



## PRESS RELEASE



**New Delhi, September 6, 2013** - Tobacco industry whistle-blower, Dr Jeffrey Wigand - whose personal and public struggle against Big Tobacco was immortalised in the Hollywood blockbuster “The Insider” - arrives in New Delhi this week to speak to policy makers, civil society and journalists about public health and the tobacco industry.

He is the key speaker at a seminar (**September 9, 2013**) on public health and journalism jointly organised by **NewsLaundry** in collaboration with **Who's There? Yes (WTY)**, a global journalism and public health mentoring initiative launched by Chitra Subramaniam Duella (Switzerland) and Dr Franklin Apfel (United Kingdom).

Called **Media's pH Value**, this is a media-led public health discussion and the event marks the end of a three-week web-based conversation on aspects of tobacco control ranging from the disease burden to deceitful marketing tactics. The organisers believe that both public health and news media are public goods and a public service that should be publicly debated and accounted for.

“Tobacco kills and the tobacco industry is a very finely-tuned machine that manufactures nicotine delivery devices that kill thousands every day. This man-made death machine is ruthless and it will stop at nothing - large developing countries like India are hunting grounds for these merchants of death”, Dr Wigand told *NewsLaundry*.

Tobacco kills six million people in the world today, one million in India alone. “We cannot stand by and watch this public health disaster - strokes, cancers, heart-attacks, the list is long. And sadly there's very little space in news for public health issues”, said Madhu Trehan.

A cigarette is the only freely available consumer product that kills one in two regular users. “Every tobacco-related death is preventable. Tobacco addiction is a communicated disease - communicated through advertising, marketing and deceitful tactics”, say Subramaniam and Apfel who led the World Health Organisation's (WHO) flagship campaign “Tobacco Kills - Don't be Duped” at the turn of the century. That WHO campaign which underpinned the development of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) - the world's first treaty entirely devoted to public health - was launched by Dr Wigand in 1999 on the sidelines of the release of the film, *The Insider*.

In 1989, Dr Wigand was brought on board as Vice President of R&D at Brown and Williamson to make safe cigarettes. In 1996, he appeared on the *CBS* news programme, *60 Minutes* and stated that Brown and Williamson had intentionally manipulated its tobacco blend to increase the amount of nicotine in cigarette smoke. He was harassed, received death threats and his story was portrayed by Russel Crowe in the 1999 film “*The Insider*” directed by Michael Mann also starring Al Pacino and Christopher Plummer. The Academy Award nominated film is also a commentary on journalism and media organisations.

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