

VIDEO WATCH

Tobacco control videos: kids, camels, surgeons, professors, Madison Avenue and more

There are a lot of them about – videos on tobacco control. They don't all try to do the same job or address the same audience. And as many of them are expensive, it's wise to check before you buy. So let's look at some of them.

Confessions of a Simple Surgeon

First into my video machine was Australia's Arthur Chesterfield Evans with "Confessions of a Simple Surgeon". I first met Arthur in the hallowed portals of the British Medical Association when we laid on a VIP reception for this self-confessed law breaker – Arthur and his colleagues had a liking for adjusting tobacco billboard ads using paint ("Marlboro" famously became "it's a bore").

This video was made in 1988. I've seen it several times before, and it's still good. Witty, hard hitting, and packed full of medical facts, the video shows Arthur taking apart the industry and its advertising and PR activities. It is primarily a resource for smoking cessation or smoking prevention programmes but it's certainly a morale booster for anyone involved in tobacco control.

Medicine vs Madison Avenue

In contrast, "Medicine vs Madison Avenue" drains all the special qualities out of front man Alan Blum's personality. But if you don't know and love Alan then it probably doesn't matter – you will just have to view him as an authoritative doctor. The format could do with more changes in pace and fewer talking heads.

When it comes to facts, though, this video is a winner. It exposes the promotional activities of the tobacco industry, showing how women, teenagers, and ethnic groups are particular targets – "They don't care about our culture, they never have, they never will – they need to advertise their products – that's all they care about".

Pamela Taylor, author of this video review, was formerly head of public affairs at the British Medical Association and Director of Corporate Affairs at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

Tobacco Control may publish, on a periodic basis, future reviews of other videos. Videos should be sent, along with promotional literature, to the editor at the address on the inside front cover. – ED



Dr Arthur Chesterfield Evans in "Confessions of a Simple Surgeon".

This video tracks the activities of DOC (Doctors Ought to Care) and aims to inspire people to take action. But it's heavy going and would go down best with an audience already hooked on advocacy work.

Smokescreen

The next front man in the frame was Dave Goerlitz, the former Winston model, now working for the American Cancer Society in "Smokescreen".

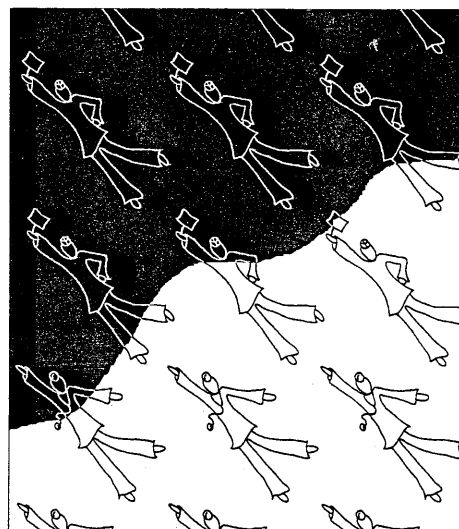
Filmed in a theatre with a live audience of young people, Dave performs like a stand up comic. They laugh, they love him – but the message is serious: "They trap us into this addiction"; "You kids are the target of tobacco advertisers"; "I was a victim of my own advertising".

What a great way to learn about tobacco ads – from the guy who starred in them. Dave is never condescending, never lecturing, and he helps young people to understand.

This video is a must – use it as a stand alone or part of a programme.

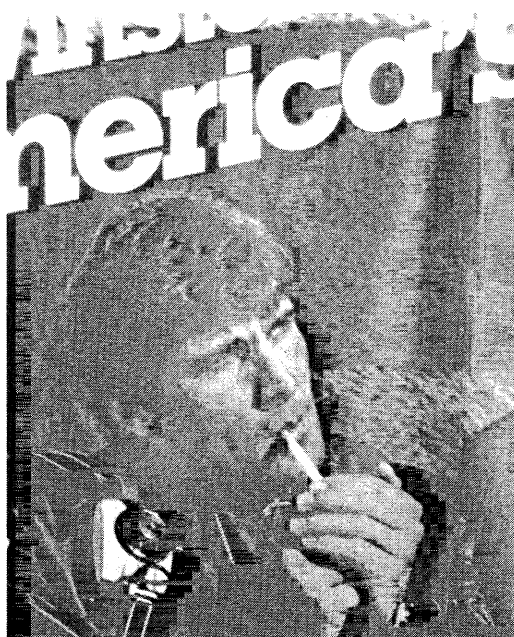
MEDICINE VS. MADISON AVENUE

Countering the Tobacco Pandemic



California
Doc

Video cover for "Medicine vs Madison Avenue"



