

Feazell's record lauded

*Victim's mother says
D.A. treated unfairly*

By MIKE COPELAND
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The mother of Lake Waco triple murder victim Jill Montgomery told the Waco City Council Tuesday that City Manager David Smith and Police Chief Larry Scott are committing crimes "by trying to make the district attorney's office look corrupt."

Afterward, she said her comments were prompted, in part, by a Dallas television station's series concerning the prosecution record of McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazell which aired recently.

The series has "created a controversy in North Texas," said Mrs. Nancy Shaw, who resides in Waxahachie. She added that the series painted a picture inconsistent with "my personal experience with the district attorney's office and the police department."

She said the triple murder at Lake Waco had the police department "stumped" after two months, "yet I've read where David Smith has introduced detective Ramon Salinas and Sgt. Dennis Baier as the men who solved the Lake Waco murders. Salinas himself marked the case inactive and put it on the shelf. This is a total disregard for the truth."

Feazell, Truman Simons, an investigator for the district attorney's office, and Ned Butler, an assistant district attorney, "wouldn't let the case die when the police department wanted to let it," she said.

Mrs. Shaw took issue with comments by Scott to the effect that the district attorney's office is inept and unwilling to prosecute cases.

"I think the district attorney is very interested in prosecuting," she said. "The police department is interested if it doesn't involve much. I think the department is trying to cloud the issue in making these accusations."

She added that Smith has not "backed up" allegations he made concerning the district attorney's office, and that she has concerns about "corrupt police officials and corrupt justice."

In the series which aired on WFAA-TV Channel 8, Smith said Feazell's prosecution shortcomings demoralize the police department.

"Who's declaring the district attorney's office to be corrupt?" Mrs. Shaw asked the council. "Who's pulling the strings? There are some things you city fathers should find out."

During the time her daughter's murder was being investigated, Mrs. Shaw said she was "baffled" by the police department's refusal to keep her informed. She said she was instructed to quit calling the department, that if there were any developments she would be called.

"At the district attorney's office, there was a different attitude. I was kept informed, and I appreciated that," she said.

Jill Montgomery was one of three teen-agers stabbed to death at Lake Waco in July of 1982. Two men — David Wayne Spence and Muneer Mohammad Deeb — have received death penalties in Miss Montgomery's death.

Two others — Gilbert Melendez and Anthony Melendez — pleaded guilty to two of the deaths and received two concurrent life penalties.

Smith had no comment on the remarks made by Mrs. Shaw.

Scott acknowledged that the district attorney's office "did an awful lot of work" on the triple murder case, adding that "Butler probably came up with the most important evidence. His observations about the bite marks (on the victims) helped a great deal."

But he added that at no time did the police department discontinue its investigation into the triple murders. He said that over a two-year period, two officers were assigned "almost exclusively" to the case.

At one time, seven officers were working the case full time and another six were devoted to it on a part-time basis, he said.

The police chief would not comment on Mrs. Shaw's charge that he and Smith are trying to make the district attorney's office look corrupt.