

## UNSOLVED MYSTERIES PODCAST | WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BBQ MAN?

### EP51 Transcript

SHEILA MOSES: They burned my granddaddy's house to the ground. My mother lived there 65 years, and no one ever bothered her. Whoever hurt Daniel, they came to that little town to hurt him. It was someone who knew him and knew him well.

NARRATION:

FIFTY-NINE-YEAR-OLD DANIEL MOSES WAS KNOWN IN THE RURAL COMMUNITY OF REHOBOTH, NORTH CAROLINA AS THE BARBECUE MAN. IN FACT, THE LAST TIME HIS NEIGHBORS REMEMBER SEEING DANIEL, IT WAS ON A SATURDAY, AND AS USUAL, HE WAS AROUND BACK OF HIS HOUSE, COOKING UP HIS NEXT BATCH OF BARBECUE TO SELL TO THE LOCALS. FIVE DAYS LATER, ON THURSDAY, JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2011, DANIEL'S HOUSE BURNS TO THE GROUND, AND NO ONE HAS SEEN OR TALKED TO HIM IN DAYS.

I'M STEVE FRENCH, AND THIS IS UNSOLVED MYSTERIES: "WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BBQ MAN?"

SHEILA MOSES: Daniel is my oldest brother, and he was so wonderful, and he loved his little sisters and brothers. He was just this kind, gentle soul.

NARRATION:

SHEILA MOSES IS THE YOUNGEST OF 10 CHILDREN, BORN AND RAISED IN REHOBOTH.

SHEILA MOSES: So, my family — my grandfather, my grandmother, the Moses family — we are from North Hampton County, North Carolina. Rural, rural, rural North Carolina. They have two stoplights and one high school in the entire county. We live in a little area called Rehoboth, and on Rehoboth Road — I was born on Rehoboth Road — the house that my grandfather, Braxton Jones, purchased in 1956 for \$3,000. That's my granddaddy's land.

NARRATION:

DANIEL WAS THE OLDEST OF THE TEN MOSES CHILDREN, RAISED ON THE FAMILY HOMESTEAD. AT THE AGE OF 17, HE DECIDES TO LEAVE NORTH CAROLINA AND MAKES HIS WAY NORTH TO NEW JERSEY, HOPING TO FIND MORE OPPORTUNITY THERE THAN IN HAMPTON COUNTY.

SHEILA MOSES: There's a 10-year age difference between my oldest brother, Daniel, and myself. So, I'm a six-year-old little girl when he leaves home, like many African American men and women did in the fifties and sixties. And he was this beautiful black man in the sixties, you know, with the Afro and the James Brown pants and, and hope. And when we were old enough to go to New Jersey, he would help us find summer jobs. He took me to New York, see my first movie. He took me to my first Chinese restaurant. He took me to my first concert. Most of the things that happened first in my life, my brother made those things happen, because he loved us, and we loved him.

NARRATION:

IN NEW JERSEY, DANIEL FINDS A JOB AS A LONG-HAUL TRUCKER AND SOON HE'S MAKING GOOD MONEY. HE MARRIES AND STARTS A FAMILY. BUT IN 1998, AN ACCIDENT LEAVES HIM WITH A SEVERELY INJURED BACK, AND SOON, A FRACTURED MARRIAGE. HE SEPARATES FROM HIS WIFE AND EVENTUALLY RETURNS TO REHOBOTH, SETTLING INTO HIS GRANDFATHER'S HOUSE NEXT DOOR TO HIS MOTHER'S HOME. IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE DANIEL BEGINS AN ON-AGAIN OFF-AGAIN RELATIONSHIP WITH A WOMAN WHO LIVES NEARBY.

SHEILA MOSES: She had a home about 20 minutes from us, and another home in Raleigh. On the weekends, she came and spent the weekends with Daniel.

NARRATION:

DANIEL KEEPS HIMSELF BUSY DURING THE WEEK, WHILE HIS GIRLFRIEND IS AT WORK AT HER JOB NEAR RALEIGH.

SHEILA MOSES: He had a lot of hobbies. He loved to fish, loved to ride his bike, loved to work out. He started taking karate and he loved it. He was good. And he could really, really, really cook. Ha, he cooked a mean barbecue. He had this grill that he made out of cement, and that's where he made the barbecue. At one point, he was making it every week. So, he would go around in the community and sell his barbecue, and they called him The Barbecue Man. That's the last thing my brother gave me, was a container of barbecue. That's the last thing he gave me. It was Mother's Day weekend of 2011, was barbecue. Yeah.

