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Former Baton Rouge producer pleads guilty in film tax credits scheme

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Admitting he received \$971,418 for bogus Louisiana film tax credits, former Baton Rouge film producer Gregory M. Walker pleaded guilty Wednesday to a charge of wire fraud.

Walker, 46, could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison, fined \$250,000 and required to forfeit more than \$971,418, U.S. District Judge James J. Brady said before the guilty plea.

The judge explained a lengthy list of rights Walker waived in accordance with his plea agreement, which requires Walker to cooperate with government investigators and prosecutors.

Brady focused much attention on the fact that Walker surrendered his right not to incriminate himself and forfeited his right to appeal his conviction and sentence unless that sentence exceeds the maximum permitted by law.

“Yes, your honor,” Walker replied. “I agreed to everything I signed.”

Added Walker: “I am guilty, your honor, yes. I understand I can face up to 20 years.”

Brady wanted to know whether Walker recently has been under the care of a physician or taking medications that could impair his judgment.

“I’ve had addiction problems most of my life,” Walker said. “I checked myself into a detox center about 70 days ago.”

Walker said he entered the center because of his use of opiates. He said he has not used opiates since then.

“I had a drink” during the 24 hours prior to the guilty plea, Walker

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said. He said his reasoning was not impaired.

When Brady asked what work Walker had done prior to his sale of film tax credits, Walker said since leaving college after his junior year: "I've worked for myself."

Assistant U.S. Attorney Reginald E. Jones read into the record a set of admissions that Walker and his attorney, John C. Anderson, had signed with Assistant U.S. Attorney Rene I. Salomon.

In that signed document, Walker admitted he lied about his ownership of the film tax credits to "P.P.," owner of Strategies for Investment.

An FBI affidavit and records of the secretary of state show "P.P." is Peggy Persac, a Baton Rouge certified public accountant and investment adviser to some of her tax clients.

Walker, who now resides in Austin, Texas, conceded he sold Persac's firm film tax credits with a combined face value of \$1.45 million that he fabricated and marketed through one of his firms, The Bishop LLC.

"From the outset, Walker represented to (Persac) that he owned and controlled the tax credits, which he sold (Persac) and SFI," the promoter's signed admission states. "Such representation was false."

Walker's signed admission also states that he signed the name and initials of "WG" to five of the bogus tax credit transfer agreements. "WG" is identified in an FBI affidavit as William Goins, a manager or agent for several film production companies.

Walker admitted in a conversation recorded Sept. 28, 2012, with officials of the Louisiana Department of Economic Development and Louisiana Office of Inspector General that he signed Goins' name without Goins' knowledge and permission.

"It was my mistake ... and it (was) wrong," Walker said at that time, according to his admission.

After Jones read the admission, Brady asked Walker whether there was anything in the statement he wanted to change.

"No, sir," Walker replied.

The judge then accepted Walker's guilty plea. He did not immediately schedule a sentencing hearing. Walker was allowed to remain free on bail while he waits for his sentence.



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