

Abstract

VENI VIDI VICI

By

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For at least the past four generations, my family has depended on tobacco as a source of income. The values passed down from my ancestors have had a great influence on my development as a person. This being stated, I cannot overlook the consequences that have resulted from tobacco's abuse. Since high school, I tortured myself with thoughts and realizations of this issue. With a better understanding of the politics surrounding tobacco, I am attempting to mediate this subject through art.

Tobacco did not start off being a problem. However, in the past two centuries, the way in which our western culture has allowed tobacco corporations to function has caused a global pandemic. This is no longer a national problem, but has spread its roots to infect the entire world. I feel these corporations that practice irresponsibly are the cancer that is hurting so much of the world. Through my artwork, I attempt to explore the different institutions our culture allows the tobacco industry to use as a means of reproduction. When the practices of these corporations industry are examined, they reveal a system built on disregarding human health in the pursuit of profit and reinforce many negative aspects of our American culture.

VENI VIDI VICI

A Report of a Creative Thesis

Presented To

The Faculty of the School of Art and Design

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts in Painting

By

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INTRODUCTION

Through my artwork, I explore my family's cultural connections with tobacco and look at how the tobacco industry has used different American institutions to encompass the globe. These corporations sell a product that, when used as it is intended, causes illness and death. I will explore how our culture has allowed and reinforced these practices over several decades. Often times, we as Americans do not examine how our cultural practices and values affect our country, as well as the rest of the world. By using forms of nostalgia, aggressive advertising, lobbyists, food subsidiaries, exploitation of people and resources in developing countries, and smuggling, the tobacco industry has established an elaborate system of reproduction aimed at generating massive financial gains while undermining public health.

The title of my thesis, "VENI VIDI VICI" (I came, I saw, I conquered), is a quote attributed to Julius Caesar after an overwhelming victory against Pharnaces II of Pontus. I found it ironic this motto was used by Philip Morris International on the insignia of their Marlboro brand cigarettes. Marlboro is the world's most popular cigarette brand that operates both nationally through Altria Group and internationally through Philip Morris International. By functioning under an abominable form of global capitalism, these and other large tobacco corporations are spreading to infect all areas of the world. The effects of these practices are seen in the form of a preventable global pandemic. "By 2030, there will be more than 8 million deaths every year."(http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596282_eng.pdf : 12) This tobacco epidemic is directly linked to how these corporations operate. When all of these practices are examined, they reveal a system built on disregarding human well-being in the pursuit of profit and reinforces many negative aspects of our American culture.

Many times as a nation we function with illusionistic ideas of what we are doing, or are trying to do. Several times in the past, our ancestors have found a system beneficial to their desires and have come up with reasons for its justification. Some of these examples include the institution of slavery, the removal of Native Americans from their homelands, the imprisonment of U.S. citizens of Japanese descent during WWII, and our questionable involvement in several recent wars. Because our nation is able to justify these institutions, many U.S and global corporations are able to function in a similar manner. We will continue these practices for years without seeing the broad ranging effects. Our nation must realize, how we function must be addressed before we can move toward a solution. If not, our mistakes will be repeated and cause greater hardships. Through my art, I present a personal perspective of my family's tobacco farming heritage, along with World Health Organization (WHO) researchers' arguments that bring attention to the lack of responsible values practiced by tobacco corporations. In doing so I will attempt to promote awareness of problems we face with the tobacco industry and move towards solutions for this global problem.

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH TOBACCO

I grew up in a rural community outside of Oxford, North Carolina. I was taught about tobacco's importance to my family's way of life. The terrain around my home is wooded, hilly, and there are few large fields. The earth is a mix between red clay, dark-rich soil, and flint rocks. Tobacco is one of the crops that thrives in this type of area. Every summer, tobacco fields have always been major part of the landscape.



My Grandparents House (1970)

In the 1960's, my grandfather, "Papa Talley", had about 40 acres of tobacco to tend. Many other families grew tobacco and my family would help out other farmers in the community. Growing tobacco was more of a community-based activity in those days. My Papa Talley's family would help other families like the Fraziers', Crutes', and the Roysters' when their tobacco was ready to be "primed", or harvested. My dad was the third oldest son in a family of four children. He would tell my brother and I stories about how early the family used to wake up and how hard his father worked them in the fields. Due to many years of bad luck with crops, my papa Talley got out of the farming business. On a few occasions, he would borrow money from the bank to buy plants, supplies, and to help with labor expenses, but did not make enough from the crops to pay back the bills. My papa Talley decided he and his sons, who had recently started families of their own, needed jobs with more reliable pay.



My Father and His Family in Tobacco

Since they had been farming their whole lives, my father and his siblings did not have many options. They all found jobs working in factories to support their families. My two older uncles went to work for the Santa Fe tobacco factory in Oxford, N.C. My granny and papa Talley, along with my father went to work at Lenox China. After working at Lenox for about seven years, my father went on to work for the J.P. Taylor Tobacco Company in Henderson, N.C., for several years until that plant closed. He then found another job at a tobacco company in Timberlake, N.C. He has been working there for the past eight years and recently his oldest brother got a job there as well. Even though he is not in the fields everyday, my father still works hard and feels like he is barely getting by.

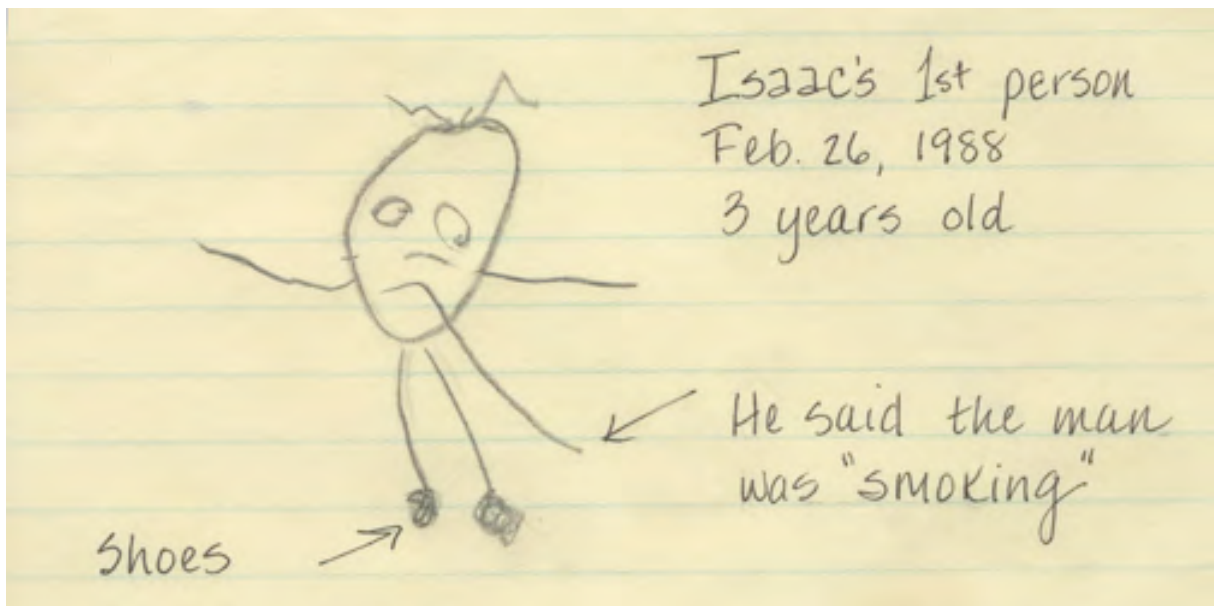
After I graduated high school, my father told me, “Go get that education, you don’t want to be stuck in a factory for the rest of your life”. I did work in a factory for two summers and I learned almost immediately why he told me this. Working in a factory is very tiring and repetitive. The factory was hot, dusty, and dimly lit. I only worked there for about two and a half months a year, but I counted down the days until I was able to start college again. I cannot imagine having to work in a place like that for 40 years of my life. Everyday my father comes home tired with tobacco dust all over his clothes. He does not want to be there, but feels as though there are not many options. He has had a job working with tobacco for over 80 percent of his life and with the economy in the shape it is in, he is thankful to have a job.

I was the second member on my father’s side of the family to get a college degree, and am glad to have their support in my endeavors. A great deal of my family’s life has evolved around tobacco and I do not want to be seen as working to destroy what has supported my family for much of our lives. However, I find myself very conflicted whenever I talk with my family about my views on tobacco.

