



Playing with Fire: Chemical companies, Big Tobacco and the toxic products in your home

Chicago Tribune Staff

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The average American baby is born with 10 fingers, 10 toes, and the highest recorded levels of flame retardants among infants in the world. How could it possibly be in the US that children are already contaminated at birth with such disturbingly high levels of toxic chemicals? The truth lies in the greed and deception of two powerful industries—Big Tobacco and chemical manufacturers.

In a groundbreaking piece of investigative journalism by the *Chicago Tribune*, *Playing with Fire* exposes the realities about the ineffectiveness and potential health risks caused by the flame retardants that are pervasive in American homes. Big Tobacco and large chemical companies used fear, exaggerated scientific claims, and shady deal-making to serve their own interests at the expense of consumer safety.

Playing with Fire is an extremely significant, revelatory piece of watchdog journalism that is a must-read for anyone with small children and for citizens who demand responsibility of big businesses and their governments. The investigation, launched in May 2012, prompted two US Senate hearings, and the US Environmental Protection Agency announced it would launch an investigation of flame retardants. Also, California's governor said the state would scrap the rule responsible for flame retardants' presence in furniture.

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