



Smoke Screen

Kyle Mills

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Through an inexplicable series of unwanted promotions, Trevor Barnett has become the lead spokesman for the tobacco industry just as it's on the verge of extinction. Plaintiff's attorneys have finally found the weakness they'd been searching for and filed a \$200 billion lawsuit that the industry will be unable to appeal.

America's tobacco companies react by doing the unthinkable—they close their plants and recall their product from retailer's shelves. Trevor is charged with going on national television and making the announcement: Not another cigarette will be manufactured or sold until the industry is given ironclad protection from the courts.

As the economy falters and chaos takes hold, Trevor becomes the target of enraged smokers, gun-toting cigarette smugglers, and a government that has been cut off from one of its largest sources of revenue. Soon it becomes clear that this had always been his function—to take the brunt of the backlash and shield the men in power from the maelstrom they'd created.

Abandoned by his friends, his family, and the industry his own ancestors helped build, Trevor finds an unlikely ally in a beautiful anti-tobacco lobbyist who he's secretly loved for years. Together they hatch a plan to fight back...

Smoke Screen Details

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From Reader Review Smoke Screen for online ebook

Shelley says

Trevor Barnett is the scion of an old tobacco family. Trevor is 32 and will come into a USD 10 million trust fund when he turns 60 so long as he has been in continuous employment from graduation until his 60th birthday with the cigarette company his ancestor founded. Trevor is consequently not the most motivated person in the world - at least when the novel opens.

At the beginning of SMOKE SCREEN, the tobacco industry is facing a multi-billion dollar lawsuit which could bankrupt the industry. But the industry decides to fight back, and decides to use Trevor to do it. And Trevor may or may not have his own agenda, which may or may not include the woman he loves from afar, who is a lawyer for one of the anti-smoking campaigner groups.

Trevor knows that cigarette smoking kills people, but doesn't really care, believing that smokers have the right to make their own decisions. The tobacco industry is about to lose a \$250-billion class-action lawsuit, a judgment the industry cannot appeal. Such a ruling will permanently bankrupt all of the tobacco companies, and Terra's ruthless CEO, Paul Trainer, is not about to let that happen.

After making some snappy and irreverent comments at a board meeting, Trevor suddenly and unwillingly finds himself spearheading a tobacco offensive that shakes the nation. Big Tobacco closes all its plants and recalls all its tobacco products in a clever game of chicken, facing down the courts, Congress, the White House and the antismoking lobby. The result is a catastrophic loss of tax revenue and political donations, and an angry population of smoking voters who want their cigarettes back.

****Review**** Trevor is not the most likeable characters that you could read about, nor is the Tobacco industry one that I feel sorry for. Then again, I've never smoked. I can understand the underlying message in that if Big Tobacco were ever to shut down, states like North Carolina would lost alot of money and force them to raise taxes. Not really a good idea at anytime whether it be a bad economy or not.

This is yet another departure from the Special Agent Mark Beamon series, and overall an interesting read. This book has it's humorous moments as well, like when Trevor takes on the Pit Bull for the Anti-Smoking lobby on TV. Of course, Trevor also finds a romantic interlude with Annie, who is also on the Anti-Tobacco side.

Belinda Fry says

Thought the main character was spineless and was lucky most of the time.

Olivermagnus says

This is an older book that I read on vacation and enjoyed tremendously. The novel introduces us to Trevor Barnett who has become the lead spokesman for the tobacco industry. He's a slacker and only works for the Terra tobacco company because he's heir to whatever fortune will be left once the courts are finished with them. Trevor is instantly tossed into a televised debate against Angus Scalia, the head legal counsel and spokesperson for the anti-tobacco lobby. He barely survives the debate and Terra decides to shut down its

business rather than deal with a \$250 billion dollar lawsuit. America's tobacco companies close their plants and recall their products from retailers' shelves. Trevor is charged with the task of going on national television and announcing no more cigarettes will be manufactured or sold until the industry is given ironclad protection from the courts.