Growing up, I never saw anyone in my family smoke. Eventually I learned that two of my uncles were smokers, but they never smoked around me. It is hard to believe no one in my immediate family smokes, yet we rely on the success of the tobacco industry to maintain an income. My father has never been a smoker, but feels a sense of loyalty to tobacco because it has always been a part of his life. Part of me feels bad that my father works for an industry that causes so much sickness. I know he does not see it the same way I do because he was raised with a different set of values. He knows that tobacco is not healthy, but people will never stop wanting what the tobacco industry makes. I do not agree with everything he tells me or defends, but I believe no one can deny the link between tobacco and the health problems that result from its use.

MEMORIES/NOSTALGIA

The community I grew up in was built around farming, especially tobacco farming. Growing up, I embraced the way of life my father and papa Talley talked about; the hard work, the beauty of the rolling tobacco fields, and the smell of the barns where tobacco leaves were cured. I remember having tobacco stick fights, climbing in the barns, and playing hide and seek in the rows when my cousins and I would play in the summer at my grandparents' house. It was very much a part of my youth and I retain the vivid memories of what it was like to be a part of that rich heritage. I vividly remember how the pilot light burned at the floor of the barn while the leaves were hanging at head level. I will never forget the smell of those barns while the tobacco was curing. It is one of the most wonderful smells I have ever experienced.



One of My First Drawings

I often revisit the tobacco barns made of logs and mud by my ancestors in the early 1900's. They still have a hint of that smell even after being dormant for over 20 years. Everything is still there, seemingly untouched. The roofs and poles are still intact. The gas lines and their burners still sit on the dirt floor. Light pours in from the concrete blocks that serve as the barns' vents. It feels like when the production of tobacco stopped, time stood still and those old barns that were once vital to the old tobacco farmers' way of life have been forgotten.

In the past, when I talked with people around North Carolina about tobacco, they would have similar stories to what I have described about my family. For many years I shared the ideas and statements made by my father and family regarding support for tobacco. Money from tobacco not only supports my family, but also paid for many colleges, buildings, and programs throughout our state. Tobacco supporters are quick to bring up these points when people talk about tobacco bans and a stricter regulation of the industry. I have had many people tell me that tobacco has been too heavily criticized over the past two decades. They immediately defend the tobacco farmers of the past, but in reality, these new regulations have nothing to do with what they are trying to defend. These new guidelines are not intended to point fingers at farmers, but to reform the way our nation has come to abuse tobacco products. I believe the nostalgia factor the tobacco industry has ingrained into peoples' minds forms a barricade many people are unable to get past.

Through exploring my feelings about the tobacco industry, I found myself doing many of the same things. It is so easy to let oneself be swept away by the nostalgia associated with tobacco's heritage. Looking deeper into the subject, I realized that most of the problems associated with tobacco come from how large-scale tobacco corporations conduct their business. It was hard to get past, as I could see myself getting caught up in a nostalgic moment and not

being able to separate the small, rural tobacco farmer from the giant corporations that have absolute control over the market. By linking all facets of tobacco under one huge umbrella, I was unable to criticize the tobacco industry without condemning my family's heritage. Many people run into a similar problem when addressing this subject. Now that I have been able to separate many different aspects of the very complex tobacco industry, it is easier to mediate the issues I have been struggling with for so long.

The use of institutions such as nostalgia by tobacco corporations is not coincidental. When these giant businesses come under pressure, they often point to the economic impact tobacco legislation has on small, rural farmers. This perceived link has been emphasized so much over the past two centuries, that many people cannot see that there is a definite separation between the two. I realized the tobacco industry uses the institution of nostalgia as a way to keep people like my family members supporting their business. The tobacco industry puts a great deal of emphasis on the small farmer whenever it comes under fire, but the farmers are not a driving force for the market. If corporations are able to gain support on a community level, they will have much more power in local and state legislation. The state of North Carolina is a prime example of this. A major reason why Republican State Senator Richard Burr and Democratic State Senator Kay Hagan opposed a bill that would bring tobacco under FDA regulation in May of 2009 was due to the local tobacco support. The tobacco industry uses local farmers as a way to justify its corporate process. Most present day tobacco farmers have inherited their lifestyle from past generations. Even though smoking rates in the U.S. have been on the decline, U.S. tobacco is in high demand across the world. The emphasis put on the economic benefits of growing tobacco for rural U.S. and global communities is the industry's single strongest argument for its continuation. But upon further review, this argument has many flaws. Although

the tobacco industry claims to be responsible for helping local communities, in reality, very few U.S. farmers still plant tobacco.

When my grandfather farmed, the most he ever tended was around 40 acres of tobacco. At that time, there were about 15 tobacco farmers in the community they lived in. Today there are only four tobacco farmers working in the same community. These farmers now have large-scale farming operations that produce anywhere from 200-500 acres of tobacco a year. They own several large pieces of farm equipment including large diesel trucks, tractors, plows, and mobile irrigation units. The old American tobacco farmer and his mule team, plow, and wooden tobacco barn has been replaced by \$50,000 tractors, large-scale migrant workforce, and sophisticated gas powered curing units. It is not very hard to see the process of growing tobacco does not have the same rich community tradition the tobacco industry wants to allude to. The small farmers of the past have been replaced by systems of farming that the tobacco industry feels is more efficient. This new style of farming has been spreading throughout our current American culture. The production of chicken, livestock, corn, tobacco and countless other items are being mass-produced to keep up with an abominated form of capitalism. To keep up with global demand for cigarettes and other tobacco products, farmers are being pushed to produce higher yields at lower prices. Because of this, many responsible farming practices have gone out the window. What started as a harsh and dangerous form of farming in America has been introduced as the gold standard in farming throughout many developing nations.

BRIEF HISTORY OF TOBACCO

The farming and usage of tobacco is not necessarily a problem. People of North and South America had used tobacco for centuries before its introduction to Europeans. “Native Americans consumed a variety of tobacco products for thousands of years. However, their tobacco use was limited to ceremonial purposes to bond with deities.”(Colditz: 813) Smoking was highly ritualistic in these cultures, but after tobacco was introduced to the capitalist system of Western culture, its addictive properties were exploited and became an abused substance. Tobacco was not grown to sell until a colony in Jamestown, Virginia began in 1612. (Shafey: 90) Once tobacco was shipped in from the America’s, it soon became a big business in Europe. King James I of England, like many others of his time, felt that tobacco smoke was harmful to breath, but his outlook soon changed. (Colditz: 896) After he saw that high taxes would not stop people from buying tobacco products, he established a monopoly so the Royal family would have control of the British Tobacco market. (Colditz: 896) Sadly, as we see too often in our American culture, believing something is wrong will not stop a person or institution from its justification for financial gain.

Growing tobacco became the major cash crop for the colonies. “Because gold and silver were scarce in the colonies, the colonialists used tobacco as currency with which they purchased supplies and paid debts.”(Colditz: 896) With the increase in demand for tobacco and limited workers for tending and harvesting the crop, many owners turned to slaves as a means of effective work while keeping labor costs down. Tobacco was a major reason for the African/Caribbean Slave Trade. Large-scale farmers later turned into plantation owners and setup a system that is still in place today. This business structure is highly effective in generating wealth for owners, while keeping the workers poor.

The tobacco industry has maintained a very similar system in present times. The large corporations control the tobacco growing market in the U.S. as well as many countries in South America, Africa and Asia. The actual farmers make little money, while the corporations make billions of dollars in profits.(Shafey: 48)

Cigarettes originated from the remnants of cigars and were sold as a cheaper version. They became very popular among smokers with lower incomes. Later, James Bonsack invented an automated cigarette-rolling machine that allowed cigarettes to be mass-produced. “In 1883, a young U.S. entrepreneur by the name of James Buchannan Duke modified the Bonsack Roller and perfected a machine, able to produce 120,000 cigarettes per day.”(Colditz: 897) This allowed Duke to make his cigarettes more available to lower-income smokers. He bought out his four major competitors and established a monopoly in cigarette sales with The American Tobacco Company. “Through numerous foreign and domestic combinations, Duke interests controlled the manufacture of a variety of tobacco products until the United States Supreme Court in 1911 ordered the dissolution of the tobacco trust as a combination in restraint of trade.”(http://library.duke.edu/uarchives/history/histnotes/james_b_duke.html)

Once the monopoly had been broken up, more companies were able to compete for sales and companies began to spread their product through marketing campaigns. As advertising possibilities expanded, cigarette companies took full advantage of the new marketing outlets. For example, cigarettes were given to soldiers who fought in WWI and WWII in an attempt to develop brand loyalty. “By 1944 cigarette production was up to 300 billion a year. Service men received about 75% of all cigarettes produced.”

