

# PROFILE

An Infoletter of the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc.

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## MGM, Fox, Warner Bros. Say NO to Tobacco Placement

### A Special Message

from Brian Dyak, President and CEO

To the Creators:

Smoking tobacco is not just a bad habit; it is one that can kill you. The entertainment industry has sometimes been blamed for contributing to smoking by "glamorizing" the habit, but as I have found through my work as Executive Producer of the *PRISM Awards*, many original productions actually make an effort to realistically portray the consequences of smoking. And as illustrated in this issue of *Profile*, production companies and studios have broken their bad habit of tobacco product placement, and are now instating official product placement policies to make sure they won't give into the urge to do so. The industry is moving forward, and members of the creative community have realized that we have other options for creating compelling, provocative entertainment. *Accurate depiction yields powerful entertainment*. Thank you for entertaining us so well.

For the past year, EIC's Creative Professional Network has been hard at work through its committee to address tobacco's role on television and in feature films. Chaired by **Kathy Findling, VP Production Resources for MGM**, the Product Placement Tobacco Advisory Committee's mission is to advise entertainment industry members and production companies on issues related to the placement of tobacco products in entertainment productions, and provide assistance in engaging our peers in the industry related to the controversy over perceived continued paid placement of these products. Committee members from the entertainment industry include **Josh Ravetch (New Line)**, **Tracey Hainsworth (Miramax)**, **Susan Safier (Fox)**, **Musette Buckley (Warner Bros.)**, **Melissa Robinson (Paramount)** and **Tony Grana (Universal)**.

At the time of the committee's formation last year, only two studios had a written policy regarding tobacco product placement, though more had unofficial verbal policies. Contrary to popular belief, however, it was also revealed through committee meetings that the practice of tobacco product placement has not taken place in the entertainment industry for years.

**Eric Dalquist, Sr.**, the current elected **President of the Entertainment Resources and Marketing Association (ERMA)**, which represents product placement executives and agents, is also a member of the EIC committee. **Larry Deutchman**, EIC's **Sr. VP of Marketing and Industry Relations**, has spoken at an ERMA meeting about the role the association can play in working toward the Product Placement Tobacco Advisory Committee's goal.

One of the two production companies that has had tobacco product placement policies in place for some time is **MGM**. Using MGM's written policy as a basic template, EIC drafted revised guidelines that strengthened the policy, and made it more comprehensive. MGM adopted the new policy, which became the model for pursuing similar written guidelines at other studios. **Warner Bros.** and **20th Century Fox** have since adopted similar policies proposed by the EIC committee, and it is expected that others will follow in the near future.

EIC has taken its tobacco product placement initiative further by drafting a parallel policy for studio marketing departments' application to marketing and promotional materials. With continued cooperation from studios and production companies, EIC hopes to snuff out the hazy public misconception that onscreen smoking is the result of tobacco companies contributing to film and television production budgets.

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## Ananda Lewis & Christy Turlington Honored on Capitol Hill with Barbara Eden, Special Guest



Special guest Barbara Eden presented host Ananda Lewis with her *PRISM Award* at the Capitol Hill Premiere.

MTV personality **Ananda Lewis** hosted the **6th Annual PRISM Awards** Premiere on Capitol Hill. Her *Ananda Lewis Show* received the **6th Annual PRISM Award** in the TV Talk Show Series Episode category for its episode "Clearing the Air: **Christy Turlington** Talks About Smoking." The *PRISM*-recognized episode examines the health effects of smoking on women, with support from model and anti-smoking advocate Turlington.

Lewis, who was not available for the May taping of the **6th Annual PRISM Awards**, was surprised when Special Guest **Barbara Eden** presented her with a *PRISM* trophy at the Capitol Hill event. Lewis accepted graciously, expressing her belief in the importance of accurate depictions in entertainment, and entertainment creators' responsibility to young audiences: "Long before TV ever became an option, I was doing youth activism for eight years. In that time, I had the privilege of seeing first hand how the entertainment industry affects youth. The *PRISM Awards* proves that the industry does care, and handles its ability to educate audiences by integrating realistic portrayals in entertainment productions."

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## EIC Focuses on Tobacco

EIC will soon be releasing its new, original findings from an audience survey on the impact of tobacco products in entertainment productions. The study, crafted by EIC and conducted by Internet-based E-Poll presented viewers with different versions of the same film clip, the only difference among them being that the characters in some clips smoked, and in others did not. The experiment also tested the audience's

correlation between age and smoking.

The study's findings will surprise most, as the experiments often lead to conclusions that contradict traditional beliefs about onscreen smoking. EIC will release the new findings in a national media rollout this fall. A full report on the study, titled *Focus on...Tobacco*, is currently available through EIC, and can also be found online at [www.eiconline.org](http://www.eiconline.org).