Mills does a great job of describing all the complications from the loss of millions of dollars in tax money, to jobs lost in the tobacco factories as well as the farms. I won't even mention the anger of millions of smokers who are suddenly deprived of their cigarettes. The results of these actions and how Trevor deals with them will have you examining the rights and wrongs of the tobacco industry and the right of Americans to make their own choices.

I liked this book and thought the concept was witty and satirical. The characters were very engaging. It's an amusing look at both the politics and the economics side of the tobacco industry. This is not a typical Kyle Mills espionage or action novel but I think no matter what side you are in the tobacco conversation, you'll really enjoy it.

Tom Tischler says

This is an older book from 2003 by Kyle Mills and it's about the tobacco industry. Trevor Barnett is the scion of an old tobacco family. He is 31 and will come into a trust fund worth 10 million when he reaches 60 as long as he has been continuously employed from graduation until his 60th birthday by the cigarette company his grandfather founded. Trevor is not the most motivated person and at this time the tobacco industry is facing a multi billion dollar lawsuit which could bankrupt them. The industry decides to fight back and to use Trevor to do it. Even though the government and the industry appear to hate each other they have been hand and hand for years. The industry is denying nothing, they readily admit cigarettes will kill you and they will cause cancer. They close all of their plants so no one can buy cigarette and their only defense is that each individual person has the right to decide if they wish to kill themselves. I myself did this and I quit 40 years ago but it was very very hard and there are millions who know this but cannot quit which is how the industry always wins.

Sarah says

Totally fascinating look into the world of big tobacco. Loved the main character, Trevor, and the humor was awesome in this book. Trevor even had a Great Pyrenees named Nicotine, a man after my heart.

Sam says

Having not read anything by Mills, I wasn't sure what to expect from this but I was really taken by this story as it follows Trevor Barnett, a child of the tobacco industry, as he finally comes to terms with not just his family's business life but its personal life as well. And in doing so he turns the industry and America on its head and even his own aimless life gets a shot in the arm and he discovers abilities and passions he never knew he had. A rather intriguing and engrossing read.

Cheryl Gatling says

If you told me that a book where talking heads discuss the various perspectives on smoking and also the history of smoking legislation, is actually entertaining, I would have been skeptical. But Mills dramatizes a pivotal moment for the smoking industry. They are about to lose a multi-billion dollar law suit. Between repeated lawsuits, tougher warnings, and hostile public opinion, the tobacco industry is running scared. Will this latest lawsuit ruin them? Put them out of business? Will they even have jobs next year? In this tumultuous climate, a young paper-pusher who processes historic documents is suddenly picked by the boss to go on TV and debate an anti-tobacco spokesperson. Trevor Barnett is a son of an old tobacco family, and the rule of his trust fund say that he has to work for the company his whole life in order to collect. So he does. But his out-of-the-blue promotion from file clerk to Executive Vice President for Strategy is a surprise to everyone, himself included. But the boss, Paul Trainer, has a plan. What would happen if the tobacco industry completely shut down, and cigarettes were removed from the stores? An awful lot of smokers would be clamoring for their return, for one thing. The workers who were out of work would demand their jobs back. The governments who rely on tobacco tax dollars would be scared. Even the anti-smoking lobbies would be in trouble, because their funding comes from the tobacco industry. Sure, tobacco is dangerous, but shouldn't smokers be free to choose to kill themselves if they want to? Isn't that the American way? That's the plot. Can they pull it off? What will happen? Along the way, the hapless Trevor Barnett grows into his new job. He develops confidence. He begins to trust his judgment. He begins to speak the truth. He becomes something more than a tool. He even begins to get the girl. Of course he gets yelled at a lot, and shot at, too, but by the end of the book... well, that's all I can say.

Judy Green says

Stopped at page 28, no interest in these characters.

Homer Jon says

Kyle is an awesome writer. One of my all-time favorites. I have been with him since the beginning. This book is an interesting concept and a funny read. His characters are very relatable, real people.

