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at the time of Barber's murder. In 1988, he was convicted in St. Louis on two counts of robbery and two counts of second-degree murder.

Over the years, lawyers and anti-death penalty groups supporting Amrine's release have pointed to Russell as the true killer. No charges against him have ever been filed in the case.

In a telephone interview this morning from prison, Russell, 40, said he did not kill Barber. When asked who did, he replied: "I don't know." He gave the same answer when asked if Amrine committed the crime.

Tackett said Monday he wasn't considering charges against Russell or anyone else as long as there's no physical evidence linking someone to Barber's murder. Tackett said physical evidence would be necessary at this point because there's been so much recanted testimony in the case.

"All your eyewitness testimony has been tainted," he said.

Russell Gross, the foreman of the jury who originally convicted Amrine but who later came to believe he was innocent, said he understands Tackett's position in not pursuing Russell.

"When you've got convicts testifying on this stuff," Gross said, "you sometimes wonder on some of this. They're convicts."

Tackett said he couldn't say whether Barber's murder would ever be resolved. "It was resolved for 17 years, and now it's unresolved."

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