

# Political Smoke

or

Is this any way to treat a perfectly good tobacco leaf?

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Mr. President, Mr. Secretary, Mr. Guffey, fellow members: I am particularly pleased to share the program with Mr. Guffey who, as some of you know, was the man who brought me to Hopkinsville and as well one who has been known to engage in the pleasures associated with my topic of the evening.

Gentlemen, events of the past months have drawn my attention to a neglected aspect of the powerful elite. This being election week my gaze has been further focused on the use of props in political gamesmanship and particularly one prop as a tool of the powerful--the cigar! While not nationally politically proper to focus on this particular item as a fit topic of polite conversation, our history has been filled with specific uses of such items and we neglect analysis at our peril.

Tobacco is native to the Americas, and the practice of inhaling the smoke of the dried plant material has been documented in the Mayan culture more than 2,000 years ago. A specific pottery vessel discovered in Guatemala, dating from the 10th century AD (or earlier) shows the figure of a Maya smoking a string-tied roll of tobacco leaves. The Mayans moved northward from Central America through the Aztec Empire and eventually took their customs to North American Indian tribes.

Huron Indian myth has it that in ancient times, when the land was barren and the people were starving, the Great Spirit sent forth a woman to save humanity. As she traveled over the world, everywhere her right hand touched the soil, there grew potatoes. And everywhere her left hand touched the soil, there grew corn. And when the world was rich and fertile, she sat down and rested. When she arose, there grew tobacco . . .

The Spanish word *cigarro*, probably was from the Mayan term for smoking--*sik'ar*. The Arawak natives of the Caribbean smoked tobacco; Christopher Columbus, during his 1492 voyage, found them smoking loosely rolled cigars. Columbus made this report after two of his men, Rodrigo de Jerez and Luis de Torres, in Cuba searching for the Khan of Cathay (China), returned from a reconnaissance mission on the island of Cuba:

*The two Christians met on the way many people who were going to their villages, women and men, with a firebrand in the hand, and herbs to drink the smoke thereof as they are accustomed.* (from Columbus' journal Nov. 5, 1492)

(Jerez became a confirmed smoker, and is thought to be the first outside of the Americas. He brought the habit back to his hometown, but the smoke billowing from his mouth and nose so frightened his neighbors he was imprisoned by the holy inquisitors for 7 years. By the time he was released, smoking was a Spanish craze.)

These Cubans rolled cigars they called *tobacos*. They lit one end from the firebrand and inhaled by inserting the other end in a nostril--not by holding it with their teeth or lips.

The Spanish took tobacco seeds to Europe. Yet, if it was the Spanish who first took up the use of tobacco, it was the Portuguese - still, before the rise of the Dutch and English, the masters of international commerce - who did most to convert the rest of the world. It was in Portugal that the tobacco plant was first cultivated outside of the Americas. By 1558, snuff was on sale in the markets of Lisbon where Jean Nicot of Nimes, the French ambassador to Portugal, sent to to negotiate a marriage between the young King of Portugal and the French King's daughter, sent some seeds to Catherine de Médicis in 1559 and gave the plant its scientific genus name, *Nicotiana*.--Specifically *Nicotiana tobacum*. Within a few years they also had become addicted to snuff.

Of much more early importance was pipe smoking. Sir Walter Raleigh began the popularization of pipe smoking in Great Britain in 1586, and the cultivation and consumption of tobacco spread with each voyage of discovery from Europe. King James, came down from Scotland in 1603. His entire reign was taken up with a quarrel over money and power. When it came to an attack on tobacco, he had no better weapons at hand than a propaganda campaign. His first work of propaganda dates from within a few months of his accession. Writing in Latin, he laments how England was fallen from her old glory. Formerly, her sons had been brave in war and obedient in peace to the authorities. Now, the clergy were grown lax, the nobility sunk in idleness, and the people as a whole suffering a steep moral decline. The only answer was a reform from above, which would begin by abolishing the the all-corrupting weed.

