



American-Statesman
Austin, Texas

MAY 13 1987

Attorney general testifies for Feazell

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Mattox claims investigation part of retaliation

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Cox News Service

Attorney General Jim Mattox testified Tuesday that an investigation of McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazell was in retaliation for Feazell's role in discrediting self-proclaimed mass murderer Henry Lee Lucas.

Feazell has been indicted on 10 counts of bribery and mail fraud. Mattox testified at a pretrial hearing in U.S. District Judge James Nowlin's court.

Feazell and Mattox worked with a McLennan County grand jury investigation of Lucas, who had confessed to hundreds of homicides across the nation. The investigation discredited Lucas' confessions to three McLennan County murders. Lucas later recanted many of his other confessions.

Feazell's attorneys have charged the indictment was a state-federal effort "to get" Feazell, coordinated by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jan Patterson. Mattox testified that the same combination had worked to interfere with his and Feazell's investigation into the Lucas probe.

Mattox said FBI agents appeared at the McLennan County Jail the day Lucas was scheduled to testify and demanded to talk with him because of reports that Lucas' civil rights were being violated.

"The FBI were not there to protect Henry Lee Lucas — they were there to disrupt an investigation," Mattox said. "It was very clear to me that they were there because they were called in by the DPS and the Texas Rangers to get Henry Lee Lucas out of the custody of McLennan County authorities."

Mattox also blamed himself for allowing the Ranger task force "to get far out of control."

Mattox said he suggested federal authorities look into the activities of the Texas Ranger task force, but that nothing came of it.

"They (federal authorities) were doing something not to convict Henry Lee Lucas, they were involved to protect the Department of Public Safety and the Texas Rangers from a potentially embarrassing situation," Mattox told reporters after Tuesday's hearing.

Williamson County Sheriff Jim Boutwell, whose county jail headquartered the Ranger task force on Lucas, testified the task force members "were somewhat upset that (Feazell) had messed up an ongoing investigation."

Nowlin has said he would rule on the motion to dismiss charges, as well as motions to move the trial to Waco and to suppress the search warrant used to search Feazell's house and car, by early next week.