in perpetuity.

And it works. Nonsmoking teens whose favorite stars smoke frequently on screen are *sixteen times* more likely to develop positive attitudes toward smoking.



Up for an Oscar?

America's most heavily advertised cigarette was featured in at least 28 top-grossing films in the 1990s. Smoking is just as common in youth-rated movies as in films rated for mature audiences.

Hollywood's vivid spectacles attract huge audiences around the globe. Lazily normalizing or purposely glamorizing a lethal addiction may well outweigh the artistic merit of smoking clichés.

This isn't about censorship — or "free expression." In Hollywood, nothing is free. Commercial tie-ins and product placements are a lucrative and deliberate business.

Big Tobacco's files are full of covert strategies, like arranging to pay Sylvester Stallone \$500,000 to use its products in five films (1983), and \$350,000 to place Larks in James Bond's "License to Kill" (1988).

In view of this slimy history, increased tobacco use in movies today makes us wonder if the voluntary ban on tobacco payola really changed anything except who is paid what, and how.

Can studio heads, financiers, agents, producers, directors, writers, editors, set dressers and actors not know that smoking looks like selling out? Might there be a moral issue here that glib claims of "free expression" don't finesse? Or are tobacco fatalities not dramatic enough, the victims not noble enough? Is this evil too...banal?

Many public health professionals are alarmed about the smoking in Hollywood movies. 480,000 Americans, smokers and nonsmokers alike, will die from smoking-related causes this year. Over *one billion* smokers live in countries where tobacco's hazards go largely unpublicized and the Marlboro Man has replaced Uncle Sam as the U.S. symbol. This overseas market now yields *half* of Hollywood's income.

We personally challenge the U.S. film industry to take these four steps now:

1] ROLL AN ON-SCREEN CREDIT certifying that nobody on the production accepted *anything* of value from any tobacco company, its agents or fronts.

2] RUN STRONG ANTI-TOBACCO ADS IN FRONT OF SMOKING MOVIES. Put them on tapes and DVDs, too. Strong spots are proven to immunize audiences.

3] QUIT IDENTIFYING TOBACCO BRANDS — in the background *or* in action. Brand names are unnecessary.

4] RATE ANY SMOKING MOVIE "R." While this may identify smoking with maturity, it should give producers pause.

This is just the first of these ads. Next, we start identifying who's responsible.



**SMOKE
FREE
MOVIES**

Smoke Free Movies aims to sharply reduce the film industry's usefulness to Big Tobacco's domestic and global marketing — a leading cause of disability and premature death. This initiative by Stanton Glantz, PhD (coauthor of *The Cigarette Papers* and *Tobacco War*), of the UCSF School of Medicine is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund. To learn how you can help, visit our website or write to us: Smoke Free Movies, UCSF School of Medicine, Box 0130, San Francisco, CA 94143-0130.

For what's next, visit SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu

Oscar, Marlboro and the Marlboro box are trademarks of their respective owners.