

[One in a Series]

IF SMOKING IS ESSENTIAL TO YOUR FILM, STAND UP AND TAKE THE R-RATING.

Producers of comic book movies seem to think flying saucers and cigarettes go together. Other producers appear to be convinced that any melodrama set before 2005 is a solemn opportunity to show people chain smoking.

Do you believe either one of these things? Then stand up for what you believe. Take the R-rating.

EXAMPLE #1 | *Cowboys & Aliens* was released by Universal, a studio that presumes its kid-rated movies will be smokefree. Yet Universal suspended its standard for this PG-13 Western-Scifi mashup. Reliance and Relativity provided most of the financing. Did they override Universal? Who else thought it was absolutely vital to show fourteen-year-olds a cowboy hero smoking?

EXAMPLE #2 | Last week, *The Help* (PG-13, backed by Reliance and Imagination Abu Dhabi) derailed Disney's smokefree track record. Set fifty years ago in Mississippi, *The Help* indulges in what *The Hollywood Reporter* called "ubiquitous" smoking. Whatever the Jackson Junior League might really have been up to in 1962, smoking rates among lower-income people in Mississippi today are among the nation's highest. It doesn't help that Mississippi offers film producers \$20 million a



year to make movies like *The Help* — twice as much money as the state invests in tobacco prevention.

Display your integrity. Other major studios have much worse records than Universal (Comcast) and Disney (see table). But if even the major studios that have explicit policies to discourage smoking in their youth-rated movies can't or won't consistently protect young audiences, an industrywide R-rating is the only thing that can.

If you're a producer, it's unrealistic to claim that your film with smoking is uniquely harmless. And testing your clout by insisting on smoking in a film is just plain callous.

If smoking is essential to your movie, then stand up and take an "R." If the smoking's not so important, why include it at all?



SmokeFreeMovies.ucsf.edu

Kid-rated movies with tobacco, 2011			In-theater tobacco impressions (to 8/17)
Hanna	Comcast (Focus)	PG-13	10,000,000
Larry Crowne	Comcast (Playtone)	PG-13	249,000,000
Cowboys & Aliens	Comcast (Dreamworks/Relativity/Imagine)	PG-13	174,000,000
I Am Number Four	Disney (DreamWorks)	PG-13	13,000,000
The Help	Disney (DreamWorks)	PG-13	693,000,000
Madea's Big Happy Family	Lionsgate (Tyler Perry)	PG-13	13,000,000
Water for Elephants	News Corp. (Fox 2000)	PG-13	930,000,000
X-Men: First Class	News Corp. (Marvel)	PG-13	705,000,000
Monte Carlo	News Corp. (Walden)	PG	3,000,000
Limitless	Relativity	PG-13	95,000,000
Country Strong	Sony	PG-13	39,000,000
The Green Hornet	Sony (Original)	PG-13	107,000,000
Jumping the Broom	Sony (Screen Gems)	PG-13	36,000,000
Priest	Sony (Screen Gems)	PG-13	4,000,000
The Rite	Time Warner (New Line)	PG-13	8,000,000
Unknown	Time Warner (Dark Castle)	PG-13	67,000,000
Sucker Punch	Time Warner (Legendary)	PG-13	79,000,000
Justin Bieber: Never Say Never	Viacom (MTV Films)	G	9,000,000
Rango	Viacom (Nickelodeon)	PG	909,000,000
Super 8	Viacom (Amblin)	PG-13	212,000,000
Transformers: Dark of the Moon	Viacom (di Bonaventura)	PG-13	630,000,000

Led by Viacom (1.8 billion) and News Corp. (1.6 billion), youth-rated films delivered five billion tobacco impressions to domestic theater audiences by mid-August 2011.