



State film commission nixes funds for film based on 1993 Branch Davidian standoff

By Carl Hoover Tribune-Herald entertainment editor

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Texas Film Commission Director Bob Hudgins said he denied state film incentive money to the producers of *Waco*, a proposed \$30 million feature film on the 1993 Branch Davidian standoff and fire, countering a report that "an unnamed state senator" had pressured the commission.

Hudgins told the *Austin American-Statesman's* Chris Garcia he made the decision after reviewing the script and talking with journalists and law enforcement people involved in the incident.

Under the provisions of the recently enacted Texas Moving Image Industry Incentive Program, state financial incentives can't go to film, video or video game projects that inaccurately depict the state or actual events in the state.

The director's remarks followed a post on the *Statesman's* film blog Sunday in which Entertainment 7 producer Emilio Ferrari told reporter Charles Ealy, reporting from the Cannes Film Festival, that the TFC had backed out of offering incentives to his film due to "opposition from an unnamed state senator."

As a result, he and his company were considering moving the film to Louisiana, which had offered \$6 million in tax breaks.

News that Texas apparently had lost a \$30 million film project sparked angry discussion on the Austin film blog, and some posters pointed fingers at Waco's state senator as the politician in question.

Republican Kip Averitt, reached Monday afternoon, denied any knowledge of the film project or any behind-the-scenes pressuring of the TFC.

"Today's the first day I've heard anything about this," he said. "The only restriction I know of in the money the state gives as film incentives . . . is that the films should be accurate in their portrayal of Texas."

Averitt said the TFC makes the call within those guidelines on what film projects should receive financial incentives.

"That's as it should be," he said, adding he supports growth of the state's film industry and doubted any colleague had pressured the film commission concerning the *Waco* film.