

Congress of the United States
began and held at the City of New York, on
Wednesday the fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine

"The tobacco companies say that they are like any other legitimate business, but they are not. What other business has to defend itself by arguing that its products are 'legal'? Like the Soviet government, the cigarette companies suffer from a lack of legitimacy. And like the Soviets, they do everything within their power to stifle criticism. The cigarette companies have a siege mentality and will go to great lengths to defend their deadly products. Everyone within their growing economic empire must follow the pro-cigarette line or suffer the consequences. Fancy talk about the glory of the First Amendment is strictly for outside consumption."

Though Philip Morris claims to be strongly supportive of the American tradition of freedom of speech and free expression, they have in fact deliberately undermined such freedoms repeatedly to serve their corporate interests. The Bill of Rights Tour is merely a cynical attempt to purchase positive name recognition; their real actions belie their claimed love of individual rights. Here are a few examples illustrating Philip Morris' contempt for American freedom:

- Philip Morris suppressed, and attempted to eliminate entirely, a 1976 documentary called *Death in the West*. The film documents the fatal lung diseases of six cowboys who had been addicted smokers. After it was first shown in Great Britain (where free speech is not protected by a Bill of Rights), Philip Morris sued the television station which broadcast it, and had its distribution barred by court order. The filmmakers were even prohibited from speaking publicly about the film. When producers of CBS News program "60 Minutes" attempted to buy a copy for American viewing, they were similarly barred. PM attempted to destroy all copies of the film; only because a copy was smuggled to the United States does it exist at all today. [Adam Hochschild, "Shoot-Out in Marlboro Country," *Mother Jones*, January 1979, p. 3; Jack Anderson, "Grim Film," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 6, 1982.]
- Philip Morris attempted to suppress free expression of "Doctors Ought to Care" (DOC), a Texas activist group. DOC had developed a "Killer Light" t-shirt, in response to a Miller Brewing campaign. The t-shirts read, "Killer Lite. We're pushing a DRUG!", in a satire of PM's "Miller Lite. We're having a party" shirts. The company attempted to get a restraining order to prevent DOC from selling the shirts. When this failed, PM sued DOC, threatening to destroy the group if it refused to withdraw the shirts. Miller subsequently settled out of court. [Julie Mason, "Doctors rip Miller despite legal threat," *Houston Chronicle*, September 2, 1989; "Miller Brewing Co. settles suit against doctors' group that mocked ad campaign," *Wall Street Journal*, March 8, 1990, p. B8.]
- Philip Morris threatened diver Greg Louganis' Olympic future to keep him from speaking out against tobacco. As he explained to Congress: "In early 1984, I was approached by the [American] Cancer Society to take over the chairmanship of their annual Great American Smoke-Out program. My manager, Jim Babbitt, thought this was a good idea, but as soon as the officials of the Mission Viejo aquatic facility heard about it, thumbs were turned down. You might wonder why they were not too happy...Well, with amateur athletics underfunded in this country, we accept whatever money

we can get. Unfortunately in this case, Mission Viejo is owned by Philip Morris. Jim was told in a round-about way that if I agreed to take on the Great American Smoke-Out that I might have to give up my use of the training facilities because it could prove embarrassing to Philip Morris. As a matter of fact, they asked that I keep a low profile on any activities on behalf of the American Cancer Society because of similar concerns on their part. With the Olympics but a few months away, I had little choice but to turn down chairmanship of the Great American Smoke-Out and instead concentrate on my training." [Congressional testimony of Greg Louganis, July 18, 1986]

"Babbitt said the threat of Louganis's being sent away from Mission Viejo, away from his coach, was the sports world's equivalent of 'I'll kill your mother.' And it didn't stop there. Two of the public relations people told Babbitt that if Louganis accepted the Cancer Society invitation, they too would be fired. 'Heads would roll,' Babbitt says." [Larry White, *Merchants of Death*. New York: Beech Tree Books, 1988, p. 204.]

- Philip Morris' advertising stranglehold on the magazine industry has censored reporting on the health hazards of tobacco, especially in women's magazines. *Harper's Bazaar*, for example, rejected a science writer's article entitled "Protect your Man from Cancer" though it was specifically commissioned and already paid for. The editor explained that "the article focused too much on tobacco" and "the magazine is running three full page, color ads [for tobacco] this month."

Cosmopolitan publisher Helen Gurley Brown frankly acknowledged the need to subordinate editorial decisions to the dictates of the tobacco industry: "Having come from the advertising world myself, I think, 'Who needs somebody you're paying millions of dollars to come back and bite you on the ankle?'" [Ken Warner, *Selling Smoke*. Washington: APHA, 1986, p. 74.]

- When MerryAnn Parks, executive director of the American Lung Association of Mid-New York and State Regent of the NY State Organization of Daughters of the American Revolution, was telephoned by a Philip Morris representative to suggest that the DAR sponsor the Bill of Rights appearance in Albany, NY, she was treated to a first-hand example of their respect for alternative views. She expressed some resistance to the firm's proposal; when the PM employee asked her why, she explained her position with the Lung Association. PM abruptly hung up. [Russell Sciandra, *SCARCNet Strategy Exchange*, September 19, 1990.]

The DOC Insider Guide to Philip Morris

- Philip Morris, makers of Marlboro, Virginia Slims, Benson and Hedges and Lite Beer, is America's largest cigarette company.
- Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of cancer and heart disease and takes the lives of 435,000 Americans every year (5,000 in Houston alone). One out of every 5 cigarettes smoked in America is a Marlboro.
- The number one preventable cause of death in the United States is Marlboro.
- 7 out of 10 teenagers who smoke buy Marlboro.
- 70 percent of Philip Morris' profits comes from cigarettes.
- A pack of Marlboro's costs just pennies to make but sell for more than \$2—like spending \$100 for a pound of hotdogs. We're paying for the image, not the product.
- Until the Marlboro package was redesigned in the 1950s, Marlboro were always a ladies' cigarette.
- Virginia Slims are a leading cause of small, premature, or spontaneously aborted babies.
- In addition to causing yellow teeth and zoo breath, Marlboro is among the leading causes of home and hospital fires.
- Unlike a pipe or cigar, a Marlboro cigarette contains chemical additives that will keep it burning continuously even in a gusty wind.
- A pack-a-day Marlboro habit costs a person more than \$700 a year.

Philip Morris Fun Quiz

1. How many cigarette-sponsored cultural and sports activities can you name besides the Bill of Rights tour?
2. How many cigarette ads can you clip and save in one month from reading the Houston Post and Houston Chronicle?
3. How many Marlboro signs can you count at the Astrodome?
4. How many Marlboro billboards line I-10, I-59, and I-45 within the Houston city limits?
5. Try to find a 14-year old teenager who can't buy a pack of cigarettes at a Stop 'n' Go, Circle K, or Exxon station.
6. Calculate the amount of money you'd save by putting \$2 a day in a 6% savings account for 10 years instead of using it to buy Marlboro.

For more information about how you can be part of DOC, please contact (713) 798-7729.