



Morning
American-Statesman
Austin, Texas

NOV 20 1985

DPS director defends Fezell inquiry role

WACO (AP) — The director of the Texas Department of Public Safety Wednesday defended the agency's role in an investigation that led to criminal charges against District Attorney Vic Fezell.

Col. Jim Adams also said that three investigations — including a Justice Department inquiry — into allegations made by Fezell that his civil rights were violated by DPS and FBI investigations, found no evidence of wrongdoing.

The McLennan County district attorney filed a complaint in December 1985 with the Justice Department in Washington, requesting an investigation into an alleged conspiracy to violate his civil rights. He said Justice Department and DPS officials were involved in wiretapping, mail tampering and attempting to suborn testimony. The Justice Department mailed Fezell a response on Jan. 8, but he would not divulge its contents.

Adams told the Waco Founder Lions Club that U.S. Attorney Helen Eversberg informed him just before Fezell was indicted by an Austin federal grand jury on racketeering charges that the Justice De-

partment had discovered no wrongdoing.

Adams said Fezell also has been notified of the Justice Department's findings. Fezell could not be reached for comment Wednesday.

Adams said that in addition to the Justice Department investigation, the Texas Public Safety Commission and FBI reviewed the Fezell investigation and found no wrongdoing.

"When you investigate a public official, expect to be attacked," Adams said. "In other words, they'll try and create a smoke screen to divert attention from what the real issues of a case are."

Fezell is to stand trial Feb. 2 in Austin on charges he accepted bribes to dispose of cases favorably.

Fezell has maintained the DPS investigation of his office was in retaliation for a 1985 McLennan County grand jury investigation into murder confessions made by Henry Lee Lucas. The Lucas grand jury inquiry embarrassed Adams and the Texas Rangers, Fezell said, because the Rangers claimed Lucas committed murders that the McLennan County grand jury cleared him of committing.