

[One in a Series]

# WHO PUT THE AMERICAN SPIRIT CIGARETTES IN WARNER BROS.' HE'S JUST NOT THAT INTO YOU?

**WARNER BROS. DOESN'T SAY.** As of March 4, the studio had yet to go on the record to explain repeated close-ups of American Spirits (British American Tobacco) in its PG-13 movie.

*The New York Times* and *L.A. Times* cite unnamed sources suggesting Warner Bros. overlooked the American Spirits as it unified Warner

and New Line, the film's distributor. But wouldn't the reorganization mean Warner Bros. would pay more attention to New Line's projects, not less?

Least plausible suggestion: "[S]tudio policemen not being the hippest people in the room...may have thought that American Spirit was an invented product, not an actual brand."\*

Implicit in these alibis is that Warner



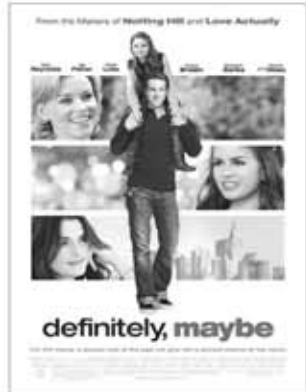
From the 1920s to 1940s, when the studios brokered cigarette ad deals for stars, almost no tobacco brands were shown on screen. From the 1970s into the 1990s, tobacco firms invested millions in product placement, often doing deals outside U.S. jurisdiction. Are studios and production companies still playing along?

Bros. would have stopped the branding if it had known about it. Why not say so? Why not simply state that this problem won't happen again because Warner Bros. won't display tobacco brands again?

Warner Bros. isn't the only studio to feature tobacco brands. Since 1998, when a legal agreement



AMERICAN SPIRITS feature in Warner Bros.' PG-13 Valentines Day release for 2009. Production companies: Flower Films (Drew Barrymore et al), Internationale Filmproduktion Blackswan (Pullach, Germany).



MARLBOROS and thinly-disguised American Spirits co-starred in Universal's PG-13 Valentines Day film in 2008. Production companies: Studio Canal, Working Title, Ringerike Erste Filmproduktion (Pullach, Germany).

with state Attorneys General barred domestic tobacco subsidiaries from paying for product placement, at least 117 U.S. films have featured tobacco brand imagery, presumably for free. In 2008, eleven films, three of them youth-rated, showed branding.

Among media corporations that so generously include tobacco brands appealing to young people: Disney, DreamWorks, GE, Lionsgate, News Corp., Sony, Time Warner, Viacom and Weinstein.

Do media companies want people to believe they don't engage in tobacco product placement?

Then they should stop making films that look just like films with tobacco product placement.



For some tobacco brand appearances since 1990, go to [smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/problem/brand\\_id](http://smokefreemovies.ucsf.edu/problem/brand_id)

**SMOKING IN MOVIES KILLS IN REAL LIFE.** Smoke Free Movie policies—the R-rating, certification of no payoffs, anti-tobacco spots, and an end to brand display—are endorsed by the World Health Organization, American Medical Association, AMA Alliance, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Heart Association, American Legacy Foundation, American Lung Association, American Public Health Association, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, L.A. County Dept. of Health Services, New York State Dept. of Health, New York State PTA, and many others. Visit our web site or write: Smoke Free Movies, UCSF School of Medicine, San Francisco, CA 94143-1390. | \*Patrick Goldstein, [http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/the\\_big\\_picture/2009/02/cigarettes-and.html](http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/the_big_picture/2009/02/cigarettes-and.html)