NARRATION:

ABOUT A MONTH LATER, ON THURSDAY, JUNE 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2011, SHEILA IS AT WORK WHEN SHE RECEIVES A PANICKED CALL FROM HER BROTHER, JOHNNY.

SHEILA MOSES: I was at a client's office. My phone ring, and it's my brother, and he's in a total panic. "I'm trying to call Daniel, but the number's not working." And he said, "Grandma's house is on fire, and we can't find Daniel." So, I hang up. But let me tell you, when I hung up, I knew. I knew something had happened to him. Everything inside of me said, I saw death. Everything.

WALTER BROWN: It was June 16th, 2011 when the fire was discovered by his brother and another farmer in the area.

NARRATION:

AT THE TIME, WALTER BROWN IS AN INVESTIGATOR WITH THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

WALTER BROWN: Once the fire was discovered, they were under the assumption that he was inside the house. They tried to go in the house. Of course, the fire and smoke was too great for them to get in there, so they backed out.

NARRATION:

FIREFIGHTERS ARRIVE AT THE MOSES HOMESTEAD TO FIND IT ENGULFED IN FLAMES. IT'S HOURS BEFORE THE FIRE IS EXTINGUISHED AND THEY CAN SAFELY SIFT THROUGH THE ASHES, LOOKING FOR ANY VICTIMS, AND THE CAUSE OF THE FIRE.

WALTER BROWN: Our arson agent went to the scene and did his investigation. He was able to determine that the origin of cause was near a front window where an air conditioning unit was, but he couldn't determine the cause, because he could not rule out electrical as a possible starting of the fire. Obviously, they searched the house for any human remains in the house, and, like I said, it was a small house. So, the search was not that extensive, and the fire damage was significant, but it wasn't that significant that you could not search the house for human remains. They did not find any.

NARRATION:

THE MOSES FAMILY IS RELIEVED TO KNOW THAT DANIEL DIDN'T DIE IN THE FIRE. BUT WHERE IS HE? DANIEL'S MOTHER, WHO LIVES NEXT DOOR, WAS OUT OF TOWN THE WEEK OF THE FIRE, AND WHEN THE FAMILY COMPARES NOTES, THEY REALIZE NO ONE HAS SPOKEN TO DANIEL IN FIVE DAYS. ACCORDING TO SHEILA, THE LAST PERSON IN THE FAMILY TO ACTUALLY SEE DANIEL WAS HIS NEPHEW ANDRE, WHO BOUGHT SOME BARBECUE FROM HIM THE SATURDAY BEFORE THE FIRE. SHEILA BELIEVES THAT DANIEL'S GIRLFRIEND WAS AT HIS HOUSE UNTIL MONDAY MORNING. THEN, SOMETIME LATER THAT DAY, DANIEL'S BROTHER, JOHNNY, STOPPED BY TO PAY DANIEL A VISIT.

SHEILA MOSES: One of my brothers go and knock on Daniel's door. His car is in the yard. His air is on, and his truck is in the yard. He had a really mean dog. The dog is not barking. The dog is growling at my brother. My brother was like, "He's in there." I guess he thought he was just chilling out. So, my brother left. That's Monday. Tuesday, my mother says to my sister, "I haven't heard from Daniel. I'm gonna call him in the morning." She calls him and he didn't answer.

NARRATION:

DANIEL'S MOTHER TRIES AGAIN ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON AND THURSDAY MORNING. STILL, NO ANSWER.

SHEILA MOSES: Now, her mother instincts are kicking in. When he didn't answer, my mother said, "Wait a minute." She calls the girlfriend and says, "Listen, I haven't talked to Daniel." She answers and says, "Daniel is on vacation." Her exact words. Daniel was stressed. Daniel needed a break. He said he was going on vacation, and he left. He's okay. My mother said, "No, he's not." My children don't go on vacation and don't tell me. Now, at that time, her oldest child was 60. We don't go on vacation and don't tell our mother. So, I call the girlfriend. I said, "Listen. His car and truck are both in the yard. Where did Daniel go on vacation? How is he traveling? He's not using his ATM card." Because by then, we had gotten someone to look at his records at the bank and he was not using his ATM card. She said, "He's using his Shell card." I called my sister. I said, "We have a problem." Daniel does not have a Shell credit card. Period.

