

Reitman's kid hits home run with first outing

THANK YOU FOR SMOKING

Starring Aaron Eckhart, Katie Holmes and Rob Lowe

Written and directed by Jason Reitman

The son of famed producer Ivan Reitman (*Ghostbusters*) has swatted his first major feature right out of the park.

Jason Reitman's brilliantly funny and subversive *Thank You for Smoking* is a gentler but effective companion piece to *Bowling for Columbine* and a direct slam against lobbyists and corporate United States. The tone and script are right on.

Mr. Eckhart plays Nick Naylor, a tobacco spinmeister who not only has no problem selling his product to an addicted populace, but loves the challenge and the payoff knowing he is more clever than the next guy at convincing the world smoking is a viable lifestyle.

It's all in the wording. He tells his



Anne Brodie

On Movies

young son, "If you make the right argument, you're always right". And damn it if he isn't clever enough to make us admire him. Until we come to our senses.

The tobacco companies he represents are about to launch an anti-smoking campaign directed at kids with the proviso it's not too successful.

He spearheads a campaign to get Hollywood smoking onscreen again.

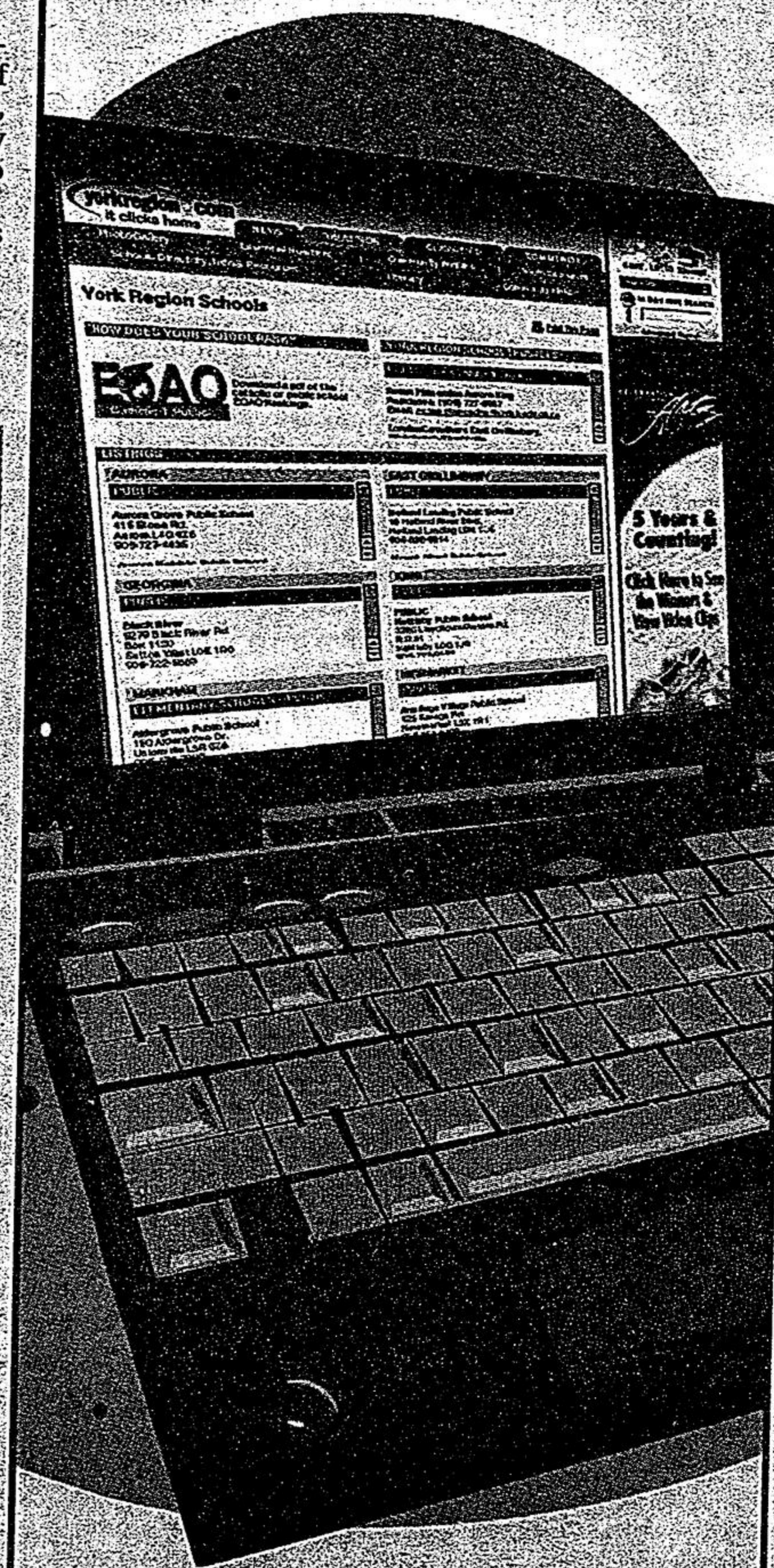
He also convinces the former Marlboro Man, now dying of lung cancer, to sue and hand the money back in a complicated gesture of "good faith".

