

NEWS ANALYSIS

Personalising tobacco counter- advertising

The *Washington Post* ran the ad. The *New York Times* refused, saying it crossed the boundary into bad taste. *Harper's* magazine will run the ad in January 1994. The *New York Observer* declined to run it because of possible law suits. The Gannett papers in Westchester County, New York, ran the ad. The *Boston Globe* ran a front-page story about it. Everyone agreed, however, that "the ad" broke new ground by personalising the issue of tobacco advertising targeted at youth.

"The ad", as it's now referred to, ran in the October 7th *Washington Post* as a paid advertisement by STAT (Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco) of Springfield, Massachusetts, USA, to coincide with the start of the Fourth International STAT Conference in Washington, DC. The ad (see figure), headlined "Meet five of America's richest drug pushers", contained the pictures of three tobacco industry chieftains - Larry Tisch of Lorillard Tobacco, Henry Kravis of RJ Reynolds/Nabisco, and Michael Miles of Philip Morris - and two leading publishers - Si Newhouse and Rupert Murdoch.

Below each picture was a paragraph which stated how each man could personally take action to stop advertising tobacco products to youth. This was followed by a statement of each man's estimated personal fortune - each in the millions or billions of dollars. Below that, in a "warning label" box, was the following statement: "What do all five of these men have in common? Like most drug pushers, they're smart enough not to use the product they sell. Not one of them smokes cigarettes".

The ad concluded by saying to Si, Rupert, Larry, Henry, and Mike, that STAT would take out an ad "twice as big honoring you and saying thanks" if they stopped their actions which promote the leading cause of pre-

Tobacco is an addictive drug — as addictive as heroin.*
Tobacco addiction is America's leading cause of preventable death.*

Meet five of America's richest drug pushers.



Si Newhouse

He could voluntarily refuse to push tobacco in his magazines, as many major magazines do. But he hasn't. His magazines probably do more to make smoking seem attractive and sophisticated — what every young person wants to be — than any others. *Fortune* puts his net worth at \$5 billion.



Rupert Murdoch

Tobacco advertising is banned on TV, so tobacco companies go after kids in Murdoch's *TV Guide*. He could say no. He's worth \$3 billion.



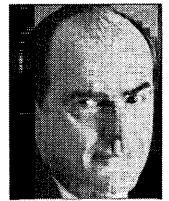
Larry Tisch

As the man who controls Lorillard Tobacco, he could ask Congress to halt all tobacco advertising and promotion. The tobacco companies would save \$4 billion a year. That's \$4 billion more annual profit for their shareholders — in the short run. In the long run, fewer kids would be enticed to replace smokers who die or quit. But is that bad? *Fortune* says Tisch is a billionaire.



Henry Kravis

Since his company, RJR, began using a cartoon character to push Camels, Camel's share of the teen and pre-teen market has jumped from 1% to 32%. He could become a health hero by joining with Tisch in asking Congress to ban all tobacco promotion — and boost the industry bottom line by \$4 billion. Judging from the *Forbes* 400 list, he can afford this risk. He's worth half a billion.



Michael Miles

Miles runs Philip Morris. Who'd have more reason to want a total ad ban than the shareholders of Philip Morris? Marlboro smokers wouldn't quit buying Marlboros just because the advertising stopped; yet Philip Morris could quit spending all those billions trying to defend its market share. Miles — who himself quit smoking long ago — made \$5 million last year.

What do all five of these men have in common?
Like most drug pushers, they're smart enough not to use
the product they sell. Not one of them smokes cigarettes.

Si, Rupert, Larry, Henry, Mike: If you'll agree it's crazy for a society to *promote* its leading cause of preventable death, and stop doing it, we'll take out an ad **twice as big** honoring you and saying thanks. There's no greater contribution you could make to America's health.

*U.S. Surgeon General

STAT Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco

NATIONAL OFFICE 121 Lyman St., Suite 210, Springfield, MA 01103 (413) 732-STAT

For a free book, KIDS SAY DON'T SMOKE, send four 29-cent stamps. If you can help us pay for more ads like this, we'd appreciate it!

ventable death. So far, this congratulatory ad has not run; we're still waiting to hear from America's richest drug pushers.

