

NBCUniversal

May 6, 2019

The Honorable Senator Edward J. Markey
The Honorable Senator Chris Van Hollen
The Honorable Senator Richard Blumenthal
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Markey, Van Hollen, and Blumenthal:

Thank you for your letter regarding our company's policies and practices regarding depictions of tobacco use in films and television programming. We treat the issue of youth smoking seriously, and we are pleased to provide the information below in response to your inquiry.

Universal Pictures has a policy and procedures in place that seek to eliminate depictions of tobacco use from its youth-rated films (G, PG, or PG-13), where appropriate and feasible. That policy starts with the presumption that no depictions of tobacco use should appear in any youth-rated film produced by Universal unless there is a substantial reason to do so. For example, a given incident of tobacco use may be included in a film if it is important to the film from a factual or creative standpoint, and/or would be difficult to remove. Universal also considers whether a film will be marketed to adolescents, either primarily or as part of a mixed audience, in determining whether depictions of tobacco use should appear.

Although this policy only applies to films produced by Universal Pictures, Universal also discourages depictions of tobacco use in youth-rated films that it acquires, distributes, or co-produces and will exert its influence, where possible, to minimize the occurrence of smoking incidents in them.

We also participate in the well-known film ratings system operated by the Classification and Rating Administration (CARA) of the Motion Picture Association of America, which gives parents information about the content of films, to help guide viewing decisions for their children (available at <http://www.filmratings.com>). CARA considers smoking as a factor in its film ratings process.

NBCUniversal also has internal policies and procedures for evaluating tobacco depictions in television programming. As a general matter, we aim to restrict portrayals of tobacco to situations necessary to the plot and/or character delineation. These determinations are made on a case-by-case basis by our NBC Program Standards executives working closely with our creative partners. Should such tobacco depictions occur, we also aim to ensure that tobacco use is not glamorized.

In addition, NBCUniversal makes no product placement, tie-in, or other promotional arrangements with tobacco companies for any of its films or television content, regardless of rating. No NBCUniversal production may receive consideration of any kind in exchange for depicting tobacco or tobacco-related signage or paraphernalia in a film or television show.

We appreciate you reaching out to share your views and to learn more about our policies and practices. Please know that we remain committed to reducing depictions of tobacco smoking in film and TV content rated for a youth audience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Phil Tahtakran', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Phil Tahtakran
Head of Federal Government Affairs
NBCUniversal

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