

Woman: DA upset area cops Lucas recanting possible cause

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An angry and embarrassed Williamson County Sheriff Jim Boutwell vowed revenge against Vic Feazell for spearheading a 1985 grand jury session that poked holes in many of Henry Lee Lucas' murder confessions, a Georgetown woman testified Wednesday.

Sixteenth-day testimony in Feazell's libel trial against former WFAA-TV reporter Charles Duncan and the Belo Broadcasting Co. shifted Wednesday from Duncan's 10-part series about the former McLennan County district attorney to Feazell's involvement with Lucas, a reformed, self-proclaimed, mass murderer.

Clemmie Schroeder, a Williamson County Jail minister who befriended Lucas while he was housed there, said Boutwell was enraged when Feazell took Lucas from his custody to begin the grand jury investigation.

Feazell, who resigned as district attorney in September 1988, has claimed that Duncan's series, which aired on Channel 8 beginning in June 1985, was prompted by vengeful law enforcement officers who wanted to lash back at Feazell for his role in the April 1985 Waco grand jury proceedings involving Lucas.

Duncan, who was on the witness stand for 10 days, has claimed that his series, which focused on Feazell's performance in office, was fair and accurate. He denied any link between the Lucas story and his series.

Feazell also contends his role in uncovering the Lucas confession hoax angered powerful officials and sparked the federal investigation that led to his 1986 indictment on bribery and racketeering charges.

A jury acquitted Feazell of those charges after a six-week trial in Austin. Several jurors said they thought the controversial district attorney had been "framed."

Duncan testified that he met a Department of Public Safety officer and a former Waco police legal adviser in April 1985 in a Waco motel room, where they gave him

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much of the information that formed his series. The meeting was about two weeks after the Lucas grand jury in Waco.

Boutwell, sheriff in Georgetown for 13 years, also testified Wednesday, denying claims by Feazell's attorney that a three-man Texas Ranger task force spoon-fed Lucas case information to prompt many of his confessions, which at one time totaled more than 600.



Boutwell

Boutwell admitted he was angered and embarrassed by subsequent press reports about the Lucas confession spree after Lucas recanted all but one of his murder confessions, and it was determined that he couldn't have committed them all.

"Yeah, I was angry at Vic Feazell back then and I am now, to be frank," Boutwell said. "But really, there was nothing going on down in Georgetown that I would hide or not do again today."

Schroeder testified that after Lucas returned from Waco and his grisly tales began to unravel, Boutwell told her that Feazell had attacked the credibility of law enforcement. Schroeder said she reminded the sheriff that Feazell also was a law-enforcement officer, to which Boutwell responded, "No, we are the law, and he is standing against the law."

"He said, 'There is only one way

to deal with this man and by the time we are finished with him, he will wish he never heard the name Henry Lee Lucas,'" Schroeder said, quoting Boutwell.

When asked about these matters by Feazell's attorney, Gary Richardson, Boutwell said he did not remember making those statements, but he did not deny the possibility.

Schroeder described a late meeting in Boutwell's office on the night before the grand jury convened in Waco to study three McLennan County homicides to which Lucas had confessed. Boutwell invited her to attend and told her that all the "top brass" would be there.

Schroeder said the meeting was attended by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jan Patterson, who launched the federal investigation of Feazell; former DPS Director Jim Adams; Texas Ranger task force members Bob Prince, Clayton Smith and Bob Werner; other Rangers; and Boutwell.

She said that after the meeting a jubilant Boutwell told her that FBI agents would have Lucas back in Georgetown within two days. The next day, the agents' efforts to get into jail at 7 a.m. to see Lucas were blocked by Feazell, who said they could not see him until after the grand jury session.

After the grand jury meeting, Lucas began in earnest to recant his confessions, and Boutwell suggested that McLennan County officials "brainwashed" him, Schroeder testified. When she noticed that Lucas uncharacteristically ate a tomato on his sandwich and told Boutwell, he said that was a "sure sign of brainwashing," she said.

On another occasion, Boutwell told her that McLennan County law-enforcement officers might be involved in a violent "satanic cult," she said.

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