NARRATION:

TWO DAYS AFTER THE FIRE, THE MOSES FAMILY DOES EVERYTHING THEY CAN TO TRY TO FIND DANIEL. THEY PUT UP FLYERS AND MAKE CALLS ALL OVER THE COMMUNITY. BY WEDNESDAY, JUNE 22<sup>ND</sup>, SIX DAYS AFTER THE FIRE, DANIEL STILL HASN'T SURFACED, AND THE FAMILY IS CONVINCED HE'S THE VICTIM OF FOUL PLAY. THEY FILE A MISSING PERSONS REPORT, BUT THE POLICE ARE SLOW TO START AN OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION.

WALTER BROWN: Ninety percent of the time, or even greater than that, really, the person is gone and they're found. You know, they're gone for a couple days. They're found in a couple weeks. So, it was several days in before the Sheriff's department started investigating it, and it got more and more obvious that something was amiss, that something wasn't right. The Sheriff's department conducted what we would describe as a ground search, where they had maybe a hundred or so individuals help search the woods and farmland around his house. They did use cadaver dogs. They did search some bodies of water. The problem is there's vast, and I would describe it as very vast, amount of land surrounding his house that if you wanted to put somebody there, that's where you would want to pick, cuz it's a lot of land, a lot of real estate, a lot of woods, a lot of farmland, and not many people.

NARRATION:

NO SIGN OF DANIEL IS FOUND AND THE SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT'S SEARCH IS EVENTUALLY CALLED OFF. THE CASE IS PUT ON A BACKBURNER, WAITING FOR NEW LEADS TO PURSUE. BUT THE MOSES FAMILY ISN'T HAPPY WITH THE LACK OF ATTENTION PAID TO DANIEL'S DISAPPEARANCE.

SHEILA MOSES: If I lose my keys in my house, there is only one way I will find my keys. I will have to look for my keys. They have not looked for Daniel Moses. If I don't call them, they don't call me. If I don't raise hell, there is no hell, and I'm gonna beat this bone until it breaks. And I got tired begging, cuz I don't do well with that. So, I wrote the governor and told him what was going on.

NARRATION:

AND THE GOVERNOR RESPONDS. IN THE WINTER OF 2012, SIX MONTHS AFTER DANIEL GOES MISSING, SPECIAL AGENT WALTER BROWN OF THE STATE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION IS FORMALLY ASSIGNED TO THE CASE AND BRINGS A FRESH AND MORE RIGOROUS APPROACH TO FINDING DANIEL.

WALTER BROWN: Oftentimes, law enforcement, they get in that perception that he's tired of being around the daily grind that he has, and he wants to go somewhere else. But, with my agency, since all we do is the worst case scenario, naturally I assume that the worst case has happened, and we're gonna investigate the case as if there was a homicide, and until we're proven otherwise.

NARRATION:

AS HE BEGINS HIS INVESTIGATION, SPECIAL AGENT BROWN INTERVIEWS DANIEL'S FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND IMMEDIATELY SEES SIGNS THAT POINT TO FOUL PLAY. DANIEL WASN'T THE TYPE TO JUST WALK AWAY FROM HIS LIFE IN REHOBOTH.

WALTER BROWN: Daniel was a healthy, athletic man. Accomplished martial arts. He was a kind individual, but he didn't seek trouble, but he was the type that would take care of business if he had to. And we don't think that he was the type of individual to get up and leave and not have any communication with his family at all. Now, he has the disability check coming into his bank account every month, and it is still coming into his bank account every month, and it is there and we monitor it to see if there's any withdrawals. So that, to me, is huge indicator. No one just gets up and leaves their money unless they've completely lost their mind and they don't know who they are. So that would certainly lead to the belief that foul play is the cause of his disappearance.

NARRATION:

WALTER BROWN IS INTRIGUED WHEN HE LEARNS ABOUT THE PUZZLING BEHAVIOR OF DANIEL'S DOG ON THE DAY OF THE FIRE. THE DOG, WHO NEVER LEFT DANIEL'S SIDE, WAS NOWHERE TO BE FOUND.