"The ad" was run to make the point that real people make the choices to target tobacco advertising at youth, and real people make the

choices about what ads to run in their magazines and newspapers. Until "the ad", tobacco control advocates generally targeted their criticism at "the tobacco industry" or at "RJR" or "Philip Morris". "The ad" was intended to pierce this corporate veil and point the finger directly at the heads of the companies who make and market tobacco products to youth and at those who take money to publish the tobacco ads.

Just as the captain of a ship is held personally accountable for actions that occur on his/her watch, so should the heads of the companies that profit from tobacco sales. Just as public officials must answer for their public policy actions, so should the heads of the companies that promote Joe Camel and the Marlboro Adventure Team. "The ad" made this point in very public terms so that readers would recognise that five men, not five companies, made these choices and profited significantly therefrom.

"The ad" generated nationwide media coverage because it broke new ground in the campaign to halt tobacco industry marketing to youth. Significantly, STAT has received only praise and contributions to pay for more such ads; there has been no criticism from any quarter. And the five men pictured have refused to comment on "the ad". The tobacco industry spokespeople who were willing to be quoted only said "we don't target youth with our advertising".

STAT believes that the time has come to "get personal" in tobacco counter-advertising campaigns. Poster-size copies of "the ad" are available from STAT for a small fee, and organisations are free to use the ad in school newsletters or in newspapers. For more information, contact STAT at: 121 Lyman Street, Suite 210, Springfield, MA 01103, USA (tel (1 413) 732 7828; fax (1 413) 732 4219).

JAMES E BERGMAN
STAT (Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco),
Springfield, Massachusetts, USA

Tobacco battle takes to the skies

This past August, the battle over tobacco advertising targeted at youth took to the skies over Long Island, New York beaches. The battle began when a small aeroplane was spotted flying over the beaches with a banner trailing behind it saying "Newport – alive with pleasure" (without the



Figure The STAT-sponsored plane and its banner at Spadaw Airport with the pilot at the wing. This photo appeared in *Newsday*, 12 August 1993.

required warning label, it should be noted).

One of STAT's private contributors saw the ad and was outraged. With his support, the next weekend when the Newport plane took off to fly over the youth-filled beaches of Long Island, a STAT plane followed it into the air with its own banner saying "Larry Tisch sells cancer sticks" (our banner was our warning label). Larry Tisch heads Lorillard Tobacco, which makes and markets Newport; he also has a summer home on the Long Island beach. Then ensued a dogfight of sorts with the STAT plane following close behind the Newport plane. Below on the beaches, crowds of bathers folded up in laughter as the STAT plane flew overhead.

When the sky battle ensued, so also did a battle of fax challenges. STAT sent faxes to Larry Tisch offering to ground the STAT plane if he would ground his Newport plane. Copies of the faxes and press releases announcing the battle of the skies and STAT's offer to halt the battle were sent to New York area newspapers, highlighting the insidiousness of the Newport aeroplane ads being targeted at youth on the beaches. STAT made the point repeatedly that Newport and Tisch were the only ones using aeroplane advertising to target youth and that it must stop. STAT further suggested to Tisch that he wouldn't want his grandchildren to start smoking, so why was he targeting other people's children and grandchildren. Tisch never responded to STAT, nor to the newspapers which carried a number of articles about the tobacco dogfight in the skies.

For the next five weekends the STAT plane with its banner took off each time the Newport plane lifted off. After the first few encounters, the Newport plane's pilot headed back to his airport whenever the STAT plane arrived, apparently not liking the parody or the companionship. The

grounding of the plane was STAT's intention from the beginning, so the summer ended with the STAT plane claiming "victory in the skies", and with a heightened public awareness of how the tobacco industry and one of its executives – Larry Tisch – targets youth with its advertising.

JAMES E BERGMAN
STAT (Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco),
Springfield, Massachusetts, USA

"Fight the tobaccoid"

Health educators worldwide have struggled with the dilemma of providing appealing "tobacco-free" messages to school children. The American Cancer Society (ACS), Illinois Division, may have found a way. Their new "Fight the tobaccoid" video game provides children the opportunity to have fun and learn a healthful lesson at the same time.

