

ASH/ Industry conduct/ Tobacco Wars

Quotations from "TOBACCO WARS"- A BBC documentary on the history and politics of tobacco, transmitted in July/August 1999

PROGRAMME 1

THE CIGARETTE AS A DRUG DELIVERY DEVICE:

"The phenomenal success of the cigarette is based on how easy it is to inhale nicotine compared to the cigar or pipe that were used in the last century. People smoke for nicotine. So you can look upon each cigarette as an injection of nicotine.

You can get an immediate feeling of well-being by injecting yourself through your lungs with the smoke. It happens in 3 to 8 seconds so fast compared to other drugs, that you feel it's instantaneous."

Dr. William Farone, Former Director of Applied Research, Philip Morris

THE NATURE OF THE CIGARETTE

"The modern cigarette is extremely complex. It contains everything from sugar to liquorice, chocolate, herbs and spices. There are 8,000 or more chemicals that come out when you light it and having them delivered in the right ratios is a substantial engineering feat."

Dr. William Farone, Former Director of Applied Research, Philip Morris

CAMPAIGN TO GET WOMEN TO SMOKE: (1929)

American Tobacco sought the advice of Edward Bernays, a PR consultant, to try to break the taboo that women should not smoke. He came up with the "Torch of freedom" slogan and encouraged women to smoke in public as a symbol of their emancipation. The "Light Up a Lucky" campaign was developed soon afterwards.

"'Reach for a Lucky Instead of a Sweet' was thought up to get women to smoke by making the argument that sweets would probably make you fat whereas cigarettes wouldn't. It worked well then, back in the 20's, when women did switch from sugar products to cigarettes."

Pat Weaver, former Advertising Manager, American Tobacco.

CAMPAIGN TO GET CIGARETTE BRAND NAMES SHOWN IN FILMS

Film stars were sent free packs of cigarettes and encouraged to show the packs on screen.

"I was always astonished that even the giants like Clarke [Gable] would be so nice about getting a free carton a week and, to my astonishment, no matter how much money they were making, a free carton a week really made a big hit with them."

Pat Weaver, former Advertising Manager, American Tobacco.

REACTION TO DOLL'S WORK LINKING SMOKING AND LUNG CANCER:

"It was a great shock. We had never thought of tobacco as being a danger to health. In fact, we thought tobacco was a beneficial product and this, obviously, was a great shock to us. We were, at first, totally disbelieving of it."

Sir Duncan Oppenheim, former Chairman of BAT.

"I expected everyone to be as concerned about it as I was, instead of which the reaction to the report was: 'how can we rubbish this'."

Tony Van den Bergh, former BAT executive.

Imperial Tobacco set out to undermine Doll's findings.

"The Imperial Tobacco company took a rather different view from us. They took the view that the Doll report was not true and that they would do nothing about it. We were a little less sceptical than that."

Duncan Oppenheim, former Chairman of BAT

"The company policy was that we, as tobacco manufacturers, were not qualified to make any medical judgements. Now that was the company's stance. I believe it was absolutely right and has stood the test of time. So that has always been my line. I'm not a doctor, I'm not qualified and I wouldn't presume to make any judgements."

Andrew Reid, former Chairman, Imperial Tobacco

1954 - THE 'FRANK STATEMENT':

"At that time, the scientific challenge had reached a large and very threatening dimension. Since it was being publicised, it was decided that the industry should respond in a public way."

Ernie Pepples, Vice-President, Brown & Williamson.

"There were pacts made between the devil and the unimaginable. Its [the frank statement] intent was to create disinformation. They sat down in the 1950s and sketched out a long-term plan that would delay regulation and offset litigation for as long as possible."

Dr Gary Huber, former research scientist for the tobacco industry.

FILTER CIGARETTES

The industry developed filter cigarettes to give the impression that they made smoking safer. "To give the protection which smokers are seeking" appeared in one cigarette ad. Industry executives referred to them as "health image cigarettes".

"The first thing you have to understand is that a filter is not a health device. The filter is a marketing device."

Fritz Gahagan, former market research executive

THE LOW TAR MYTH

"The supposition was that lowering tar was better. But what you have to remember is, when you talk about lowering tar, that's in governmental tests. That's not the way people smoke cigarettes. People can take a low tar cigarette and by drawing on it harder or holding it in longer they can get the same amount of tar and nicotine as they can from a high tar cigarette."

Dr. William Farone, Philip Morris.

