



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on July 30, 2025

Fake News: USA Today Claims People Are Smoking More. Actually, It's a Liberal Thing.

With the alphabet networks' viewership down to 19 percent of the market — they controlled more than 90 percent in the mid-'70s — it's safe saying the once-mainstream media aren't exactly smokin'. The same is true of mainstream newspapers, and a recent *USA Today* article about smoking may illustrate why.

The headline, above a piece by one Andrea Javor, reads, "We know cigarettes are bad. So why are people starting to smoke again?" The problem?

They are — and they're not.

That is, cigarettes are unhealthful. There are not, however, any data showing that people are starting to smoke more again. Yet it may seem that way to liberal journalists because, well, smoking is a "liberal thing."



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Smoky Haze of Confusion

Javor is likely projecting. She [writes](#) that she's "a 46-year-old diabetic who tries to be healthy." Nonetheless, however, she has resumed smoking after 20-years going cold turkey. She wonders why, too, and rejects her friends' simple explanations. Rather, she writes, she suspects it's "a defiant exhale of the angst and authenticity I crave in an uncertain world."

Of course, it couldn't just be that the world is not what she thinks — and she's weak.

Now, Javor provides no studies backing up her claim that people "are starting to smoke again." In fact, she confesses that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports no increase. Regardless, she claims that "we're edging toward a [smoking] resurgence, at least in popular culture." This refers to tobacco representation in movies.

Yet there's no evidence for this, either. I had Grok AI search the web, and it found that 41 percent of 2023's top films contained tobacco imagery. In contrast, Grok discovered that estimates suggest this figure was

61% in 2015 (10 years ago), 45-50% in 2005 (20 years ago), and 70-80% in 1995 (30 years ago), based on trends from entertainment analyses showing a gradual decline over decades.

Of course, AI isn't infallible. But if there are data refuting the above, Javor doesn't provide them.

History of the Habit

Javor does provide a bit of the "historical canon of smoking," as she puts it. She writes:



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I grew up in the haze of the 1990s when smoking wasn't just a habit, it was a personality — raw and rebellious — butts smeared with Courtney Love's red lipstick, the thrift-store fantasy of "Reality Bites," the sultry detachment of Mia Wallace in "Pulp Fiction."

The roaring '90s, my. Well, I grew up partially in the '70s and remember pre-anti-smoking-law days. Back then, it was restaurant owners who decided if lighting up would be allowed in their establishments. Eateries generally did have smoking sections, too (freedom of association — what a radical concept).

For the record, I'm not a smoker myself. In fact, there was smoking in my home growing up, I disliked it, and, yes, it caused friction. Regardless, I can agree with an MSN commenter under Javor's article. "I do know one thing," she [wrote](#). "Back in the days when nearly half the population smoked people were a LOT nicer and kinder to each other. It was a far more tolerant place to live then." This is correlation and not causation, of course, but true.

Double Standards

The commenter also mentioned that a cigarette can calm a person down. She then asked rhetorically, "Is it really any worse than other drugs that do the same thing?"

This gets at a relevant point. The real question is not why people smoke despite knowing the risks. It is this: Why do people do anything that's bad for them?

I won't get holier than thou here. I eat too many sweets, probably (though I'm healthy), and waste too much time imbibing entertainment. Is this a way of dealing with stress or escaping from the world?

Or is it just that I like these things?

Whatever the case, those are my vices.

Apropos to this, I did meet two men in the past who, rawly honest, unabashedly said they simply liked smoking. They had no intention of quitting.

I also met a couple of fellows who decided to quit longtime tobacco habits — and did so on the spot. "Addiction" was not an issue for them.

And regarding those "other drugs," there's an irony here, one reflected in another MSN respondent's comment. An ex-tobacco user, he wrote, "Been smoking cannabis about 51 years now. It's much, much better in every way. And I refuse to end that habit."

The irony is that smoking is now often demeaned as a dirty, nasty habit of pusillanimous, pathetic souls. At the same time, many portray marijuana use as if it's some enlightened activity. It gets them high, so they hold it in high esteem. And, of course, people always want to justify their affinities.

Liberals Smoking Liberally

Javor is surely right on one matter: Hollywood just loves lighting up on screen. It's wholly unsurprising, too, that Tinseltown liberals would, while being foursquare behind anti-smoking laws, glamorize tobacco use in film. These are the same people, after all, who inveigh against Second Amendment rights but can't seem to portray enough "gun violence" in their movies.

Part of this is that their "principles," which really are preferences, end where their pocketbooks begin. But it's not just that. In reality, studies have shown that liberals are actually more vice-ridden than



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conservatives are. Liberals:

- Are six times [more likely to smoke cannabis](#).
- Are five times [more likely to use cocaine](#).
- Drink [more alcohol](#) (did you see that coming?).
- Are [more likely to smoke tobacco](#).

(They're also orders of magnitude more likely to indulge the worst vice of all: liberalism.)

Then there was the study Newsmax [cited in 2008](#). It determined that "among heavy drug users, the ratio of Democrats to Republicans was more than 8-to-1."

"Yet another survey found," Newsmax continued, "a 'direct and linear relationship' between liberalism and the use of any illicit drug."

The short explanation: What we *call* "liberalism" today (or leftism) really [is movement toward moral disorder](#). Those embracing it consequently have disordered thinking (e.g., sexual perversion is mere "preference"). This leads to unhappiness — and unhappy people are more apt to indulge self-destructive behaviors.

That Ethereal Addiction

Really, though, I suspect that it's simply human nature to have some kind of "addiction," negative *or* positive. In fact, the 1976 book *Positive Addiction*, by iconoclastic late psychologist William Glasser, propounds the idea that negative addictions can be eliminated by replacing them with positive ones. But here's what he didn't explore:

Is the only truly and thoroughly positive addiction belief in and worship of God?

This sure is relevant here, too, because "liberals" are far *less* likely than conservatives to have that addiction.



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