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Fezell says his telephone was tapped

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AUSTIN — McLennan County District Attorney Vic Fezell said yesterday that he believes that the government tapped his home telephone and burglarized his office.

Fezell, standing trial on charges of accepting bribes, said the federal activity was designed to harass him after he began a grand jury investigation into the Henry Lee Lucas case.

"There were so many forms of harassment going on from day to day," Fezell said during five hours of defense testimony. His cross-examination was expected to last at least another day.

"I made some very powerful people mad at me," he said.

Fezell, 36, is charged in a 10-count federal indictment with accepting about \$19,000 in payments from defense attorneys in exchange for leniency for their clients.

He has denied the charges and said they were initiated by the Department of Public Safety, which he said was seeking revenge because of the grand jury investigation into Lucas' confessions to hundreds of slayings.

Lucas recanted many of the confessions, which had been used by some authorities to clear unsolved cases.

Fezell testified yesterday that he believed that his home phone was tapped after the Lucas grand jury convened in March 1985. He said it still was being tapped July 4, 1986, when his wife heard a "click, click" on the telephone and ran outside to see a man climb down from a telephone pole and run away.

"I'm not sure, even today while down here (in Austin), that they are still not tapping my phones," Fezell said.

Fezell said the FBI and federal officials seized many of his records and papers from his Waco office on a search warrant Nov. 17. He said a number of papers taken from his safe were not on the list of documents furnished him by the U.S. attorney's office.

"However, two weeks later when my office was burglarized, at least two of these documents that were taken from the safe by the FBI turned up in a desk drawer after the burglary," Fezell said. "I don't know if the law representatives did it, but all indications point to them."