

# *Smoking in movies radiates “mania, sex, sophistication, cool, toughness, rebelliousness, self-abuse and social inferiority”?* Hey, try acting.

**A** published study of movie industry professionals finds that they confuse smoking on screen with the words in the headline. But for the audience, smoking in the movies can mean only one of two things: corruption or stupidity. Here's why:

Once-secret documents show that tobacco marketers consider smoking in movies to be more effective than TV ads, because “the public is unaware of the sponsor.”

That could be why the industry's ban on Hollywood tobacco payola hasn't worked. There's more smoking in the movies today than before the 1989 ban. Stars are still lighting up and displaying brands — celebrity endorsements repeated on TV, tapes, DVDs and cable.

Either people in Hollywood are still paid off, in which case they're corrupt. Or else they're doing Big Tobacco's dirty work for free, in which case they're stupid.

Laziness may also play a role, of course. Smoking is a cliché for writers, directors and actors. They don't even bother to be true to life. Smoking is *three times* more frequent on screen than off. And it's the rich, powerful and glamorous who smoke in movies, when in



*Julia Roberts and Brad Pitt have both taught young audiences how to smoke on screen. Scores of other Hollywood professionals, including many stars, addicted before tobacco's health dangers were fully known, have died from smoking.*

reality it's the young, poor, depressed and least educated.

No matter if smoking characters are good guys or bad guys, studies show they persuade young people that smoking is “adult,” acceptable, normal. It's not. It's behavior driven by nicotine, an addictive substance, backed by more than *\$8 billion* in marketing and advertising in the U.S. alone.

This is a global issue. Tobacco marketing kills three million people a year worldwide — as many as died in battle each year of WWII — and U.S. movies are a major vehicle for multinational tobacco companies. Their biggest future profits are in countries where the Marlboro Man has replaced Uncle Sam as the American icon, thanks in large

part to Hollywood movies. Hollywood itself now generates 50% of its income overseas.

Still believe it's an “artistic choice” or “free expression” that Hollywood movies are smokier today than at any time since the 1960's? Still think it's just part of the actor's craft to corruptly or stupidly promote a profit-driven addiction which kills more people in the U.S. than murder, suicide, illegal drugs and AIDS combined?

Censorship is poison, too. That's why we challenge Hollywood to take these four reasonable, effective steps:

**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.

For what's next, visit [SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu](http://SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu)

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.



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