Play it again

Play It Again is a section of the journal where we re-publish quotes, gaffes, and immortal lines from friends and foes of tobacco control. It is compiled by Gene Borio, the webmaster of Tobacco BBS, which is the premier tobacco news-gathering site on the internet. Send contributions (including an original version or photocopy of the sourced item) to him at Tobacco BBS, PO Box 359, Village Station, New York 10014-0359; fax +1 001 212 260 6825. Send quotes from online stories (including the full article) or scanned documents (in GIF or JPEG format), to gborio@mindspring.com

"John Slade has been the "tipping point" for changing our world"


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While the unexpected death of John Slade on 29 January saddened us in the tobacco control movement, the world had experienced a monumental loss on 11 September 2001. Our normal priorities were put on pause, as we grappled with a new reality

"I can’t even explain it... But something infinitely more important is going on today with peoples’ lives that just requires us to sit back and wait.”


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As the initial shock wore off, the event inevitably gave rise to a range of new metaphors and perceptions

“It has not gone unnoticed that in less than a week, the tobacco industry kills as many Americans as were killed in the terrorist attacks... tobacco companies don’t want people thinking about that.”

Dr Stanton Glantz, University of California San Francisco Medical School, on why tobacco ads have been pulled from publications covering the 11 September events. Philip Morris’ ads soon returned, in force. Source: Brook D. Ad and Subtract, “Philadelphia City Paper,” 27 September 2001.

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“We are fighting a noble battle to eradicate the source of the biggest corruption on earth... We will demand that tobacco firms be included on the lists of terrorists and those financing and sponsoring terrorism because of the large number of victims that smoking has claimed the world over.”


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Meanwhile, tobacco marketing hardly missed a step

“This is just a small way for us to say thank you to everybody for the service they’ve provided to New York.”


* * *

“I wanted to distribute this brand because this is a good way to do my little part. It’s actually very good tobacco. It’s American tobacco.”


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“Consumers will increase smoking in times like these... The more you watch CNN on the television right now, the more you’re going to smoke.”


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“Here’s a story that has a lot of people in government upset. It seems the major tobacco companies have been smuggling billions and billions of cigarettes into Iraq. Where is their patriotism? They’re supposed to be killing Americans with those cigarettes!”


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Nicely put

“You can either see the last 40 years as a catastrophe with five million dead from smoking or a public health triumph with almost two million saved due to the reduction in smoking since 1962. Either way, we still need to see tobacco as a potent malign force in society filling the cardiac and cancer wards, draining away peoples’ lives and soaking up National Health Service resources.”


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“Are cigarettes just another legal product? No, compared to the legal treatment given other products, cigarettes are supralegal—they are a product that is above the law.”


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“[C]ustomers smoking these new products are essentially human guinea pigs in a deadly science experiment.”

The typical poor smoker could easily add over 500 calories to the diet of one or two children with his or her daily tobacco expenditure. An estimated 10.3 million people currently malnourished could have an adequate diet if money on tobacco were spent on food instead. The lives of 350 children could be saved each day.


The tobacco companies really care about advertising. So let’s accept their judgement that it’s important—and ban it. Half of British smokers believe that since the government allows advertising, smoking can’t be all that dangerous. That, if you think about it, is a reasonable inference.


On regulation
“It is a fundamental tenet of good regulation that the regulated are involved.”


“Right now, we don’t have regulation, so we have to work within the bounds of what we think is responsible.”


“We shouldn’t allow a company that creates a product that kills over 430,000 every year in the United States to create public policy.”


On candy
“I like the new Camel dark mint. It’s like smoking a dessert.”

Twenty year old Dominic N Young, on RJR’s new Turkish Jade menthols which are marketed in dark mint and mandarin mint flavours. Source: Fitzpatrick E. “Candy-coated” Indian cigarettes are a hot teen trend, “Providence Journal-Bulletin” 4 September 2001.

“A taste of banana mixed with cheese and sugar sauce together with chocolate, all toasted together. That’s the flavor that came to me—Bam!—sweet, nutty, caramelic, fruity, everything!”

Djoko Herryanto, a chemist whose mission it is to find the most delicious mixture of spices to enhance the taste of Indonesia’s sweet-smelling clove cigarettes. Source: Mylans S. Kadus Journal: A good cigarette is a fantasy of flavor, “New York Times” 3 September 2001.

“I can’t tell you how many of those candy cigarettes I have eaten . . .That is the main candy (our characters) ate. I remember our prop guy would always give us more to take home.”


On health issues
“I think some of the medical campaigners gild the lily. The figures they cite are based on a curious definition of causation.”

Kenneth Clarke, former Tory Chancellor and health secretary—and current member of BAT’s corporate social responsibility committee. Source: Brandreth G, Ken, the cavalier, “Electronic Telegraph” 1 July 2001.

“I don’t do interviews with the general press about ETS (environmental tobacco smoke or second-hand smoke). I find the people generally don’t have the qualifications to understand the issue and generally have their mind made up about it.”


On genetic research
“Japan Tobacco has made a multi-million dollar deal with pharmaceutical company Corixa to develop a lung cancer vaccine. Corixa’s vaccines rely on gene sequences—taken from lung cancer patients—which the company wants to patent. This is vertical integration at its finest. Funeral parlour chains should expect takeover bids any day now.”


“We’ve got a vaccine for lung cancer. It’s called tobacco control.”