

Smoking Calms Your Baby

INT. PLUSH OFFICE - DAY

HENDERSON, the boss of a tobacco corporation, sits at his desk smoking. His assistant JONES opens the door to let in Mr JOYLESS, who carries a briefcase.

JONES

Sir, Mr Joyless is here from the Surgeon General's Office.

HENDERSON

Ah, come on in, Joyless.

Joyless approaches the desk and opens his briefcase on it.

JOYLESS

Henderson, I'll come straight to the point: the Surgeon General is unhappy with the warning labels on your cigarettes. Did you think we wouldn't notice that you've changed some of the words?

HENDERSON

What do you mean?

JOYLESS

(produces a cigarette pack from the briefcase)

Well, for example: 'Smoking While Pregnant Calms Your Baby'?

HENDERSON

Mr Joyless, I am aware of that slight misprint. There is a simple problem with our spell checker, which I assure you we are working to rectify.

JOYLESS

And how do you explain these others?

(holds up various cigarette packets)

We have, 'Smoking Manages Your Fitness'.

HENDERSON

An honest mistake. Very easy to put an M in the wrong place, I do it all the mite. I mean time.

JOYLESS

Then we have 'Smoking Can Cause Heart Ease'.

HENDERSON

Well the letters D I S are very unfashionable these days. You know these modern kids ... they don't like to be 'dissed'.

JOYLESS

(still reading)

'Smoking Is A Leading Cause of Health'?

HENDERSON

'Death' and 'health' use all the same vowels. It's very easy to mix those two up.

JOYLESS

And what about this one: 'Smoking is Fun and Makes You Seem Cooler'?

HENDERSON

Ah. Well. Yes. I don't quite know what went on with that one, to be honest.

JOYLESS

Mr Henderson, you obviously have no regard for the legalities in place. You can expect to hear from our lawyers shortly.

Joyless moves to leave.

HENDERSON

Don't be like that, Joyless. Here, have a cigarette.

(offers a pack)

You know, smoking increases your life, man.

JOYLESS

It's 'life span', dammit!
'Decreases your life span'!

Joyless turns to storm out, aiming disdain at Jones too,
who is smoking by the door. Joyless leaves.

HENDERSON

What a Roman, eh, Jones?

JONES

Sorry, sir?

HENDERSON

Moron, I meant. A moron.

They both laugh and throw cigarettes in the air like
confetti.

END