

Brandeis University Says Director Jonathan Demme Can't Film Carter Speech

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Associated Press

WALTHAM, Mass. — [Brandeis University](#) has denied Academy Award-winning director [Jonathan Demme](#) permission to film a speech by [Jimmy Carter](#) that he wanted to include in a documentary about the former president.

Demme said he had hoped Tuesday's speech and the planned question-and-answer session afterward would be part of a powerful ending to his documentary, "He Comes in Peace."

"They have in a way diminished everyone's ability to add to the debate, including the Brandeis students themselves," Demme told The Boston Globe.

Carter's use of the word "apartheid," in his new book, "[Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid](#)," has angered many in the American Jewish community because it appears to equate South Africa's former apartheid system with Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

Brandeis is a nonsectarian university where half of the students are Jewish. Last fall, Carter turned down an invitation to discuss the book at the suburban Boston campus because it came with the suggestion that he debate Harvard Law professor Alan Dershowitz, a harsh critic of the book.

Brandeis agreed to remove the conditions after the subsequent outcry by some students and faculty.

Demme, who has directed more than 25 films, including "Silence of the Lambs," said Carter's visit to Brandeis was "a dream come true" because he felt he had not captured the widest spectrum of views on Carter's book.

Brandeis spokeswoman Lorna Miles said there was no room for Demme in the 40-person media pool.

She said the university had previously decided to exclude documentary crews due to their special logistical challenges, particularly because documentary crews needed signed releases from participants.

"I conveyed my regrets to Mr. Demme — and I have utmost respect for his work — but we simply do not have the staff or the flexibility to accommodate this," Miles said.



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