

# Defense: Feazell flamboyant in all media

By TOMMY WITHERSPOON 4/16/91  
Tribune-Herald staff writer

Attorneys for former Dallas television reporter Charles Duncan and the Belo Broadcasting Co. began their defense of Duncan's series about Vic Feazell Monday by showing jurors how other television stations and newspapers covered the controversial former district attorney.

Feazell is seeking more than \$60 million from Duncan and Belo, claiming that a 10-part series Duncan aired about Feazell in 1985 libeled him. The trial began its sixth week on Monday, Feazell's fifth day on the witness stand.

Belo attorneys John McElhaney and Tom Leatherbury continued stressing their

familiar theme that Feazell was a flamboyant public figure who knew how to grab headlines and make news. He was accustomed to the glare of media spotlights, they said.

"Suffice it to say that you are, at the very least, a very controversial figure," McElhaney said.

"Now I am," Feazell said.

"And you have had much more specific things said about you in other media than what was on Channel 8. There have been other, more specific things about you elsewhere compared to what was on Channel 8, haven't there?"

Feazell paused for a moment and said, "I don't know how to answer that."

The attorneys introduced into evidence articles from at least five newspapers and began showing tapes of events from Feazell's days in office and his criminal trial in Austin from Waco's three television stations.

A federal jury in Austin acquitted Feazell in 1987 on bribery and racketeering charges. Several jurors have said that they thought Feazell had been "framed" by the government in the case, which matches what Feazell has said since the first rumors of an investigation began to surface in 1985.

Feazell has said those rumors didn't

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**Belo**  
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Tribune-Herald  
Attorneys for  
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Broadcasting Co.  
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Belo attorneys  
Tom Leatherbury

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## FEAZELL

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start until Duncan came to Waco in April 1985. He also contends that his troubles with state and federal investigators — and with Duncan — cropped up after he led a McLennan County grand jury session in April 1985 that investigated confessions to three local murders by Henry Lee Lucas.

Angry law-enforcement agents, embarrassed when most of Lucas' confessions turned out to be bogus, began to try to build a case against Feazell and used Duncan as their tool, Feazell contends.

Duncan's series chided Feazell for being lax on prosecution and

implied that he accepted bribes from a handful of Waco attorneys to dismiss cases, Feazell said.

Feazell's attorney, Gary Richardson, asked Feazell about computer printouts that reflect the number of driving-while-intoxicated cases handled by some attorneys in 1983 and 1984. Feazell said he could determine no "trend" or "pattern" in dismissals for certain attorneys in reviewing the records, Duncan's apparent inspection of the same records hinted at such a pattern.

One of the articles introduced by McElhaney was a *Tribune-Herald* story about a grievance filed against Feazell by his former employer, Brian Pardo of the ASK Corp. Pardo hired him after Feazell resigned in September 1988.

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