

Since Mary Elizabeth "Me Me" Loper disappeared about three months ago, her relatives pray and hope when their phones ring, have trouble sleeping and have difficulty going about their daily lives. Mary Loper was reported missing May 29 by her mother and sisters. She was last seen at her house on Clarence Bonnett Road located between the Movella and Barton communities in southern George County. "It's getting the best of us. It's gone on for too long now," stated her mother, Dorothy Reynolds of Rocky Creek.

Investigators have not released any developments in the case and Loper's family members say having no answers only leads them to more questions. Had an accomplice abducted her in vengeance? Did she know something that someone wanted kept quiet? Why isn't her husband talking to the family? Was it drug related? Questions but no answers.

Loper's husband, Carl, 29, was arrested for manufacturing marijuana the day his wife was reported missing. He is currently in the George-Greene County Regional Correctional Facility after having his bond revoked from a prior indictment for possession of methamphetamine and escape. He also will stand trial Sept. 9 in Warren County for a June 2001 aggravated assault after he allegedly shot a man in Vicksburg. There was no word from authorities as to whether he may have been involved. Carl Loper's attorney, George Shaddock, however, denied Loper had anything to do with his wife's disappearance. Mary Loper's family stated that he has refused to allow them to speak to him since her disappearance and denies their requests to visit him while he has been incarcerated.

Mr. J.D. Mitchell of the George County Sheriff's department admitted that he is "not familiar with everything that happened" in the case, but claimed that no evidence exists at this time to suspect foul play.

"We've been looking everywhere we figured we could look," Reynolds said.

Lt. J.D. Mitchell was recently appointed as chief investigator with the George County Sheriff's Department after former chief investigator Al Hillman took a job with the state Department of Corrections. "We are working on it, but as of this time, it's a missing person case," Mitchell said.

Glenda Allen, one of Mary Loper's older sisters, said that others can't understand "the hell it is" not knowing if a missing loved one is OK or not. "I sit and wonder, Is she hungry? Is she cold or is her body out there? It's hard to describe the pain," she said.

The Lopers' 10th wedding anniversary was Aug. 1. Their three boys, ages, 6, 3, and 8 months have been staying with Carl Loper's parents since their mother's disappearance.

Glenda said she keeps the boys every other week. "They say things like, "Daddy's in jail and Mommy ran away and needed a break." "I don't know why someone would want to hurt her. I fear the worst but I hope I'm wrong," Reynolds said. "I just wish she could come home and she's OK. We miss and love her. The boys miss and love their Mama."

Family and friends say Mary Loper enjoyed making others happy, that her sons were her life's main joy and she always looked for positive and happy things in life.

Reynolds said the family has participated in many searches in the rural area near the Lopers' property on which the house they built six years ago stands.

Allen and Travers said that Mary did not leave on her own because of her love for her sons and are urging her husband, Carl Loper, to help them find some answers if he can provide them. Donna Travers, Loper's other older sister, left her home in Crystal River, Fla., to come home and assist in the searches and gather information. "It's so hard to deal with this. I feel so guilty trying to go on with my life when we have no clue where she is. I feel like I should be there in Lucedale and looking for her," she said. Travers and other family members say Mary's disappearance has caused them to unintentionally neglect their own family and friends due to the emotional roller coaster of not having any answers.

"Something has happened to her and I don't know what but I wish I did," said Travers.

Anyone with any information can call the George County Sheriffs' department at 1(601) 947-4811.