(http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/docs/tobacco/Unit1/2history_of.html) These practices continued without being restricted until the 1950’s.

Many people had been opposed to smoking and believed it to have negative health affects, but these groups had little affect on the tobacco industry. To relieve some of the criticism, Philip Morris began adding filters to their cigarettes. This was intended to restrict some of the carcinogens that would enter the body. Many other companies followed suit as a way to promote their product as being healthier.

“The tobacco industry has a history of creating the appearance of scientific controversy in an attempt to counter initiatives intended to restrict tobacco use.”

(http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2009/9789241563918_eng_full.pdf : 38) In most cases, studies conducted by tobacco-funded institutions reject findings of organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO). Throughout the 1950's, tobacco corporations hired scientists to perform research aimed towards disproving or down playing the hazardous affects of its products. In an effort to reassure their customer's that their health was a top priority, the industry came together to publish the Frank Statement in over 400 newspapers in 1954. See Appendix. <http://www.tobacco.neu.edu/box/BOEKENBox/Boeken%20Evidence%20PDF/0363.pdf> The Statement was used to question the research combating the tobacco industry, while trying to gain public assurance under difficult circumstances. The Surgeon General's 1964 report linked smoking with lung cancer and many other health conditions. These claims were rejected by the tobacco industry, but as time went on, the Surgeon General's language got stronger and reports lead to legislation in the U.S Congress to require cigarette packs to come with a label that warns consumers of the health concerns. In 1970 the Public Health Cigarette Smoking Act of 1969 was passed, which banned tobacco companies from advertising their products on television or radio. (http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/by_topic/policy/legislation/index.htm)

Tobacco control policies have slowly continued to improve, but have been hindered by the tobacco industry's methods of business. Tobacco Companies have had their own consultants working for WHO to influence policies and to compromise the goals of the organization. In some cases, offering future high ranking positions or paying WHO officials off the books for helping tobacco companies. (http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/who_inquiry.pdf : 48)

With continued legal actions and scientific research, the industry has changed their approach. Instead of claiming cigarettes do not cause cancer, tobacco companies now take the stance that individuals are responsible enough to make their own decisions, therefore placing nicotine addiction on smokers and not the addictive nature of their industry's products.

NICOTINE ADDICTION

By taking this position, the tobacco industry leaves very little to no burden on itself for selling addictive substances and reducing smoking rates throughout the world. The idea of “Freedom of Choice” is not as clear as it may seem when dealing with tobacco. I agree, that to a certain point, a person has the ability to choose what he or she does in life. When a person becomes addicted to a substance such as tobacco, it no longer becomes a freedom of choice. Some people are biologically more susceptible to become addicted than others.

The drug nicotine is not a harmful substance. Nicotine is a naturally occurring compound that is found in tobacco, potatoes, tomatoes, and many other plants and vegetables. Unfortunately, “At least 51 of the 4,000 chemicals in a cigarette are known to be carcinogenic.

http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/docs/tobacco/Unit4/1whats_in.html”

Nicotine is a highly physical and psychologically addictive drug, which triggers the reward sensors in the brain. “A key chemical involved in the pleasure-feedback loop of the brain is the neurotransmitter dopamine, and doses of nicotine increase the levels of dopamine in the reward circuits.”(Colditz: 905) Cigarette smoke is a very effective vehicle for nicotine because it delivers the drug to receptors, which channel the drug directly to the bloodstream. With the addition of filters in the 1950’s, less nicotine was delivered to the bloodstream, which many smokers felt was a less desirable cigarette. The tobacco industry in turn increased the nicotine levels in cigarettes, and introduced more additives that would make the delivery of nicotine less harsh. With additives like menthol, fruit flavoring, and chocolate, the smoke becomes smoother and more easily inhaled. This allows for deeper inhalation of smoke to the lungs and a quicker absorption of nicotine into the bloodstream.

For this reason, cigarettes labeled “light” or “ultra-light” cause just as many health problems as full strength cigarettes. Squaxin Island Tribe’s Skookum Creek Tobacco is promoting one new additive free tobacco called “Traditions”. Bryan Johnson, deputy c.e.o. of Island Enterprises Inc. says, “We are the only cigarette manufacturer to be ahead of the curve in calling our newest products what they really are, ‘High Air Flow Filter’, rather than ‘lights.’”(Hoyt III: 58) Cigarettes labeled as ‘light’ or ‘ultra-light’ burn the same tobacco, but the filters allow more air to flow to the smokers’ lungs with each pull. To get the extra nicotine so many smokers are accustomed to, a person will inhale deeper, trying to attain the level of nicotine needed to suppress their craving. Nicotine is able to spread through the bloodstream to the brain in about eight seconds. This allows the smoker a brief sense of euphoria, which satisfies the nicotine craving for a short period of time.

A nicotine addiction is very hard to break. Although we consume the drug in small amounts in certain foods, tobacco has a much higher concentration of nicotine. There are several nicotine replacement therapies, but they are all very expensive. The packs of gum and boxes of patches can range from \$30.00- \$100.00. These therapies are not always successful when trying to quit.

It has been said that trying to quite smoking is one of the hardest things a person can encounter in life. Most of the smokers I know say they wish they had never started smoking. Looking back, it is easy see how so many of my friends and family got addicted to tobacco. It was not that they thought cigarettes tasted amazing. Smoking was a part of the social structure they were or wanted to be a part of, and over time, the addiction set in.

PEER PRESSURE IN MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL

Throughout middle school and high school many of my cousins and friends started smoking. My oldest cousin, Jeremy, was one of the more popular kids in high school and he had been smoking since middle school. Several times my brother and I would practice smoking before going to his house. We knew he would pressure us to smoke and neither of us wanted to cough our lungs up in front of someone we thought was cool. My cousin got caught smoking a few times by his parents, but they were also smokers. Eventually they figured he was going to smoke regardless, so they let him smoke in the house. Eventually, both Jeremy's little brother and sister picked up the habit when they were in middle school and all of them still smoke to this day. They all have made attempts to quit, but they have been in vain.

When my brother and I used to go to Jeremy's house, he would always offer us drags off his cigarettes. I could inhale without coughing, but felt like my throat was on fire and the taste the smoke would leave was horrible. I always brushed my teeth well before going back home, but the taste of smoke stayed for hours later.

In high school, most of the popular kids smoked. Our classes were about 1.5 hours long, and as soon as the bell rang, there would be a rush of people heading towards the bathrooms. Many times only one or two people had a cigarette and would share with everyone who was there. It got to the point where I would not even go to the bathrooms between classes because I was afraid of being guilty by association. My younger cousin was always getting in trouble for smoking.

The teachers eventually started cracking down on smoking in the bathroom, but students would hide behind the school's trailer classrooms or go to the bathrooms between classes. After school, many people would drive about half a mile from school to the nearest gas station.

Underage students could get their older friends to buy them cigarettes, or if the right cashier was there, they could buy them without an ID.

The middle school and high school years are a major time of metamorphosis in a young person's life. I know without a doubt, the main reason I tried to smoke was to fit in and gain respect from my cousin. I was not a very rebellious child growing up, but I did want to fit in and be seen as cool by someone I looked up to.

In high school, I knew many people who used smoking as a way to get attention and attempt to declare independence from parents. The tobacco industry is able to capitalize on teenagers' rebellious and insecure feelings by positioning smoking as an activity that liberates teens from being restrained by society. By associating smoking cigarettes as an adult activity, many teenage smokers assume they will be more popular and gain respect. I was lucky not to become addicted to cigarettes, but caved in to peer pressure to feel a sense of belonging. I knew better, but at the time, my only naïve concern was gaining respect from my cousin and friends, many of whom were smokers.

