

Quid Pro Quo: Tobacco Companies and the Black Press

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Introduction:

- Tobacco is the leading cause of health disparities affecting African Americans
- African American newspapers play important roles in conveying information to the African American community
- National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) is the trade association of the Black press (representing 200+ newspapers)
- Compared to the general population, African American communities are disproportionately targeted with tobacco advertisements, products, philanthropy

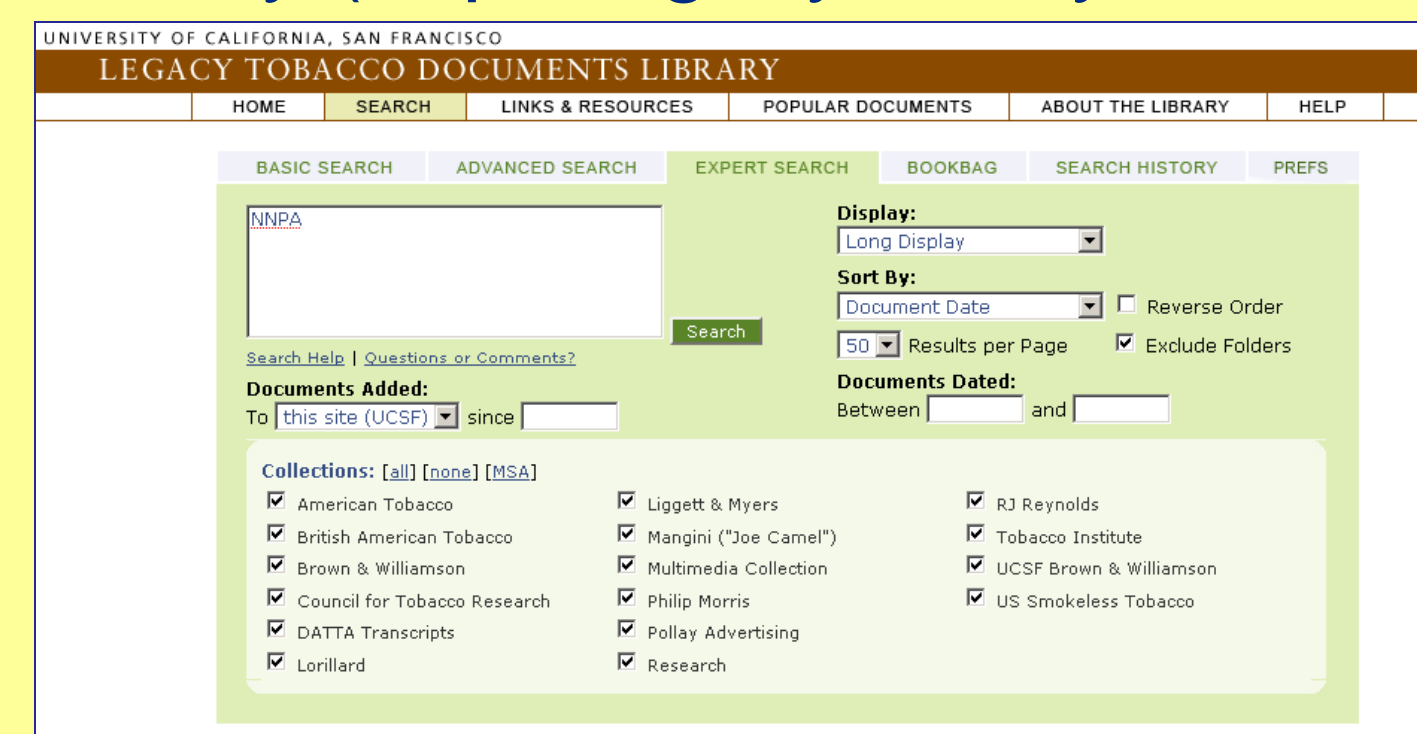
Study Purpose

- Explore relationship between the tobacco industry and NNPA

Methods: Archival case study

Data Sources

- Internal tobacco industry documents in Legacy Tobacco Documents Library (<http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/>)



