

# "Project SCUM" targeted gay smokers

*Mid-1990's RJ Reynolds marketing effort uncovered*

WASHINGTON, DC — The American Lung Association discovered a major tobacco marketing document among those forced to be made public by tobacco companies as part of the "1998 Master Settlement Agreement."

The RJ Reynolds marketing effort, "Subculture Urban Marketing" — specifically targeting San Francisco's gays as well as poor communities — was termed, "Project SCUM" by the tobacco company.

Asked about the document, an RJR spokesperson, David Howard, said, "We look to reach a diverse audience so we have equally diverse marketing behind each of our brands. We want to reach as wide an audience of adult smokers as possible."

**New TV ads target**

The American Legacy Foundation recently began running a new series of truth ads revealing the "Project SCUM" document.

"Our 'Project Scum' truth ad forces one of the leading tobacco manufacturers to come clean with regard to targeting gay consumers," said Dr. Cheryl Heaton, President and CEO of the American Legacy Foundation. "Project Scum" is yet another disturbing example of how the tobacco industry markets its addictive and lethal products," she added.

"Project SCUM is troubling not only because of a major tobacco company's offen-

sive characterization of the gay community, but because the industry is targeting us. LGBT smoking rates are estimated to be double that of the general population," said Bob Gordon, Vice President of the CLASH, the Coalition of Lavender Americans on Smoking & Health.

"We need to learn more about tobacco use in the LGBT community so we can fight such targeting tactics in the future," said Gordon.

The Coalition of Lavender Americans on Smoking & Health, with national public health and advocacy groups, held a day-long summit in November to address the need for more research on tobacco use in the LGBT community.

**"Project SCUM" one of "Orange Curtain" ads**

The American Legacy Foundation presented the "Orange Curtain" ads at the conference and discussed its efforts to reduce tobacco use by this community.

The American Legacy Foundation is airing the "Project SCUM" truth ad as part of its new "Orange Curtain" series of truth advertisements. The ad features a teen pulling back an orange curtain and reading a copy of the actual tobacco industry document describing "Project SCUM."

The ad will air on BET, MTV, MTV2, WB, WB SYND, and WWE. In addition, the Foundation will be placing a series of print ads in many of the major GLBT publications.

The American Legacy Foundation's truth campaign has helped produce dramatic

declines in teen smoking by revealing the tobacco industry's marketing tactics as well as the health consequences of smoking.

"This outrageous behavior towards the LGBT community is particularly disturbing because of the disproportionately high rates of smoking among this population," said Heaton.

**LGBT kids' smoking way above US average**

Estimated smoking rates for GLBT youth range from 38 percent to 59 percent, far above the approximately 30 percent national average for all adolescents. To address this disparity, the American Legacy Foundation created its \$21 million grants program to serve the GLBT community, as well as other underserved communities. Examples of the numerous grants it has already made to the GLBT community include:

- Fenway Institute, LGBT Incubation Project, Massachusetts

A grant to help bring together healthcare providers, tobacco control experts, and community members to develop successful intervention techniques for the LGBT population.

- Billy DeFrank Lesbian and Gay Community Center, Tobacco Awareness Program, California

A grant to help the center conduct a media-based counter marketing advertising campaign, supported by outreach volunteers, through small, targeted discussion groups and venue-based media.

- Mautner Project, Washington, DC

A grant to develop a national anti-smoking media and counter-marketing campaign aimed specifically at lesbian women over the age of 40.



## Attention Gay Men

Researchers at Elon University are looking for *gay men of all ages* to participate in an important survey about men's attitudes about their appearance. Participation is confidential and the *first* 100 participants to return a completed survey will receive \$15.

All participants will have a *chance to win* one of five, \$100 prizes.

To participate, send us an email at: [surveyelon@elon.edu](mailto:surveyelon@elon.edu).

Please state your willingness to participate, and your current mailing address.

Or call 336-278-6470 and leave the information on voice mail.

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