ADVERTISING AND MARKETING

American based tobacco corporations have some of the most persuasive advertising campaigns in history. At the turn of the 20th century, these companies were the leaders in modern advertising. They had the money to overwhelm the public with cheap products and aggressive advertising. As a result, cigarettes became the best selling commodity across America. Cigarettes continued to grow in popularity as the companies expanded advertising campaigns and presented smoking as a social norm. As advertising possibilities expanded, cigarette companies took full advantage of the new marketing outlets.



A Pack of Coupons From an R J Reynolds Website (www.camel.com)

**...AND
CREATE
YOUR OWN
PATH**

CAMEL CRUSH
REGULAR FRESH

CAMEL
LIGHTS

Have a TWO-some
Freedom to change.
It's up to you... simply squeeze the capsule whenever you want to release a burst of menthol freshness.

FLAVORFUL and SMOOTH
Since 1913. Rich, full-bodied, bold flavor for people who love to smoke.

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GET ANSWERS.**
WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU AT CAMEL.COM*

<< EXPERIENCE MORE OF WHAT YOU WANT MORE VALUE. MORE SAVINGS. >>

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Quitting Smoking Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.

*Offers and website restricted to legal age tobacco consumers.

Inside of the Camel Coupon Packet



YOUR CAMEL. YOUR WAY.

<p>MANUFACTURER COUPON EXPIRES 3/30/10</p> <p>103455</p>  <p>\$2.50 OFF ONE PACK</p> <p><small>INCLUDES CAMEL CRUSH AND ALL CIGARETTE STYLES EXCLUDING RED KAMEL, CAMEL W'S AND CAMEL NON-FILTERS. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED.</small></p>	<p>MANUFACTURER COUPON EXPIRES 3/30/10</p> <p>103453</p>  <p>\$2.50 OFF ONE PACK</p> <p><small>INCLUDES CAMEL CRUSH AND ALL CIGARETTE STYLES EXCLUDING RED KAMEL, CAMEL W'S AND CAMEL NON-FILTERS. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED.</small></p>
<p>MANUFACTURER COUPON EXPIRES 3/30/10</p> <p>35000453754</p> <p>103456</p>  <p>\$2.50 OFF ONE PACK</p> <p><small>INCLUDES CAMEL CRUSH AND ALL CIGARETTE STYLES EXCLUDING RED KAMEL, CAMEL W'S AND CAMEL NON-FILTERS. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED.</small></p>	<p>MANUFACTURER COUPON EXPIRES 3/30/10</p> <p>103454</p>  <p>\$2.50 OFF ONE PACK</p> <p><small>INCLUDES CAMEL CRUSH AND ALL CIGARETTE STYLES EXCLUDING RED KAMEL, CAMEL W'S AND CAMEL NON-FILTERS. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED.</small></p>

\$2.50 Off One Pack Coupons

Joe Camel was an iconic cartoon character that became popular in the U.S in the 1980's and early 90's. Joe Camel originated in France in 1974 (Shafey: 92), but was soon picked up by R.J. Reynolds, a tobacco company whose headquarters are still located in Greensboro, N.C. I remember looking through my fathers' Sports Illustrated magazines and trying to draw Joe Camel. That Camel could do anything! I saw him playing pool, driving motorcycles, playing the saxophone, and even windsurfing.

When I was around ten years old, Philip Morris came out with a promotional program called "Marlboro Miles". With this program, people who smoked Marlboro cigarettes could turn in proofs of purchase called Marlboro Miles and receive products such as jackets, shirts, watches, lighters, tents, camping gear, etc. that had the Marlboro logo. My aunt and uncle smoked Marlboro cigarettes constantly and when I was at their house, my cousins would look through the Marlboro Miles magazine to see what they could get. As a child, this seemed to be a pretty great thing. It was like looking in the Sears Wish book for things you wanted, but in this case, all someone had to do was smoke. These kinds of advertising and promotional campaigns have allowed the tobacco industry to introduce its products to new generations, without seeming underhanded.

The Marlboro brand, which began selling in the U.S. around 1902, did not start out being the worlds' leading cigarette. They were marketed mainly to women with the slogan "Mild as May", but the campaign was not as successful as the company had hoped. It was not until the 1960's when "Marlboro Country" and the idea of the "Marlboro Man", that the brand became popular. Even though the tobacco industry was banned from advertising their products on television and radio in 1970, they have found new ways of promoting cigarettes. By employing some of the best advertisers and using new methods of promotion, the tobacco industry was able

to successfully position itself to target a new generation of potential smokers. These practices have continued through the decades.

The American Legacy Foundation has collected data from the top box office movies from 1996-2005. Their findings show

“Although the percent of movies with tobacco imagery has declined, the majority of movies continued to depict tobacco use or imagery, with 56% of youth rated movies in 2005 containing smoking.”

http://www.legacyforhealth.org/PDFPublications/Character_Smoking_in_Top_Box_Office_Movies.pdf : 4)

The link between movies and smoking is far from being accidental. “Of Hollywood’s top-grossing movies featuring tobacco brand placement over the past fifteen years, seven out of ten times the brand displayed is Marlboro. Studies show that brands showing up on screen most often are also the most heavily advertised in other media”(Shafey: 59)

As the smoking rates are going down in America, tobacco companies are finding new ways of advertising and ways of positioning themselves to increase their presence in foreign countries. In 2003, The Federal Trade Commission Report stated, the major U.S. tobacco companies spent more than \$15 billion promoting their products. New methods of farming, technology, and imaginative marketing strategies have already spread from our American culture, to countries throughout the world.

“U.S. tobacco companies are now growing tobacco in Africa, South America (Brazil and Paraguay), India, Pakistan, the Philippines, Greece, Thailand, and the Dominican Republic. Fifty percent (50%) of the sales of U.S. tobacco companies go to Asian

countries, such as Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Taiwan.”

(http://healthliteracy.worlded.org/docs/tobacco/Unit1/2history_of.html)

EFFECTS ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

For years U.S. companies have been trying to force developing countries to open their markets for tobacco trade. The tobacco industry uses short-term wealth as leverage to create new smokers in these poorer countries and to keep company costs down. A committee of experts has reviewed industry documents written throughout the mid 1990's that reveal tobacco companies' attempted to convince developing countries that tobacco was essential to their economic stability. (http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/who_inquiry.pdf : 98) As these countries become more influenced by western culture, tobacco companies are able to promote their product as a status symbol. When people of these countries realize the health and environmental devastation that results from these industry practices it is usually too late.

“According to *The Tobacco Atlas*, 2.1 million cancer deaths per year will be attributable to tobacco by 2015, 83% of these deaths will occur in low and middle-income countries.”

(<http://www.tobaccoatlas.org/tobaccoatlas/press.html>) In these third world countries, smoking rates are dramatically rising in the youth and female populations, which are targeted by aggressive advertising campaigns. American tobacco companies have focused efforts in these countries in order to replace revenue lost in U.S. sales. As a way to lower costs, many American based tobacco companies target developing areas of the world to exploit cheap labor and land resources.

These campaigns are particularly disturbing because vital revenue is taken away from extremely impoverished families to support parental tobacco addiction. The environment in these areas is also being neglected. Tobacco agriculture creates extensive environmental and public health problems. “Pesticide and fertilizer runoff contaminate water resources, and curing of tobacco leaf with wood fuel leads to massive deforestation.” (Shafey: 48) The tobacco industry has seen the best of its years in our country. Now that they realize Americans are moving away from

cigarettes, they are branching out to countries in need of revenue and have national governments that can be easily corrupted. The tobacco industry has implemented those previously outlined questionable practices and similar systems in these developing nations.

“The imperialistic and colonialistic white man exports or at least sells death to the people in the underdeveloped countries, and at the same time robs their anyway meager economy of huge economic assets.”

(<http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/yxq50g00/pdf;jsessionid=8FC9232B5D9402AE598053D5300E9A17> : 2)

Our nation has to be careful concerning how its corporations treat people in foreign countries. Our treatment of other nations is a direct reflection of our values and economic interests.

The tobacco industry tries to portray itself in a way that appears beneficial to these countries. They focus on the economic benefits of raising tobacco without addressing the many harmful consequences that come along with its production. Once ties with local groups and organizations are established, large corporations are able to promote a pro-tobacco agenda at the local and national level. With subverted control at a national level, these corporations prevent anti-tobacco legislation from being passed. (http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/who_inquiry.pdf :30)

This makes it harder for organizations such as WHO to launch solutions to reduce the influence of large tobacco in developing countries.

