



Staff photo — Steve Earley

Bob and Joyce Lemons are seeking help to find the murderer of their daughter

## In search of their daughter's killer

*Pair who questioned Lucas' role says their plight's been ignored*

By **DARRELL DUNN**

Tribune-Herald staff writer

Bob and Joyce Lemons, the Texas couple who were the first people to question officially the murder confessions of Henry Lee Lucas, are looking for someone to help bring an end to an 11-year-long nightmare.

"I think the reason that to this day Joyce and I have not been able to get any help on this is that we were never portrayed as the people who went out and uncovered this sham," Lemons said in Waco recently.

"In Hugh Aynesworth's story, you'll notice, 'The *Times Herald* discovered,' and in the Channel 8 report it's, 'a Channel 8 investigation reveals that ...'

"The truth of the matter is that we were the ones who went out and did all of that stuff but no one knows it," he said.

The Lemons' oldest daughter, Deborah Sue Williamson, is the first murder victim listed as killed by Lucas in the Texas Rangers Homicide Task Force chronological report of around 200 murders the Rangers at one time attributed to Lucas.

Ms. Williamson was murdered outside her Lubbock residence on Aug. 24, 1975, two days after Lucas was released from

a Michigan prison where he had completed serving a prison term for the murder of his mother.

The Lemons say that by May 1983, they had managed to put their daughter's murder behind them when they received a call from the Lubbock police telling them that Lucas was responsible. The Lemons said it became clear the moment they heard Lucas' confession that the drifter was not the murderer.

The Lubbock Police Department's insistence that Lucas was responsible needlessly opened up old wounds, Lemons said.

Circumstances surrounding Ms. Williamson's murder always have been difficult for the Lemons to understand.

Lemons said that on the day of Ms. Williamson's funeral in 1975 his family began receiving harassing telephone calls and that his two younger daughters were threatened at school.

"Finally, it came to a point in September 1975 when the Lubbock police told us they didn't feel they could protect us anymore. The school called and said our children couldn't attend anymore," Lemons said.

Within 24 hours the Lemons family



Staff photo — Darrell Dunn

Henry Lee Lucas is now a Death Row inmate

moved out of Lubbock, eventually relocating in a rural area near Gainesville.

"We lived like we'd fell off the planet Mars for nearly nine years," he said.

"We really were doing pretty well in getting our life back together, and then they came along and dumped Lucas in our lap. That just started it all over again. It just rekindled the whole thing," Lemons said.

"We went back to Lubbock (in 1983) and found out that it wasn't over. There was nothing different, outside of them saying that this guy did it, who couldn't possibly even have known anything about the murder.

"They had to know. The stupidest person in the world would have had to have known that Henry didn't know a thing about this murder," he said.

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## Parents seek murderer

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Lemons said he and his wife listened to Lucas' confession and said that none of the information Lucas provided actually matched the facts of the murder. The Lubbock police and Texas Rangers refused to back off of Lucas' confession, he said.

"They said, 'No, Lucas knew things only the killer would know.' How many times have we heard that since then? We realized that day that if we were ever going to know the truth about it, we were going to have to find out for ourselves, because there sure as hell wasn't going to be anyone else," Lemons said.

The Lemons devoted the next two years to attempting to establish an accurate chronology of Lucas' travels between the time he left prison and was arrested in Montague County on June 11, 1983.

First they spent thousands of dollars on long distance telephone calls to newspapers and law enforcement agencies in the Eastern United States in an attempt to locate Lucas family members.

"No one but a parent could have gotten a lot of the information we compiled. Family members would not talk to the press, they would talk to law enforcement officials. I had to beg them at first to talk with me. They didn't want to get involved, and even said they were sorry Henry was a family member," Mrs. Lemons said.

"One day I looked up and said, 'Bob, this guy hasn't killed any of these people. I can tell you where he was on every one of these dates.' It was bizarre," Mrs. Lemons said.

It was at that point that the Lemons realized they needed help, and contacted Aynesworth, who was working on a book about Lucas, then widely touted as the worst serial murderer in the nation's history.

"Hugh helped us a whole heck of a lot. Hugh had some suspicions that there was something wrong about all this, but he hadn't done anything about it. He was still tottering the first time we talked to him. It was a week or two later, he came back and said that we were right," Lemons said.

The Lemons say they are now upset that despite helping break the Lucas story, they've yet to find anyone who will help them find the man they believe is their daughter's real killer.

"When we were passing all this evidence over for free, we were treated royally, whether it was Jim Mattox or whoever. As soon as they had the information, they didn't need us anymore. We have been used by the attorney general's office, by Channel 8 news, by the *Times Herald*. I'm tired of being used," Lemons said.

"I'm very thankful to Hugh that he helped us as much as he did, because that was the important thing, to just get (the chronology) done. But, we're sitting here with ever reason to believe that we know who actually killed our daughter and the thing that is standing between us and him is some help, some money, or both."

Lemons said he has checked all 50 states and three Canadian provinces for the man they believe murdered Ms. Williamson. He said he wants to continue to search Canada, but isn't familiar with the country and is drained financially.

"We sold our house. We're back to ground zero. We're back where we were 20, 30 years ago. I think if the people care about right and wrong and realize that we took it upon ourselves and did this with our own resources and found out the truth, I think we'd find someone willing to help us," he said.

"To satisfy some egos, they have destroyed us and it makes me madder than hell. There is going to be a day of reckoning. I don't know how it will come to be, but there is going to be one. Somehow. Someway. We've just been put through too much," Lemons said.