Developed with video game experts in Chicago, the ACS funded the project with a special endowment from a life-long supporter of the society. The game has all the appeal of the video games commonly found in video arcades, with plenty of sound effects and excellent graphics. The challenge of the game is to "zap" the villain "tobaccoid", which transforms him into a healthy-looking non-smoker. At the start of the game, the player chooses either Spanish or English, and also chooses amongst a



"Fight the tobaccoid" video game

variety of potential heroes to portray. Another option is to pick the "field of play", including a soccer field, a shopping mall, the inner city, or the farm, which was the big favourite in "downstate" (rural) Illinois.

Besides scoring points for "zapping the tobaccoid", the student is rewarded for consuming fruits and vegetables, and stopping to exercise. A key feature of the game is that most students learn to play with ease, and the fast action of the game keeps the students involved. Because of the humorous sound effects, students enjoy watching their classmates play the game. The time of each game is limited to two minutes, so entire classrooms can participate within a relatively short period of time.

The best test for an educational tool is the classroom, so the game was field-tested by my daughter's third-grade classmates (eight to nine years old). I presented a brief educational programme, demonstrated the game to the students, and then simply watched the game do the teaching. Hands on, fast-moving, humorous, high-tech; all the ingredients for an enriching programme. As one student was overheard to say, "this is the kind of school I like"; and another stated, "I wish all our lessons were on computer".

Future plans for the video game include its use at community health fairs and in DARE programmes (drug awareness/resistance education), as well as ongoing use in the schools. Use is somewhat limited by its size (it is a full-size video game) and weight, and only 15 copies exist at this time for the whole state. The ACS hopes that "tobaccoid's" popularity will grow, and allow modifications to distribute the programme for use in home and school computers. Judging from the response from a reputable group of third-grade critics, the ACS has created a winning, educational, pro-health programme.

LUKE L BURCHARD
Mattoon, Illinois, USA

For further information on the "Tobaccoid" video, contact the American Cancer Society, Illinois Division, 77 East Monroe Street, 13th Floor, Chicago, Illinois 60603, USA; tel: 1-312-641-6150; fax: 1-312-641-6588. - ED



Agence France-Presse

Western-made cigarettes are among the most visible images in Moscow

Tobacco ad ban in Russia?

Western-made cigarettes and liquor are among the most visible images on billboards and storefronts in Moscow, according to an article in the *New York Times* (20 July 1993) (see figure). In fact, the head of the Moscow office of the international advertising agency BBD&O claims that tobacco and alcohol products are advertised more heavily than any other consumer goods in Russia (*Wall Street Journal*, 24 August 1993). Of the 5700 billboards in Moscow, 70% advertise tobacco products (*Boston Globe*, 29 August 1993).

The situation may soon change, however. In July the Moscow City Council adopted a resolution banning tobacco and alcohol advertising from billboards, kiosks and bus shelters, and from local newspapers, magazines, and Russia's national television network. The Council also called on the Russian Parliament to extend the ban nationwide. The Supreme Soviet (Russia's standing legislature) did just that, voting in August to prohibit most forms of tobacco and alcohol advertising; Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed the proclamation into law.

Nevertheless, the government official responsible for enforcing the ban said that it would not be carried out. Sergie Luknitsky, an official in the Russian Press Ministry, said that "We will not take any draconian measures because alcohol and cigarette advertising is a major source of income for many newspapers" (*Boston Globe*, 29 August 1993).

A newly formed Association of Russian Advertisers, representing 17 of the country's leading ad agencies, is lobbying for the ban to be reversed. The Association has asked western ad agencies, tobacco and alcohol marketers, and media to lobby to overturn the ban (*Advertising Age*, 30 August and 20 September 1993). In its objective search for the truth, the coalition, according to *Advertising Age*, "has ordered two marketing studies on the effects of the ban, aiming to show that it will have no effect on frequency of use of cigarettes or alcohol but will cause the loss of hundreds of millions of dollars to federal and local budgets". - ED

Low-tar hole blocking - the consumer continues

The Australian Consumers' Association (ACA) has published further evidence in the saga of what must surely be one of the greatest and most enduring confidence tricks the tobacco industry has played on its customers. As many readers (but few of the smoking public) will know, many low-tar and -nicotine cigarettes have a band of barely visible pinprick ventilation holes on the exterior of the filter, toward the tobacco end. These are designed to allow the smoker to inhale extra air along with the mainstream smoke and thereby reduce the amount of tar, nicotine, carbon monoxide, and other tobacco combustion

products being inhaled (*Beitr Tabakforsch* 1974; 7: 282-7).