## "What are you going to do? Charge me with smoking?"

The words above are uttered by Catherine Tramell in *Basic Instinct*, probably the best known of Joe Eszterhas' creations. Tramell, played by Sharon Stone, is remembered for her ability to adroitly use sexuality as a weapon. In the film, part of Tramell's sexual allure (especially to Michael Douglas' Detective Nick Carran) is her seductive use of cigarette smoke.

Joe Eszterhas was once the highest-paid and one of the most publicly recognizable screenwriters in the history of motion pictures. Among his accomplishments are *Basic Instinct*, *Flashdance*, *Jagged Edge* and *Showgirls*. His films are known for provocative and often controversial storylines. Likewise, the fictional characters he creates are some of the most complex ones to ever shine on the silver screen, and espouse highly quotable dialogue.

"Killing isn't like smoking...you can't quit," another pointed piece of dialogue from *Basic Instinct*, reflects Eszterhas' ironic wordplay, but hardly his first-hand knowledge of the power of addiction. At the time he wrote *Basic Instinct*, and since the age of 12, Eszterhas was a smoker.

Maybe killing isn't like smoking, but is smoking like killing? According to Eszterhas, when it comes to smoking on screen, it is. Eszterhas shocked the world recently when he issued a press release from his home in Cleveland stating that:

"Smoking, I once believed, was every person's right...Remembering all this, I find it hard to forgive myself. I have been an accomplice to the murders of untold numbers of human beings. Eighteen months ago I was diagnosed with throat cancer, the result of a lifetime of smoking. I am alive but maimed.

"I don't think smoking is every person's right anymore. I think smoking should be as illegal as heroin...I'm desperate to see my four boys grow up. I want to do everything I can to undo the damage I have done with my own big-screen words and images."

Eszterhas continued on that "My hands are bloody; so are Hollywood's. My cancer has caused me to attempt to cleanse mine. I don't wish my fate upon anyone in Hollywood, but I beg that Hollywood stop imposing it upon millions of others."

EIC wishes Eszterhas a full recovery so that he can indeed see his boys grow up. While it is commendable that he has reflected on his past creative choices and elected to use his craft and connections to make a difference, epiphany should never have so steep a price.

Core principles of EIC suggest that the entertainment industry is one small piece of the societal puzzle. Smoking and addiction are complex, multifaceted issues that can be addressed by the creative community through numerous perspectives. Seeking creative alternatives is part of the process of making a film or TV show.

Certainly, the realities currently being faced by Joe Eszterhas have provided an opportunity for him to reassess his creative intent regarding smoking on screen. We trust in the creative community's integrity to make their own creative choices about tobacco use and addiction on-screen in the best interests of audiences, while remaining true to their visions.

EIC's **Let's Clear the Air** program was created to partner with entertainment companies to spotlight their potential influence on audience perceptions through the depiction of tobacco and related lifestyles in entertainment products.



The program addresses the accurate portrayal of tobacco use in entertainment media; the reinforcement of media depiction activities through community support efforts; serves as a media resource to other tobacco campaigns; and provides scientific expertise on tobacco and nicotine addiction.

"Behaviors associated with tobacco use are very personal," said Brian Dyak, EIC President and CEO. "The decision to smoke rests with the individual. The bottom line is that the entertainment industry can empower youth not to risk tobacco use, and can empower those who desire smoke-free environments."

For additional information regarding EIC's tobacco initiative, please contact Larry Deutchman at: v. (818) 955-6845 f. (818) 955-6870 email: ldeutch@eiconline.org

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## Hollywood: Hooking Audiences Without Cigarettes

Larry Deutchman, EIC's Sr. VP of Marketing and Industry Relations will once again represent the entertainment industry at the 2002 National Conference on Tobacco and Health in New Orleans. The conference will feature a number of leading national health and social issues-oriented associations and organizations, some of which have in the past alluded to the entertainment industry's irresponsible representation of smoking in feature films and on television.

In order to dispel such myths, the many different reasons that tobacco products reach theatres and home televisions in productions were noted, including the fact that none of these reasons is the paid placement of tobacco products by tobacco companies. Additionally, Deutchman spoke and responded to media questions about the reasons that smoking is seen on screen, and to discuss ways that "Hollywood" can become a part of the solution to the tobacco problem, rather than part of the problem.

"There are many conspiracy theorists out there," said Deutchman. "They assume, incorrectly,

that if there's smoking or a brand of cigarettes shown in a movie or TV show, somebody got paid for it. This is simply not the case. It's a creative decision, pure and simple."

Convincing evidence was given, citing examples of "responsible" entertainment productions that deglamorize smoking, and in fact encourage and support the success of such efforts through positive reinforcement rather than negative. More examples of progressive entertainment industry-based initiatives to counter smoking were provided, such as the new tobacco placement policies of **MGM**, **Warner Bros.** and **20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox**, as well as the annual **PRISM Awards™**, which recognizes outstanding accurate depictions of drug, alcohol and tobacco use and addiction in entertainment productions.



Larry Deutchman,  
Sr. VP of Marketing and  
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Encouraging the Art of Making a Difference