"When they did this [reduced tar yield] they changed the inhalation pattern and with it changed the nature of the kind of diseases that occur. We also saw an increase in emphysema going up over the past 20 years and part of it may be due to the lowering of tar and nicotine, inhaling more deeply, getting the smoke out to the heart and lungs where emphysema occurs."

Dr Gary Huber, former research scientist for the tobacco industry

HOW THE INDUSTRY BEAT THE MACHINE TESTS

"The cigarette machine, when you test them, won't close up the vents..." But "... people smoking will close up the vents like this, with their lips, So they were smoking something five times stronger than they thought they were. It was naughty... We ambushed the consumer.. we ambushed him."

Fritz Gahagan, former market research executive

PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF SMOKING IN THE LATE 1950's:

"Everyone seemed to treat smoking as a natural pleasure. The industry, as a result, prospered. And rightly so."

Andrew Reid, former Chairman, Imperial Tobacco.

TAX REVENUE:

"The tobacco industry was a very important and very cheap way of raising Government revenue... The Treasury didn't have any hang ups about the desirability of tobacco industry being strong and profitable."

Andrew Reid, Imperial Tobacco.

1957 GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS LINK BETWEEN SMOKING AND LUNG CANCER

But at a press conference organised by the Ministry of Health, an adviser to the Board of Trade takes a sceptical view:

"There is a need for much more research over a wide area, and, in my opinion, to single out smoking as a causal agent is, on the evidence to date, completely unjustified."

Sir Alexander Maxwell, former tobacco adviser to the Board of Trade.

ADVERTISING

"If you did not advertise then your brand died. It was vital to the success of the brand..." "You've got to get into the mind of the smoker.. that he feels, this is my brand."

Andrew Reid, Imperial Tobacco

"The aim of advertising is not just to sell cigarettes but to lull people's fears... Deceptive? Of course it's deceptive. What are you going to say? Go out and buy our product, it'll kill you?!"

Fritz Gahagan, former market research executive

"You also want to have a high degree of sexuality in the appeal... cigarettes are essentially very close to a sexual product".

Fritz Gahagan, former market research executive

US SURGEON GENERAL'S COMMITTEE & REPORT, 1964

"The Committee was perceived as a threat within the industry... Many in the industry thought perhaps the end was nigh."

Eric Pepples, B&W

"We expected tobacco companies to share freely since they had had an equal place at the table in selecting the committee. Their collaboration and co-operation was pledged but it never occurred."

Dr Charles LeMaistre, committee member, Surgeon General's report, 1964.

NICOTINE ADDICTION

"It was so clearly addicting.... A year after the [Surgeon General's 1988] Report, the WHO changed the definition of addiction... Today, it is now the most addicting substance in the world."

Dr Charles LeMaistre, committee member, Surgeon General's report, 1964.

PROGRAMME 2

1950s

In response to the growing evidence that smoking was harmful:

"The members of the industry were answering the charges, and were in effect saying this product is OK."

Eric Pepples, Brown & Williamson

INDUSTRY QUEST TO FIND LINK BETWEEN SMOKING AND DISEASE

1960's

"They started out with the best of intentions, that they were sincere about doing serious research. Then something scared them."

Joseph Bumgarner, former biochemist, RJ Reynolds.

Commenting on his research which, in 1970, showed a connection between smoking and emphysema:

"There was evidence starting to build in our own work that there was a connection. They had demonstrated emphysema in rabbits that had been exposed to cigarette smoke as defined by a clinical pathologist."

"My supervisor came in and asked that we turn in all our laboratory note books.. They contained all our experiments.., our results. The explanation given was that the legal department wanted to see if there was something potentially dangerous to the company."

J Bumgarner.

The scientists were told that the notebooks had been "accidentally destroyed".

"As a scientist, I was watching two and a half years of hard effort go for nought."

"It's been a shameful track record. It's been one of deception, cover-up, misleading intentionally misleading the public and all in the name of profit."

J Bumberner

Commenting on the action taken by the company:

"In retrospect, decisions might have been made differently but I think that people who were making those decisions at the time were properly guided and they made decisions they thought were appropriate."

Charles Blixt, Vice President, RJR

SEARCH FOR A 'SAFER' CIGARETTE

Dr James Mold, a scientist who worked for Liggett & Myers, discovered that palladium mixed with tobacco could significantly reduce cancer in smokers. Project XA was eventually stopped in 1977 because of pressures from other tobacco companies and the difficulties in continuing to market conventional, less safe cigarettes. According to Dr Mold, if the project had gone ahead, "It could have saved lives."

Dr Mold tried to convince industry bosses of the importance of his work:

"If you did not put such a cigarette out [on the market] and it was found out you withheld it, would you not find yourself in a worse situation?"