Children in Developing Countries

Over the past few decades, smoking rates have been declining in more wealthy countries, but steadily rising in poorer countries such as Indonesia. The harmful effects of smoking go beyond immediate health risks in these areas. Children in these poor conditions suffer from lack of better nutrition, because money that should be used for food is used to purchase cigarettes. Researchers have conducted surveys on the impact of smoking on low-income families in Indonesia. Their findings show that,

“The average family with at least one smoker spends 10 percent of its already tight budget on tobacco. Sixty-eight percent of a smoking family’s budget goes to food, and 22 percent for non-food, non-tobacco purchases. The average family’s budget, on the other hand, spends 75 percent of its income on food and 25 percent for non-food items.”(Block:2)

Families that have smokers tend to spend more money on cheaper, less nutritional foods such as rice and neglect buying nutritious foods like fresh fruits, vegetables, and meat.

“In Bangladesh alone, if the average household bought food with the money normally spent on tobacco, more than 10 million people would no longer suffer from malnutrition and 350 children under age five could be saved each day.” (Shafey: 44)

Environmental Impact

Tobacco is grown on almost four million hectares of the world's farmland. Global tobacco production has almost doubled since the 1960s, increasing 300 percent in low- and middle-resource countries while dropping more than 50 percent in high-resource countries.”(Shafey: 48) The problem with tobacco is not strictly the direct health problems caused by its use, but the impact large-scale farming has on the environment. Pesticide and fertilizer runoff contaminate many local water sources. Workers suffer from pesticide poisoning and green tobacco sickness as a result of handling the leaves while in the field. In attempts to gain more land for growing tobacco, many acres of rainforest are destroyed and the wood is burned to cure the leaves while in barns. “In southern Africa alone an estimated 200,000 hectares of woodlands are cut annually to support tobacco farming. This accounts for 12% of deforestation in the region.”

[\(http://www.panda.org/about_our_earth/agriculture_impacts/tobacco/environmental_impacts/deforestation/\)](http://www.panda.org/about_our_earth/agriculture_impacts/tobacco/environmental_impacts/deforestation/) The World Health Organization is trying to come up with solutions that give assistance to farmers who are currently depending on the production of tobacco as their income. Many of these efforts are aimed at shifting farmers to produce crops that can be directly used as food for their country's population and exportation. By doing this, farmers will provide much needed nutritional support for their families, while rejecting values that are counterproductive to national health.

Misconception of Tobacco Revenue

Many people in the tobacco industry claim these poorer countries need the financial benefits that tobacco growth is able to provide to the people, but this argument loses much validity when all factors are weighed. Tobacco companies often claim that reducing tobacco production will decrease tax revenues and increase the unemployment rate in areas that are already poor, but several other factors are left off the table. The industry neglects to factor in the number of people out of work or dying from cigarette related illnesses. The lack of good health care in low-income families is a major problem for people of these nations. Children are unable to grow to their full potential due to a lack of high protein foods, which cost more. Land used for growing tobacco can be used to grow crops with a higher nutritional value, or be used to raise a variety of livestock. Tobacco production is extremely profitable for national and international corporations, but the small farmers that do the work see little of the profits. Once farmers in these countries pay off the costs to plant, raise, and harvest the crop, they find themselves with very little, if any profit.(Shafey: 48)

Manipulation by Tobacco Organizations

Since the 1980's tobacco companies have targeted developing countries as a way to sustain their process. The tobacco companies had been operating in these countries for years, but had not come under such scrutiny for their practices until efforts were made by large international organizations. WHO (World Health Organization), International Union Against Cancer, and many smaller organizations, focus on both the short and long-term effects tobacco use and its threat to public health. The efforts made by these groups are useful in finding solutions for improving peoples' lives. Once organizations, such as WHO, made it a goal to focus on anti-tobacco campaigns in developing countries, the tobacco organizations initiated a counter campaign. These companies used their money and influence to build relationships with government officials and UN delegates to advance a pro-tobacco agenda. Supporters of tobacco organizations had to position themselves in a way that pushed its product as a major economic benefit to these countries and shift attention away from the harmful consequences of its production. By positioning itself as sympathetic to developing country's needs, the tobacco industry sought to gain support for its operations in third world countries.

Companies like Philip Morris worked hard to prevent the ILO (International Labor Organization) from being a part of the WHO Anti-Smoking Program. (http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/who_inquiry.pdf : 57) The ILO would make it easier for workers to find jobs other than those related to tobacco production. The tobacco company's representatives focused on problems such as disease, poverty, malnutrition, clean water, etc. as a way to promote the financial benefits of sustaining tobacco growth and to build stronger relationships between the tobacco industry and these countries. The tobacco industry focused on foreign exchange revenue, employment of workers, and the economic consequences associated with the lack of tobacco as a cash crop as a convincing way to advance pro-tobacco legislation

and dismiss the relevance of WHO's anti-tobacco campaign. Tobacco representatives also tried to position anti-smoking campaigns in developing countries as a policy imposed by industrialized countries in order to restrict freedoms.

Tobacco companies were very worried that WHO could gain support from many other international organizations and eventually come under pressure of the UN. If this were the case, the tobacco industry would be likened to issues such as drug smuggling. The tobacco industry then began to develop complex strategies aimed at undermining WHO efforts and trying to influence many organizations to adopt a pro-tobacco stance. The tobacco industry did this by promoting tobacco's economic importance in developing countries and establishing relationships with prominent officials. (http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/who_inquiry.pdf : 31)

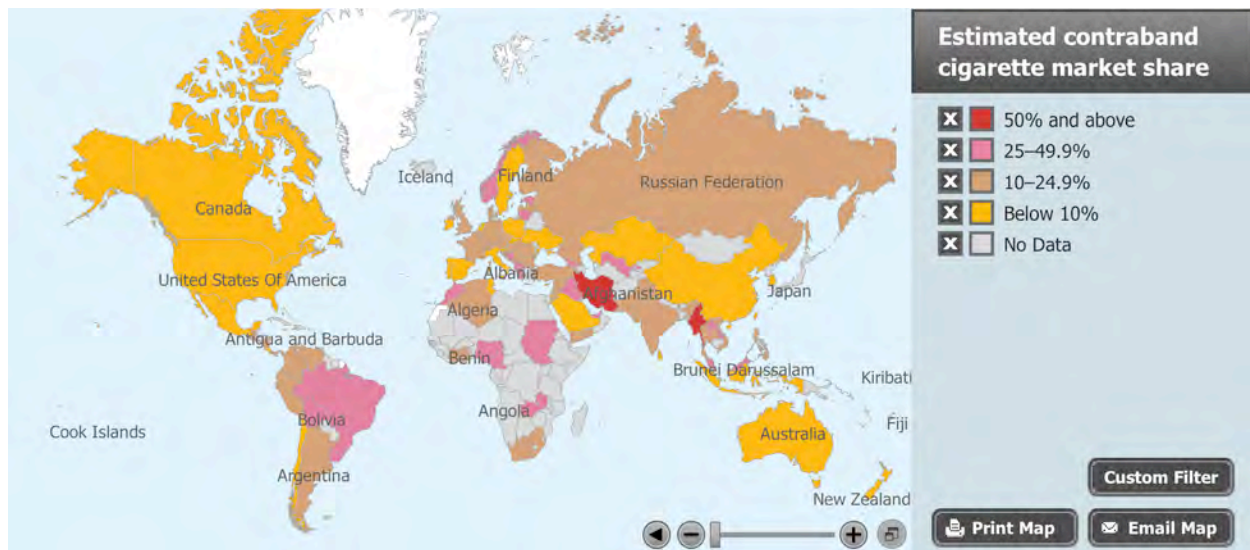
Tobacco companies used other United Nation agencies to combat WHO tobacco control plans. The most prominent agency targeted by the tobacco industry for support was the (FAO) Food and Agriculture Organization. Through the 1950's and 60's, The FAO was a supporter of tobacco growth in developing countries. (http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/who_inquiry.pdf : 52)

The organization's goal was to improve the standard of living in rural populations through agriculture. By the 1970's, the tobacco industry had regarded the FAO as a strong ally and wanted the FAO to claim the economic significance of tobacco outweighed the health concerns associated with using tobacco. But in 1980, the FAO backed the WHO's tobacco control policies. (http://www.who.int/tobacco/en/who_inquiry.pdf : 51)

Cigarette Smuggling

Cigarettes are the worlds' most widely smuggled legal consumer product. Many major tobacco companies have been involved with large-scale cigarette smuggling operations.(Tobacco Atlas 54) This is a global problem that undermines public health, prevents governments from taxing goods, and supports many terrorist organizations across the globe.

