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# Lucas may have Florida job excuse

**United Press International**  
SAN ANGELO — Two men testified Thursday that Henry Lee Lucas was working with them on a roofing job in Florida at the time an unidentified woman was killed in Texas.

Payroll records from Southeast Color Coat of Jacksonville, Fla., show Lucas was working on a roofing job when an unidentified hitchhiker's body was

found Oct. 31, 1979, along Interstate 35 in Texas.

Roofing supervisor Fred Winters Ellis signed an Oct. 30, 1979, timecard stating Lucas worked for him in Jacksonville.

The community is nearly 1,300 miles from Oklahoma City, which is where Lucas said he picked up the woman he later strangled and dumped in a culvert.

Lucas pleaded innocent Monday, but he has confessed to more than 150 killings across the country.

Lucas was sentenced to life in prison for murdering his common-law wife Frieda "Becky" Powell, 15, and to 75 years in

prison for killing an elderly Ringgold woman.

But the trial for the slaying of the unidentified hitchhiker is the first to bring a capital murder charge against Lucas. If convicted, Lucas faces a sentence of life in prison or the death penalty.

Defense attorney Parker McCullough said Lucas falsely confessed to the slaying, and is expected to argue he was insane.

Since testimony started Monday, jurors have heard various portions of taped confessions in which Lucas described killing the woman, and dumping her body.

Ellis testified he had not accepted payment to falsify

timecards as suggested by Ken Anderson, Williamson County assistant district attorney.

State District Judge John Carter allowed Anderson to question Ellis in front of jurors about convictions Ellis has for writing worthless checks.

"I did some time for some checks," Ellis said. He had initially denied having prior convictions.

Former roofing company supervisor Mack Caulder admitted he also had served time in state prisons in California and Alabama for forgery convictions dating back to the 1960s.

Jurors were absent when Caulder described his criminal record. McCullough objected to

the mention of both Ellis and Caulder's convictions before jury.

Anderson said he needs time to study whether Caulder's convictions were timely enough to be presented to jurors.

Anderson asked Caulder front of jurors if Lucas and his Toole, Lucas' former inmate companion serving time in Florida prison for arson, paid him half their paychecks to falsify work records.

"I'm saying under oath anything else, that is a lie," Caulder replied.

A supermarket owner, M. Yazgi, testified that La Toole and a woman used a shop at his store in Jackson

## Collision with birds doesn't slow satellite repair mission takeoff

**United Press International**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — Two shuttle astronauts skipped their final tune-up jet flights Thursday because of a takeoff collision with a flock of birds, but the countdown ticked uninterrupted toward today's blast-off to start Challenger in hot pursuit of a wobbling satellite.

James van Hoften and Terry Hart were not injured in the collision and they resumed their prelaunch activities with their three crewmates — Robert Crippen, Dick Scobee and George Nelson.

The shuttle was primed for the scheduled 7:58 a.m. liftoff for the six-day mission intended to prove the shuttle's capability for orbital rescue and repair.

Challenger will blaze into an orbit higher than a shuttle has flown before to allow the astronauts to corral and overhaul the broken Solar Max satellite 300 miles above the Earth. The restoration will cost \$45 million.

On the 10 previous missions,

shuttles have gone no higher than 214 miles. To help achieve the extra height, the shuttle's three main engines, packing 37 million horsepower, will fire an extra three seconds during lift-off.

On their flight, the astronauts also will launch the largest satellite ever put into orbit by a shuttle.

*On their flight, the astronauts will launch the largest satellite ever put into orbit by a shuttle.*

Van Hoften's aborted takeoff in a T-38 jet trainer was the only unplanned incident Thursday.

His jet was streaking down the Kennedy Space Center runway at 161 mph when one of

the plane's twin-engines flamed out.

Van Hoften slammed on the brakes to stop his takeoff about one-third of the way down the 3-mile runway.

Hart, who was following in another plane, stopped also. Both flights were called off.

NASA spokesman Rocky Raab said the remnants of birds were found on the nose landing gear on van Hoften's jet.

A similar incident occurred on Oct. 31, 1964, when Astronaut Ted Freeman was killed as he was coming in for a landing at Ellington Air Force Base near the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

For the Solar Max mission, one of the jetpacks used on the last shuttle flight will fly about 200 feet from Challenger and link up with the satellite. Once the satellite's slow rotation is stopped, it will be snagged by the shuttle's 50-foot robot arm and brought into the cargo bay for two days of repairs.

Project officials hope the conditioning work will make the precise positioning system Max needs to accurately monitor radiation outbursts of solar flares. If the repairs are successful, the crew will park Solar Max back in orbit. If not, the satellite will be brought back to Earth.

The satellite, which cost \$235 million to replace its positioning system, has three fuses blown nine months after it was launched Feb. 1980.

Scientists are eager to get the Solar Max operating so they can study solar energy as the United States quires for 1,000 centuries.

The first repairs on Solar Max are not scheduled to place until Sunday. On the second day of their flight, the astronauts will launch the 21,400-pound satellite with trays that contain 30 experiments.

## Texans being 'set up' for tax hike, state inefficient, says GOP leader

**United Press International**

AUSTIN — Texas Republican Party Chairman George Strake lashed out Thursday at advocates of a state tax hike, saying Texans were being set up for a tax increase before cuts in government spending were even considered.

Strake made the comments in response to a presentation last

week by state budget analysts in which lawmakers were told Texas faces a revenue shortfall of \$500 million to \$4 billion in the next biennium — and possibly more if higher teacher pay and educational reforms are considered.

"Apparently state budget people have not even been instructed to search for ways to cut inefficient programs, reduce unnecessary expenditures or abolish obsolete agency programs," Strake said.

"It seems that state officials are setting us up for a big tax increase by convincing us the state is broke — without even considering ways to cut government waste."

Strake said that since the state last raised taxes 13 years

ago, spending and income rose 424 percent compared to a 156 percent increase in the U.S. Consumer Price Index.

"In other words, the Texas state budget has risen nearly three times the rate of inflation, but the population of the state has only risen 40 percent in those years," the Houston businessman said.

Strake said the state could save \$327.7 million by limiting the number of state employees to 100 workers for each 10,000 citizens. He said the current level is 115 employees per 10,000 population.

Other cost-cutting measures proposed by Strake included:

- Reducing the cash balances of the state's medical

schools, resulting in a \$40 million savings.

— Reducing Senate operational spending, which has increased 78 percent in fiscal 1984-1985, for a \$10.9 million savings.

— Eliminating redundant search and state increases in Texas Railroad Commission a \$3.9 million savings.

— Refraining from acquisition and related personnel for a savings of \$3.9 million.

At his weekly news conference, Gov. Mark White said he was encouraging state agencies to be economy minded, but rejected House Speaker George Bush's call for a no-growth budget.



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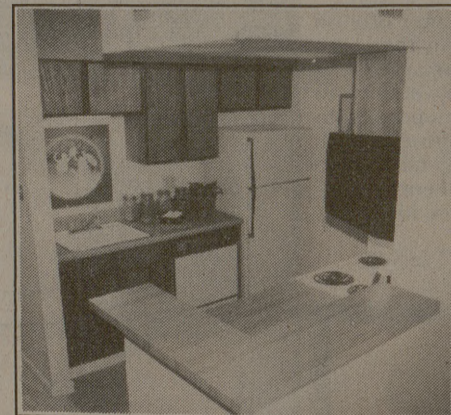
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