

# Kettler, Hall get court dates

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Waco law partners Don Hall and Dick Kettler, who testified against McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazell in his federal bribery trial, have court dates set in Austin to face misdemeanor tax violation charges.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Jack Frels said Hall, 60, has agreed to plead guilty to a charge of failure to pay income taxes at a July 24 hearing before U.S. District Judge James Nowlin in Austin.

Feazell was acquitted of charges he accepted about \$19,000 in bribes from Hall and Kettler to handle cases for the attorneys, many of which were dismissed. Feazell shared law offices with Hall and Kettler before Feazell took office in January 1983.

Kettler, also charged with misdemeanor failure to pay taxes, is scheduled to be arraigned before U.S. Magistrate Philip Sanders in Austin at 11 a.m. Thursday, Frels said. Kettler tentatively had agreed before Feazell's trial to plead guilty to felony tax evasion, the only one of five attorneys who testified against Feazell who was facing a felony charge.

But during his testimony, Kettler told Frels that he would not accept a felony charge and said he would renew negotiations with federal authorities.

Frels said Monday that Kettler will appear Thursday to be made aware formally of the charge against him, but added that no other arrangements have been made in Kettler's case.

Hall and Kettler both testified that they took cash payments from clients and failed to report them all on their income taxes.

Hall said he received a notice Monday from federal officials to be in court on July 24, but declined additional comment.

Kettler did not return several phone calls to his office. His attorney, William Ravkind of Dallas, said Monday that he has not been in contact with federal authorities for several weeks, but added that he received notice Monday for he and Kettler to be in court on Thursday.

"I haven't had a chance to talk with the government lately and haven't had a chance to talk to Dick, so you have kind of caught me by surprise here because I didn't know what the government had decided," Ravkind said. "I am assuming that the government has had time to evaluate the testimony he gave and decided it was truthful, although everybody in Austin didn't think so. But I am positive Mr. Kettler is being charged with a misdemeanor."

Federal authorities investigating Feazell and reports he dismissed driving while intoxicated and drug cases for bribes discovered that many of the defendants paid their attorneys in cash. The tax violations were uncovered when investigators began checking the attorneys' tax records.

Waco attorneys Ron Moody and Ken Crow, who pleaded guilty to misdemeanor tax evasion during Feazell's trial, are scheduled to be sentenced by Nowlin on Aug. 6, Frels said. Moody testified during Feazell's trial that he and Crow made illegal campaign contributions to the district attorney. Crow did not testify.

Waco attorney Dick Clark, who also testified he made illegal campaign contributions to Feazell, was granted complete immunity from prosecution on tax violations.

Hall, Kettler, Moody and Crow face a year in prison and fines up to \$100,000, said Frels, who was prosecutor in Feazell's five-week trial in Austin.

State Bar Association officials will not comment if the attorneys will be disbarred, and Frels said the government will not intercede on their behalf.

"What we do is report their cooperation and the significance of it to the bar association as part of the arrangement," Frels said. "But as far as our interceding on their behalf, no, that has never been part of the deal."