



Staff photo — Steve Earley

McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazell is flanked by his administrative assistant, John Ben Sutter, left, and his attorney, Gary Richardson, as they leave the federal courthouse in Austin Monday

## Feazell says prosecutor warned him to 'stay out of Lucas thing'

By DREW PARMA  
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AUSTIN — McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazell launched a pretrial hearing Monday on federal bribery and mail fraud charges by putting convicted murderer Henry Lee Lucas, an assistant U.S. attorney and the Department of Public Safety on trial.

Feazell's attorney, Gary Richardson, spent the day trying to prove that Assistant U.S. Attorney Jan Patterson mounted a vendetta against Feazell, overstepping her bounds in an investigation that resulted in a 10-count indictment charging him with accepting bribes from defense

attorneys in exchange for leniency for their clients.

Lucas confessed to hundreds of homicides in several states, but an investigation launched by Feazell and Attorney General Jim Mattox in early 1985 discredited his confessions to three McLennan County murders. Lucas later retracted nearly all his confessions.

"The evidence will show that there was retaliation against Feazell because of his investigation of the Henry Lee Lucas affair," Richardson said. "We expect to develop ... evidence that will tie the connection directly to the U.S. attorney's office, and specifically to Jan Pat-

terson."

Feazell took the stand to tell U.S. District Judge James Nowlin about a threat he said was delivered by Ms. Patterson in Cleburne, where he was trying Muneer Deeb for his part in the 1982 Lake Waco triple murders.

Feazell said he was unloading records from the day's testimony in a motel parking lot when Ms. Patterson drove up.

"At the time, I thought she wanted me to go get a drink with her ... I wasn't real interested," Feazell said. "Her demeanor changed ... as a passing com-

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ment, she said, 'As a word to the wise, stay out of the Lucas thing.'

Feazell said he was threatened on several occasions by Rangers, including one occasion when he was told that "you dragged us through the mud ... I'm going to get you."

And Feazell testified that when he met Ms. Patterson at the federal grand jury in San Antonio, where Lucas was later taken, she told him that, "I warned you to stay out of this thing."

Much of Monday's testimony was taken up by Clementine Schroeder, or "Sister Clemmie," a Georgetown woman running a jail ministry at the Williamson County Jail when she befriended Lucas. The jail became the headquarters of the Texas Ranger task force investigating Lucas' dozens of murder confessions in the state.

Ms. Schroeder said that when Lucas was brought to Waco in April 1985 to appear before the grand jury, Williamson County

Sheriff Jim Boutwell and other task force members became worried because they were denied access to him. She said Boutwell asked her to obtain a letter from Lucas saying he was being held against his will.

"Boutwell said those were evil people in Waco, that they were working against the law, that Vic Feazell was doing this all for political gain and that we must rescue him," said Ms. Schroeder. "I felt it was my responsibility to get Henry Lee Lucas out of Waco and save the task force."

Ms. Schroeder testified that Boutwell enlisted the help of Ms. Patterson to get Lucas out of the custody of McLennan County authorities. Ms. Schroeder said she attended a meeting in Georgetown with Boutwell, Ms. Patterson, then-Department of Public Safety head Jim Adams and Capt. Bob Prince of the Ranger task force, among others. She said Boutwell told her that Ms. Patterson was there "to support the task force."

Feazell had subpoenaed Lucas to testify today at the hearing, but Richardson said "there is an order right now denying that right, but we probably will re-urge it."

Richardson said he expects to call eight witnesses today and Assistant U.S. Attorney Leroy Morgan Jahn said the government will call about three or four witnesses.

Nowlin also heard arguments Monday on motions to move Feazell's trial to Waco from Austin and to suppress a warrant used to search Feazell's house, office, storage building and car. He promised to rule on the motions before the end of the week.

Richardson argued that Feazell could not afford the extra expense of a trial in Austin, placing the extra cost at between \$20,000 and \$100,000. Nowlin asked Richardson to come up with figures to compare the costs before he rules on the motion.

Feazell's trial is scheduled to begin May 26 in Austin.