By releasing contraband cigarettes to the market, companies hope to make their product more affordable to the consumer, boost their profit margins, and gain brand loyalty by offering a name brand cigarette at a cheaper price. This also makes it much easier for young people to purchase cigarettes. Because these smuggled goods are not taxed, contraband cigarettes cost the US government between \$40-50 billion in lost tax revenue each year. (Shafey: 54)



Estimated Contraband Cigarette Market Share (<http://www.tobaccoatlas.org/illegal.html>)

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS FOR THE TOBACCO EPIDEMIC

The world tobacco epidemic is a very complex dilemma, which has developed through decades of manipulation by the tobacco industry. Because it is so deep-rooted, a multi-step solution is required to prevent the problem from getting worse. To warn people of the health risks and curb global tobacco use, WHO has been working on a six-step program called “MPOWER”.

- **Monitor** tobacco use and prevention policies,
- **Protect** people from tobacco smoke,
- **Offer** help to quit tobacco use,
- **Warn** about the dangers of tobacco,
- **Enforce** bans on tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship,
- **Raise** taxes on tobacco.

These policies are proven to be effective in reducing tobacco consumption and will save many millions of lives per year. (http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596282_eng.pdf :

28) The first policy establishes a monitoring system used to track the progress of the program.

“Only through accurate measurement can problems caused by tobacco be understood and interventions be effectively managed and improved.”

(http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596282_eng.pdf : 29) With this data,

researchers and policy makers will be able to collaborate to discuss progress and alter policies if needed.

The second policy calls for government support of mandatory Smoke-free environments. Although the tobacco industry claims this will hurt other industries such as bars, restaurants, and casinos, public opinion polls show these smoking bans are popular and are successful in reducing second-hand smoke. “In 2006, Uruguay became the first country in the Americas to go 100%

smoke-free by enacting a ban on smoking in all public spaces and workplaces, including bars, restaurants and casinos. The ban won support from eight out of ten Uruguayans, including nearly two thirds of the country's smokers.”

(http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596282_eng.pdf : 32)

The third policy is aimed at getting help for smokers who choose to quit. This is a three-part policy that sets up “tobacco cessation advice incorporated into primary health-care services; easily accessible and free quit lines; and access to low-cost pharmacological therapy.”

(http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596282_eng.pdf : 36)

Many smokers throughout the world are unaware of the threat smoking poses to their health. Often, people see smoking as a bad habit instead of thinking of its long-term health affects. Because we live in a country with an advanced healthcare system, we are aware of many dangers associated with smoking. Many other countries around the world are not as fortunate. WHO calls for advertising campaigns that display larger warnings on packs and present images of the effects of tobacco use. This can be done through television, magazines, billboards, and most importantly, on cigarette boxes. By requiring tobacco manufactures to incorporate pictorial warning of the dangers of tobacco use, it costs taxpayers nothing and makes it harder for companies to seduce consumers with well-designed packaging.

Another policy WHO advocates is the reinforcement of bans on advertising and limiting the amount of promotional material associated with tobacco companies. Tobacco companies spend most of their money on advertising and promoting products. Some of the most heavily targeted areas are developing countries. Many of these nations lack any type of anti-tobacco legislation so the corporations can market at will. “Widespread tobacco advertising “normalizes” tobacco, depicting it as being no different from any other consumer product.”

(http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596282_eng.pdf : 42) Although tobacco ads have been banned from television and radio in the United States, other countries still allow companies to advertise in these formats. Many countries only have partial bans, which are not as effective. Tobacco corporations are able to advertise in magazines, newspapers and the internet, which are still major marketing tools in developing countries. As partial bans in advertising are strengthened, the tobacco industry is finding new ways to promote their products. People can easily go online to attain coupons from promotional websites. I registered at both the Marlboro and Winston website and within a week, received coupons for my next cigarette purchase. The Marlboro website hardly references tobacco on their site. Apart from the promotional coupons, the site is filled with games, recipes, and video clips of extreme sports that are sponsored by Philip Morris. If more international bans can be strictly enforced, the tobacco industry will be forced to reevaluate their business practices.

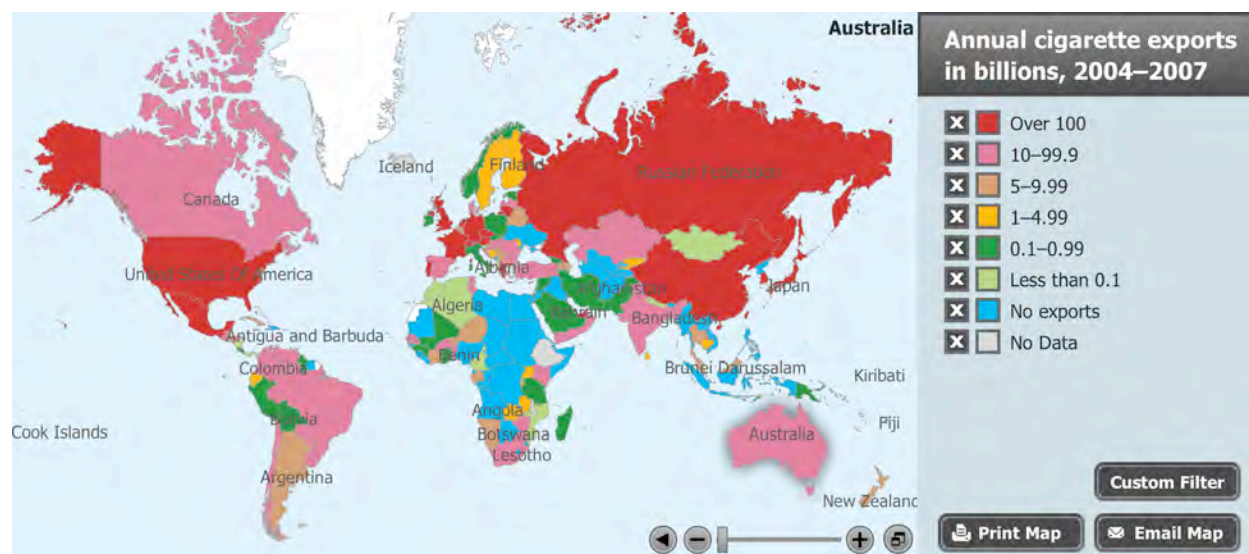
The most successful way to reduce smoking rates is the implementation of higher taxes on tobacco products. Higher prices per pack of cigarettes causes a dramatic drop in the number of cigarettes smoked, increases the likelihood that a smoker will quit, and makes it more difficult for younger people to begin smoking. “Youth, minorities, and low-income smokers are two to three times more likely than other smokers to quit or smoke less in response to price increases.” (Shafey: 82) Higher taxes on cigarettes would allow a higher percentage of funds to be used for programs to prevent smoking and promote more research aimed at fixing problems caused by tobacco use. This will allow research to be paid for by tobacco consumers and not just be passed on to the majority of the population that does not smoke.

“Increasing tobacco taxes by 10% generally decreases tobacco consumption by 4% in high-income countries and by about 8% in low- and middle-income countries, while

tobacco tax revenues increase by nearly 7%.”

(http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596282_eng.pdf : 44)

Reducing tobacco consumption is a problem that must be approached from many different angles. Organizations like WHO have been trying for decades to oppose organizations and practices that undermine public health. This issue encompasses many nations and cultures, therefore, reforming this industry is very difficult unless global policies can be thoroughly applied. If the “MPOWER” package can be initiated on a global level, it would be effective in reducing the number of smokers today, and take giant steps in preventing tobacco addiction for future generations. Some countries have already taken some of these steps to protect their people. As more countries adopt these, or similar policies, scientists will be able to better gauge the impact on actual human lives.



