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King of confessions

Lucas said he sold children into slavery

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Prosecutor campaigns 2B

In addition to being a convicted killer and accused bank robber, Henry Lee Lucas also is suspected of kidnapping children and selling them into slavery in Mexico.

Texas Ranger Capt. Bob Prince testified Thursday that "it's possible that he did some." But Prince does not believe Lucas's confession that he sold 500 school-aged children into slavery.

"It's possible that (some) occurred ... the FBI made numerous contacts with him about that allegation," Prince testified.

The veteran Ranger was in charge of the Henry Lee Lucas task force, which coordinated up to 3,000 interviews with law-enforcement agencies after Lucas began confessing to murders. Lucas eventually confessed to more than 600 murders, al-

though police now believe he is responsible for 162 killings.

"And there's different levels of belief in those 162," Prince testified.

About 40 of the state's 80 Texas Rangers played a role during Lucas's 18-month-long confession binge in 1983-84. One of those confessions involved the 1983 ax slaying of 72-year-old Librada Apodaca in her Lower Valley home.

Lucas' defense lawyers, Doris Sipes and Rod Ponton, want 120th District Judge Brunson Moore to disallow that confession from being used against Lucas in his upcoming capital murder trial. They claim Lucas' confession to Apodaca's killing was as phony as hundreds of his other murder confessions.

•Please see Lucas, 2B

Lucas

•Continued from 1B

Prince, whose testimony will continue today, is the prosecution's final witness for the confession suppression part of the pretrial hearing. Ponton and Sipes plan to call at least 50 witnesses in an effort to prove that Lucas' confession was phony.

According to Prince's testimony, the Rangers believe that of the cases cleared on the basis of Lucas's confessions, only "three or four" are total fantasy.

"There's no way that he could have committed them, yet he gave accurate descriptions" of the crimes, Prince testified. "There's just no way we can explain how he could do that."

Ponton's meticulous cross-examination of Prince about the Texas Rangers prompted a scolding from Moore. The judge told Ponton that the pretrial hearing was not the appropriate time to discredit the Rangers.

Ponton explained that "Capt. Prince and the Texas Rangers had information that Henry Lee Lucas would confess to anything and everything with absolutely no basis whatsoever," but still let him confess to Apodaca's killing.

"The task force was not set up to dig into the veracity of the confessions or the facts behind the confessions," Ponton said. "It was set up to clear murders based on the confessions of a man who would confess to killing Jimmy Hoffa and Lee Harvey Oswald."