Former Winston model Dave Goerlitz

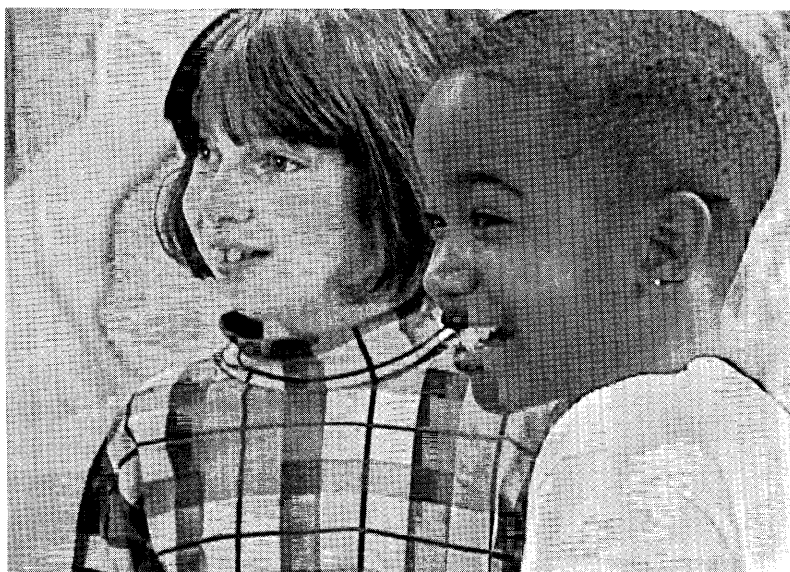
Pack of Lies

Next it's the turn of Jean Kilbourne and Rick Pollay to perform in "Pack of Lies". They stand behind a lectern, delivering a lecture, but even the cut-away slides can't liven up this impenetrable performance. A drab format, overloaded with facts and figures, it might be okay for a live university audience, but it doesn't work as video.

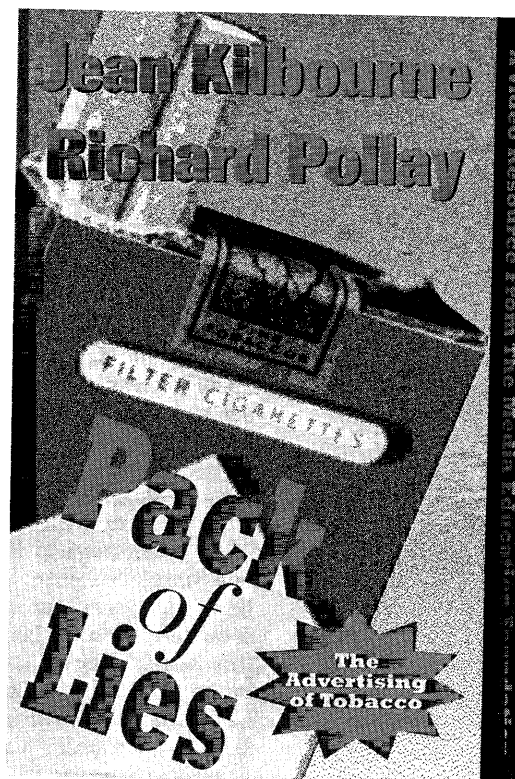
A dedicated health campaigner could sit down and usefully strip the video of all its facts for future use (aided by the freeze button and replay facility), but that's about it.

Say Goodbye Camel Joe

I decided to take a break from the lecturers and front men to view "Say Goodbye Camel Joe". Nice pace, colour and black-and-white shots, a hand held camera and plenty of action. It's good to see young people articulating how they



Kids from "Tobacco-Free You & Me".