Annual Cigarette Exports in Billions, 2004–2007 (<http://www.tobaccoatlas.org/trade.html>)

EXPLANATION OF THE “VENI, VIDI, VICI” INSTALLATION

When the viewer enters the exhibition, he or she is presented with the following statement that addresses the installations’ purpose, along with a wall of photographs. These images show a progression starting with my great grandparents, then grand parents, father, and finally my brother, cousins and I. The images were originally small photographs taken by family members, and kept in our family photo albums. Looking at these images, I tried to reconstruct my ancestor’s way of life. As the images were selected from the albums, my grand parents explained exactly who the people were, their location, and the task each person was performing. No alterations were made to the photographs because they were not meant to be glorified memories of the past, but magnified cultural objects that represent my family’s history. In order not to follow suit with tobacco companies that continuously alter their products with additives, I chose to keep these images as close to the original photographs as possible. Through the progression of images, I want the viewer to see the deep relationship that bonds my ancestors with tobacco. The viewer should remember how this aspect of tobacco is presented, because a vastly different representation awaits them around the corner.



Introduction and Statement for the Installation



Exhibition Show Card

VENI • VIDI • VICI

“I Came, I Saw, I Conquered”

Like so many people throughout the state of North Carolina, many of my values have been constructed through my family’s tobacco heritage. As I grew up in a rural community near Oxford, N.C., I learned of tobacco’s importance. For at least the past four generations, my family has depended on tobacco as a source of income. The values I have learned from my family and community have had a great influence on my development as a person.

This being stated, I cannot overlook the consequences that have resulted from tobacco’s abuse. As I have grown up, I have tortured myself with thoughts and realizations of this issue. Now that I have matured and understand the politics surrounding tobacco, I am attempting to mediate this subject.

Tobacco did not start off being a problem. However, in the past two centuries, the way in which our western culture has allowed tobacco corporations to function has caused a global pandemic. This is no longer a national problem, but has spread its roots to infect the entire world. I feel these corporations that practice irresponsibly are the cancer that is hurting so much of the world. Through my artwork, I attempt to explore the different institutions our culture allows tobacco corporations to use as a means of reproduction. Often times, we do not examine how our cultural practices and values affect our country, as well as the rest of the world. By using forms of nostalgia, aggressive advertising, lobbyists, and the exploitation of people and resources in developing countries, the tobacco industry is able to control a complex system of power while maintaining a relatively safe distance from public interest. The effects of these practices are seen in the form of a preventable global pandemic. “Today, an estimated four million persons die worldwide from smoking. This number is expected to climb to 15 million by 2025.” (The Tobacco Atlas: World Health Organization, 2002) This tobacco epidemic is directly linked to how these corporations operate. When all of these practices are examined, they reveal a system built on disregarding human health in the pursuit of profit and reinforce many negative aspects of our American culture.

Isaac Talley

Statement at the Beginning of the Installation



Currin Family



Grandpa Joe



Grandma Joe



Granny and Papa Talley Planting



Annie and Sam Ward Filling a Barn with the Currin Family



My Father and His Family Filling Barns at Uncle David's



My Father in the Fields



My Brother, Cousins, and I on the John Deere with My Papa Talley

Once the viewer has finished looking at the final photograph, he or she enters a large dark space. The room feels very ominous because the only light source is focused on an altarpiece at the opposite wall. In between the viewer and the altarpiece there is a field of dead tobacco stalks. In constructing this field, my goal was to make the viewer feel that they were part of the piece. They are not merely viewers in this process, but actual participants. The issue addressed in this installation is a real world problem and each person is a participant, whether they choose to acknowledge it or not.



Tobacco Field Leading to Altarpiece

The stalks are spaced about every two feet, just like the spacing used by farmers in an actual tobacco field. Some of the plants still have dried limbs, leaves, and seedpods that crumble and crunch when the viewer accidentally makes contact. During the reception, several small children were playing in the field. Some would try to pass through the narrowest places without making contact with the stalks. Others would chase one another through the rows. Running back and forth they would hit the plants causing them to violently shake and shed their dead leaves. Some of their parents would apologize, but I told them not to worry, the kids are a very important to the installation. As a child, I remember running and hiding in the fields of tobacco. I believe seeing these children playing in a field of dead tobacco is very fitting link to my past.

Nearly three decades ago, my family had farmed tobacco in the very field in which these plants had been taken. I searched for the connections between tobacco corporations, my family, and the institutions in between. I found the only link binding my family the tobacco industry was plants they raised. The tobacco grown to make cigarettes is an annual plant, which means, at the end of the season, the tobacco leaves are harvested, and the plant dies. The rows of dead plants in the installation represent my family's direct connection to the tobacco industry will end at my generation.

The field has been constructed so that as the viewer is drawn towards the altarpiece, the rows become more concentrated. This was done to suggest a similar focusing that I dealt with in trying to mediate my problems with the tobacco industry. These directional cues, along with the dramatic lighting set the viewer up to interact with the altarpiece, which commands their attention.



“VENI VIDI VICI” Altarpiece

The altarpiece represents my realization of large tobacco corporations as the disease that is spreading and must be amended. This installation suggests the difference between the complex internal workings of the industry as opposed to the clean and well-designed façade they put so much money in trying to maintain. My intention is to spark peoples' interest, and hopefully cause them to look deeper into this subject. Once the issue is brought to their attention, I hope the viewer will do their own research, so they can make their own assessment of this issue.

The altarpiece is a large-scale model of a Marlboro Box that has been partially deconstructed to reveal the institutional values of the tobacco industry. The Marlboro brand box was used because it is seen as the canon for cigarettes throughout the world. It is not by coincidence that The Altria Group, owner of Marlboro, spends the most money for advertising and marketing in the U.S., as well as developing countries. The tobacco industry tries to keep its image very clean and well maintained on the outside, but its internal activities, especially in 3rd world countries, show a side of the industry meant to be kept at a distance from the public.



Side View of Altarpiece

The trophy in this case is an aluminum cast of my own head, meant to represent my past beliefs and ideas in support of tobacco. Through many years of not realizing the magnitude of power and corruption that had been veiled by the tobacco industry, I had been the exact non-smoking supporter the corporations need. Many other people find themselves in a similar situation. Though never a smoker, I refused to listen to people when they criticized the industry. Refusing to listen to the criticisms that had been linked to the tobacco industry, I supported the industry both directly and indirectly. The tobacco industry needs supporters who do not smoke to sustain their agenda. Being unaware of how these corporations harm our nation and its reputation creates problems and often makes responsible decision making impossible. The head is mounted on a plaque, much like a hunter would display a wild game trophy. The plaque is based on the Marlboro insignia of two rampant horses. The plaque reads “Veni, Vidi, Vici”, Latin phrase when translated reads, “I came, I saw, I conquered”. This motto is more than just a catchy slogan. It is a mission statement driven by the sole pursuit of power through profit.



Trophy Guarded by Corporations

As a result of the trophy and industry practices being exposed, flagpoles with spearheads have sprung forward to protect its contents. Each flagpole is wrapped with the currency of the country the corporation is based in. The bills are stained with actual tobacco juice, which will deteriorate the paper over time. The spearheads along with the flags act as a defense mechanism to keep all viewers at a distance. The flags represent the worlds' most powerful tobacco corporations that are trying to keep their global activities out of public view.



Flags and Spears



Detail of Flagpoles Wrapped in Currency

There is a great deal of competition between these corporations, but when organizations oppose tobacco legislation they unite in an effort to fight a common enemy. The largest privately owned tobacco corporations include Philip Morris, which is owned by the Altria Group, Reynolds American, British American Tobacco, Japan Tobacco International, Imperial Tobacco, and Hongta Group. The largest tobacco producer in the world is the China National Tobacco Company, but it is a state run monopoly. These corporations, along with other organizations, and powerful officials influence tobacco control policies throughout the world. The map that the flags are trying to cover shows the operations of these different corporations across the globe.



Flags of Major Tobacco Corporations

A coffin serves as the, predella, or base for this altarpiece. The predella of the “Isenheim Altarpiece”, which can be seen in the Appendix, Matthias Grünewald depicts “The Lamentation of Christ”. While trying to decide on the appropriate base, I realized the coffin would be perfect because it is a symbol of lamentation. Many people do not realize the lethal consequences of smoking until someone they care for dies as a result of chronic tobacco abuse. The interior of the coffin is collaged with cigarette boxes, coupons, and magazine ads. These images depicting fun and good times while smoking are stained with tobacco juice and shellac. The acidic juices of the tobacco will eventually cause the collage to break down.



