**Former BR movie producer charged on federal wire fraud count**

**by Bill Lodge**

blodge@theadvocate.com

October 09, 2013

Former Baton Rouge movie producer and hospital owner Gregory M. Walker was charged Tuesday in local federal court with one count of wire fraud for his alleged sale of $1.4 million in state film tax credits he did not own.

Walker, who now resides in Austin, Texas, sold those credits to Baton Rouge accountant and investment broker Peggy Persac’s Strategies for Investment , according to an affidavit by FBI Special Agent Joshua C. Morrill.

Walker, 46, received $971,418 for the bogus tax credits, according to the charge signed by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rene Salomon.

Voice mail and text messages seeking comment from Walker were not returned.

“Not commenting is the prudent thing to do at this time,” said Michael S. Walsh, Walker’s attorney.

Acting U.S. Attorney Walt Green said a wire fraud conviction carries a possible 20-year prison term and a fine of as much as $250,000.

If Walker is convicted, prosecutors also will seek forfeiture of at least $971,418 from his assets.

Salomon’s charge alleges that between August 2011 and January 2013, Walker used a fraudulent scheme to get money and property from Strategies for Investment.

The wire fraud charge stems from Walker’s alleged use of emails to perpetrate the fraud against Strategies for Investment.

Some of the emails were from Walker’s now-closed Gulf States Health Services office in Baton Rouge.

The IRS has a pending $4.3 million lien against Walker in Baton Rouge for his failure to forward his former hospital employees’ tax withholdings to the federal government. Walker said in an interview in April the failure to forward those taxes to the IRS was the result of clerical errors and that he is repaying the debt over an eight-year period.

In the film tax-credit case, Walker is alleged to have used one of his firms, The Bishop LLC, to market credits that belonged to other people.

The FBI’s Morrill noted in his affidavit that The Bishop’s address was 2561 Citiplace Court, Suite 750-115, an address that belongs to a United Parcel Service store.

The charge alleges he falsely told prospective buyers that he owned tax credits for various film productions, including Universal Soldier IV, El Gringo, Mama I Want to Sing, and Transit.

Walker also is alleged to have signed two other people’s signatures on documents that transferred the tax credits for those films to Strategies for Investment.

The Louisiana Department of Revenue would not honor those tax credits because the Louisiana Department of Economic Development determined they were never transferred to Walker’s firm, The Bishop, the affidavit says.

The charge states that legally owned film tax credits can be used to pay taxes owed by a film production company, cashed at a discounted price at the Department of Revenue, or sold to others who could use the tax credits to pay their Louisiana income tax liabilities.

But, as Morrill noted in his affidavit, “The tax credits can only be applied against a Louisiana income tax liability once.”

The Louisiana Inspector General’s Office worked with the FBI on Walker’s investigation, Green noted.