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**MIAMI ATTORNEY FILES BILLION DOLLAR LAWSUIT AGAINST TOBACCO COMPANIES ALLEGING RACIAL PROFILING AND RACISM IN MARKETING TO AFRICAN AMERICANS**

**Miami** – In a historic lawsuit filed today, Miami attorney J.B. Harris has sued Big Tobacco seeking \$1 billion in damages on behalf of an African American woman whose mother and grandmother were killed by cigarettes. Defendants in the suit include R.J. Reynolds, Philip Morris, Lorillard, Brown & Williamson and others. The suit was filed in Miami-Dade County Circuit Court and arises from the *Engle* class action partially overturned by the Florida Supreme Court late last year.

Based on strict liability, negligent design, fraud by concealment and civil conspiracy, the suit alleges that the tobacco companies engaged in racial profiling and racially motivated marketing strategies to entice, addict and ultimately kill African American smokers.

“Cynical and exploitive, the Defendant’s files are replete with evidence of massive marketing campaigns, aimed specifically at African Americans, employing some of the most sophisticated advertising methods ever developed, which targeted the most vulnerable and beleaguered segments of society, including the least educated, poor, inner-city African Americans, many on public support including food stamps,” the complaint alleges. Such tactics, hidden for years in confidential marketing files of the tobacco companies, have never come to light until now.

Among the most egregious evidence of this abuse includes a report prepared by R.J. Reynolds stating that “Blacks tend to buy less things to improve themselves, they appear less concerned about health related issues (i.e. Blacks don’t necessarily identify

with the motivations of the “Concerned” or “Moderation segments) and are more prone to buy on impulse. Further, “Blacks have less concern for the future and live from one day to the next,” based on the fact that African Americans lead “superstitious, unplanned, impulsive life styles.”

To reach young often underage African Americans, the tobacco companies engaged in saturation advertising in inner city neighborhoods, paid above rate advertising fees to Black publications like *Ebony*, *Jet* and *Essence* and sponsored street fairs, sporting events and church activities where they distributed free packs of cigarettes.

The tobacco companies also introduced to African Americans new and lethal brands of cigarettes like, Uptown, which contained the highest rates of nicotine and tar that any other brand. The rationale for marketing such brands included the view that “Blacks drink malt liquor rather than beer and are less concerned with tar and nicotine levels.”

*J.B. Harris is plaintiff's personal injury attorney in Miami. For more information he may be contacted at 786-303-8333 or through his website at [www.suebigtobacco.net](http://www.suebigtobacco.net).*