

TOBACCO USE IN THE MOVIES

Fact Sheet

“Film is better than any commercial that has been run on television or in any magazine, because the audience is totally unaware of any sponsor involvement.”

Hollywood Public Relations Firm to RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company, 1972¹

Did You Know?

- There was more smoking in movies in 2002 than at any other time since the 1950s, despite smoking levels being half of what they were in that decade.²
- Historically, the tobacco industry paid movie studios to have tobacco appear in major Hollywood films such as Superman II and License to Kill.³
- Between 1991-2008, tobacco was used in 65% of youth rated films (mostly PG-13) and in over 80% of R rated films. In 2010, 31% of youth rated movies still contained smoking, but it varied widely among producing studios.⁴

The Impact on Youth

- Researchers estimate that tobacco use in films influences up to half of all new teen smokers to start. This gives the tobacco industry 180,000 new customers each year, 60,000 of whom will eventually die from smoking related diseases.⁵
- Youth who have a favorite movie star that has smoked in three or more of their recent films are 16 times more likely to think positively about smoking.⁶

Here are some movies from the past year that had smoking in them. Which have you seen?⁷

- Burlesque
- Cowboys and Aliens
- The A-Team
- The Tourist
- Rango



The Tourist



Cowboys and Aliens



Rango



Burlesque



The A-Team



- ¹Tobacco Industry Internal Document. Available at www.smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/problem/1972.html.
- ²Glantz, S.A., Kacirk, K., McCullough, C. *Back to the Future: Smoking in Movies in 2002 Compared with 1950 Levels*. American Journal of Public Health 94:261-263, 2004.
- ³Tobacco Industry Internal Document. Available at <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/hlm68e00>.
- ⁴Titus, K., Polansky, J., Glantz, S.A. *Smoking Presentation Trends in U.S. Movies 1991-2008*. UCSF Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education, 2009. Available at: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/30q9j424#page-1>;
- Glantz, S.A., Titus, K., et. al. *Smoking in Top-Grossing Movies—United States, 1991-2009*. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, August 20, 2010/59 (32); 1014-1017.
- Glantz, S.A., Titus, K., et. al. *Smoking in Top-Grossing Movies—United States, 2010*. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, July 15, 2011/60 (27); 909-913.
- ⁵Millett C., Glantz S.A. *Assigning an 18 rating to tobacco imagery is essential to reduce youth smoking*. Thorax 65:377-378, 2010.
- ⁶Tickle, J.J., Sargent, J.D., et al. *Favorite Movie Stars, Their Tobacco Use in Contemporary Films, and Its Association with Adolescent Smoking*. Tobacco Control 10:16-22, 2000.
- ⁷Smoking in Movies Database at www.scenesmoking.org.