

2000

SHEILA BOX IS MURDERED

AUG. 5: Sheila Box is shot in her SUV and crashes into the Tradewinds store. She is pronounced dead at a hospital. Sikeston Department of Public Safety detective John Blakely processes evidence at the scene.

According to trial transcripts, David Robinson says he takes his car to be repaired by a friend, and spends much of the evening at a fish fry with friends and family, many of whom would testify to that later. He says he goes with friends to a wedding party and to a hotel room later that night to party before returning home.

Confidential informant tells police that he heard that David Robinson shot Sheila Box.

AUG. 6: Police question David Robinson's girlfriend Natalia Lawrence. She tells Blakely that Robinson left her house at around 9 p.m. to take her car to get repaired at Brian Keith West's house and was going to the Manhattan Room with a friend named Steve Lott. She states he had not returned with the car by 11.

At 2 a.m., police are waiting for Robinson at his house when he arrives home driving his friend's car. A joint is found in the car. Robinson is taken in for questioning and tested for drugs; the test came back negative.

Blakely takes several pieces of evidence to the crime lab, and is told the bullet that killed Box was possibly a .38 or 9mm and "the number of lands and grooves are 6."

Romanze Mosby tells his cousin and close friend Carlos Jones that he shot Box. This would be revealed months later by then-informant Dion Savage.

AUG. 9: According to the investigative report, Blakely calls "a member of the probation and parole office" and explains to them "the things Mr. Robinson was believed to be involved in and the drugs that were located in a vehicle and no bond warrant was issued for him, but he was released 08/09/00 Wednesday just 14:00 hours pending drug treatment."

After questioning, Robinson is released from jail.

AUG. 11: Informant says Albert Baker was in the vicinity of the shooting the night of the Box murder.

Investigative report signed by Blakely says that he took Robinson's clothes for evidence to be checked by the crime lab. Brian Keith West, the first person Blakely talks to, says Robinson was with him around 10:30 and there for 45 minutes as West worked on his car.

AUG. 15: Baker is arrested on stealing charges.

AUG. 18: Baker tells police he saw Robinson shoot Box at a pay phone at the corner of Osage Street and Malone Avenue.

AUG. 28: Baker takes a polygraph conducted by Missouri State Highway Patrol, answers four questions and passes.

AUG. 30: Robinson is arrested for murder.

AUG. 31: Robinson is tested for gun residue. Only two of the three elements needed to confirm gun residue were found on Robinson's arm. Two others who were tested were also missing one of the three elements needed to show gun residue.

AUG. 31: Robinson and Brian Keith West are both named as suspects on a document.

SEPT. 13: Scott County Jail inmate Jason Richison tells police he overheard Robinson bragging of shooting a white woman in jail. He says Robinson brags of stealing a wad of cash and says Robinson said he was wearing all white clothes.

FIRST MOSBY SUSPECTED IN SHOOTING

SEPT. 16: A man named Gerald Walker is shot in the hip. Published reports at the time said that a juvenile was taken into custody. Several other public documents show that Louis Mosby, Romanze Mosby's younger brother, was the suspect in the shooting and was later certified as an adult.

OCT. 7: Two men are shot during a robbery while in their car. The victims are later identified as Christopher Babb and James Beck. Carlos Jones is taken into custody, and police announce that Romanze Mosby is a suspect after both victims initially identify Mosby out of a lineup provided by police. Beck is Sheila Box's stepson.

After obtaining a search warrant for Mosby's mother's property, police find several stolen items in a shed (including a violin and a cell), which Romanze later tells police his brother Louis is responsible for. Police also find a 9mm magazine under Romanze Mosby's bed. Romanze Mosby tells police the magazine is also his brother's. One reason police obtained a warrant because Blakely said he believed a "black 9mm semi-automatic pistol" was believed to be the same weapon that Louis Mosby had used in the Gerald Walker shooting. The gun was not found.

OCT. 10: Police say that Mosby is no longer a suspect in the Babb/Beck shootings, that another man, Edward M. Armstrong was identified by Jones and another witness, Latonia Townsend, as the shooter in that robbery. Townsend is identified by Blakely as Romanze Mosby's girlfriend. The victims were shot with 9mm bullets.

NOV. 1: Larry Brooks is shot while walking down the street with Gerald Walker. Romanze Mosby is taken into custody shortly after. He later confesses to shooting Brooks while aiming for Walker and leads Blakely to a .32 revolver he claims he used. Romanze tells Blakely he wanted to prevent Walker from testifying against his brother. Blakely seizes the .32 as evidence.

