SKYFALL DELIVERS A BILLION TOBACCO IMPRESSIONS.
DOES THAT BEAT THE BEER THAT PAID SO MUCH?

Heineken and half a dozen other advertisers spent millions on Skyfall (MGM/Sony). “The simple fact is, without them, we couldn’t do it. It’s unfortunate but that’s how it is,” said Daniel Craig.1

But the film’s hard-selling two minutes goes uncredited. Featured, as well, in Skyfall’s TV spots, in a video on the film’s official website and in the film’s international trailer, Bérénice Marlohe’s carefully-framed cigarette would be the envy of any product placement agent.

Skyfall (PG-13/12A) has so far delivered 1.2 billion tobacco impressions to theater audiences in the US and UK alone, with an estimated 300 million delivered to children and adolescents.

That doesn’t even count the tobacco impressions from Skyfall’s TV spots or trailers, future impressions from video disks, VOD and online streaming, or the hundreds of millions of impressions now being delivered to theater audiences in emerging markets where smoking rates are climbing fastest among girls and women.

Globally, smoking by women is projected to double by 2030; women’s death rates from tobacco are already rising. So Bond might tout beer to young men, but the film’s longest-lasting commercial and health effects could be from selling young women on smoking.

There’s nothing novel about tobacco companies promoting cigarettes to women or exploiting movies to do it. Historically, scores of stars, from Claudette Colbert to Bette Davis and Joan Crawford, signed cigarette deals, brokered by their studios in exchange for advertising.

The difference today is that we know tobacco is the most lethal product sold commercially. Lung cancer kills more US women than breast cancer. One in three kids recruited to try smoking by a movie will die from it.

Do global marketers like Coke and Heineken (and film subsidy providers like the UK government) really want to be associated with youth-rated “branded entertainment” that gives a star turn to tobacco, a product that kills 5 million people a year? Can things get more cynical?

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From Oct. 2010 to Oct. 2012, youth-rated films delivered 60% of tobacco impressions to US theater audiences. 7 billion came from movies, like Skyfall, with fewer than 30 tobacco incidents each.