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Lucas probe called 'fiasco' by Walsh

By **DARRELL DUNN**
Tribune-Herald staff writer

The 1985 McLennan County probe of Henry Lee Lucas was a "fiasco" and a recent "60 Minutes" report about Lucas was unfair, Ed Walsh said in Waco Friday.

Walsh, a former Williamson County district attorney and a Republican candidate for Texas attorney general, is the only prosecutor to obtain a death penalty conviction against Lucas.

Walsh obtained the conviction against Lucas in the murder of an unidentified woman found dumped near Georgetown in 1978. The case became known as the "orange socks" murder, because the victim was found clad only in orange socks.

He said Attorney General Jim Mattox and McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazell used the McLennan County grand jury investigation of Lucas for political gain.

"I think the law enforcement agencies themselves, if they started having doubts about Lucas' confessions, would have started looking into it. I don't disagree with finding out which cases he didn't

commit, but what I do disagree with is Mattox and Feazell making a political football out of this case," he said.

Walsh denied he has attempted to gain politically from his involvement with Lucas.

"I did my job . . . I did not start calling press conferences trying to set myself up as a great prosecutor. Lucas has become a political football, but Ed Walsh didn't start kicking it," he said.

"As far as I'm concerned, Walsh kicked it off with the bogus orange socks confession," Feazell said Friday.

"I'm running for the same office I did three years ago. Jim Mattox is running for the same office he was elected to three years ago. It's Ed Walsh who is running for a higher office, and his only claim to fame is the orange socks case and certainly he'll try to defend it," Feazell said.

Walsh said despite reports showing Lucas could not possibly have committed many of the murders to which he confessed, he believes Lucas was guilty of numerous slayings.

"I believe when history finally closes



Staff photo — Mike James

Republican attorney general candidate Ed Walsh blasts the probe of Henry Lee Lucas

the book on Lucas, if that ever happens, it will be over 100 (murders). When Vic Feazell and Jim Mattox drug (Lucas) up here to Waco, the Texas Rangers Homicide Task Force had attributed 200 cases to Lucas," Walsh said.

Lucas was brought to Waco from Georgetown on a bench warrant signed by 54th District Court Judge George Allen.

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Walsh said Friday that soon after Lucas was brought to Waco, he contacted federal officials about reports he had received that Lucas' civil rights were being violated in McLennan County.

"I was one of the officials who relayed some information to the Justice Department about what was going on here in Waco with Lucas. The information we received was hearsay, but we felt we could not sit on it, and someone needed to hear about it," Walsh said.

Walsh said he talked to Assistant U.S. Attorney Jan Patterson about the rumors he had heard. Ms. Patterson is leading a federal grand jury investigation of Feazell in Austin.

Federal officials took temporary custody of Lucas in April 1985, less than two weeks after he was brought to Waco. Lucas was taken to San Antonio, where he was questioned by U.S. Attorney Helen Eversberg. Ms. Eversberg has never made a public comment about why Lucas was questioned.

Walsh said he believes Feazell acted unethically in making public comments about the Lucas probe during the McLennan County investigation.

"I do find something inherently wrong with (Feazell) using that forum to investigate every other DA's case in the state. I have no quarrel with what that grand jury did. My quarrel is with Vic Feazell and the public statements he was making in the course of what was supposed to be a secret proceeding," Walsh said.