NOV. 17: Ronnie Coleman, friend of Albert Baker, says Baker called him and told him that he did not see Robinson shoot Box, but he was working a deal with police for leniency, according to a deposition from 2004. Baker tells Coleman he was in Milwaukee on witness protection. Coleman said he was angry that Baker gave a statement against Coleman to police on a drug violation.

DEC. 28: According to an email, the prosecutor sets up a meeting with detectives to discuss the Robinson case. No records of the meeting exist in the case files.

2001

MARCH 13: Louis Mosby robs a locksmith, then in the course of a struggle, shoots the locksmith and leaves the scene. The victim calls 911; police arrive. Louis Mosby is arrested. A Lorcher brand 9mm Luger is seized.

PARALLEL INVESTIGATIONS

David Robinson was convicted of a 2000 murder that another man later confessed to committing. That man, Romanze Mosby, emerged as a suspect months before Robinson was to face trial. The lead detective on the case did not investigate Mosby; instead that investigation was done by a deputy with the Scott County Sheriff's Department, who now works at the Sikeston DPS.

REPORT BY BOB MILLER AND TYLER GRAEF

INVESTIGATIVE TIMELINE KEY

RED: The red throughout the graphic indicates details about the investigation and trial of David Robinson, who was convicted of life in prison without the possibility of parole for the murder of Sheila Box on Aug. 5, 2000.

BLUE: The blue throughout the graphic indicates details about the investigation of Romanze Mosby, who emerged as a suspect a few months before Robinson's trial and later confessed to committing the murder. Some of the entries marked by blue text or shapes are about Mosby's involvement in other shootings.

ORANGE: Orange text and dates indicate where the Mosby and Robinson investigations connect or intersect.

LARGE CIRCLES: Circles with numbers denote cross-referenced information in larger circles in the middle of the page.

ARROWS: Indicate a pattern or connection from multiple events.

Same day events

... A 9MM ...

Korenz Hill told Sullivan that Jones told him a 9mm was used in the murder. (Mosby told Sullivan that Hill heard Jones say he killed Box. When Hill was questioned, he actually stated he heard Mosby did it with a 9mm)

... AND A .380

Dion Savage told Sullivan that Mosby had used a .380, and that was what the divers were looking for in Upper Big Lake.

MAY 2:

Scott County Deputy Bobby Sullivan receives a tip from confidential informant (later learned to be Dion Savage, who was in Mosby's inner circle) that Jones told him that Mosby killed Box in a drug deal gone bad. It's later stated that Savage gave the tip in hopes to work a deal to avoid jail time on a driving while revoked charge.

MAY 15:

Sullivan questions Mosby. Sullivan records the interview, unlike any of the interviews conducted by the Sikeston detectives. This tape is now missing.

JUNE 6:

Defense attorney Chris Davis writes in a memo that Sullivan said he "knows David Robinson didn't do it." And that he would be searching for the gun where the informant said it was thrown.

JUNE 11:

The Missouri Highway Patrol searches a nearby lake for the gun, based on the informant's tip. No gun is found. "We did not find the .380 pistol," the report states.

JUNE 25:

Sullivan provides statements and supplements to the Missouri Attorney General's office, which is prosecuting the case. The Sikeston DPS could offer no such correspondence to the Southeast Missourian via a response to an open records request pertaining to all materials regarding the Box investigation, particularly pertaining to the Mosby investigation.

INVESTIGATING ROBINSON



John Blakely, Sikeston DPS detective



David Robinson, Sentenced to life



Sikeston Detective John Blakely, left, was the lead investigator on the Sheila Box murder. He, along with other detectives in Sikeston including current chief Mike Williams and Dan Armour, investigated the crime, interviewed several witnesses and came to the conclusion that Robinson, right, was the murderer.

"I believe after the actual conviction, yes ma'am. ... That would have been followed up on if we would have received that information."

Sikeston Det. John Blakely, answering questions about his knowledge of Mosby being a suspect in the Box murder during a deposition in 2015

David Robinson is serving a sentence of life without parole for the conviction of the 2000 murder of Sheila Box. He is set for a hearing before the Missouri Supreme Court in August, which he hopes will result in an exoneration or a retrial. Please see our previous coverage at www.semissourian.com/lifewithout

INVESTIGATING MOSBY



Bobby Sullivan, Former Scott County Deputy



Romanze Mosby, Confessed to killing Sheila Box

Bobby Sullivan, then-Scott County deputy, received a tip months before Robinson went to trial that Romanze Mosby had said he'd killed Box. Sullivan later stated he believed Robinson was innocent and that Mosby was the killer (though he could not prove it), adding he thought the investigators in Sikeston had "tunnel vision."