WALTER BROWN: His dog was not a friendly dog. Most people could not come up to the house without Daniel being present to be able to restrain the dog. The dog was not friendly to other people. It was friendly to a few people, but not many.

SHEILA MOSES: That dog barked at everyone, except my mother, Daniel, and the girlfriend. So, this is crazy. The day of the fire, the dog was not there, but he came back the next day. My mother's porch is like a screened-in porch. The dog has chewed the screen and he's on the porch, like, crying. He came back. That dog loved Daniel.

WALTER BROWN: So, the question in my mind is: did the fire scare the dog away? But you would think if the fire was sufficient to have the scared of the dog away, he would still be, you know, within eyesight, but just away from the house. Or, was the dog with Daniel, and something happened to Daniel away from the house, and the fire is not necessarily related to the investigation?

NARRATION:

DANIEL'S PHONE RECORDS PROVIDE MORE INTRIGUING CLUES.

WALTER BROWN: His phone records did not indicate somebody that used a phone a lot. He spoke to a few people regularly, but only a couple calls a day. And he communicated with the same individuals. It was pretty consistent. His cell phone usage was the same, but we found out two weeks before he went missing, that he changed his phone number.

SHEILA MOSES: This is so unlike Daniel. He had a cell phone that he had for years. Out of the blue, he all of a sudden changed his number. He gets a Walmart burner phone, and his

girlfriend, who worked at Walmart. That was so unlike him. So, I do feel like something was going on related to that girlfriend. On Thursday, when my mother called her, you've been dating this man 10 years, she didn't pick up the phone and call Daniel to say, "Hey, where are you? Your mother is looking for you." How do you date a man for 10 years and he goes missing, and you don't come to the fire? How do you date someone for 10 years and they go missing and we've never heard from her again? And this is when I knew she knows something. She knows what happened to him.

WALTER BROWN: When the Sheriff's department initially spoke to his girlfriend, it was three days after the event and she reiterated that Daniel had indicated he might wanna go on a vacation.

NARRATION:

DANIEL'S GIRLFRIEND SAYS THE LAST TIME SHE SAW DANIEL WAS ON MONDAY MORNING, WHEN SHE LEFT HIS HOUSE AND HEADED BACK TO HER JOB IN RALEIGH, AND THAT'S WHERE SHE WAS WHEN THE FIRE AT DANIEL'S HOUSE BROKE OUT FOUR DAYS LATER. SHE CLAIMS TO KNOW NOTHING AT ALL ABOUT DANIEL'S DISAPPEARANCE, BUT THE FAMILY ISN'T SURE THAT'S TRUE, WHEN THEY FIND A MYSTERIOUS, ANONYMOUS LETTER IN THE GLOVE COMPARTMENT OF DANIEL'S CAR.

SHEILA MOSES: The North Hampton County Sheriff's Department did not search Daniel's car, nor truck. My brother came home and searched the car and popped the trunk. Daniel could have been dead in that trunk, and we would've been the ones to find him. Thank God my brother was not in that trunk because it would've killed my mother. But my brother found a letter in that car that was addressed to Daniel, but it was not mailed. It did not have a stamp. So, someone he knew put it in his car. So, the letter tells Daniel the truth about his girlfriend, about that she was living in Raleigh during the week, dating this other married man and come home to him on the weekends. Whoever wrote this letter, they're telling Daniel to check into her and this man.

NARRATION:

COULD DANIEL HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN A DANGEROUS LOVE TRIANGLE WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND AND HER LOVER?

WALTER BROWN: It's fairly evident that she has had a long-term relationship with another individual, and that's more or less ongoing. We all kinda thought someone just got jealous, you know, that is a possibility. So, we can't dismiss that.

NARRATION:

SUSPICIONS GROW WHEN INVESTIGATORS REQUEST AN INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL'S GIRLFRIEND AND SHE IMMEDIATELY REFERS THEM TO HER LAWYER.

WALTER BROWN: It's concerning to me that she hasn't cooperated to the extent that I would expect a girlfriend who is sincerely concerned about her boyfriend's disappearance. She hasn't

been willing to talk with law enforcement, or at least with the SBI since that initial interview. Dozens of times, we've reached out to her to speak to her, and she's just rejected those opportunities.