Since these arguments had no observable effect, James made his next attempt in English. Published anonymously in 1604 - it was only publicly acknowledged in 1616 - *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* repeats but also elaborates the earlier pamphlet. Smoking is condemned as a new custom learned from barbarians. Its medical benefits are denied. Rather, it is, in the strongest terms alleged to be harmful: it is addictive; it

*oftentimes in the inward parts of men, soiling and infecting them, with an unctuous and oily Soote as hath bene found in some great Tobacco takers, that after their death were opened.*

Finally, comes the famous peroration to the English people:

*Have you not reason then to bee ashamed, and to forbear this filthie noveltie, so basely grounded, so foolishly received and so grossly mistaken in the right use thereof? In your abuse thereof sinning against God, harming yourselves in person and in goods, and taking also thereby the markes and notes of vanitie upon you: by the custome thereof making your selves to be wondered at by all forraine civil Nations, and by all strangers that come among you, to be scorned and condemned. A custome lothsome to the eye, hateful to the Nose, harmefull to the braine, dangerous to the Lungs, and the blacke stinking fume thereof, neere resembling the horrible Stigian smoke of the pit that is bottomeless.*

(C. Everett Koop should be so articulate!)

In the 17th century, King Philip III establishes Seville as tobacco center of the world. Attempting to prevent a tobacco glut, Philip requires all tobacco grown in the Spanish New World to be shipped to a central location, Seville. Seville becomes the world center for the production of cigars. European cigarette use begins here, as beggars patch together tobacco from used cigars, and roll them in paper(papeletes).

We traditionally teach our U.S. History students about the importance of 1619 in Virginia's colonial development: House of Burgesses; arrival of the first blacks, destined to be slaves, and the first shipment of wives for settlers. Future husbands had to pay for his prospective mate's passage 120 lbs. of tobacco. By 1621 the price



had risen to 150 pounds of tobacco each.

However, with the settlement of Connecticut in the 1630s what followed soon was the expansion of cigar leaf production to that region of New England from the more southern colonies. By the middle of the century, the colony of Connecticut General Court ordered no smoking by any person under age of 21 & no smoking by adults except with physicians order.

During Charles II's reign (1660-1685), the growing of tobacco in England, except for small medicinal gardens, was forbidden so as to preserve the taxes coming in from colonial imports.

Near the end of the 17th century, smoking was banned in the British House of Commons chamber: "no member do presume to take tobacco in the gallery of the House or at a committee table"

The Eighteenth Century saw conflicting opinions on the use and distribution of tobacco--in many cases dependent on whether the authority was a user of tobacco or merely a collector of taxes. Peter the Great repealed Russian bans on smoking. Pope Benedict XIII learned to smoke and repealed bans on smoking.

General Israel Putnam, after a British campaign in Cuba during the French and Indian War, returned with three donkey-loads of Havana cigars and introduces the customers of his Connecticut brewery and tavern to cigar smoking.

But it was in the 19th Century that the cigar came to supplant the pipe and snuff as the delivery vehicle of choice.

Around 1810 a Cuban cigar-roller brought to Suffield, Connecticut to train local workers. The Craze was on!

England imported 26 pounds of cigars in 1826. The cigar becomes so popular that within four years, England was importing 250,000 pounds of cigars a year. At virtually the same time, the first organized anti-tobacco movement in US began as

adjunct to the temperance movement. Tobacco use was considered to dry out the mouth, "creating a morbid or diseased thirst" which only liquor could quench.

The Prussian Government in 1830 enacted a law that cigars , in public, be smoked in a sort of wire-mesh contraption designed to prevent sparks setting fire to ladies' "crinolines" and hoop skirts.

Our soldiers bring back from the Southwest after the Mexican War a taste for the darker, richer tobacco favored in Latin countries, leading to an explosive increase in the use of cigars. One of the most prominent advocates was U.S. Grant. A new invention, the camera, would in only a few years give us pictures of the disheveled Grant and his ever present cigar as some of the most vivid images of the Civil War. Congress passed a law during the Civil War calling for manufacturers to create cigar boxes on which IRS agents could paste excise tax stamps.

Oscar Hammerstein received patent in 1885 on a cigar rolling machine.

1890: "Tobacco" appears in the US Pharmacopoeia, an official government listing of drugs and six years later smoking was banned in the House of Representatives although chewing was still allowed

The Tennessee Supreme Court upheld a total ban on cigarettes in 1898, ruling they are "not legitimate articles of commerce, because wholly noxious and deleterious to health. Their use is always harmful." The United States' Supreme Court supported Tennessee's ban on cigarette sales in 1900. One Justice, repeating a popular notion of the day, says, "there are many [cigarettes] whose tobacco has been mixed with opium or some other drug, and whose wrapper has been saturated in a solution of arsenic."