Detail of Coffin

The two putti represent small children of developing countries who are dealing with the consequences of smoking family members. They look unfinished because their future is yet to be determined. A closed coffin has kept the values of the cigarette industry concealed. They have freed themselves and are trying to reveal the content of the coffin to the people whose culture has brought this disease upon them. The quote “Our Values guide our behavior as we pursue our Mission and our business strategies,” is taken directly from the Philip Morris USA website. In an attempt to bring awareness to these corporations’ “Values,” the putti are exposing the details that we as Americans do not see. This quote is a powerful and ethical statement when taken at face value, but the viewer must realize the values that guide these corporations are their profits and stock values. With financial profit as their guiding value, they disregard peoples’ health, destroy the environment, and exploit people and resources in developing countries. Everything else is disregarded in the sole pursuit of their “Mission.”



Putti Revealing the Tobacco Industry Secrets



Our Values guide o
Our Mission and o

Detail of Left Putti



Detail of Right Putti

CONCLUSION

The way our national and international tobacco corporations practice business is not healthy. It is a very costly and destructive institution that our culture has allowed to develop. It has become so deeply rooted, that there will never be a way to completely heal its effects. I believe our states and nation are taking positive steps towards fighting the tobacco industry at a national level, but we must see to it that corporations who represent some of the worst aspects of our culture do not spread to the rest of the world. As tobacco companies continue to lose smokers in the U.S., their focus is shifting toward less developed countries. These countries are limited to what they can do against tobacco companies because of lower budgets and weak infrastructures. Companies that have been established from our cultural values must not be able to exploit other nations without consequence. These companies severely damage our reputation and reinforce many negative characteristics associated with our culture

My goal is to bring more awareness to issues people might not be aware of, and promote a positive change in the way we conduct ourselves as a culture. “The epidemic of tobacco use and disease as we know it today would not exist without the tobacco industry’s marketing and promotion of its deadly products over the past century.”

(http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2008/9789241596282_eng.pdf : 27)

People are free to make their own decisions when it comes to these issues, but they must be aware of the tobacco industry’s values, or lack thereof, how it functions, and take responsibility for what they support. Being raised in an environment where smoking is a social norm makes it much more difficult to reject smoking, or to be successful in attempting to quit. We have already experienced this as a nation and are now seeing the long-term affects. I have many friends and family members who smoke, and hopefully they will take what I have to say

into consideration for their health and for the future of our nation. If American based or supported industries hurt people in other parts of the world, we must be held accountable for being part of the solution. We are a nation based on freedom, but with great freedom, comes even greater responsibility. “Unless dramatic steps are taken to control tobacco, about 6.3 trillion cigarettes will be produced in 2010—more than 900 cigarettes for every man, woman, and child on the planet.” (Shafey: 32)

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APPENDIX

A Frank Statement to Cigarette Smokers

RECENT REPORTS on experiments with mice have given wide publicity to a theory that cigarette smoking is in some way linked with lung cancer in human beings.

Although conducted by doctors of professional standing, these experiments are not regarded as conclusive in the field of cancer research. However, we do not believe that any serious medical research, even though its results are inconclusive should be disregarded or lightly dismissed.

At the same time, we feel it is in the public interest to call attention to the fact that eminent doctors and research scientists have publicly questioned the claimed significance of these experiments.

Distinguished authorities point out:

1. That medical research of recent years indicates many possible causes of lung cancer.
2. That there is no agreement among the authorities regarding what the cause is.
3. That there is no proof that cigarette smoking is one of the causes.
4. That statistics purporting to link cigarette smoking with the disease could apply with equal force to any one of many other aspects of modern life. Indeed the validity of the statistics themselves is questioned by numerous scientists.

We accept an interest in people's health as a basic responsibility, paramount to every other consideration in our business.

We believe the products we make are not injurious to health.

We always have and always will cooperate closely with those whose task it is to safeguard the public health.

For more than 300 years tobacco has given solace, relaxation, and enjoyment to mankind. At one time or another during those years critics have held it responsible for practically every disease of the human body. One by one these charges have been abandoned for lack of evidence.

Regardless of the record of the past, the fact that cigarette smoking today should even be suspected as a cause of a serious disease is a matter of deep concern to us.

Many people have asked us what we are doing to meet the public's concern aroused by the recent reports. Here is the answer:

1. We are pledging aid and assistance to the research effort into all phases of tobacco use and health. This joint financial aid will of course be in addition to what is already being contributed by individual companies.
2. For this purpose we are establishing a joint industry group consisting initially of the undersigned. This group will be known as TOBACCO INDUSTRY RESEARCH COMMITTEE.
3. In charge of the research activities of the Committee will be a scientist of unimpeachable integrity and national repute. In addition there will be an Advisory Board of scientists disinterested in the cigarette industry. A group of distinguished men from medicine, science, and education will be invited to serve on this Board. These scientists will advise the Committee on its research activities.

This statement is being issued because we believe the people are entitled to know where we stand on this matter and what we intend to do about it.

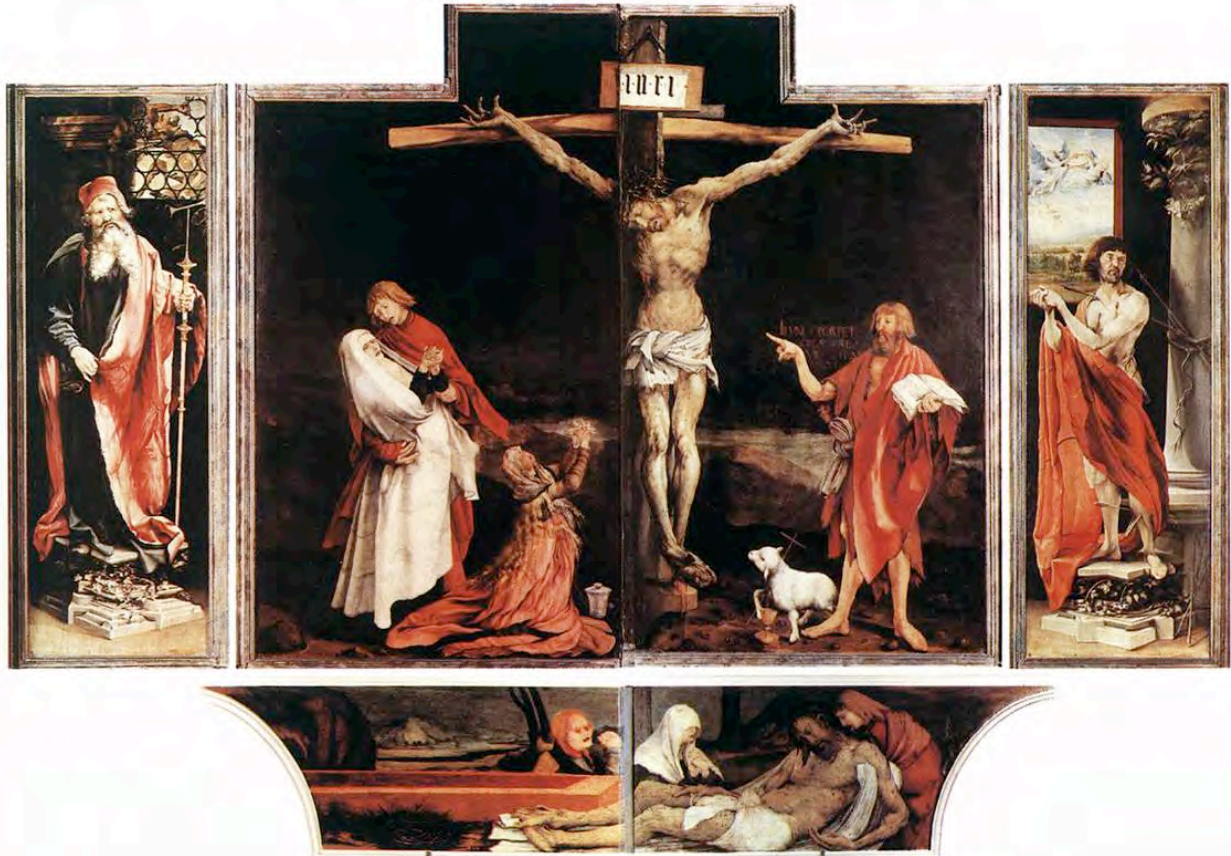
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A Frank Statement to Cigarette Smokers (New York Times -January 4, 1954)



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