Brochure for "Pack of Lies"

believe Camel targets them and to hear the debate "Camel Joe smokes so maybe smoking isn't that bad for you". The Camel man has a say too: "We would not attract young people", but Camel Joe seems to have helped Camel become the cigarette of choice among those under 18, increasing from 5% of smokers to 33%.

This is a well made video which young audiences will want to identify with. It gives them the insight they need and there isn't a grownup in sight telling them what to think.

Tobacco-Free You & Me

The young people themselves also star in "Tobacco-Free You & Me" – but these young people are almost too good to be true. As I watch them sitting in class, responding politely to their teacher, giving all the right answers as they criticise the industry's ad techniques, I wonder how many real children will watch this and identify with them. But maybe someone needs to aim specifically at the middle classes.

This is a video of two halves. The first is too static and lacks visual impact, but when the kids take to the streets, the cafe and the kiosk, arguing and discussing, it's more engaging and easier for audiences to identify with.

Smokeless Tobacco: A Spittin' Image

Let's not forget the dangers of "Smokeless Tobacco". Fronted by Johnny Felder, it's well paced, well edited, fast moving with plenty of action – from young women in an open top car ("Chewing is not macho: respect turns me on to a guy."), to the rodeo, and to a teacher with a young class ("Every 20 minutes your body is going to want more.").



Dr Robert Jaffe in "Ad Libbing It".

Johnny's script pulls its punches when it comes to the health messages, but it's a well made video which young people will enjoy and learn from. "Find a better way to spend your money" – how about on this video?

Ad Libbing It

Last into my video machine was "Ad Libbing It", with Robert Jaffe. The video sets out to debunk the ad industry, exposing its tactics. I'm not convinced that mixing the subjects of tobacco and alcohol in one video is helpful – the analysis is good, but the health messages suffer. I wasn't clear whether Bob is trying to tell us that alcohol is as damaging as tobacco or that these industries' advertising is a con, or both (or neither).

The main theme seems to be that there is good and bad advertising, and that "these guys are spending \$3 billion a year looking for you". It puts across well the idea that ads sell an image, not necessarily the truth. But this stylish video suffers from spanning both tobacco and alcohol and does not give us clear messages on the truth about these products.

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Tobacco control videos

Title	Time	Stated target	Cost*	Available from
Confessions of a Simple Surgeon	21 min	Junior high school and above	\$225	Pyramid Film & Video Box 1048 Santa Monica, CA 90406-1048, USA tel: 213-828-7577 tel: 800-421-2304
Medicine vs. Madison Avenue	25 min		\$75	Tobacco Free California PO Box 7690 San Francisco, CA 94120-7690, USA tel: 415-882-3327
Smokescreen	26 min	Grades 6-12 (ages 11-18)	\$199	Durrin Productions, Inc 4926 Sedgwick St, NW Washington, DC 20016-2326, USA tel: 202-237-6700 tel: 800-536-6843 fax: 202-237-6738
Pack of Lies	35 min	"Broad range of educational settings"	\$225	Foundation for Media Education 26 Center Street Northampton, MA 01060, USA tel: 413-586-4170 tel/fax: 800-659-6882
Say Goodbye Camel Joe	8.5 min	Ages 10+	\$30	STAT 121 Lyman Street, Ste 210 Springfield, MA 01103, USA tel: 413-732-7828 tel: 800-998-7828 fax: 413-732-4219
Tobacco-Free You & Me	19 min	Grades 4-6 (ages 9-12)	\$249	Durrin Productions, Inc (see above)
Smokeless Tobacco: A Spittin' Image	14 min	Grades 6-12 (ages 11-18)	\$149	Durrin Productions, Inc (see above)
Ad Libbing It	17 min	Grades 6-8 (ages 11-14)	\$200	Comprehensive Health Education Foundation c/o Washington DOC PO Box 20065 Seattle, WA 98102, USA tel: 206-287-2DOC

* Does not necessarily include shipping and handling. These costs were current when the review copies of the videos were obtained, and may have changed since then.