"Tobacco" does not appear in the US Pharmacopoeia, in 1905. The removal of tobacco from the Pharmacopoeia after having been listed for 15 years was the price that had to be paid to get the support of tobacco state legislators for the Food and Drug Act of 1906. The elimination of the word tobacco automatically removed the leaf from FDA supervision.

Great Britain began the second decade of the 20th Century by allowing tobacco - growing in England for the first time in more than 250 years.

Birth of the "modern" cigarette: RJ REYNOLDS introduced CAMEL in 1913.

Smoking was banned in the Senate chamber in 1915 following the House precedent of still allowing chewing.

1915: POETRY:

Tobacco is a dirty weed. I like it.  
It satisfies no normal need. I like it.  
It makes you thin, it makes you lean,  
It takes the hair right off your bean.  
It's the worst darn stuff I've ever seen.  
I like it.  
--Graham Lee Hemminger, Penn State

Those opposed to sending cigarettes to the doughboys were accused of being traitors by General John J. Pershing: *You ask me what we need to win this war. I answer tobacco as much as bullets. Tobacco is as indispensable as the daily ration; we must have thousands of tons without delay.*

The War Department responded by buying the entire output of Bull Durham tobacco. in 1918. Bull Durham advertised, "When our boys light up, the Huns will light out."

The decade of the 20s ended with a "freedom march" of smoking debutantes/fashion models who walked down Fifth Avenue during the 1929 Easter parade dressed as Statues of Liberty and holding aloft their cigarettes as "torches of freedom."

The new President, with his ever present cigarette holder firmly in place, included tobacco in the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 that instituted crop price supports.

World War II produced a competition of sorts for the most mileage out of a tobacco prop. In my mind, the largest single supporter of the tradition of the "prop" value of tobacco, however has to be Winston Churchill. His ever-present cigar during his long career did much to add to the already present attraction of the masses to the large version of this 500 year old European addiction. Churchill's adept use of the newsreels and his untiring efforts during the war eclipsed both our Commander-in-Chief and the ever present pipe of Douglas MacArthur.

If the tradition of the "victory" cigar continues alive and well into last half of the 20th century so did seemingly endless controversy. From "I Love Lucy" sponsored by Philip Morris to the Marlboro Cowboy it appeared that we were destined to carry the tobacco wars forever forward.

1955: TV: CBS' *See It Now* aired the first TV show linking cigarette smoking with lung cancer and other diseases. For the first time on TV, Edward R. Murrow is not seen smoking.

While not in the strident tones of King James, Pope Pius XII suggested in 1957 that the Jesuit order give up smoking. There were only 33,000 Jesuits in the world at that point, so the industry was not worried about losing this handful of smokers. They were worried that the Pope or other church leaders might ask, as a magazine headline once put it, "When are Cigs a Sin?"

The Tobacco Institute was formed within the year.

On Saturday morning, January 11, 1964, at 9 AM, 200 reporters were physically locked into the State Department's auditorium to hear a two hour briefing by surgeon general Dr. Luther L. Terry and a panel of experts. The top-secret measures were felt necessary because of the bold and closely-guarded conclusion reached in the brown paperback book they received titled *Smoking and Health*. The report's astounding verdict: smoking causes cancer. The report stated that Cigarette smoking was a health hazard of sufficient importance in the United States to warrant appropriate remedial action.



At the time, 46% of all Americans smoked; smoking was accepted in offices, airplanes and elevators. Within 3 months of Terry's report, cigarette consumption had dropped 20%, but was soon back to *normal*.

President Nixon signed a measure banning cigarette advertising on radio and television, to take effect after Jan. 1, 1971. Not at all coincidentally, the same year cigarette manufacturers agree to put health warnings on advertisements, RJR sponsorship of NASCAR's Winston Cup Series and the Virginia Slims' Tennis tour began.

#### Surgeon General's Report: The Health Consequences of Smoking--1973

Found cigar and pipe smokers' health risks to be less than cigarette smokers, but more than nonsmokers.

The Civil Aeronautics Board in 1973 required all airlines to create nonsmoking sections. This was the first federal restriction on smoking in public places. The following year, Joe Camel was first used in a poster for a French ad campaign for Camel cigarettes.

In 1975 the U. S. military stopped the distribution of free cigarettes in rations.

