

Thank You for Smoking: Creativity Run Amok

By ACSH Staff — March 17, 2006

Nick Naylor, master lobbyist for Big Tobacco in the just-released film *Thank You For Smoking*, is adept at making lemonade out of lemons. His creativity in twisting logic and reality is breathtaking -- but that may be the essence of the lobbyist's job.

Nick can turn any con into a pro -- as evidenced by his profession of concern for a "cancer boy" while participating on a talk show panel on the health effects of cigarettes. The bald fifteen-year-old is supposedly fighting cancer incurred by cigarette-smoking. (At fifteen? Surely the producers could have come up with a more realistic and equally heart-rending victim.) The boy is obviously present to point out the evil intent of the cigarette cartel. But Nick points out that of course the tobacco companies don't want the child to die -- they want him to continue to live and smoke. By this twist of logic, Nick flummoxes the anti-tobacco authorities on the panel and seems to gain the sympathy of at least some in the audience (and, of course, kudos from his boss).

Nick and his lobbyist buddies in the "MOD squad" (Merchants of Death) congratulate themselves for their agility in fending off attacks from the public-health minded -- senators and doctors, for example. We've seen many examples of such emotional manipulations, and not just from lobbyists (although it seems likely that indicted Jack Abramoff must have also been skilled in this department). [Many "consumer activists" also use such tactics to scare the public about health threats that, unlike cigarettes, are hypothetical rather than real.](#) [1]

Thank You For Smoking is a light-hearted exposé of real manipulation that occurs all the time -- but in reality, it's not so funny.

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