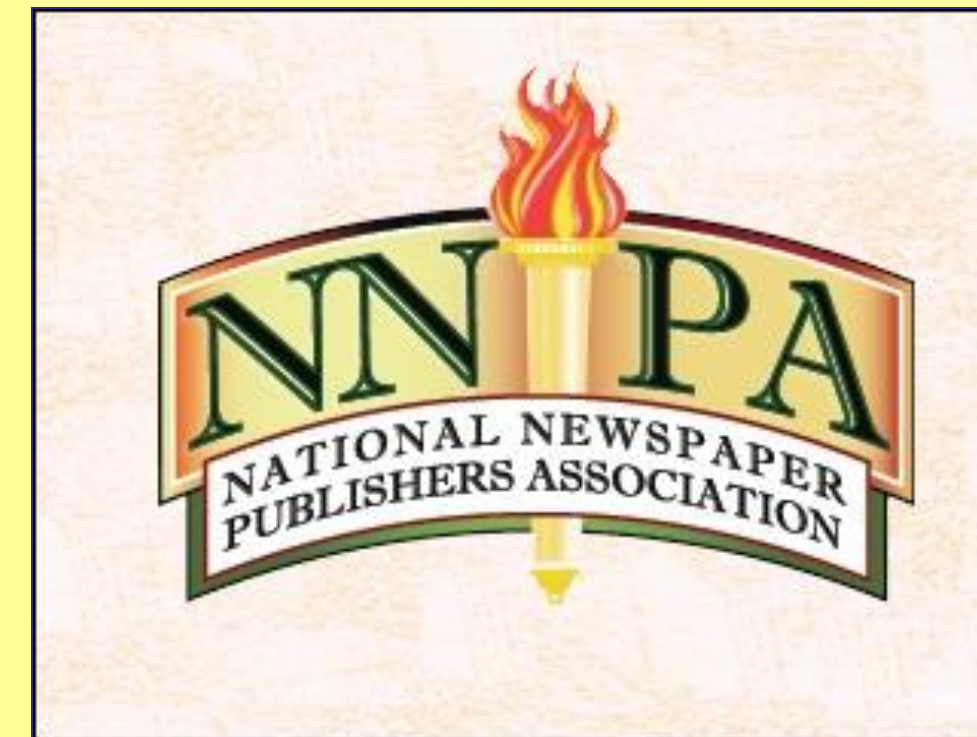
- Archived documents of NNPA publishers at the Howard University Moorland-Spingarn Research Center

Analysis

- Evaluated documents for relevance
- Organized materials thematically
- Prepared descriptive case study

Results:

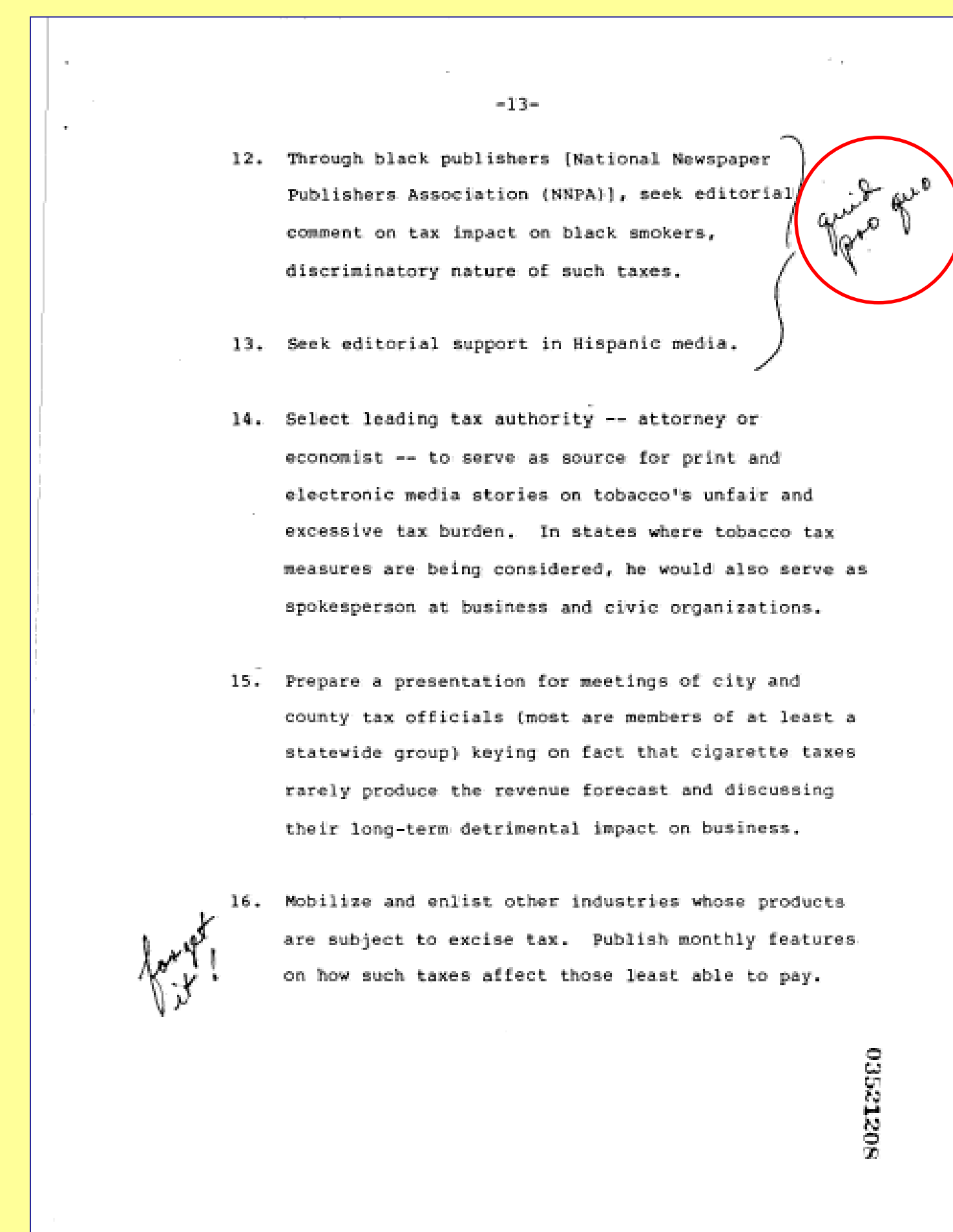
- Longstanding relationship between NNPA and tobacco companies
 - Advertisements
 - Awards
 - Editorials
 - Op-Eds
 - Scholarships
 - Sponsorships
 - Speeches