"He (Blakely) knew what I received, but as far as him saying, 'Let me look into it,' anything like that, no it didn't happen. ... I got that impression from all the investigators. One night before our search warrant, we sat and talked -- I don't remember when it was, but we discussed the whole thing as far as what I was told and what all I had found out since then."

Bobby Sullivan, former Scott County Deputy, pretrial deposition

HOW THIS TIMELINE WAS REPORTED

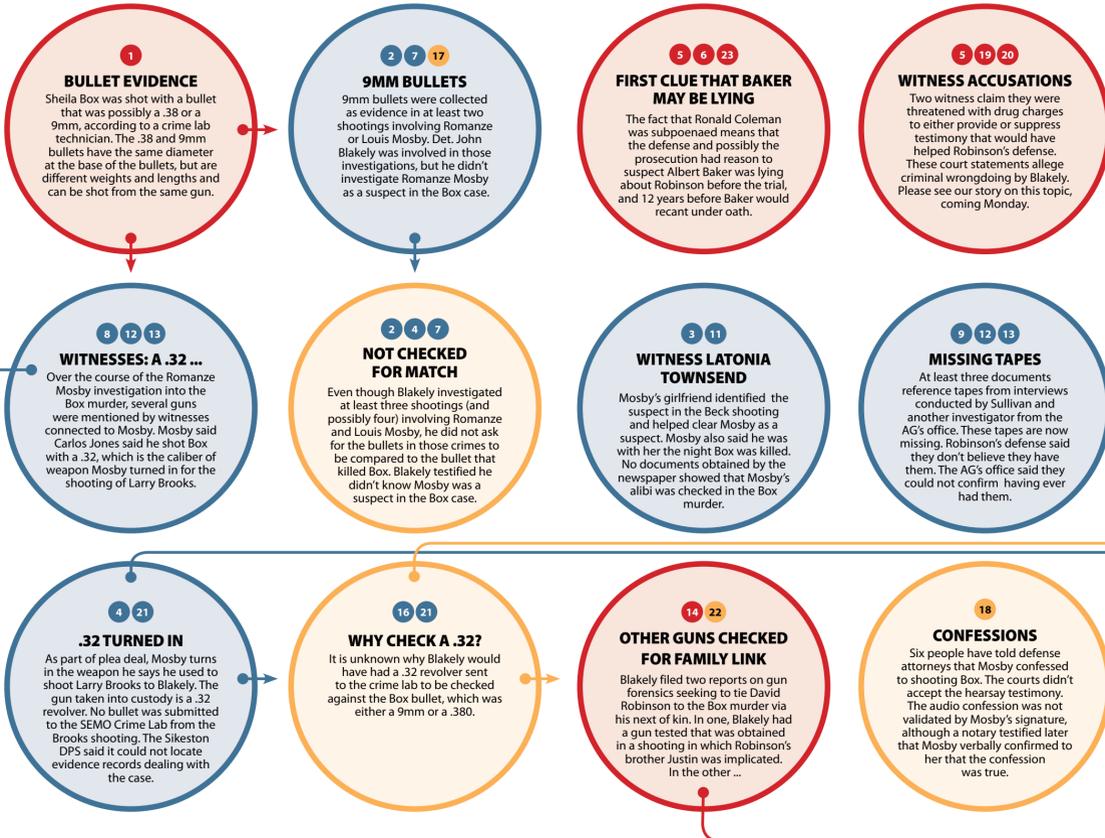
The Southeast Missourian compiled this timeline via public records requests from the Sikeston Department of Public Safety, the Missouri Highway Patrol, the Missouri Department of Corrections, the Scott County and Mississippi County court clerks, the Scott County Prosecuting Attorney's office, Scott County Sheriff's Department and the Missouri Attorney General's office. Documents include trial transcripts, pre-trial and post-conviction deposition transcripts, investigative, forensic and interview reports. Old newspaper reports were also used. Items that were obtained via recent interviews are noted within the detail of the text. In many cases, spellings of names were inconsistent in documents. Spellings that were used most often throughout the documents were used in the timeline.



32mm VS 9mm While a .380 and a 9mm bullet can be shot from the same gun, a .32 and a 9mm have different diameters and cannot be shot from the same gun. Pictured left is a .32 round; a 9mm bullet is pictured at right. (Not printed as actual size)

NO MATCH TO BOX

... an investigative report, Blakely claimed Robinson's son Christopher Jackson "got the gun" for Romanze Mosby. Neither gun came back as a match to the Box bullet. Jackson was not charged in the case.



