



Secret documents

A Louisiana son wrote to R.J. Reynolds: Enclosed is an unfinished package of cigarettes which my father had with him when he was admitted to the hospital with lung cancer. I realize this is of no interest to you because you are making money from these cancer sticks, but have you ever watched your own father dying slowly in a hospital bed gasping for each breath that he takes, mumbling because the cancer went to his brain and he cannot be understood, seeing things that are not there, unable to recognize members of his family and having seizures which cannot be controlled? Well, that's what this man's wife, son and daughter in law are watching now twenty-four hours a day and praying he will go away without any more suffering...

See the document: <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/orz79d00>

Two months later, R.J. Reynolds' spokesman, T.K. Cahill, responded: We are deeply sorry to hear of this unfortunate occurrence. However, as to the alleged cause of the illness which befell your father, we believe that there is a misunderstanding. This company does not regard itself as being in any way responsible. We firmly believe that cigarettes have been unfairly blamed as a cause of human disease...on the assumption that you may be interested in our side of the matter, we are enclosing a copy of a booklet entitled "The Cigarette Controversy."

See the document: <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/nrz79d00>

In response, the grieving son wrote: Received your letter...and I do offer my apologies to you and your company. My father died some 36 hours after I wrote to you, at the time of my letter my nerves were on edge and to be truthful I knew nothing could be done for him...and I guess I needed someone to take my hostilities out on. The brochure you sent me on smoking was very interesting as I have never heard both sides of the smoking controversy. I didn't mean to blame Salem cigarettes for his death... Please accept my apologies as I have accepted your views on smoking. If you could possibly send any more pros and cons on smoking I would sure appreciate it as the men at work have become interested in this matter also.

See the document: <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/mrz79d00>