



Ashes to Ashes: America's Hundred-Year Cigarette War, the Public Health, and the Unabashed Triumph of Philip Morris

By Richard Kluger

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No book before this one has rendered the story of cigarettes -- mankind's most common self-destructive instrument and its most profitable consumer product -- with such sweep and enlivening detail.

Here for the first time, in a story full of the complexities and contradictions of human nature, all the strands of the historical process -- financial, social, psychological, medical, political, and legal -- are woven together in a riveting narrative. The key characters are the top corporate executives, public health investigators, and antismoking activists who have clashed ever more stridently as Americans debate whether smoking should be closely regulated as a major health menace.

We see tobacco spread rapidly from its aboriginal sources in the New World 500 years ago, as it becomes increasingly viewed by some as sinful and some as alluring, and by government as a windfall source of tax revenue. With the arrival of the cigarette in the late-nineteenth century, smoking changes from a luxury and occasional pastime to an everyday -- to some, indispensable -- habit, aided markedly by the exuberance of the tobacco huskers.

This free-enterprise success saga grows shadowed, from the middle of this century, as science begins to understand the cigarette's toxicity. Ironically the more detailed and persuasive the findings by medical investigators, the more cigarette makers prosper by seeming to modify their product with filters and reduced dosages of tar and nicotine.

We see the tobacco manufacturers come under intensifying assault as a rogue industry for knowingly and callously plying their hazardous wares while insisting that the health charges against them (a) remain unproven, and (b) are universally understood, so smokers indulge at their own risk.

Among the eye-opening disclosures here: outrageous pseudo-scientific claims made for cigarettes throughout the '30s and '40s, and the story of how the tobacco

industry and the National Cancer Institute spent millions to develop a "safer" cigarette that was never brought to market.

Dealing with an emotional subject that has generated more heat than light, this book is a dispassionate tour de force that examines the nature of the companies' culpability, the complicity of society as a whole, and the shaky moral ground claimed by smokers who are now demanding recompense

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The time is right for a comprehensive history of cigarettes in America and their effect on public health and the economy. This book, passionate yet measured, bulky but absorbing, looms as definitive. Kluger (Simple Justice) traces the rise of the cigarette to the onset of mass production in the late 19th century. He moves forward with cross-cutting stories, about the barons and hucksters who developed the industry, the slow rise of medical and civic concern over smoking and the industry's increasingly obfuscatory and combative stance. Kluger has harsh words for government regulators, long too timid to take on a powerful industry. And while he ultimately indicts industry leader Philip Morris, his narrative suggests that the company, which has moved overseas and also diversified into the food business, has been managed with supreme savvy. Kluger concludes with an innovative policy remedy: because the tobacco companies will inevitably lose big in court someday, why not trade a federal exemption from lawsuits for limits on advertising, higher cigarette taxes, an end to tobacco price supports and required reductions on tar and nicotine?

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From Library Journal

Two recent releases chronicle the history of the current political status of the controversial tobacco industry from different vantage points. Kluger's (The Paper, LJ 10/15/87) *Ashes to Ashes* is riveting and highly readable despite its length. From the Native American usage of tobacco through the lawsuits of the 1990s, Kluger follows the industry's agricultural and labor practices, technical advances, and marketing campaigns; he also considers research on tobacco's deleterious health effects and the tobacco control movement. Significant personalities and events such as the invention of the cigarette-rolling machine are featured. An extensive bibliography is provided, and a lengthy list of the Phillip Morris executives (and ex-executives!) are interviewed. Suitable for readers of high school age on up, this book belongs in every library. Much more scholarly, *The Cigarette Papers* focuses more on one company?Brown & Williamson?and one issue?health effects. In 1994, Glantz received an anonymous package containing thousands of pages of internal documents from Brown & Williamson. The author's analysis of these indicate that, public statements to the contrary, the company did indeed know about the health and safety effects of their products and actively sought to suppress the information. The documents, made available by the University of California via the Internet (<http://www.library.ucsf.edu/tobacco>), are quoted extensively. Also included is a statement by Brown & Williamson in response to the 1995 publication of some of these data in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. This work is extremely thorough and at times makes for tedious reading. Recommended for academic and large public libraries.?Eris Weaver, Marin Inst. for the Prevention of Alcohol & Other Drug Problems, Rohnert, Cal.

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From the Inside Flap

No book before this one has rendered the story of cigarettes -- mankind's most common self-destructive instrument and its most profitable consumer product -- with such sweep and enlivening detail. Here for the first time, in a story full of the complexities and contradictions of human nature, all the strands of the historical process -- financial, social, psychological, medical, political, and legal -- are woven together in a riveting narrative. The key characters are the top corporate executives, public health investigators, and antismoking activists who have clashed ever more stridently as Americans debate whether smoking should be closely regulated as a major health menace.

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Users Review

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Madeline Pastrana:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to find information. The information will make you to definitely understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information better to share. You can find a lot of recommendations to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You can observe that now, a lot of publisher which print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended for you is Ashes to Ashes: America's Hundred-Year Cigarette War, the Public Health, and the Unabashed Triumph of Philip Morris this guide consist a lot of the information from the condition of this world now. This particular book was represented how do the world has grown up. The words styles that writer use for explain it is easy to understand. Often the writer made some investigation when he makes this book. This is why this book suited all of you.

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