

## **Man who told of DA plot is in jail**

**By Kevin Krause and Ed Timms**

**Dallas Morning News**

**June 4, 2010**

The man who claims that Dallas County's constable investigator was behind a plot to concoct lies about District Attorney [Craig Watkins](#) is in jail facing numerous felony charges.

Information from Gale Corbett Hutchinson, 44, who has a lengthy criminal history and suffers from mental illness, led Watkins to hand off his constable investigation this week to a special prosecutor, Ted B. Lyon.

The district attorney's office said it asked for an outside prosecutor because Watkins apparently is the target of a scheme to drive him from office.

Hutchinson, of [Allen](#), has been in the Collin County Jail since April 1 on felony charges including making false statements for property credit, credit card abuse, theft and impersonating a lawyer.

He has said in court documents that he suffers from several mental-health disorders and was placed on suicide watch while in custody.

Watkins, a [Democrat](#), has been accused of dragging his feet on investigating criminal allegations against two constables, who are also Democrats. Some critics have argued for months that Watkins has a conflict of interest because his office defends constables in civil matters.

Criticism of Watkins' alleged lack of enthusiasm for investigating the constables intensified after the county auditor revealed last week that she had alerted the district attorney's office about criminal allegations against Constable [Jaime Cortes](#) more than two years ago.

"He sat for two years with credible evidence and did nothing," county [Republican Party](#) chairman Jonathan Neerman said Thursday. "Now he takes only six days to act on information provided by a man who appears to be a fraudster and a lunatic."

Lyon, a [Mesquite](#) personal injury attorney and former Democratic state legislator, was appointed by a judge Wednesday after being approached by the district attorney's office to take over its constable investigation. Lyon will also look into the allegations from Hutchinson regarding Danny Defenbaugh, the investigator hired by county commissioners last year to look into the employment practices of Cortes and Constable Derick Evans.

Cortes said Hutchinson claimed that Defenbaugh instructed him to "make things up about myself and the DA's office."

Cortes said Hutchinson spelled out his allegations in a letter to Cortes' attorney, Larry Friedman. He said the allegations were passed on to the district attorney's office.

According to Cortes, Hutchinson's letter said that "they want that black district attorney out of office and his lawyers out of the way, too." Cortes said he believes there was a "racial element" to the commissioners' investigation of him.

"It's not shocking to me," Cortes said. "If these allegations are true, it will reveal corruption at the highest levels of Dallas County."

Defenbaugh, a former [FBI](#) agent, said Hutchinson reached out to him around March or April with what Hutchinson described as damaging information about Cortes.

Defenbaugh said that his investigation for the county was completed by then and that he referred Hutchinson to the FBI. Hutchinson, he said, was hoping to cut a deal.

"He was running from the law and wanted to keep from going to jail," he said.

Defenbaugh said he was outraged about "any type of racial implication" against him. "I will not tolerate my integrity being impugned," he said. "I have no personal or political agenda."

First Assistant District Attorney Terri Moore offered no details of the alleged scheme when she announced the special prosecutor appointment Wednesday.

"It's about lying, scheming and conniving," she said.

Moore said her office learned about Hutchinson's accusations last week, although she did not name him Wednesday.

County Judge Jim Foster, who pushed for the civil constable investigation, said the truth will come out soon.

"It's nothing but a sham," he said about the allegations against Defenbaugh.

John Barr, Defenbaugh's attorney, said the information Hutchinson provided was "not helpful and not used" by Defenbaugh in his report to county commissioners, which found Cortes had abused his office. "We find the entire issue, as expressed by Ms. Terri Moore, to be very surprising because we thought we had a good working relationship with Mr. Watkins," Barr said.

Meanwhile, Lyon said he has already contacted witnesses to schedule interviews. He said he also has met with lawyers, including prosecutors, and with investigators to discuss their joining his investigative team.

He said he's considering using some Texas Rangers and Texas [Department of Public Safety](#) investigators.

"It's going to take a lot of help to do this," Lyon said.