He meets Hollywood producer (Mr. Lowe) who is even more skilled at spin than he is. Naylor's awestruck. Their new tack is a licence to print money — product placement. Cigarettes, cigars, pipes! Sexy stars smoking!

A reporter (Ms Holmes) comes forward to unveil the powerful world of tobacco lobbyists. But she's no angel, putting her integrity on the line by entering into an affair with Naylor, who is the subject of her piece.

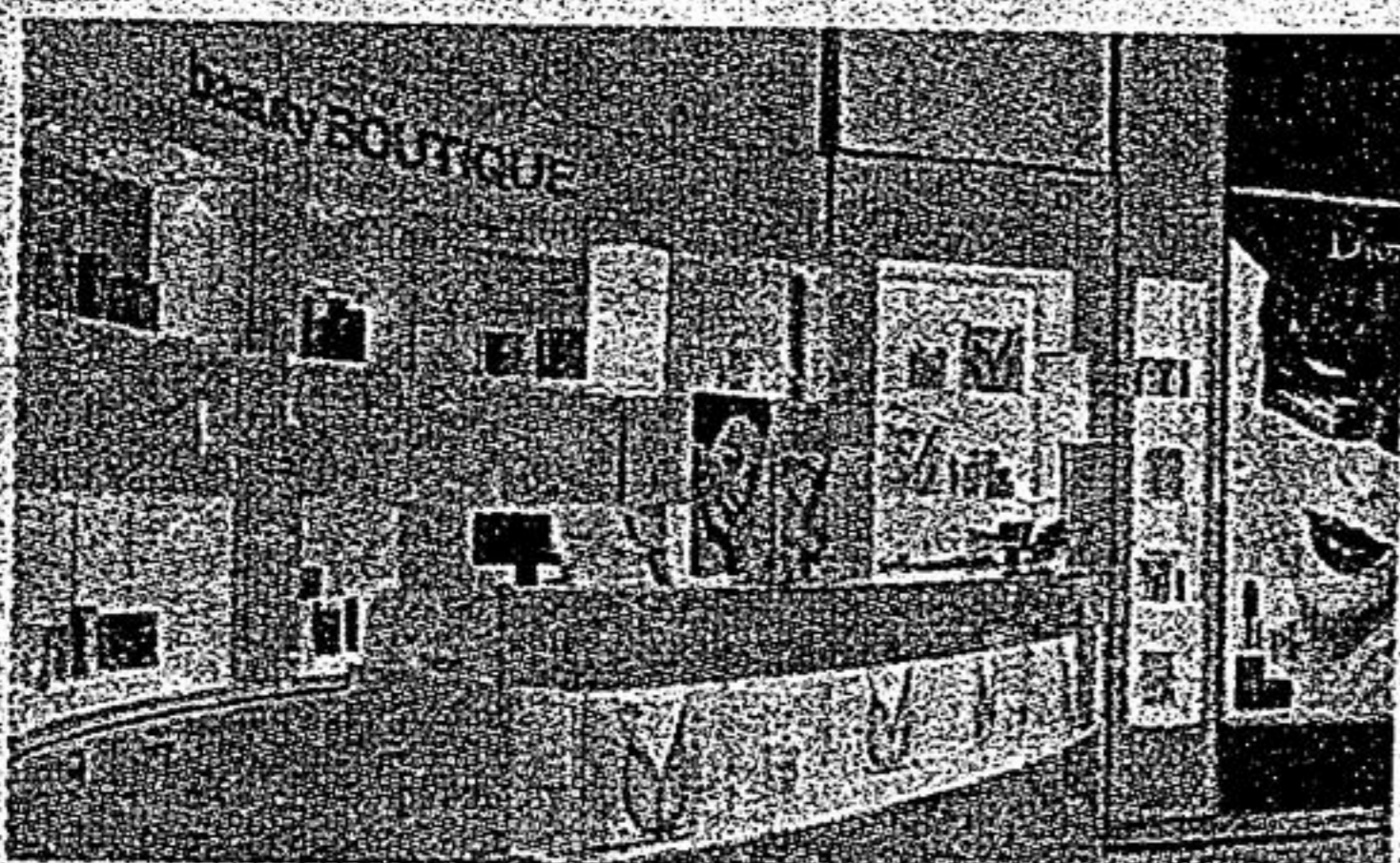
What makes the film palatable is its wicked humour. The script is breathtaking and the performances are confident and supple. The only weak link is Ms Holmes. She's not skilled enough for this brainy outing.

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