

# AIADC

## AMERICAN INDIAN ANTI-DEFAMATION COUNCIL

215 West Fifth Avenue Denver, Colorado (USA) 80204

(303) 392-7011

RUSSELL MEANS

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February 1, 1993



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4000 Warner Blvd.  
Burbank, CA 91522

Dear Sirs:

The American Indian Anti-Defamation Council (AIADC) has been informed that you are in the initial stages of producing a major commercial film which will purportedly constitute a sort of "Indian Roots." We have been further informed that you have recently terminated all bona fide American Indians you had retained for purposes of researching and developing a script along such lines, choosing instead to rely upon the services of an individual named Lee Miller, who claims to be Cherokee.

While the AIADC certainly has no intrinsic objections to films about American Indians being made (indeed, we seek to encourage legitimate projects in this regard), we do insist that this be approached in an accurate and respectful fashion which can hope to undo at least some of the misrepresentation and negative stereotyping so purposefully and profitably heaped upon us by Hollywood over the past 75 years.

In order to accomplish this, it is of course crucial that American Indians — that is, individuals who identify and are recognized as being Indian in real life, rather than simply alluding to some claimed ancestry as an expedient to obtaining professional benefits — be directly involved in cinematic processes at every step along the way: research and scripting, expert consultation, set and location development, casting and wardrobe, acting in key roles, and so forth.

Self-evidently, your wholesale purge of those Indians who originally agreed to participate in your project leads in the exact opposite direction. Worse, your designation of an individual with no known connection to any indigenous community, Cherokee or otherwise, as the "authenticator" of what you are doing suggests you may be engaging in practices bordering on fraud. Such comportment is plainly unacceptable.

To give you the benefit of the doubt, we will temporarily assume that you have been conducting yourselves, however inappropriately, without malicious intent or knowledge of how to proceed in a more constructive fashion. We therefore offer our services in connecting you with individuals and organizations which can assist in preparation of an historically/culturally

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