Information graphics: Bob Miller and Nadir Hussein. Images: Archive and file photos

ROBINSON'S TRIAL BEGINS

AUG. 29: Robinson's trial begins. Public defense investigator Linda Bollinger searches for Ronnie Coleman, who does not show up to court, but she cannot find him. It is revealed in court that Sikeston DPS pays about \$1,500 for witness protection to Baker for his testimony, including travel to Milwaukee and later an apartment in Perryville.

ROBINSON IS FOUND GUILTY OF MURDER. He is sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

SEPT. 24: Sikeston DPS receives a letter from the State of Missouri Department of Public Safety to Blakely. The letter addresses witness protection funds, and says that requests for receipts after June 2001 are denied. "DPS cannot pay more than original amount requested after deadline. Extension should have been submitted."

NOV. 28: Mosby pleads guilty to shooting Brooks. As part of the plea deal, according to the probable cause statement, Mosby takes Blakely to the gun and other evidence, including the glove he was wearing when he shot Brooks. The gun that was taken into custody was a .32 revolver.

APPEALS BEGIN

2002

DEC. 12: Robinson's first appeal is denied.

2003

JUNE 13: Robinson's defense files a motion to vacate. Robinson's new public defender, Karl Hinkebein, provides a document to the court that one or more of the bullets used in three of the Mosby shootings are a match with the bullet that killed Box. Hinkebein also states that three victims are willing to testify that they were shot by either Romanze or Louis Mosby. That includes James Beck, who was also shot in the incident that Armstrong pleaded guilty to. The judge later denies the motion; the evidence and testimony were never presented again. Records obtained by the Southeast Missourian from the Missouri Highway Patrol show Hinkebein's statement to be false, however. The bullets provided to the SEMO Crime Lab in the Mosby related shootings were "right twist" bullets, while the bullet found in Box was a left twist.

2004

AUG. 9: Romanze Mosby confesses on audio tape to public defense capital investigator Butch Johnson that he killed Sheila Box on Ruth and Branum streets, firing a single shot at her when he saw a gun in her lap and she reached for it during a drug buy. Mosby declines to sign an affidavit with the recording, saying his voice should be enough. Johnson would later testify Mosby sobbed for nearly 20 minutes before collecting himself enough to confess on tape.

AUG. 10: Ronnie Coleman gives a deposition, claiming that he was called by Blakely and threatened with charges if he showed up to court.

ALBERT BAKER ADMITS TO JOHNSON THAT HIS TESTIMONY ABOUT DAVID ROBINSON WAS FALSE.

OCT. 18: Jason Richison, who testified that David Robinson bragged of shooting Box in jail, recants his testimony. He says detectives, including Blakely, brought a quarter-gram of "dope" into jail and threatened additional drug charges if he did not cooperate. He also states police fed him the details he used in his testimony.

OCT. 22: Blakely sends a fax to the AG's office, mentioning on a "lab report on gun Romanze Mosby used a few months after the murder of Ms. Box." The gun is eliminated as the firearm used to shoot Box.

MAY 5, 2004: Baker is subpoenaed to recant, but instead sticks to his original testimony. He later said in the days before he was scheduled for his deposition to recant, he felt threatened by police when he was approached by an officer from a different town where he lived at the time who handed him a cell phone with Blakely on the line, reminding him how he testified. Robinson's appeal is later denied.

2006

DEC. 28: Blakely files a memo to the AG's office, saying he believes he found the Box murder weapon, a .38 Smith & Wesson. The memo states it could be the same gun used in a murder that David Robinson's brother Justin was implicated in but later cleared of. The report states "disputes Mosby's [sic] story."

2007

MAY 5: A bullet comparison report from the Trevor Neal shooting that David Robinson's brother Justin was implicated in but later cleared of. The bullets do not match, according to the report.

2009

JUNE 20: After reading a newspaper story that the Bryan Cave Law Firm in St. Louis, the same firm who helped exonerate Josh Keizer in a Scott County case, was taking on Robinson's case, Mosby confesses one last time to his step-father, who was also in prison with him. That night, Mosby hangs himself in his cell. Mosby was weeks away from finishing his prison sentence. In the article, Capt. Mark Crocker of the Sikeston DPS said "We're certain that we put the right person in jail."

2010

FEB. 22: Robinson's habeas petition is denied.

2012

JULY 14: Albert Baker recants on video to an attorney from the Bryan Cave Law Firm.

2015

MAY 8: Baker recants under oath.

MAY 15: Blakely testifies in a deposition that he was unaware that Mosby was a suspect in the Box case until after Robinson's trial, saying they would have followed up on that if they had that information.

ROBINSON'S SECOND HABEAS PETITION DENIED.

2017

AUGUST 2017: Robinson will have a six-day hearing before the Missouri Supreme Court. He is hoping for an exoneration or retrial.