**Substantiation for UCSF Smokefree Movies Ad #130**

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HEADLINE:

**“Most kid-rated movies with smoking are now bio-dramas…but most smokers in bio-dramas are fake.”**

SOURCE:

Breathe California-UCSF Onscreen Tobacco Database (“OTDb”) results as reported in [*Smoking in US Top-grossing movies, 2018*](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55x9b9c1) (April 10, 2019) and the reference spreadsheet posted at <http://bit.ly/filmreport041019>.

In 2018, 42 percent (11 of 26) of top-grossing, youth-rated movies with any smoking were bio-dramas, billed as recreating actual events and depicting real people. This compares with 32 percent (10 of 31) in 2017 and 21 percent (5 of 24) in 2016. The average since 2002 has been eleven percent (82 of 718 films).

[*Smoking in US Top-grossing movies, 2018*](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55x9b9c1) reports that 73 percent of all characters shown smoking in bio-dramas lack a biographical foundation. These include 69 percent of characters depicted using tobacco in youth-rated (G/PG/PG-13) bio-dramas (360 smokers of 519 depicted).

LEAD:

**"Studios have reduced the number of kid-rated movies with smoking by 57% since 2002. Yet these films hold just as many tobacco incidents as ever. How come? Hollywood studios are packing more tobacco incidents and invented smokers into the latest PG-13 biographical dramas."**

SOURCES:

Breathe California-UCSF Onscreen Tobacco Database (“OTDb”) results as reported in [*Smoking in US Top-grossing movies, 2018*](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55x9b9c1) (April 10, 2019):

The number of youth-rated films with smoking has declined from sixty-two in 2002 to twenty-six in 2018. The number of tobacco incidents barely shifted between the start and end of the survey period (1,246 in 2002; 1,241 in 2018).

Meanwhile, PG-13 bio-dramas with any smoking have averaged 63 tobacco incidents per film, compared to 24 per purely fictional film. In 2018, 88 percent of all characters depicted smoking in youth-rated films were in bio-dramas. Bio-dramas also accounted for more than 90 percent of all tobacco incidents in youth-rated films.

TABLE: Youth-rated biographical dramas, by film company, 2002-2018

SOURCE: Reference spreadsheet posted at <http://bit.ly/filmreport041019>. OTDb is the source of the data.

TEXT:

**“Yet invented smokers, inserted in these films, have for years outnumbered biographically-based smokers by two-to-one.”**

SOURCE:

Reference spreadsheet posted at <http://bit.ly/filmreport041019>. OTDb is the source of the data. Across all ratings, from 2002 to 2018, inauthentic smokers outnumbered authentic smokers in bio-dramas by 2.7 to 1. In youth-rated bio-dramas, the ratio was 2.3 to 1.

**“About one-quarter of the fake smokers are played by credited actors, including in lead roles. The rest are background actors, hundreds of them, handed a cigarette (usually an herbal prop) and directed to smoke.”**

SOURCES:

Breathe California-UCSF Onscreen Tobacco Database (“OTDb”) results as reported in [*Smoking in US Top-grossing movies, 2018*](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55x9b9c1) (April 10, 2019):

Leads and other credited actors accounted for 23 percent (196 of 865) of inauthentic smokers in bio-dramas from 2002 to 2018. The rest were background (uncredited) actors (669 of 865). According to SAG-AFTRA contract documents referenced in the Breathe California-UCSF report (2018), background actors are given a $14 per day bonus for “working in smoke,” including prop cigarettes.

There are numerous media references to the substitution of herbal prop cigarettes for tobacco products in film shoots. For example: <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/features/smoking-in-films-light-up-camera-action-9059744.html>.

**“Since 2002, toxic tobacco incidents in PG-13 fictional films fell by 82 percent. PG-13 bio-dramas have made up all the difference.”**

SOURCE:

Breathe California-UCSF Onscreen Tobacco Database (“OTDb”) results as reported in [*Smoking in US Top-grossing movies, 2018*](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55x9b9c1) (April 10, 2019):

Absent bio-dramas, total PG-13 tobacco incidents would have declined by 81 percent (from 1,246 to 222) from 2002 and 2018. Bio-dramas accounted for 1,019 tobacco incidents in 2018, which prevented any substantial change in the incident count from 2002.

**“While fictional PG-13 films delivered 94 percent fewer tobacco exposures to moviegoers, bio-dramas pumped out six times more.”**

SOURCE:

Breathe California-UCSF Onscreen Tobacco Database (“OTDb”) results as reported in [*Smoking in US Top-grossing movies, 2018*](https://escholarship.org/uc/item/55x9b9c1) (April 10, 2019):

In-theater audience exposure to tobacco imagery is measured in impressions (incidents X paid admissions). Impressions delivered by PG-13 purely fictional films declined from 16.3 billion to 1 billion between 2002 and 2018 (94%). At the same time, impressions delivered by PG-13 bio-dramas increased from 1.3 billion to 9.2 billion (587%). With the bio-dramas, total impressions declined by 43 percent, about half what the decline would have been without these films.

**“Sure, the proposed R-rating for smoking offers a commonsense exception for depictions of historical people who actually smoked.”**

SOURCE:

See Smokefree Movies: Policy Solutions at <https://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/policy-solutions/r-rate-films-tobacco>. The proposed R-rating for tobacco imagery endorsed by leading health authorities offers an exemption if the depiction of smoking “is necessary to represent the smoking of a real historical figure.” Adding inauthentic smokers lacking a biographical foundation would prevent a film from gaining this exemption.

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