The smoking machines used to measure smoke yields for pack labelling are programmed to deliver a 35-ml, two-second puff every minute from each cigarette tested, with all the ventilation holes being left unblocked. Research into what smokers actually do when smoking shows that the industry test standard predictably bears little relation to reality (*Am J Public Health* 1980; 70: 1202-3). Various studies have shown that the average interval between puffs is 34 seconds and that puff volumes average 43 ml (see the US Surgeon General's 1988 Report, pp 156-7).

The ACA tests (conducted by the Australian Government Analytical Laboratory) were performed on 30 Australian brands claimed in their labelling to be variously "ultimate", "micro mild", "ultra mild", "ultra light", "super mild", "extra light", "superior mild" or plain old "light" or "mild". Tests were conducted using the industry standard; by half-blocking; and by fully blocking the holes; and by having the machine puff every 30 seconds instead of 60 seconds, with all holes open.

The results, published in full in the August 1993 edition of *Choice* magazine (obtainable from the ACA, 57 Carrington Rd, Marrickville, 2204 Australia, fax 61-2-558 9341), showed that when the ventilation holes were half-blocked, tar yields rose by an average of 74% (and up to 380%) and nicotine yields by an average of 51% (and up to 140%). Increases when the holes were fully blocked were even higher. With the doubling of the puff frequency, tar yields rose in the six brands tested by an average of 107% and nicotine yields by 73%. — sc

Note to readers

David Simpson has assumed the role of news editor for *Tobacco Control*. David is well known in the international tobacco control community, having served as director of Action on Smoking and Health (UK) from 1979 to 1990. He is the founder and director of the International Agency on Tobacco and Health.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Dr Alan Blum for his valuable contributions to the journal during his two years as news editor. He will continue as a correspondent to *Tobacco Control*.

Ideas and items for NEWS ANALYSIS should be sent to David Simpson at the address on the inside front cover. — ED



A sailor lights up his first cigarette in two months after the USS Theodore Roosevelt docked in Norfolk, Virginia in early September. Smoking was banned on the ship while it was at sea during a six-month deployment.

Paul Aiken/Associated Press

Teddy's ship relapses

Two news articles in the last issue of *Tobacco Control* mentioned that the USS Theodore Roosevelt, an aircraft carrier in the US Navy, had banned smoking entirely aboard the vessel. However, in late October the Navy announced that every ship in the Navy would have to provide at least one smoking area beginning 1 January 1994 (*Chicago Tribune*, 24 October 1993).

A Navy spokesperson denied that the policy change was related to reports of a black market in cigarettes (contraband cigarettes were reportedly sold for as much as \$25 a pack), complaints from smokers on the Roosevelt, surreptitious smoking behind hatches of the ship, or pressure from members of Congress. According to Commander Mike John of the

Bureau of Naval Personnel, the new policy is intended to standardise policy as the Navy sails toward its goal to be smoke-free by the year 2000.

One member of Congress sought to take credit for Teddy's relapse. An aide to Representative Martin Lancaster, a Democrat from North Carolina, said his boss lobbied aggressively to overturn the Roosevelt's smoking ban. A member of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation panel of the House Armed Services Committee, Lancaster "exerted all the influence he was capable of with the secretary of the Navy and Navy brass".

Earlier this year, the House Armed Services Committee cut \$17 million from Navy welfare and recreation funds included in the committee's version of the 1994 defence authorisation bill. The *Navy Times* (2 August 1993) reported that "there's no doubt the cut is tied directly to the Theodore Roosevelt episode". — ED