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Flashback: While Waco's Branch Davidian compound siege raged on, hawkers and opportunists swarmed



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For many, the siege at Mount Carmel, the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, was a real-life nightmare playing out on the nightly news. For others, it was even closer — a violent horror show playing out in their state, in their city and, for many around the compound, before their very eyes.

For hucksters who swarmed the perimeter of the compound, however, it was a golden opportunity.

In 1993, long before Magnolia Market drew people to Waco, Mount Carmel did. Many came for the same reasons they visit now — to tell their friends they were there. Others came to protest the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives or to spread their own particular brand of Christianity. But for many, the draw was the crowd itself — and their pocket books.

ADVERTISING

In particular, T-shirt salesmen set up their stands, offering merchandise with slogans like "WACO — We Aren't Coming Out" and "Wacko WACO." The latter also featured a scorecard, which could be filled in with a laundry marker "to keep track of casualties."

Others, like David Mevis, focused on crowds' stomachs. Mevis set up his grill and offered "Koresh Burgers" and "Koresh Dogs" for \$2 each.

The Dallas Morning News photo team stayed in Waco for weeks, capturing images of all aspects of the siege, including the opportunists looking to make a buck off the "End Times."



April 17, 1993: Palm reader Linda Parker of Waco read Joseph Fiorenza's palm on a hill where people gathered to get a look at the Mt. Carmel Compound. A tote bag in the back reads "Official David 'Vern' Koresh Body Bag." (Milton Hinnant/The Dallas Morning News)



March 12, 1993: Rosaline Eastepp, of Garland, attempted to sell T-shirts to two women in Waco to observe the stand off. (Irwin Thompson/Staff Photographer)



March 12, 1993: Vendors sell merchandise to onlookers in Waco. The tent on the left sold T-shirts, while the booth in the

middle served "Koreh Burgers and Dogs." Rosaline Eastepp sold T-shirts out of the white car. (Irwin Thompson/The Dallas Morning News)



March 23, 1993: Linda Cox sold T-shirts near the compound, including this shirt reading, "My parents went to Mt. Carmel and all I got was this lousy AK-47!" (Beatriz Terrazas/The Dallas Morning News)



April 23, 1993: David Koresh's grandmother, Jean Holub, talked with two reporters on the hill off Loop 340 near Highway 2491 as Randy Lechler (second from right) sells Koresh T-shirts. She bought two David Koresh business cards for one dollar each. (Irwin Thompson/Staff Photographer)

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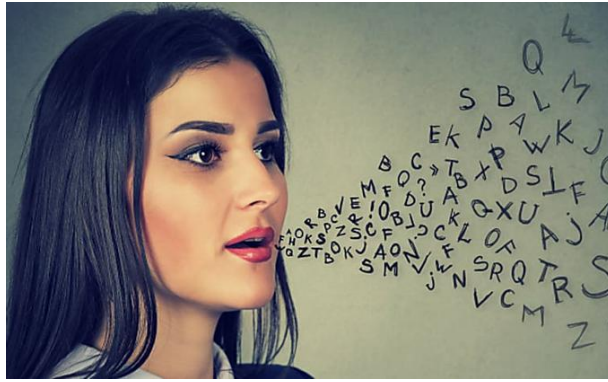
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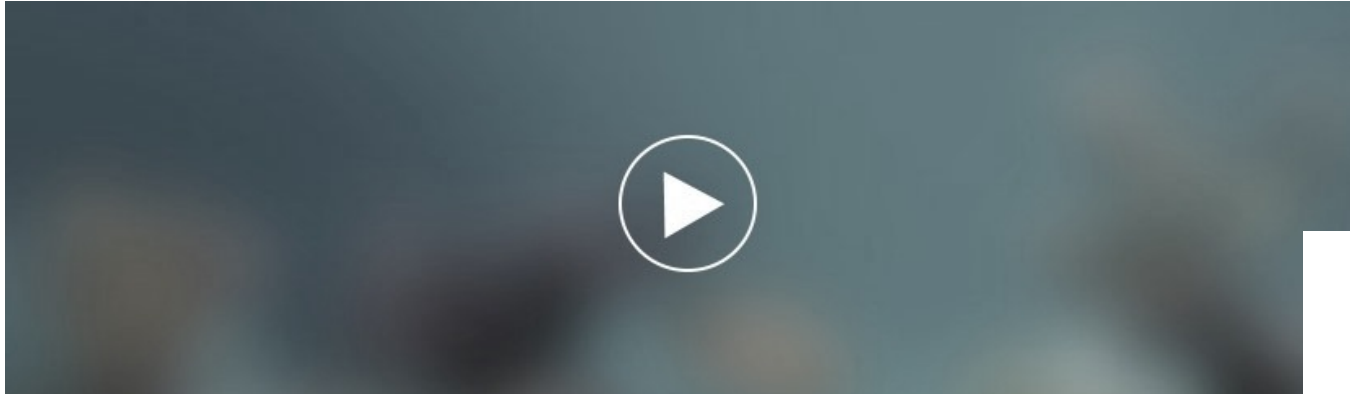


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