A former lawyer for Liggett agreed:

"The world missed a tremendous opportunity by not publicly exposing all the research done by Liggett."

Lawrence Meyer, former lawyer, Liggett and Myers

TOBACCO ADVERTISING

Industry tactics, after the advertising ban on TV in the USA.

"They adopted a war of attrition. They would give just enough ground to get the government and the public health advocates off their back. I think I would characterise it as giving an inch to gain a decade."

American advertising executive.

In the UK, the voluntary agreement system gave rise to the surreal advertising, made famous by the ads. for Benson & Hedges.

"The ads were very very clever, and cleverness is the attribute the young enjoy most in advertising."

David Abbott, Chairman of Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO advertising agency.

SPONSORSHIP

The tobacco companies quickly moved into sponsorship as a result of advertising restrictions. This resulted in huge rewards for the industry as the following quotes from Andrew Reid of Imperial Tobacco reveal:

"Sponsorship. The tobacco industry really led the way on sponsorship."

"Formula One has enormous appeal as a virile, young modern sport. It's an ideal medium in which to promote a product."

"Sponsorship of these sports ... rugby, tennis, cricket, snooker... these had a major impact on British sport and also for us."

Andrew Reid, former chairman, Imperial Tobacco

PROGRAMME 3 RECRUITMENT OF CHILDREN

Dave Goerlitz, the "Winston" man was employed by RJR to attract children to smoking. Goerlitz was told to recruit 3-4,000 kids to smoking every day.

"We were getting new replacement smokers and we, in our minds, were told to recruit 13-14 year old boys."

Dave Goerlitz, actor employed to promote Winston cigarettes

In the interview, Goerlitz also repeats the now infamous admission by RJR executives, who, when asked by Goerlitz why they didn't smoke, responded:

"We don't smoke that s***, we just reserve the right to sell it to the young, the poor, the black, the stupid."

NICOTINE ADDICTION

Philip Morris's research into nicotine was led by scientist, Victor DeNoble. Through his experiments on rats, he was able to show that:

"Cigarette smoking was a biological process of addiction, not just a habit."

DeNoble was summoned to the Vice-President's office and asked to explain his research. The VP's comment, according to DeNoble was:

"Damn it man, you are turning us into a drug company."

Euphemisms were used to refer to 'addiction':

"People were very careful not to use the 'A' word... [they] used words like 'impact'. What they really meant was how much nicotine is being delivered to the brain."

Victor DeNoble

"Our opponents wanted that word addiction to be used in a pejorative sense... To link smoking with crack cocaine was obviously part of a strategy to demonise smoking and to make it anti-social."

Nick Brookes, Chairman of Brown & Williamson

PASSIVE SMOKING

"With the possible exception of very young children, there is no statistically significant risk association with environmental tobacco smoke. Smoke in the atmosphere can be solved as a matter of courtesy and tolerance. It is not a scientific matter."

Nick Brookes, Chairman of Brown & Williamson

On the other hand, according to Jeffrey Wigand, former Head of Research and Development at Brown & Williamson:

"There are a number of documents within the industry which clearly indicate that second-hand smoke is just as dangerous, if not more dangerous, than main-stream smoking. The documents date back to the 1970's."

LITIGATION AND THE IMPACT ON THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY

Liggett & Myers, the smallest of the top five American tobacco companies, was the first to admit that nicotine was addictive. The move was a calculated gamble to fend off litigation.

"It was refreshing to come out and say that smoking does cause all these diseases and that nicotine is addictive. Yes, it's addictive... one hundred percent."

Bennett Le Bow, chief executive of Brooke Group (owners of Liggett)

MISCELLANEOUS INDUSTRY VIEWS

... "Americans are hypochondriacs and litigious. The lawyer industry is totally out of hand. These men [plaintiffs' lawyers] are wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice as a result of being struck lucky."

Kenneth Clarke, Deputy Chairman, BAT.

In response to the question, 'Do you ever have any second thoughts or regrets about your business?', Martin Broughton replied:

"The only regret I have is that someone out there is winning my market share, when I should be winning his."

In reply to the statement: 'It's been said that cigarettes are the only consumer product which kill when used exactly as intended:

"It's been said, but a lot of things have been said about the industry. Not true. Guns?"

Martin Broughton, Chairman and Chief Executive, BAT

Also see [Tobacco Explained](#) ... The truth about the tobacco industry - in its own words. ASH's survey of thousands of confidential tobacco industry documents released during legal action in the United States covering health, addiction, advertising, children, passive smoking etc.