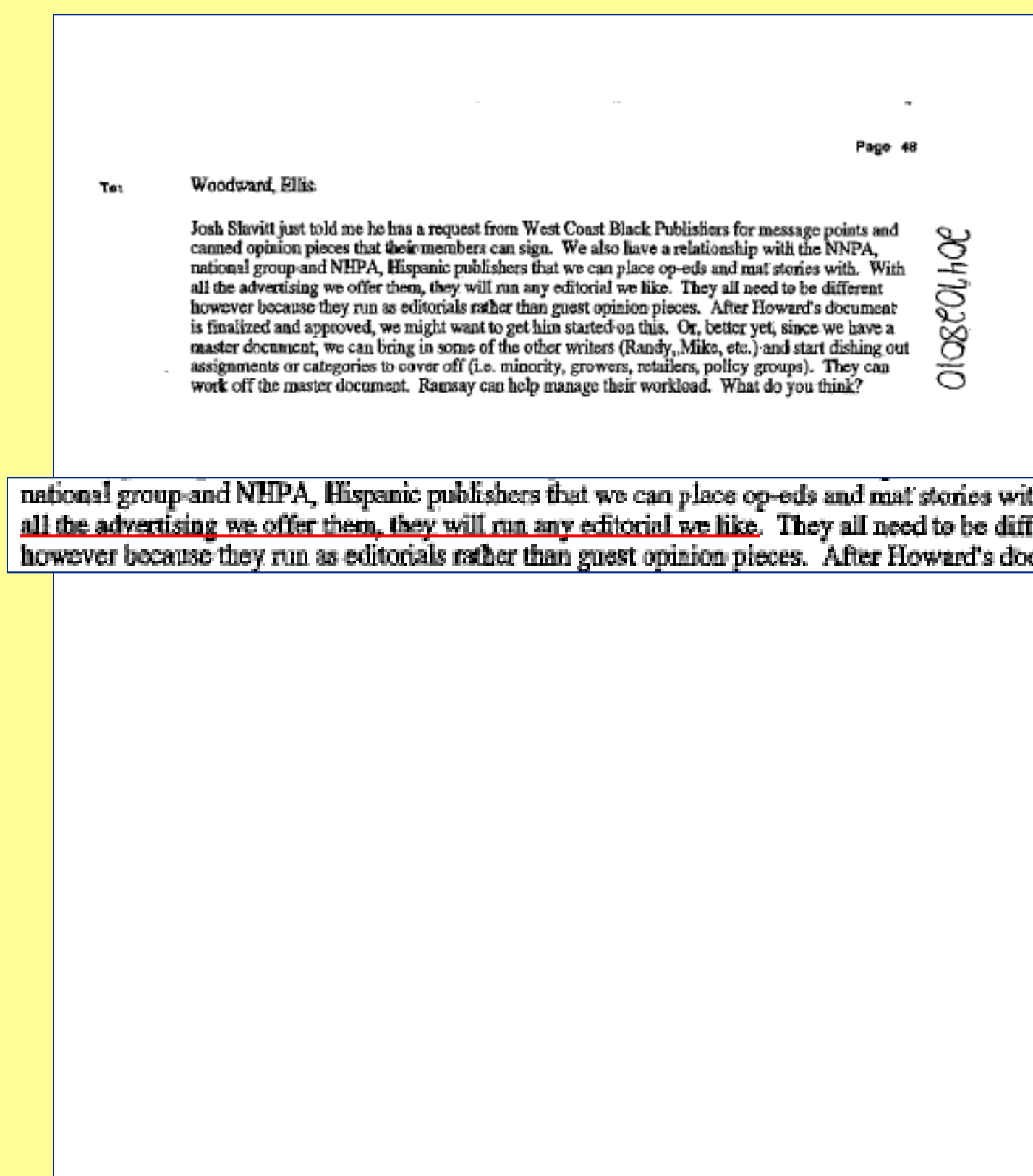
Expectations of Relationship

Quid Pro Quo: Tobacco Industry Expectations

- Expectation of NNPA support
- Tobacco Institute—lobbying arm of tobacco industry--planned to “place a minimum of two stories annually pointing out heavy burden placed on middle and lower income smokers by cigarette taxes” in NNPA papers
- “With all the advertising we offer them, they will run any editorial we like.” (Philip Morris, 1995)



Tobacco Institute, 1983 Communications Plan for High Priority Issues . TID: ydc81e00



Philip Morris, 1995 Email. TID: lf77d00

NNPA Expectations and Developing Tensions

- Documentary evidence of NNPA support for the tobacco industry and expectation of industry support in return
- Counter-pressure within African American communities emerged (e.g., Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Louis Sullivan calling for banning cigarette advertising in Black newspapers), straining NNPA-tobacco industry relationship
- Tobacco industry recognized “ugl[i]ness” and threats to its legitimacy were growing
- Tobacco industry ad budgets fluctuated for NNPA papers

Addressing Tensions

- Industry-funded scholarships, advertising, sponsorships, and speaking engagements sustained NNPA connections well into 1990s
- RJ Reynolds included NNPA leaders (e.g., former NNPA presidents Bogle and Leavell) in discussions about how to counteract community tensions
- Tobacco industry friendship and advertising acknowledged as influences

Conclusions:

- Tobacco industry expected editorial support for tobacco industry positions in return for advertising, sponsorships, scholarships, and other types of contributions
- Tobacco companies viewed willingness to support Black press as buying loyalty and securing favor: more likely quid pro quo-plus
- Relationship may have contributed to dissemination to Black community of inaccurate/incomplete messages about tobacco
- Quid pro quo-plus between tobacco companies and Black press violated journalistic standards to “deny favored treatment to advertisers and special interests”
- “Quid pro quo” legacy of inequitable trade likely harmed African American communities