

IX. CONCLUSIONS

In August 1997, Geoffrey C. Bible, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Philip Morris Companies, answered questions under oath as part of a legal proceeding with the State of Florida.⁶ Ron Motley represented the Florida Attorneys General office. Motley asked Bible if he recalled describing antitobacco advocates as the Germans and bad guys in World War II. Bible responded, “No, I never said that.”

Motley asked Bible if he did not then compare the cigarette industry as the allies and the antitobacco public health advocates as Germans. Bible responded, “No, I don’t remember saying that at all.”

Motley asked Bible if he recalled assuring the 2,000 or so Philip Morris employees that Philip Morris would eventually win over the public health advocates in the cigarette battle. Bible answered, “I don’t recall saying ‘the public health advocates.’ I could have -- I don’t remember saying that. But I could imagine myself having said that we would win the battle.”

Motley followed up by asking, “Win the battle. And the battle is between the cigarette industry and the public health community?” Bible, “No, I think I would say those people who are antitobacco generally.”

Motley, “Well, that would include the Surgeon General of the United States?” Bible, “Could, hm-hm.”

Motley turned his questioning to the issue of advertising and promotion. “In markets where Marlboro Reds’ share of young adult smokers has declined, share of starters was also down. Thus the ability to attract new smokers and develop them into a young adult franchise is a key to brand development. Does that indicate to you, sir, that at least the marketing department was discussing ways to get people to start smoking?” Bible, “No. I can be really frank about this. What that means is that to the extent that people decide to start smoking, we want them to smoke our brand. So our ability to have the new smoker choose our brand versus a competitor’s brand is what that’s referring to.”

Motley, “Well, how do you get a nonsmoker to start smoking your brand? By advertising?” Bible, “We don’t. But they need to have a certain awareness that the brand exists.”

Motley, “How do you get that awareness? You do that by advertising, correct?” Bible, “Well, yes, advertising and sponsorship.”

Motley, “Now, are you aware that a Philip Morris marketing five-year plan in 1983 calls children ages 15 to 19 the primary source of new smokers and sets forth a plan to exploit smoking menthol brands among young people through means such as, quote, ‘increased distribution of menthol at youth locations?’” Bible, “What year was it again?” Motley, “1983.” Bible, “No, I’m not aware of it.”

⁶ Summary of Deposition of Geoffrey C. Bible, CEO and Chairman of the Board of Philip Morris Companies, August 21, 1997. [promotions/bible_deposition.PDF]

Motley concludes, “Sir, my last question to you is -- is very simply this. Would Philip Morris agree that a single American citizen who smoked their products for 30 or more years, a single one, has ever died of disease caused in part by smoking cigarettes?” Bible, “I think there’s a fair chance that one would have, yes. Might have.”

Motley, “How about a thousand?” Bible, “Might have.”

Motley, “A hundred thousand?” Bible, “Might have.”

In this report, we have demonstrated conclusively how the tobacco industry as a whole, championed by industry leader Philip Morris, implemented a strategic and systematic effort to embarrass, stigmatize negatively and diminish the effectiveness of health educators and public servants working to reduce tobacco addiction in America.

Industry representatives characterized philanthropic health activists as “radicals,” “zealot,” and “social do-gooders.” They extended the scope of their assault to prominent organizations such as INFACT, STAT and the American Cancer Society. In the latter case, Philip Morris and The Tobacco Institute openly engaged in social warfare to diminish the effectiveness of the ACS’s Great American Smokeout – an event staged by the ACS to assist those Americans who have chosen freely to try and beat their addiction to nicotine.

Philip Morris Chairman and CEO, Geoffrey Bible, testified he began smoking at 14 years of age. This would have been in the early 1950s. While over a half century has passed, little has changed. Today, most smokers become addicted to tobacco products while in their early teens. As admitted by Bible, advertising and promotional events are key to furthering the imagery of tobacco brands. The documents featured in this report provide overwhelming evidence that the industry continues to rely on subliminal marketing messages designed to leave a lasting impression on America’s youth. As stated eloquently by Elizabeth Butson in her *Fountain of Youth* presentation, “Smart marketers, therefore, are tapping the youth market in order to establish buying habits and brand loyalties which will be carried forward into adult years.”

Smart marketers from the tobacco industry have infiltrated nearly all the major social institutions in Texas; corrupted the political process; and exploited the cherished symbols of American society, such as freedom, integrity, truth and democracy. CEO Bible notes accurately that, “the tobacco industry is a – is a large industry, [having a] huge economic impact in this country. Lots of very vital interests, like tobacco growers and retailers, employees.”

We dedicate this report not to the thousands, but the millions of Americans, who in most cases tragically suffered extended and painful illness, cancers, and ultimately, premature death as they gave their lives to further the economic success of the tobacco companies and industry affiliates. The story of this human suffering, not just from the victims of tobacco, but their families, friends and loved ones remains untold.