Phyllis Sommers says

A quirky novel, with a somewhat quirky protagonist, both of which grew on me. Trevor Barnett, 35-year old heir to huge tobacco company, Terra, has never been happy with his adult life. Working in a fairly menial capacity for Terra, mainly to secure his trust fund, Trevor also participates in the anti-smoking group, Smokeless Youth, to assuage his guilt about the harmful effects of tobacco. It is at SY where he meets and

falls in love with Anne Kimball, a dedicated SY employee. As Trevor attempts to "find himself," Anne begins to see potential in using Trevor to further the SY cause. She soon takes the job at Terra that Trevor offers her and they begin to work slowly & meticulously to change the underlying culture at Terra. The novel is promoted as a thriller and, in terms of not quite knowing where it's headed, I suppose it is one. For the most part, though, the suspense is very low-keyed and it builds so gradually, it's almost not noticeable. Ultimately, however, "Smoke Screen" reaches a very satisfying conclusion and becomes stronger as a result. Well-written and enjoyable.

Bob says

Trevor Barnet is the scion of a family high in the tobacco empire. His father is a lawyer in the company and Trevor has a so so make work type of a job with the company to meet the requirements of his trust fund. Mainly he is leading a playboy life although not a carefree one. The company is fighting a huge class action lawsuit and if they loose his trust will take a hit along with the company. Trevor is brought into a plan by one of the executives and made an unwitting dupe in his plan to disrupt the lawsuit by shutting down the tobacco industry. Meanwhile Trevor has fallen for a young lawyer who was working for an antismoking lobbying firm. Lots of back and forth maneuvering as the various sides try to get the upper hand. An interesting plot, but some how it was a drag for me. One of those books you have to push your self to keep reading, not one that you hate to put down.

West Mack says

i give this to my preachy nonsmoking friends and tell them to suck it. furthermore i didnt realize that big tobacco made powdered doughnuts

Fiona says

This was a great book. The plot charged off in directions I did not see coming. There were one or two moments where I thought the author had lost the plot, but went along for the ride anyway.

It was a fascinating insight into the financial tentacles of the tobacco industry. I definitely recommend this book.

LJ says

SMOKE SCREEN (Thriller-Cont) - G

Kyle Mills – Standalone

Signet-2004, Paperback

Trevor Barnett, living off a trust fund and promised inheritance, is a descendant of the founders of the tobacco industry. He is drifting through his job and life until a one-line report ends up being seen by the company's CEO, resulting in a promotion and confusing thrust into the front line of a battle between the tobacco industry, federal government and anti-smoking proponents.

*** More a fantasy than a thriller, this story was so engrossing I was more than half way through it before it

occurred to me it wasn't really a mystery. You know Trevor is being set up as a patsy, but are fascinated to see the result. Although I was, occasionally, annoyed by Trevor's seeming spinelessness, his youth, the relationship with his parents, and background allowed me to accept him. The relationship between the government, tobacco industry and legal system was fascinating. If you're looking for a book in which to lose yourself for a few hours, or the perfect airplane book, I recommend giving this a try.

Jacob says

In many ways Kyle Mills's *Smoke Screen* is similar to Christopher Buckley's novel, which was later turned into a film by the same name, *Thank You For Smoking* both are about a tobacco industry spokes person dealing with the internal politics of the Tobacco industry while trying simultaneously to deal with their complicated love life and Washington's love hate relationship with cigarettes. The difference is that Mills' is the far superior narrative.

Smoke Screen is the story of Trevor Barnett, The last son of an old southern tobacco family plucked from an obscure job as a glorified file clerk and thrust into the limelight to by the company head as spokes person/human target for his bold plan to save the industry. Further complicating Trevor's life is that he is in love with an anti-smoking activist.

Mills manages to tell a riveting thriller with elements of comedy romance and even libertarian political philosophy while creating real believable characters who you can truly care about. *Smokes Screen* is a thoroughly enjoyable novel well worth anyone's time.