An entertainment milestone of some note occurred in the Superman II movie that began the 1980s. Lois Lane lit up. In fifty years of comic book appearances, Lois Lane never smoked. For a reported payment of \$42,000, the company purchased 22 exposures of the Marlboro logo in the movie and Lois Lane got a Marlboro pack on her desk and began chain smoking Marlboro Lights. At one point in the film, a character is tossed into a van with a large Marlboro sign on its side, and in the climactic scene our super hero battles amid a maze of Marlboro billboards before zooming off in triumph, leaving in his wake a solitary taxi with a Marlboro sign on top.

The New York State Journal of Medicine followed the release of the film with an article titled "Superman and the Marlboro Woman: The Lungs of Lois Lane."

June 6, 1983 Newsweek ran a 4 page article, "Showdown on Smoking" on the nonsmokers' rights movement. Issues before & after carried 7-10 pages of cigarette ads. The June 6 issue carried none. Estimated loss of revenue as a result of publishing the article: \$1 million.

A quick 1990s survey:

1991: Johns Hopkins University announced that it would sell all its \$5.3 million worth of tobacco stock. (LB)

1992: First issue of *Cigar Aficionado*

1993: Incoming President Bill Clinton banned smoking in the White House.

1993: US POST OFFICE banned smoking in its facilities.

1994: McDonald's eliminated smoking in all of its company owned restaurants.

You, no doubt, remember that very strange scene in April of 1994 with seven tobacco company executives giving testimony in Congressional hearings.

The officers who appeared before Henry Waxman's (D-CA) Committee beginning April 14, 1994, were:

William Campbell, CEO, Philip Morris

James Johnston, CEO, RJR Tobacco Co

Joseph Taddeo, President, U.S. Tobacco Co

Andrew Tisch, CEO, Lorillard Tobacco

Thomas Sandefur, CEO, Brown & Williamson Tobacco Co

Ed Horrigan, CEO, Liggett Group

Donald Johnston, CEO, American Tobacco Co.

The following is the most famous exchange (April 15, 1994):

REP. WYDEN: Let me ask you first, and I'd like to just go down the row, whether each of you believes that nicotine is not addictive. I've heard virtually all of you touch on it--yes or no, do you believe nicotine is not addictive?

WILLIAM I. CAMPBELL (Philip Morris): I believe that nicotine is not addictive, yes.

REP. WYDEN: Mr. Johnston...

JAMES JOHNSTON (RJReynolds): Uh, Congressman, cigarettes and nicotine clearly do not meet the classic definition of addiction. There is no intoxication--

REP. WYDEN: We'll take that as a no. And again, time is short, if you can just, I think each of you believe nicotine is not addictive, I'd just like to have this for the record.

JOSEPH TADDEO (US Tobacco): "I don't believe that nicotine or our products are addictive."

ANDREW TISCH (P Lorillard): I believe that nicotine is not addictive.

EDWARD HERRIGAN (Liggett Group): I believe that nicotine is not addictive.

THOMAS SANDEFUR (Brown & Williamson): I believe that nicotine is not addictive.

DONALD JOHNSTON (American Tobacco Co.): And I too believe that nicotine is not addictive.

1995 The NY Times reported that CBS had killed broadcast of a *60 Minutes* interview with a former tobacco executive (soon revealed as Jeffrey Wigand). Ex-B&W research executive Jeffrey Wigand then testified to federal and state prosecutors in Pascagoula, Miss.

In February of 1996 CBS aired the Wigand Interview on *60 Minutes*. Wigand claimed B&W Chief Sandefur lied when he told the House committee he believed nicotine was not addictive.

CALIFORNIA Became the first state in the nation to ban smoking in bars effective Jan. 1, 1998. In April, 39,000 formerly super-secret tobacco documents were posted on the House Commerce committee's web site.

AH, yes the tortured saga of our complex relationship continues. I had intended to conclude with the saga of Mr. Clinton and his interesting approach to smoking--inhalation, and flavorful cigars, but given the results of this week's election I run the risk of flirting with politics--so instead I leave you with one of the best wits of the 20th century--cigar in hand--I hasten to add-- Groucho Marx and that classic bit from "You Bet Your Life", a live 1950s quiz show.

GROUCHO: "And you, M'am, tell us about yourself."

CONTESTANT: "Well, I'm a busy homemaker and mother and I love to bake."

GROUCHO: "That's great. And how many kids do you have?"

CONTESTANT: "I have eight wonderful, beautiful children."

GROUCHO: "Eight kids! Amazing. How did that happen?"

CONTESTANT: "Well I love my husband very much."

GROUCHO: "Lady. I love my cigar, but I take it out of my mouth every  
once in a while."

To which I can only add--mmm...tastes good!