

More than 40 years after John Lloyd "Buddy" Heflin disappeared, Mississippi Bureau of Investigation officials confirm they are trying to find out what happened to him.

Heflin last was seen by a family member on New Year's Day 1969, his wife, Alexis Heflin said. She learned from one of his family members that he was missing.

She last had seen her husband about a year before, when after six years of marriage, she moved with their two sons from their home in Oktibbeha County to Chicago. He went to Jackson to work at a Kroger grocery store with friend Earl Burch, she said.

"He wasn't a bad person. He was just 23 years old and got mixed up with some bad people," Alexis Heflin speculated.

Alexis Heflin, who is writing a book about her husband's disappearance, said Burch told her husband's family he was killed and thrown into the Mississippi River.

The Mississippi Bureau of Investigation would confirm only that the case was reopened in 2010.

The Clarion-Ledger learned of the case after Heflin's relatives contacted the newspaper.

Gail Wofford, who had been friends with Buddy Heflin most of her life, has long believed his disappearance is connected to something illegal involving him and a couple in Longview.

One day he came into the coffee shop where she worked and asked her to ride with him to Longview to settle a disagreement, she said.

Once they got there, she said, she could hear Heflin and a man in the back bedroom. The other man seemed angry, and Heflin seemed to be pleading.

Buddy Heflin left the house crying and told her he didn't want to involve her because it would endanger her life, Gail Wofford said.

"He said he couldn't tell me everything because if he did, my life wouldn't be worth a plug nickel, not worth any more than his," she said.

He told Wofford that he'd agreed to do a "one-time deal" that paid a lot of money for the couple.

"He said it didn't go down like it was supposed to, and he saw something he wasn't supposed to," she said.

Wofford and her father both urged Heflin to go to authorities about his predicament, she said, but he said the couple had told him if he went to the police, they'd kill his family.

Wofford said she believes Heflin may have been the getaway driver for a crime. He had taught her and other girls in Starkville how to drive.

"He was excellent at driving, even at a fast speed," she said.

A document from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare denying Alexis Heflin's 1973 application for survivor's benefits for herself and the children stated that witnesses said Heflin would leave for months at a time. It also stated that "there is nothing to definitely indicate that (Heflin) met with foul play. There is evidence, however, indicating that he may have been engaged in criminal activities and had a very good reason for wishing to disappear."

But Heflin would not have bailed out on his children, Wofford said.

Wofford didn't see him again after the trip to Longview and moved to Georgia a few months later. Years later, she came back and found out that Buddy Heflin had been missing for years. She told an Oktibbeha County deputy her story, asking him to tell Sheriff Dolph Bryan.

Wofford said she does not remember exactly what year it was that she talked to the deputy but said it was shortly after her return to Mississippi around 2005.

She said she didn't hear from Bryan until 2007, when he got in touch with her after her sister died. He said a family member had told him she might know something about the disappearance, and she told him the story. Wofford said it appeared the deputy never had passed along her information.

There was very little, if any, coverage about Heflin's disappearance.

"Sometimes I think it's so old they'd like to wish it away," she said of Oktibbeha County officials. "But that family can't do that," Wofford said.

Bryan did not return phone calls seeking comment.

Those left in Alexis Heflin's life said they'd like to see the case solved for her sake.

"She has always worked two jobs to survive," said her niece, Valerie Maxwell. "There are a lot of people who care about her and want to see closure."

Alexis Heflin said more than anything she wants to be able to tell her sons, who look so much like their father, what became of him.

"I'd like to have closure for the boys, and I'd like to have a little funeral with a tombstone there," she said. "Nothing has ever been done. They'd have a place to go and something to remember him by."

<http://www.clarionledger.com>

JACKSON, Miss. (WJTV) — Authorities need your help in a missing person's cold case. Officials said John Lloyd "Buddy" Heflin disappeared about 48 years ago. He was last seen on New Year's Day in 1969.

Heflin moved to Jackson from Oktibbeha County to work at a Kroger grocery store with a friend.

Authorities said it is believed his disappearance is connected to something illegal involving him and a couple in Longview, Miss. They said Heflin might have been the getaway driver of a car involved in a crime.

His wife and children are looking for closure in this case.

He was 24 years old at the time of his disappearance.

His sister told police that he came to her home in Starkville on January 1, 1969, when their mother brought him by there to catch a ride with one of his friends. This was the last known sighting of Heflin.

Anyone with information that could help solve this case would be eligible for a reward of up to \$2,500.

If you have information that can help, call Crime Stoppers at 601-355-TIPS (8477) or submit a tip online through the Web Tip link.

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Central MS Crime Stoppers / Cold Case Missing Person

It has now been 48 years since John Lloyd "Buddy" Heflin disappeared. John Heflin was last seen on New Year's Day 1969. His wife, Alexis Heflin was informed by family members that he was missing. The couple had been married for six years before she moved with their two sons from their home in Oktibbeha County, MS to Chicago, IL. Buddy Heflin moved to Jackson, MS to work at a Kroger grocery store with friend. It has long been believed his disappearance is connected to something illegal involving him and a couple in Longview which is a small community just outside of Starkville, MS. One day, he asked a friend who worked in a coffee shop in the Columbus, MS area, if she would ride with him to Longview to settle a disagreement. Once they got there, the friend could hear Heflin and a man in a back bedroom at

a residence talking. The other man seemed angry, and Heflin seemed to be pleading with him. When Buddy Heflin left the house he told the friend he didn't want to involve her because it would endanger her life. Buddy Heflin told the friend that he'd agreed to do a "one-time deal" that paid a lot of money. Heflin told her, "It didn't go down like it was supposed to, and he saw something he wasn't supposed to". The friend tried to convince Heflin to go to authorities about the situation, but he told the friend that he had been threatened, that if he talked to the police, they would "kill his family". It is believed that Buddy Heflin might have been the getaway driver of a car involved in a crime. For years Alexis Heflin and her family have tried to find answers related to her husband's disappearance and possible murder. Alexis Heflin has said that, "more than anything she wants to be able to tell her sons, who look so much like their father, what became of him". "I'd like to have closure for the boys, and I'd like to have a little funeral with a tombstone," They'd have a place to go and something to remember him by." John Lloyd "Buddy" Heflin was born January 31, 1944 and was 24 years old at the time of his disappearance. He was a white male, between 5'5" and 6'0"ft tall. Heflin weighed between 160-185 lbs with Brown hair and Hazel eyes. His friends and family all called him by the name "Buddy". He was last seen in Starkville, Oktibbeha Co. Mississippi. His sister reported that he came by her residence on 1/1/1969, when their mother brought him by there to catch a ride with one of his friends. This was the last known sighting of John Lloyd "Buddy" Heflin. Information and rumors that have circulated over the years, suggests that Heflin was killed near Jackson or Vicksburg, MS and thrown into the Mississippi River. Anyone with information that could help solve this case would be eligible for a reward of up to \$2500.00. If you have information that can help, please call Crime Stoppers at 601-355-TIPS (8477) or submit a tip online through the Web Tip link on the home page of the Central MS Crime Stoppers website. Or use your mobile device or computer to submit a tip by going to www.P3tips.com.
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