NARRATION:

AFTER YEARS OF INVESTIGATION AND TRACKING DOWN EVERY LEAD, DANIEL MOSES IS STILL MISSING, AND THERE ARE ONLY THEORIES ABOUT WHAT POSSIBLY COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM.

WALTER BROWN: Right now, we don't have any really overt signs that there was somebody that was out to get him. And it is unlikely that the perpetrator is a random individual traveling down the road. It's a small, remote area. Mainly it's relatives that live nearby and/or friends. And you would not go to Daniel's house unless you were either lost, or you were, intended to go to his house, so that would kind of lead us to believe that whatever happened to him, it was somebody close to him.

SHEILA MOSES: His car is in the yard and his truck is in the yard, and that tells me one thing about my brother. He got in the car with someone he knew. Nobody came in his house and picked a fight with him and walked out that door. Daniel Moses had lethal hands. He was not to be played with, and he was a hunter. He had guns in his house. So, a stranger didn't break in his house because if they did, they would've left in a body bag. Whatever happened to Daniel on that land, my granddaddy's land, someone that knew him, and knew him well, took my brother. They caught him off guard, and they murdered him in that house and took him out the back door. I believe it happened that late that Sunday night, because that Monday morning, my brother went to the house and knocked on the door and Daniel didn't answer.

WALTER BROWN: The most frustrating part of this whole investigation is the lack of real evidence or real investigative leads. There are individuals in North Hampton County that know what happened to Daniel Moses, and if they can come forward, either directly or indirectly, you know, obviously that will help us solve the case.

NARRATION:

SPECIAL AGENT WALTER BROWN RETIRED FROM THE STATE BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION IN LATE 2021, BUT HE HASN'T LET THIS CASE GO. HE'S NOW WORKING ON DANIEL'S DISAPPEARANCE PART TIME WITH THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE.

WALTER BROWN: I don't treat it as a cold case. The truth of the matter is that the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation does not use the term "cold case," because it conveys to the family that you're not interested in the case. You've moved on. You're doing something else. And this case in particular, you know, you see and you feel the pain that the family has when they're missing brother is... they don't know where he is. And so, you want to be as compassionate as you can with the family. So, if I got an investigative lead that I can follow up on, I'm gonna follow up on it.

NARRATION:

AS FOR THE MOSES FAMILY, THE PAIN OF LOSING DANIEL HAS CONTINUED TO WEIGH HEAVY ON THEIR HEARTS, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE LOSS OF THEIR MOTHER IN 2020.

SHEILA MOSES: My mother lived through the Great Depression, the Civil Rights Movement. You could bend her, but you couldn't break her. She died not knowing what happened to her child. I used to tell my mother, "Ma, I'm gonna find Daniel." She would say, "Oh, child. I'll be dead and in my grave when y'all find Daniel." And I had just made up my mind that I wanted to come home one day and say, "Ma, we found Daniel. Daniel's dead, but we could take him to Chapel Hill Church and bury him with our ancestors now." And somebody out there felt that they had a right to deprive my mother of burying her child. You took my mother's child, her first born son. So, I'm just hurt for my mother, you know? She had a right to know what happened to her son. I hope that I'm not cold in my grave, like my mother, when they find out what happened to my brother. I keep looking because I hope I find him in my lifetime. The only thing we have left of Daniel is a jar where he put barbecue in, and a sign on the side of a road that says *Missing*. I want justice for my mother, for my brother. For Daniel.

NARRATION:

DANIEL MOSES WAS 59 YEARS OLD WHEN HE WAS LAST SEEN AT HIS HOME IN REHOBOTH, NORTH CAROLINA ON OR AROUND JUNE 12, 2011. HE IS 6'3" TALL AND 200 TO 220 POUNDS, WITH BROWN EYES, BLACK HAIR, AND A PIERCING IN HIS LEFT EAR.

IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THIS CASE, CALL THE NORTHAMPTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE AT (252) 534-2611, OR SUBMIT A TIP AT [UNSOLVED.COM](https://www.uncountdown.com).

NEXT, ON UNSOLVED MYSTERIES...

DAPHNE JACOB: It's a really terrible feeling to think that you live in a small town, and then to think that someone can murder another human being and not have to be accountable for it. I think there's a handful of people that know what happened to my brother, and justice needs to be served.

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THANKS FOR LISTENING TO EPISODE 51 OF UNSOLVED MYSTERIES.